

University of Pittsburgh
Faculty Assembly Meeting
2700 Posvar Hall
Minutes of September 5, 2006

1. Call to Order: President John Baker called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.
2. Approval of Faculty Minutes of June 6, 2006: Approved without change.
3. Introduction of Items of New Business: None
4. Report of the President, Professor John J. Baker
 - a. Welcome: President Baker welcomed the members of Faculty Assembly and guests.
 - b. Moment of Silence: President Baker called for a moment of silence in memory of City of Pittsburgh Mayor Bob O'Connor.
 - c. Introductions: President Baker introduced new Senate Director Lori Molinaro, and Senate staff member Cindy Brendel. He asked Faculty Assembly members and guests to introduce themselves.
 - d. Membership Rosters: Faculty Assembly members were mailed a 2006-2007 membership roster, and Faculty Assembly meeting dates through June 2007. Newly elected members also received information about the Senate
 - e. Senate Committees: Much of the work of the Senate is accomplished via its committees. The Senate has 15 standing committees and three ad hoc committees. Committees welcome a reasonable number of ad hoc members. Faculty Assembly members who wish to serve on a committee can contact the committee chair and request to join the committee as an ad hoc member.
 - f. Correspondence: Senate correspondence will be sent via e-mail, unless a member specifically requests the Senate Office to use regular mail.
 - g. Senate Executive Committee: The Executive Committee held a planning meeting on July 28, 2006.
 - h. Expanded Senate Executive Committee: The Expanded Executive Committee, which includes all of the Committee chairs, met on September 1, 2006.
 - i. Committee chairs presented a brief summary of their committee's activities last year, and plans for the coming year.
 - ii. New committee chairs this year include:
 - (a). Ronald Linden, Political Science, will co-chair Admissions and Student Aid with Carol Stilley; and,
 - (b) Catherine Greeno, Social Work, will co-chair Educational Policies with Judith Erlen.
 - iii. The Plant Utilization and Planning Committee and the University Press Committee will elect new chairs later in September.
 - iv. Committee chairs are listed on the Faculty Assembly membership roster. The chairs will be asked to make reports to Faculty Assembly at various times during the academic year.
 - v. The Senate traditionally recommends four faculty to the Provost for three year term appointments on the University Planning and Budgeting Committee. One position is open this year; President Baker recommended Kathleen Vergona, School of Dental Medicine, to fill the slot.

vi. The Senate President and the Chairs of the Senate Budget Policies Committee, the Educational Policies Committee, and the Plant Utilization and Planning Committee also serve on the University Planning and Budget Committee. President Baker will report Senate recommendations to other University committees at future meetings, including faculty appointments to University of Pittsburgh Board of Trustees Committees.

i. Senate Web Sites. The Senate now maintains two websites.

i. The original Senate web site (<http://www.pitt.edu/univsenate>) has unrestricted access. It can be located by clicking on the Faculty/Staff button on the pitt.edu home page.

ii. The second Senate web went online June 30, 2006. It can be accessed only by users with a Pitt account. The site can be located as follows: open the Pitt home page; click on/log onto: my.pitt.edu; and click the Faculty Services button. The portal site contains more information about the Senate than the unrestricted public site.

iii. Information about the Senate web sites will appear in the September Senate Newsletter.

j. University of Pittsburgh Pandemic Working Group: The University has formed a working group to devise a plan for the University of Pittsburgh in the event of an avian flu pandemic. The committee is chaired by Jay Frerotte, the director of Environmental Health and Safety. Ellen Cohn is representing the Senate on the committee. The Senate will review the plan when it becomes available. To learn more about avian flu, click on the Emergency Preparedness button on the pitt.edu home page. The Pitt Chronicle and the University Times have also reported upon avian flu pandemic planning at the University.

k. Senate Plenary Sessions:

i. The Fall Plenary Session will be held Thursday, Oct. 19, 2006, from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm in the Assembly Room, William Pitt Union. The topic is: "Fostering Mentoring for Sustaining Organizational Vitality." Faculty Assembly members are encouraged to attend, and to invite colleagues as well.

ii. Vice President Pinsky requests that Faculty Assembly members submit possible topics for the Spring 2007 Plenary Session as soon as possible, as these sessions can take 4-5 months to plan. Suggestions for the Spring Plenary received thus far are:

1. "Is Teaching Undervalued in Annual Evaluations and Promotions at Pitt?"
2. "Rescuing Science from Politics" (recommended by Herb Needleman)
3. "National Performance Standards for Colleges: Good Idea or Bad Idea?"

iii. Nicholas Bircher recommended that the Senate maintain a list of prospective plenary topics.

iv. Irene Frieze advised that successful plenary sessions are often organized by a group of faculty members who are highly committed to the topic.

v. The topic for the Fall, 2007, Plenary Session will be "Fitness for Life."

5. Unfinished Business and New Business

a. Report of Stephen Carr, Chair of the Senate Budget and Policies Committee (SBPC).

- i. The SBPC has a broad charge –the fiscal health of the University. Specific areas of focus include the funding of academic programs, and faculty and staff compensation.
- ii. Carr stated that overall, the University administration has done a great job over the past decade. While many institutions are currently experiencing salary freezes, one has not occurred at the University since 1996. There have been a number of measures that show in comparative standings, that the salaries of different groups of professors at Pitt are moving up in relationship to those who work in peer institutions. However, there remain a number of challenges related to national and state circumstances. The University's current funding from the Commonwealth is significantly below the historical highest level of funding.
- iii. With regard to faculty compensation, both the SBPC and the University Budget Policies Committee make recommendations concerning the salary increase policy. The size of the salary increase pool consists of several components: there is a cost-of-living component for satisfactory performance, and merit, market and equity components. Another major component, (a separate budget item) that affects faculty/staff salaries are academic initiatives; these typically represent .5% of the total budget. These monies, are restricted to use by faculty, and are sometimes targeted to specific schools for which there are identified academic needs. Departments can apply for these funds as well. Thus, there is a salary increase pool for faculty and staff, with funds designated exclusively to each group. Carr reports that some staff are upset that that the salary pool is effectively larger for faculty than for staff. He believes that one reason for this difference is that the faculty workforce constitutes a national labor market, while the staff workforce represents a local labor market.
- iv. There have been some years in which salaries have not kept up with inflation. Carr expressed concern that high energy and healthcare costs may precipitate higher inflation in the near future. Carr reports that within the last year for which the SBPC had records, over half of the faculty in the University (excluding faculty members of the School of Medicine) received salary raises that were less than increases in the cost of living. When this occurs over several years, some groups of faculty, especially less compensated faculty (e.g., part-time faculty), may suffer a real loss of purchasing power. While increases in tuition can increase the salary pool, Carr states that care must be taken that higher tuition does not negatively affect the recruitment and enrollment of excellent students. Carr therefore concluded he cannot currently support a larger salary increase pool. While Carr believes the University administration has done a good job in allocating the centrally held portion of the salary pool, he notes that the fund is allocated without immediate input from any Senate committee. Carr hopes that the current Senate administration will further consider this lack of Senate input into the policy that guides the process. The UPBC has called for a study on the effects of the salary pool allocation on staff, including different groups of staff. He would welcome information about groups that may be adversely affected over time to enlarge the perspective of the Committee.

- v. Carr advises faculty to educate themselves on these issues, and contact him or another member of the SBPC if there are questions.
- vi. Carr welcomes pro tem members to the SBPC.
- vii. Carr believes that the University community should support increases in endowed scholarships and endowed chairs (especially in Arts and Sciences and professional schools).
- viii. President Baker affirms the importance of these issues, and agreed that Chancellor Nordenberg has done a good job. President Baker intends to continue to address these issues over the coming year via the Senate Matters column of the University Times.
- ix. Carey Balaban asked if there is information concerning the University's salary reduction policy. Carr has no knowledge of such a policy, and reaffirmed his belief that the University is financially healthy. He has not heard of faculty who received less than last year's salary.
- x. Vice President Pinsky asked what groups may be hurt by the under funding of salary issues. Carr responded that some staff at the top of their salary ladder may be receiving no or limited increases. Some employees achieve meritorious ratings, but are negatively affected by salary compression. Some staff achieve wage increases by changing jobs or job classifications.
- xi. Balaban inquired about the possibility of longevity increases. Carr responded that he would like the University administration to provide more data.
- xii. Philip Wion recalled that once in the past, salary caps were set at the University. These were met with significant Senate disapproval. Carr wants to study the issue further and asks President Baker to request data from University administration.
- xiii. President Baker noted that the recent state appropriation was increased 4.5% over the previous year, higher than the expected 4% increase. This had a positive impact on the salary increase pool. President believes the administration is acting very responsibly in these matters.

b Report of Nicholas G. Bircher, Chair Ad hoc Committee on Consumer Satisfaction with UPMC. Nate Hershey, along with John Kozar, Benefits Director, Human Resources, met with representatives of the UPMC Health Plan. Nate proposed a UPMC consumer advocacy program for University employees. He requested a dedicated phone number answered 24 hours a day. The call line would be staffed by a University employee with specific training in the details of the UPMC Health Plan for University of Pittsburgh subscribers. Nate advocated for a single call (by the consumer) problem resolution model, and reported that UPMC has been receptive to this and other matters. Discussions will continue.

c. Report of Senate Vice President Pinsky, Chair, ad hoc Committee for Fitness for Life. This committee has two subcommittees that are addressing risk reduction for faculty and staff. The Health Maintenance subcommittee, chaired by John Jakicic is focusing on stress reduction, weight reduction, and smoking cessation. Associated programs will be rolled out in the future. The Risk Reduction and Management subcommittee is chaired by Lou Kuller. Discussions are progressing well between this committee and the UPMC Health Plan, with details to be released in the future. Pinsky anticipates that these efforts will provide Pitt employees with a state of the art preventive health program.

d. Resources for Enhancing Teaching, Professor Joanne M. Nicoll, Associate Director for Instructional Design and Faculty Development Dr. Nicoll reported on the mission and services offered to faculty by the Center of Instructional Development and Distance Education (CIDDE).

- i. CIDDE's mission is to support instructional excellence and innovation via instructional development, faculty development, and instructional support. CIDDE places a strong emphasis on active learning.
- ii. Five CIDDE instructional designers, each with graduate background in learning theory and instructional design, are available to assist faculty (full-time, part-time and adjunct faculty) develop new courses or revise existing courses; design syllabi; and learn new teaching methods and strategies. Instructional designers are also available to observe teaching, and provide confidential feedback to instructors. CIDDE can assist with both formal and informal classroom assessments of learning, and facilitate the development of faculty teaching portfolios.
- iii. Faculty CIDDE liaisons link programs, departments and schools to CIDDE.
- iv. CIDDE offers workshops each term, an instructional course development summer program, and intensive Blackboard instruction.
- v. CIDDE's Faculty Instructional Develop Lab (FIDL) in Alumni Hall houses instructional technology for faculty use.
- vi. CIDDE is hosting faculty led interdisciplinary book discussions. The current featured book, is: *The Art of Changing the Brain: Enriching the Practice of Teaching by Exploring the Biology of Learning*, by James E. Zull, (2002, Stylus Publishing LLC. The books are funded by Provost's Office funding. In response to a question by John Slimick, representing University of Pittsburgh's Bradford regional campus, Dr. Nicoll offered to work with interested regional campuses to supply books for onsite book discussions. The regional campuses could assist by identifying on-campus faculty facilitators.
- vii. CIDDE hosts multimedia podcasts (M-CASTS) that provide "just-in-time learning" for faculty.
- viii. The CIDDE produced Teaching Times newsletter contains articles written by faculty.
- ix. CIDDE will sponsor the annual Teaching Excellence Fair, November 8, 2006, 9:00 AM- 1:00 PM in Alumni Hall. Presentations will focus on instructional technology and instructional development. In addition, recipients of the Provost's Innovation in Instruction awards will present their work.
- x. CIDDE maintains a library of books on instruction for faculty use. The library is located in Alumni Hall.
- xi. CIDDE's newly designed website offers instructional content, including information concerning peer review.
- xii. Irene Frieze asked about the faculty use of Courseweb (Blackboard). Dr. Nicoll reports that 2/3 of the students use Courseweb. Dr. Baker affirmed the value of Courseweb, and stressed that teaching portfolios are often required for promotion.
- xiii. Dr. Nicoll serves as the contact person for faculty to CIDDE instructional design services (412-624-3335; nicoll@pitt.edu)

5. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by President Baker at 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Cohn,

Secretary

Members attending:

Aaron, Baker, Balaban, Belle, Brush, S. Carr, Cassaro, Chattopadhyay, Close, Cohn, Coley, Constantine, Costantino, Deasy, Flynn, Frieze, Hall, Hansen, Harbert, Hartman, Hayden, Lotze, Molinaro, Muenzer, Olson, Pike, Pinsky, Ross, Skledar, Slimick, Smolinski, Soska, Stoy, Sussman, Weber, Wion, Withiam

Others attending:

Bircher, Brendel, Fedele, Hart, Hershey, Nicoll, Pack