

Provost's Advisory Committee for Women's Concerns Meeting

December 12, 2019

12:00-1:00 p.m.

826 Cathedral of Learning

Present: Julie Bannister (Panther Central), Jennifer Brach (School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Physical Therapy), Sofia Brien (University of Pittsburgh at Bradford and Titusville), Yu Cheng (Arts and Sciences, Statistics), Paula Clemens (Medicine, Neurology), Pam Connelly (Office of Diversity and Inclusion), Ann Cudd (Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor), Jordan Fields (National Pan-Hellenic Council), Cynthia Golden (University Center for Teaching and Learning), Faith Grear (University of Pittsburgh at Bradford), Jacqueline Horrall (University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg), Melanie Hughes (Arts and Sciences, Sociology), Laurie Kirsch (Office of the Provost), Laurel Roberts (Arts and Sciences, Biological Sciences), Jennifer Shang (Katz Graduate School of Business), Brittany Witoslawski (Office of the Provost).

Introduction of PACWC Members

Laurie Kirsch and Pam Connelly, co-chairs, introduced themselves and welcomed the committee. Committee members introduced themselves. Laurie welcomed Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor Ann Cudd, who attended the meeting to provide the charge to PACWC members.

Provost's Charge and Discussion

Provost Cudd briefly introduced herself, and thanked PACWC members for agreeing to serve on the committee. She gave a quick overview of PACWC, which was started in 1983 when it was formed by then-Provost Rhoten Smith. Provost Cudd noted that during the University's history, there have been eight provosts, which include six men and two women.

Provost Cudd also provided some data and information for how the University has changed since 1983 in terms of gender. She noted that in 1983, there were 16,620 female students and 18,993 male students, compared to 18,263 female students and 15,481 male students in 2019. Additionally, for graduate students, female graduate students outnumber male graduate students when comparing 2019 to 1983.

Provost Cudd further noted that senior leadership has shown changes in gender representation. For deans and campus presidents, in 1983 the breakdown was 89% male and 11% female, compared to 50% male and 50% female in 2019. Additionally, officers of the University (positions who are elected by the Board of Trustees), were 11 men in 1983, compared to 7 men and 6 women in 2019. For department and division chairs, in 1996 there were 96 male chairs and 17 female chairs, compared to 97 male chairs and 23 female chairs in 2019. Provost Cudd observed that it was interesting to see the changes were large at the senior leadership levels, but not yet at the departmental level.

Provost Cudd added that her leadership team is reviewing data from the COACHE survey of full-time faculty, particularly to find differences by gender and race, diversity views, and more.

Provost Cudd stated that she would like committee members to review the mission of PACWC and consider whether PACWC should be re-envisioned more broadly in terms of diversity and inclusion. She added that PACWC could look into what are the main struggles for the University going forward, in terms of gender, LGBTQ, racial issues, and more. Provost Cudd noted that PACWC might still look into women's concerns, but also consider other identities and other areas of diversity. She asked PACWC to consider whether it was time for the committee to broaden its original mission, and include a focus on those who are marginalized, exploring how PACWC could be a force for diversity and inclusion across the University.

Provost Cudd asked committee members to share their initial thoughts and ideas on possible changes to PACWC's mission. Jen Brach asked if there are other existing committees at Pitt that focus on diversity and inclusion. Pam responded that there is a University Senate committee called EIADAC, or Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Advocacy Committee, which is very active, and that PACWC may want to coordinate efforts with them. Pam added that there are diversity committees at each school, a transgender working group, the Title IX Office, and Board of Trustees' committees. Jen noted that PACWC might not want to step on other committees' toes, to which Provost Cudd replied that she is focusing efforts on diversity and inclusion, but that there is not currently an advisory committee to the Provost in this area. Provost Cudd stated that there could be a role for an umbrella organization in an effort to create solidarity, and Laurie added that there could be a communication vehicle added between committees to formalize that role.

Melanie Hughes noted that they could consider organizations designed to focus on women that have been grappling with diversity and inclusion. She added that one possibility was to rebrand the committee by thinking intersectionally, not just women, but in terms of gender identity, race, etc. Melanie noted that this would be consistent with moves over time for gender equity where you cannot examine gender by itself, and then you can more explicitly include other marginalization. Laurel Roberts noted that a committee with an expanded focus could serve as an advisory committee on the campus environment.

Provost Cudd agreed that she has seen this shift towards intersectionality, such as the shift from women's studies programs to women, gender, and sexuality studies programs, which has been a positive experience. She asked committee members if there would be a need for multiple committees, but noted there could be a downside to this. Melanie replied that there is a benefit to having both kinds of spaces, especially those who are marginalized. She added that PACWC has been a leader in general, and noted that if PACWC could be in competition with other concerns, and could drop work being done. Jackie Horrall noted that if the decision is to broaden PACWC's focus, then focus could be ensured by implementing specific subgroups with specific focuses in order to continue the broader mission.

Provost Cudd charged the committee with exploring broadening PACWC's mission in its capacity as an advisory committee to the Provost, how to make it clear that the Provost is concerned about diversity and inclusion, and to work with others in these roles to do so. Laurie added that PACWC can have a facilitator help committee members think things through, since the University has changed a lot since 1983, and how to best support the Provost's goals.

Provost Updates from April Luncheon

Provost Cudd provided a brief update to PACWC members on the recommendations presented to her at last April's luncheon. She appreciates the committee's feedback about surfacing concerns among women, such as lactation rooms. This is helpful for her to know as she works with senior leaders to improve the campuses for all. She added that she is continuing to look into concerns about the limited childcare facilities on campus, which she is in monthly discussions with Carnegie Mellon University about in order to identify a solution. Provost Cudd noted that this is not fast to resolve, but conversations are continuing as the lack of childcare facilities have been an issue of concern.

Continuing Discussion

After Provost Cudd departed for another meeting, PACWC members briefly continued their discussion of the Provost's charge, which will continue in future meetings. Laurie announced that there was cake to thank Pam for her service and dedication as co-chair of PACWC for the past several years, given her upcoming departure from Pitt. PACWC members expressed their appreciation to Pam for her dedication and support over the years.

Announcements

Laurie said that she will be in touch with PACWC members after winter recess with future meeting dates to be held over the lunch hour, and how to best move forward with Provost Cudd's charge to the committee for this year. Pam noted that Katie Pope from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion will be at future PACWC meetings after her departure.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:48 p.m.