

Provost's Advisory Committee for Women's Concerns Meeting

February 25, 2019

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

826 Cathedral of Learning

Present: Julie Bannister (Panther Central), Yu Cheng (Arts and Sciences, Statistics), Paula Clemens (Medicine, Neurology), Pam Connelly (Office of Diversity and Inclusion), Cynthia Golden (University Center for Teaching and Learning), Jacqueline Horrall (University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg), Melanie Hughes (Arts and Sciences, Sociology), Laurie Kirsch (Office of the Provost), Nancy Niemczyk (Nursing, Health Promotion and Development), Kristine Ojala (Graduate and Professional Student Government), Jessica Sun (University Center for International Studies), Brittany Witoslawski (Office of the Provost).

Welcome and Introductions

Laurie Kirsch and Pam Connelly, co-chairs, introduced themselves and welcomed the committee. Committee members introduced themselves.

Minutes

Laurie asked for a motion from committee members to approve the meeting minutes of November 26, 2018. The motion was made, seconded, and approved.

Overview of Existing Resources and Benefits for Parents at Pitt

Laurie welcomed three guests to the meeting, who attended to provide an overview of existing resources and benefits for parents at Pitt, as well as to answer any questions PACWC members may have. The three guests are Melissa Kluchurosky from the Office of Human Resources, Jennifer Walker from the Office of the Provost, and Victoria Lancaster from the Office of Faculty Records.

Melissa provided an overview of benefits that are available to staff parents at Pitt, which are divided into three categories: for the employee, for the employee and their baby, and for the employee and their family. Melissa distributed a handout (attached) to PACWC members detailing these benefits, which include medical/dental/vision coverage, an onsite clinic, health coaching, the Life Solutions employee assistance program, educational benefits, paid parental leave, the UPMC maternity program, the University Child Development Center (UCDC), on-campus lactation rooms, and more. Melissa also handed out flyers on the Life Solutions program and the UPMC maternity program (also attached). Melissa noted that there is a waitlist for the UCDC, which is open to the University community for children ages six weeks to five years.

Laurie asked what resources and benefits are available to staff on the regional campuses, which Melissa noted is handled with the Human Resources directors at each campus. Regional campuses have on-campus wellness specialists, but do not yet have wellness centers like the Pittsburgh campus does, but there are discussions underway of how to implement telemedicine at each campus. Melissa added that the regional campuses have nurses on campus who are able to

see staff and faculty. Nancy Niemczyk noted that there might be opportunities with these initiatives to partner with nursing students. Melissa replied that there are similar partnerships in place with the School of Pharmacy.

Jennifer provided an overview of benefits available to graduate students and distributed a handout (attached) summarizing these benefits and resources. Jennifer noted that a parenting panel is held annually for graduate and professional students, during which several representatives from various offices on campus and UPMC present benefits information to these students. Jennifer added that students were also welcome to bring their children to this panel. Jennifer mentioned that there are accommodation guidelines in place for graduate student parents, and that schools are responsible for managing this process. Eligible students are allowed a six week parental accommodation period, and birth mothers may be granted additional accommodation time based on doctor's advice.

Jennifer noted that there are also guidelines in place for postdoctoral associates and scholars. Eligible postdocs are allotted four weeks of paid parental leave for a non-birthing parent, and either six weeks of paid parental leave for the birth mother for a non-surgical delivery or eight weeks of paid parental leave a surgical delivery. Jennifer added that a number of individuals continue to receive benefits during this time based on what their classification is (e.g. teaching fellows or assistants, etc.), and others may continue to receive benefits depending on their funding agency's rules.

Jennifer added that the most salient issue for graduate student parents is childcare, referring to the lengthy waitlist for the UCDC. PACWC members noted that there are other nearby childcare facilities such as the Children's Center of Pittsburgh, the Carriage House, and the JCC. Jennifer noted there are several other resources that are available to graduates students, which include the lactation rooms on campus, the YWCA Early Learning Resource Center, the University Counseling Center, and the PACWC website.

Jessica Sun asked if there is any data available on student parents at Pitt, in order to better understand their needs. Jennifer replied that they track the students that attend the parenting panels, but there is not an easy way to track any data on student parents. She also noted that there was interest for student parents to connect with other student parents, for which a distribution list was created but has not yet been utilized. Laurie asked if there are any concerns or wish list items for student parents – Jennifer noted that childcare is the largest issue, but that students were happy with the policies that are in place for students.

Victoria provided an overview of benefits and resources that are available to faculty parents at Pitt, noting that a number of these benefits are the same as what were mentioned earlier for staff, such as the medical/dental/vision and education benefits. Victoria noted that eligible faculty have a different policy for medical and family leaves, known as the Faculty Medical and Family Leave (FMFL) policy. Under the FMFL policy, the birth mother is eligible for six to eight weeks of paid medical leave, and additionally, both parents are eligible for four weeks of paid family leave. The four weeks of paid family leave can be taken any time within a year of the birth or adoption.

Additionally, tenure stream faculty (both parents, for birth and adoption) can request that the academic year in which the leave is taken not be counted as a year towards mandatory tenure review. Nancy noted that some research funds could also be extended, upon request, due to birth or adoption. Victoria distributed the “Family-Friendly Programs for Pitt Faculty” brochure, available [here](#), which also provides a brief overview of benefits and resources for Pitt faculty. PACWC members asked how faculty teaching loads are handled during these leaves. Laurie replied that these are handled at the school level in the deans’ offices.

Updates from Subcommittees

The subcommittee that completed local benchmarking of resources and benefits for parents provided updates. The subcommittee chair, Julie Bannister, reported that they looked into four topics: lactation rooms, child development, parental leaves, and other concerns/discussion. Julie noted that Pitt posts the location of lactation rooms on the Pittsburgh campus on the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) website, and noted that one of the locations is open 24/7. PACWC members asked how regional campuses are accommodated for lactation rooms since none are listed on ODI’s website. Jackie Horrall noted that there were not any at the Greensburg campus, so PACWC members noted that this is a topic to explore. Julie noted that Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) listed lactation rooms on their website, but none are 24/7; Duquesne University has nothing posted online; and Indiana University of Pennsylvania has lactation rooms available. PACWC members asked what the factors are for having a 24/7 lactation room available, and that this would be looked into.

In terms of child development, Julie noted that Seton Hill University and Saint Vincent College both have child development options, and that both programs are similar to Pitt’s. Julie further noted that Seton Hill’s services are open to the community, but that they hold spaces that are allotted to their employees. For parental leaves, CMU’s policy is similar to Pitt’s and they also work with UPMC. Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s policy is more complex – it allots 20 working days but also has information relating to children with disabilities, which was unique. Other concerns were in regards to the UCDC waitlist length, and expressing an interest in having more family-oriented events at locations such as Phipps Conservatory or local museums, along with a Facebook community to plan or share such events. PACWC members noted that infant years are the most difficult to find coverage for, noting that this is primarily due to a shortage of childcare that is in high demand, along with the increased staffing needs at such childcare centers. PACWC also wondered if the Life Solutions program is able to provide childcare referrals, or if there are legal issues with such referrals. PACWC members noted that care.com is a good resource for finding childcare.

The subcommittee that compiled articulation of issues that Pitt parents face also provided an update. The subcommittee has plans in place to solicit information from colleagues on what issues parents face, and will report later on that. Jessica read some literature on parental leave policies, and noted that one book stated that there should be clear difference on policies for each faculty, staff, and students given the different issues each group faces. Jessica reported that policies play an important role, but that it was equally or more important to have an encouraging and supportive culture for parents. Jessica also reported that literature shows that men do not typically use the full amount of parental leave that they are entitled to, with men noting that

either they do not need the full leave or that they do not want to be perceived as slacking if they utilize their parental leave. PACWC members inquired how this scenario plays out at Pitt – Laurie noted that for faculty, men and women equally use parental leave, and for staff this is unknown.

Melanie Hughes noted that faculty should be sensitive to graduate students' needs, but it is not always clear how to best accommodate their students. Melanie noted that there are often informal mechanisms that can be used to assist students, but she was not aware of resources for faculty to provide to students. Melanie and other PACWC members suggested that best practices being shared could help immensely. Jessica mentioned a case study about paid leaves at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that may provide some helpful information.

Laurie reminded PACWC members about preparing for the upcoming luncheon with the Provost, noting that it would be good to compile a summary of what PACWC has found, as well as possible recommendations. Laurie mentioned that maybe a central resource could help, working to strengthen the culture for parents at Pitt, and sharing best or successful practices.

Announcements

Laurie noted that PACWC has received ten nominations for the “Spotlight on Women Leaders” program to-date. She noted that PACWC members would be asked to review the nominations at a later date.

Laurie reminded PACWC members that they are invited to attend “A Celebration of Newly Promoted Women Faculty” on Wednesday, March 6 from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. in 2500 Posvar Hall. The “Celebration” is sponsored by PACWC, which will feature an outstanding group of panelists and promises to be a terrific discussion about academic careers and career progression.

Laurie and Pam suggested scheduling an additional meeting in March in order to prepare a summary of the subcommittees' work and to think about recommendations for the meeting with the Provost.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.