

University Staff Senate Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Location: Governor's Room, Overman Student Center, Pittsburg State University

Time: 1:30 PM

Call to Order

President Eva Sager called the meeting to order at 1:30PM.

Roll Call and Confirmation of Quorum

Quorum was confirmed by voice vote and attendance was recorded by sign-ins. The attendance list is attached to these minutes.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Previous minutes were approved by the Senate by unanimous consent.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Thomas Newsom, President, Pittsburg State University

Dr. Thomas Newsom, President of Pittsburg State University, gave an update on campus operations and initiatives.

Dr. Newsom announced a partnership with IGNITE Academy in Arkansas, which will provide 10 full scholarships for IGNITE students to attend Pittsburg State. Dr. Newsom described IGNITE as a secondary-level program similar in structure to the Crossland College of Technology, plus Nursing and Healthcare tracks. A formal partnership with IGNITE in Nursing/Healthcare is in development.

Dr. Newsom has been conducting a listening tour of campus; he has completed about 90% of meetings with the academic areas by date of these minutes. Staff employed within academic areas were invited to attend those meetings, but scheduling conflicts and communications difficulties prevented this on occasion. Dr. Newsom is now continuing these tours on the staff side; meetings with Registrar's, Financial Assistance, and financial areas are already complete, and a meeting with OSC staff is next. Dr. Newsom finds it important to know how Pittsburg State works and functions, and he feels that getting to know the staff and faculty will effect that goal. Dr. Newsom also finds that tours will help him to better understand requests to him, and to champion various causes.

Dr. Newsom has been looking into the ability of all employees to have an advocate/ombudsman outside their direct supervisory chain. Dr. Bon will serve in that role for faculty, Karl Stumo for students, and Doug Ball for staff. Each will communicate concerns to Dr. Newsom. Dr. Newsom emphasized the importance of shared governance between staff, faculty, and students, and said leadership will ensure channels exist for all groups to be heard.

Dr. Newsom reported that university leadership expects state funding for the university to decrease next year. The legislature is considering a ~5% reduction in the state budget overall, and higher education may face greater cuts. Dr. Newsom reported that Pittsburg State can be positioned to absorb governmental funding reductions with minor changes, and that remaining needs could be addressed through enrollment growth and targeted initiatives.

A revised strategic plan will be released in the coming months. Dr. Newsom plans to condense the current plan into about 3–5 pillars, each with a few initiatives. Departments and colleges will develop unit plans that align with the overall strategic plan.

Dr. Newsom then introduced Access Pittstate. Access Pittstate is an upcoming initiative designed to help people across our region (including students, teachers, companies, researchers, and professionals) access the University, with the ultimate aim of supporting workforce needs. Aspects of the plan will include campaigns to build scholarship funds, development of workforce development programs, and work with legislative partners to keep Pittstate graduates employed in Kansas post-graduation.

Dr. Newsom answered questions from senators. Of major interest: recycling is still being collected on campus; due to challenges at SEK Recycling, materials are being stored while Pittsburg State works with alternative recycling partners, if/as needed.

Shared Governance Report

Faculty Senate

University leadership is proposing a change to the times at which classes will be scheduled, starting in AY 2026–2027. Dr. Bon is leading the rollout measures to judge stakeholders' reactions to the plans. Staff Senate was provided with a summary document describing the changes on behalf of the Faculty Senat.

Student Government: Eva Sager

Eva Sager provided report on behalf of members. Members attending national conference in Orlando. Hosted Trunk or Treat at Bicknell in October. Gearing up for fee season

University Leadership: Emily McElwain

Wednesday is November KBOR meeting, held virtually. All-campus holiday gathering on 12/10 2-4pm, with a community event later. Cabinet (VPs and a few other key people) and Leadership Council (old cabinet members and other direct reports to Dr Newsom including Stu Hite Bartlow and Wes S...) both exist. Mary L is joining the office of the president as XA with expanding functions, including supervising student workers and managing crossland house. Looking for more student workers.

Human Resources Report

Rachel Reardon provided a report. All staff who work on Veterans' Day should read the job aid available on HR's website regarding time reporting. Employees should also note that timecards for the pay period ending on November 21 are due at 4:00PM on that Friday, not on the following Monday as usual.

Holiday time reporting information will be available on HR's website and as an informational bulletin in the Pittstate Daily.

The Orientation Report is attached to these minutes.

Employee Initiative Teams (EIT)

- Kudos/Recognition: Food trucks are coming to campus in the Spring, likely to Gorilla Village. There is a pop-in popcorn appreciation day on December 3, 2025;

there will be two opportunities to receive popcorn on that day, one in CCoT and one in Crossroads.

- Professional Development: the next meeting is set with member and is on the calendar for January 2026.
- Onboarding/Offboarding: the next meeting is set with member and is on the calendar for January 2026.
- Employee Wellness: no report.
- Performance Management: the performance management form will be reevaluated once changes to the strategic plan are finalized and published.

Cabinet Update

Presidents' Report

Minutes from the Regents' meeting were attached to the paper copy of the present meeting's agenda. Of note: federal executive orders have been of major concern on other campuses, but they haven't yet majorly affected Pittstate's operations.

Information regarding the President's meeting info was attached to the paper copy of the present meeting's agenda. Of note: the campus search process is being modified to ensure that secure lines of funding exist such that hired positions are not eventually let go due to lack of continuous funding.

Faculty Senate is considering changing course schedules such that each class can be offered Monday-Wednesday, Wednesday-Friday, or Tuesday-Thursday for 75 minutes per week each. This is to increase classroom utilization and to provide larger breaks between classes for students with classes off main campus.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Libby Graham wished to poll the Senate regarding using applicable Senate funds to provide cookies/beverages at the next meeting on December 10, 2025. By plurality vote, the Senate approved funding the purchase of coffee and hot chocolate for the December 10 meeting.

Committee Reports

Professional Development Day (Eva Sager/HR)

The committee plans to schedule a meeting before winter break.

Satisfaction Survey (Michael Woodrum)

The committee met once and is working to schedule next meeting. Reports from the surveys have been submitted to committee members for review.

Parking Committee (Stephanie Willis and Heather Busch)

No report.

Board of Governors (Donna Jacobs)

All information was covered in other reports.

Sustainability

No update.

Old Business

The Senate needs up to four more senators to fill vacant seats. Interested candidates should reach out to a member of the Executive Team for further information and consideration. The Executive Team provided information about senators' responsibilities and surveyed the bylaws of the senate.

Bookmarks were provided at the September meeting for review of the Senate. These bookmarks were proposed to be provided to new staff members upon onboarding. By plurality vote, the Senate approved funding the procurement and distribution of bookmarks to newly hired University staff members.

New Business and Questions

Senators discussed the viability of procuring buttons or ribbons for University nametags to identify staff senators more readily. The Senate plans to revisit this topic at a later meeting.

Sarah Moon was appointed to lead a subcommittee to work on the Staff Senate display case outside of the University Post Office in Whitesitt Hall. The display case needs to be updated and must include a new plaque of Staff Senate presidents; this plaque must be similar in nature and appearance to the current one in the display case that shows past USS Senate presidents. Amber Hames was appointed to serve as a member of this subcommittee; additional interested senators were encouraged to reach out to Sarah via email.

Heather Busch is serving on an artificial intelligence (AI) campus task force. She encouraged senators to reach out to her to let her know what they need from Pittstate regarding AI. Various senators expressed possible concerns.

Good of the Order

The next Senate meeting is Wednesday, December 10, 2025, at 1:30PM in the Meadowlark Room, Overman Student Center, Pittsburg State University.

Adjournment

President Eva Sager adjourned the meeting at 2:28PM.

The above minutes were prepared by Secretary Thomas Smith and were submitted to the Senate for approval at their December 10, 2025 regular meeting.