



# PSU-KNEA Communicator

## Greetings and Happy Holidays

Colleagues,

It is hard to believe that the semester is over! This achievement of the conclusion of the Fall semester is a testament to your hard work and dedication. You have done so under the most dire of circumstances, this pandemic. Dr. Howard Smith thanked all of you at last week's Faculty Senate meeting, again proving that your efforts have not gone unnoticed.

This has been a rough year for all of us, but I am proud of what we have achieved on behalf of the faculty. We secured a one-year contract and postponed the negotiations on the three year contract till next year. Our team is currently reaching out to the Administration for resumption of the negotiations.

I have been involved with the plans for returning to campus and have always fought for the rights of the faculty in determining their method of delivery. I also was adamant about offering online CTLT training for faculty who could not attend such training Face to Face, the training carried a \$500 stipend.

In February, all faculty will get their OST (Out of State Travel) allocation, either in cash or in Professional Development Funds, depending on which option you chose.

Also, I have had conversations with the Provost regarding this year's performance appraisal. The Provost understands that the expectations for this year's performance appraisal have to be tempered and allowances made for faculty who could not meet the expectations outlined in their goals.

I wish you all Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year. Stay safe.

Khamis Siam, Ph.D

President, PSU-KNEA

## Contract Ratification

Under the direction of Tim Thomas, lead negotiator for PSU-KNEA, the Bargaining Team worked diligently throughout the 2019-2020 academic year to negotiate important benefits for FY 2021. On August 28th, 2020 the Unit voted to ratify a one year extension to the existing three year contract, with negotiated changes, including a zero percent raise.

## Spring Elections

PSU-KNEA held its annual elections in the spring of 2020. You can find your PSU-KNEA officers and other committee members on the website of the Provost and Academic Vice President under PSU-KNEA<sup>1</sup>. Currently, there are two vacancies on the PSU-KNEA Bargaining Team. Faculty who wish to get involved are encouraged to contact PSU-KNEA Treasurer, Dr. Phil Rudd.

## Flexible Teaching Arrangements

PSU-KNEA advocated for faculty in the unit with respect to adjusting teaching formats and schedules in the wake of current events. The position of PSU-KNEA is that faculty have the right to determine delivery format in addition to course content, according to space availability and in the best interests of both faculty and students. For faculty wishing to attend, the Center for Teaching and Learning Technology has offered training and assistance with the transition of courses to an on-line, hybrid, hi-flex and other formats. Faculty received \$500 to attend this training. In addition, PSU-KNEA worked to ensure that Unit faculty were given the choice to take contractual Out of State Travel dollars as salary or as professional development dollars, with the requirement that those dollars be spent by the end of FY 2021.

## The State of Our Nation's Schools

2020 seems like good time to review the Congressionally mandated annual report on the state of our schools, including postsecondary institutions. To do so, visit The Condition of Education 2020<sup>2</sup> at the National Center for Education Statistics. To view statistics for Pittsburg State University, visit the

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.pittstate.edu/office/provost/knea/index.html>

<sup>2</sup><https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2020144>

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System<sup>3</sup>. Finally, for salary information, visit What's Up or Down with Faculty Salaries?<sup>4</sup> as prepared by your faculty association, the National Education Association.

## Academic Freedom

Academic freedom remains a critical issue for university faculty in 2020. In a sometimes contentious environment, PSU-KNEA has held fast to its support of the right of unit faculty to determine not only manner of course delivery, but the content of their courses as well. Congratulations to the faculty of Pitt State, and to all of our students as well, for a job well done!

## PSU-KNEA Shared Leave Pool

The executive committee of PSU-KNEA wants to remind to donate hours to the shared leave pool for members of the Unit. You can find the form at Human Resources Services<sup>5</sup>. The executive committee meets the first Monday of every month.

Newsletter Prepared by Browyn K. Conrad, PhD; PSU-KNEA 1st Vice President

Photo Credit: Sam Clausen; University Marketing and Communications; Pittsburg State University.

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<sup>3</sup><https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/find-your-college>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.nea.org/resource-library/professional-pay-higher-education>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.pittstate.edu/hr/index.html>