

## ASEF-PSOM EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

### MINUTES

Virtual and in person Monday, January 8, 2024

12:00pm – 1:30 pm

Wood Room (John Morgan Building) and Zoom

The meeting was called to order by Paul Lanken at 12:04 p.m.  
An attendance sheet was passed around for people to sign in.

#### Attendees:

1. Ana Lia Obaid
2. Arberetta Bowles (Admin)
3. Fran Barg
4. Fred Henretig-on line
5. Jana Alrayes (Admin)
6. Janice Bellace
7. Jeff Fields
8. Joan Von Feldt
9. Joel Greenberg
10. John Hansen-Flaschen
11. Judith McKenzie
12. Judi Aronchick
13. Melpo Christofidou-Solomidou
14. Paul Lanken
15. Peter Wilding
16. Priscilla Duncan (Admin)
17. Steve Sondheimer
18. Susan Heyner
19. Vicky Mulhern

**Absent:** Lesley Carson, Yvonne Paterson, Iris Reyes, Erin Rossello

1. **Minutes from last (December 2023) meeting** – There was a request for approval seconded by another Council member. All approved. No objections

2. **Report and announcements by President, ASEF (Paul Lanken):** PASEF council has 2 at large members from the med school (Ana and Brian) and will be rotating

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off after 4 years. Mitch put Paul on the nominating committee and Paul was asked for ASEF retirees to consider PASEF and he asked Ana for criteria to use to replace them. The suggestion is for someone ideally who knows how the system works. Paul welcomed the suggestions of the Council and wanted some diversity, since there are few women. Paul asked Gail Morrison and she said that would be great, as she will be retiring in a year. The committee also wanted nominees who would be agreeable and talented to serve as president in the future. They wanted a list of several possible nominees. Another possible person could be Harvey Rubin (Faculty Senate president with School of Engineering). Janice commented that it is not much work unless you are the President. Ana-Lia commented it is important to have people with experience. Peter commented that when he was president and went to the PASEF meetings, it was not easy to get people to commit and come to all the PASEF meetings and work for the council especially after they retire.

**Regarding the reception in May:** Paul met with Lisa Bellini. He wanted to make sure that Lisa and all ASEF Council attendees can attend the reception for this year's retirees (Addendum: This was originally scheduled for May 7, 2024 but now rescheduled for May 6, 2024 (4-6 PM)). Last year Laura Perna had attended. She has it on her agenda and she will be speaking (confirmed by Arberetta). Paul asked if anyone from Pathology and Lab Medicine for example is retiring this year, if we should ask the respective Chair to attend. Similarly, we could ask other Department chairs to attend. The faculty affairs people could also be invited. Previously the department chairs were invited if there were retirees from their department.

**Annual report:** Lisa Bellini asked that we initiate providing an annual report so she can use it in her annual report to the PSOM and UPHS leadership. Peter commented that traditionally the president has made a report when the dean

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presents his report and asked Paul if he has done this with the senate. So that report was recorded. The idea for the tradition of a report has been around. JHF commented that it would be great to invite Lisa Bellini to one of our meetings. Paul commented that she will come to the reception in May.

**3. Report and announcements by President, PASEF (Janice):** Janice stated that PASEF has a representative on the University's Personnel Benefits Committee. It is supposed to meet monthly, but meetings are often cancelled. However, it does give PASEF access to the HR person who heads Benefits. When a PASEF member contacts the PASEF office and mentions a problem, PASEF can follow up on it. She noted two recent issues.

A retired faculty member noted the very high premium increases for the John Hancock long term care insurance. HR Benefits replied that this person is grandfathered, the current provider is Genworth, but Genworth also has increased premiums sharply. Penn has no other option. No other companies are willing to offer LTC insurance. Janice observed that this is an industry-wide problem. The insurance companies who offered long term care 20 years ago all underestimated the cost. The premiums went up significantly since. Janice offered to share the article which is in the WSJ. Peter commented that if the insurance company goes bankrupt, the money you paid over the years for long term care will be lost.

Another person mentioned difficulty in receiving any reimbursement following the purchase of hearing aids. It turned out that the problem was due to Highmark's failure to understand the Penn hearing aid benefit. In this case, the person had contacted Health Advocate (which Penn uses) and Health Advocate had been very helpful. She shared that the hearing aid benefit is relatively new. The university reimburses up to \$4,000 for a hearing aid once

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every 3 years. Please find relevant information on Hearing Aid Coverage here:

<https://www.hr.upenn.edu/PennHR/benefits-pay/health-life-and-fsa/health/medical-plan-options/hearing-aid-coverage#:~:text=In%20July%202021%2C%20Penn%20added,more%20than%20every%20three%20years.>

Janice concluded by mentioning some of the upcoming PASEF programs: February 29 -- on hearing aids; March 26 -- Estate planning session focused on faculty who have people with special needs in their family; April 9 - - Olivia Mitchell will be speaking on longevity awareness and financial decision making in later life.

#### **4. Reports by Chairs of ASEF Standing Committees**

##### **a. Lunch Talks and Other Lectures Committee – Chair, Judith Aronchick;**

discussion of future speakers for Lunch Talks: Jan 24<sup>th</sup> lecture on “Food as Medicine initiative” by Kevin Volpp; February 29<sup>th</sup>, we have Steve Treat who will talk to us about on how retirement impacts our relationships. He will talk on “Opportunities and challenges for personal growth and relationships in retirement”. Steve is a very skilled marriage and family therapist and specialized in counseling physicians and other professionals. He is retired now. On March 18<sup>th</sup> we have the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vicky Mulhern honorary lecture by Robert Vonderheide on “20 year transformation of cancer care and research”. There was a discussion if this should be hybrid or in person only. The feeling is to have it hybrid because retirees may be away for winter but for special events perhaps just have it in person. It can be recorded so people can see it later. Peter commented that at last now that COVID is still going on, perhaps hybrid is the best option. Vicky commented that her son and family observed the presentation remotely last year who could not

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attend in person. A lot of people beyond ASEF, who were interested in the subject, could hear it. We need to advertise and make sure people know about it. There was a question about wearing a mask and what the mandate is at Penn. Janice commented regarding recording the lecture that we can use zoom or zoom webinar as it works better and you can see the speaker rather than having multiple small squares. Judith also mentioned 2 outings coming up: a) at the Academy of Vocal Arts (AVA) on March 8<sup>th</sup> which includes a presentation and b) on May 15<sup>th</sup> to go to the Lazaretto. JHF also mentioned that there is an outing to the Lantern theater on Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>. There will be a performance for mainly ASEF/PASEF members. People can go to the website and get the info from the poster with the discount code. People should register on the ASEF site. Arberetta asked if we have received the invoice for Lazaretto. Paul said they had not.

- b. **Newsletter Committee – Chair, John Hansen-Flaschen:** JHF had hoped the first issue of the newsletter would be distributed on January 1<sup>st</sup>. However, as JHF mentioned, you need to have a specially designed template to preserve formatting across many computer screens. Either you use an existing design or make a new one. JHF did not like the 2 that he was given by the SOM development office because they could not accommodate 3 distinct features he wanted: Firstly, our newsletter has a banner on the top of page 1 and the templates did not account for something like this. Secondly, we have headings and the template did not allow for that. Thirdly, we also have photos. So the 3 criteria were not met by the 2 templates. JHF asked Arberetta to find ways to get this up and running and see how to identify alternatives to using this especially since a lot of work went into this. Arberetta commented that short term, we can email the newsletter. We can also work with their designed template and get someone to produce templates for us. Arberetta mentioned we paid a

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designer intern \$100 and they created some templates for us to choose. Peter mentioned that we need to warn members that Safari may not work so he had to switch to Google Chrome. So, it is important to use a certain browser in order to better access the newsletter. Janice confirmed that for watching certain videos of recorded lectures, she had to use a certain browser (Google chrome, Firefox, Safari, etc). Paul mentioned that JHF and Arberetta have made an official University of Pennsylvania account for donations, which will be mentioned in the newsletter. A poster will still be made for the AVA outing and the rest.

- c. **Website Committee – Chair, Joel Greenberg:** The web site is in good shape. It has not changed a lot. Joel asked if we are archiving the minutes. Susan said that she has all archived meeting minutes from past years. We can go back 5 years and upload them. Arberetta commented that if the archived minutes are in binders as hard copies, we will not be scanning them. We would need them to be electronic. Arberetta commented that we recovered all minutes of the past 5 years and we have all, if not most minutes so we are in good shape. Joel also commented that there are other members on the committee (Steve and Jeff), and they need to meet to discuss certain issues on how to post certain posters for upcoming talks. Currently they are at the bottom of the page. When you open the site you don't see the announcements. Janice made a comment that the PASEF web site is well organized. We can use that model. JHF made a suggestion: we could have a photographic banner at the top of the page or, have a ribbon with photographs of us, that is, happy faces of us! We can also show pictures from our events and show people in the audience. Janice commented that it is a public event and no written consent is needed.
- d. **Special Events (includes the Joint Spring Reception for Retirees with PASEF and events, like trips to museums or other venues) – Chair, Yvonne**

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**Paterson:** Yvonne was not present so Paul commented that we have the May 7<sup>th</sup> Spring reception (Tuesday) and we hope many will attend. We ask retirees for a Bio paragraph and photo. Once in the room there will be a slide show during the event featuring each new retiree. Paul will ask our Council to help get this information. Jeff Fields commented that they usually divide up this work and it gets done efficiently.

#### 5. Reports from Ad hoc Committees:

- a. **Committee to Revise Bylaws:** Fran (chair), Yvonne and Arberetta: Fran commented on revised bylaws: They are almost ready to share except for one issue: Do the revised bylaws have to be approved just by this Council or by all members at large? Jeff Fields commented that in the past, just small details were changed in the bylaws when Yvonne was president and the procedure was to send it out to ALL ASEF and set a deadline. Paul asked then what happened? Do we count majority? Arberetta read the bylaws during the meeting and the new bylaws currently state that they must only be sent to the voting Council members at least 3 weeks before the meeting at which they will be voted and need 2/3 majority to pass. So, just the Council members get to see them and vote on them. Arberetta commented that if someone wanted this to be revised, they could make a comment.
- b. **Community Outreach committee (Fred Henretig, chair)** (to identify and develop opportunities for outreach to the local community, including health education, clinical work, and non-health education): Fred joined the meeting online. He reviewed the past meeting notes with all listed potential opportunities such as underserved high school students in Philadelphia, etc. He said he has not made any significant progress due to the holidays, but he will follow up with people he met in the past, to revisit the role to which ASEF members may play a role. Opportunities have been identified and we will continue following up. Paul recommended to wait for

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the survey results to see how many people are interested to volunteer (membership engagement).

- c. **Membership Engagement committee (Fran)** (to develop a survey of ASEF members regarding possible new ASEF-sponsored activities to provide opportunities for more engagement by ASEF members and for building relationships and connection among those with similar interests, such as a book club, as well as to assess their interest in volunteering for work in local community): Fran said that we have 106 responses to the survey. So far, the most popular is bird watching. The survey will be sent out again to the listserv. Fran commented that by the next meeting we should have the full report. Some people need to take charge of each group. Some members commented they had never received the survey. Paul commented that if you have not received it, to notify him or Arberetta.

#### 6. List of Members of Committees (Paul Lanken):

Note<sup>1</sup>: Please review the following List of Members of ASEF Committees and let Paul know of corrections and additions.

Note<sup>2</sup>: Council members are welcome to join any committee.

- a. Lunch Talks and Other Lectures Committee (see Notes – Chair, Judith Aronchick. Other Members: Lesley Carson, Iris Reyes, Paul Lanken.
- b. Newsletter Committee – Chair, John Hansen-Flaschen, Other Members: Judith Aronchick, Arberetta Bowles, Melpo Christofidou-Solomidou, Fred Henretig, Susan Heyner, Judith Mckenzie, Steve Sondheimer, Joan Von Feldt.
- c. Website Committee – Chair, Joel Greenberg, Other Members: Jeff Field, Peter Wilding, Paul Lanken, John HF, Steve Sondheimer, Lesley Carson: Paul commented that we need to include the “in memoriam” on both our website and the newsletter. JHF commented that the newsletter is just 200



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words and can provide the link to our website's "in memoriam". Steve said he looked at the PASEF website and took out all deceased faculty from the SOM and added them to our website. Paul commented that Leslie Carson, as a geriatrician, will monitor the Resources section since she may have good resources on long term care, healthy aging and issues related to dementia. Etc.

- d. Special Events Committee – Chair, Yvonne Paterson. Other Members: Peter Wilding, Susan Heyner, Paul Lanken
- e. Committee to Revise Bylaws – Chair, Fran Barg. Other Members: Yvonne Paterson, Arberetta Bowles, John HF
- f. Community Outreach ad hoc Committee – Chair, Fred Henretig. Other Members, Judith Mckenzie, Iris Reyes, Ana Lia Obaid, Paul Lanken, Joan von Feldt
- g. Membership Engagement ad hoc Committee: Chair, Fran Barg. Other Members: Steve Sondheimer, Paul Lanken
- h. Nominating Committee: Chair – John HF, members Yvonne Paterson, Paul Lanken.

7. **Other Business:** Please stay in Wood Room after meeting for our January Social Gathering – Thanks for Priscilla, Arberetta, and Susan for organizing this get-together.

#### **General comments:**

- Janice commented that they completed the revised Hitchhiker's guide. The Guide is sitting with General Counsel. It was revised for FIAP. She will send it to Pricilla to upload as soon as it is approved.

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- JHF commented that there is an App for a self-administered hearing test (MiMi). It is a good audiometry screening test that you download to your phone. You can screen yourself using it.
- Steven commented that if you get the hearing aid at Penn you can get the benefit immediately applied towards your hearing aids. Susan added that you can get them replaced once for free.
- There was a question by Arberetta regarding the passing of a faculty member. How are we notified? Who notifies the department? Do we post if we only hear from the departments? We need to get verification by the department if we want to post it. This is the preferred option. Janice commented that some people notify the department, or HR etc, but the Almanac is the source. If you still have medical insurance, HR would also know if someone passed. The surviving spouse gets \$10,000, so, HR knows. But Arberetta commented that HR does not report to them.
- Should we have photos in the “in memoriam”? Arberetta commented that it is a lot of duplicative work and they are already stressed for support.
- Judith commented that we need to start thinking of speakers for next year. We need everybody’s input. She can put together a list and we can vote on it. Paul commented that he will meet with Kevin Mahoney for a talk. We can also use Jake Brenner as a junior faculty in Pulmonary and have him talk. We can also ask Vladimir Muzykantov, his advisor from Pharmacology, on his work on nanoparticles and liposomal delivery. He is head of the nanoparticle center. Everyone agreed it is worse pursuing.

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- Judith commented that Michal Kahana works in the Psychology department and works on memory and its neural basis, and we could ask him also for a talk. He is a dynamic guy and does interesting work.
- Peter commented that we could have someone to talk on modes of delivering drugs. Particularly at this age where they are alternating a lot of the delivery systems. You need to be careful on the title of the talk because it attracts a certain audience. A talk he attended had 20 pharmacists in the audience.
- Paul commented on having someone talk on how to train service dogs. Melpo commented that Penn has an amazing dog-training center.

Arberetta commented on the Penn giving site. You type in which organization to select and ASEF is listed among them.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Melpo Christofidou-Solomidou, Ph.D., ML

Secretary, ASEF Executive Council