

1 Academic Senate
2 Meeting of September 19, 2012
3 University Club, Scriptorium Room
4 University Park Campus
5
6

7 **MINUTES**
8
9

10 **Present:** R. Ben-Ari, D. Blaine, D. Brooks, L. Carver, G. Clark, P. Conti, S. Curran, C. Dieterle,
11 P. Ethington, R. Flick, S. Geck, R. Girandola, C. Gomer, H. Greenwald, S. Gupta, L. Hunt, R.
12 Labaree, A. Lakoff, S. Levine, O. Mayer, J. Orr, M. Parks, J. Platt, P. Riley, J. Silvester, J. Steele,
13 K. Venegas, C. Wang, M. Weinstein, W. Wolf

14 **Absent:** P. Cannon, G. Ehresmann, J. Kagan, D. Larsen, R. Lin, M. V. Marx , E. McCann, J.
15 Moffett, K. Murphy, P. Pattengale

16 **Guests:** R. Abeles, E. Garrett, S. Greene, M. Levine, W. Wolf

17
18 President Riley called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm.
19
20

21 **1. Dialogue with Provost Elizabeth Garrett**
22

23 Provost Elizabeth Garrett was introduced:

24 Welcome to you all. It may be your first time at the new University Club – I hope you like. The
25 renovation has gone well. A couple of things to mention:
26

27 1. Dean Rochelle Steiner of the Roski School of Fine Arts stepped down a few days ago and Erica
28 Muhl, who many of you know because of her involvement with the Academic Senate, has agreed to
29 be interim dean. Erica is doing a terrific job; she has had a number of meetings with faculty,
30 students and is reaching out to the board of councilors. I think the School will be in very good
31 interim hands with Erica at the helm.
32

33 We are beginning a dean search in order to have a dean in place for next year. Michael Quick and
34 Elizabeth Galey (Connie can you check on the spelling of this?) will co-chair the search committee.
35 In addition we are bringing in a search consultant. As you know whenever we have an interim dean
36 we continue to move full speed ahead. We will be going through an academic program review of
37 the school; a faculty search will also continue as planned along with all fundraising programs. The
38 search will be led by a faculty advisory committee. Marty Levine has been a real presence in helping
39 with the transition.
40

41 2. Enrollment. Our total enrollment is at 39,768; undergraduate is circa 18,0000, with the remainder
42 representing graduate enrollment. Some of these are online students, but it has been a robust year.
43 We have more than 3,000 freshmen. You may remember that our target was 2,650. All freshmen
44 are on campus in residential colleges. Several members of the Senate are faculty masters. If you
45 have the chance, try to have a dinner at one of these residential colleges.

46
47 Our admit rate was slightly below 20%, which is the lowest in our history. Our yield rate was 33%.
48 Every school met or exceeded enrollment except for Architecture, which is a 5-year undergraduate
49 program.

50
51 We have 1,600 transfer students and 200 spring freshmen coming in. We are also strong with
52 respect to graduate students with a total enrollment of nearly 6,400 graduate students. Last year it
53 was 6,280. Total PhD admits is actually down and total enrolled is actually flat; but that is what we
54 want. We want to become more selective with respect to our PhD program, but we are growing our
55 professional master's and doctoral degrees.

56
57 The undergraduate class is 48% men, 51% women. 21% are under-represented minority students.
58 In this group there are more Latinos than in the past. Of this group 14.4% are first generation
59 college-goers. I believe this is the highest of any top research university and I am very proud of this
60 figure. SCIONS comprise 24% of the class.

61
62 10.2% are international students – we believe the numbers are down (we like to be around 12-15%).
63 We believe the murders of the two Chinese graduate students played a role in this. Remember that a
64 freshman is just six years away from being a sixth grader - this was problematic for some parents.
65 We did not see any effect with regard to graduate students. International graduate student
66 enrollment is actually up.

67
68 3. I hope you saw the memo from Michael Quick regarding the GE curriculum. We are encouraging
69 colleagues to participate in giving us input. We will begin to implement the revision in the fall of
70 2013 and are very excited about this. We will constitute a faculty committee to provide oversight.
71 The GE curriculum must be most rigorous.

72
73 4. Because of advice of the faculty, we have issued a memo regarding the streamlining of processes
74 and the reduction in paperwork. Are we imposing responsibilities on faculty, staff and students that
75 are necessary? The answer is we will do so only when we must. Otherwise it takes time away from
76 research and teaching. We will continue to reduce paper and streamline whenever possible.

77
78 Q. We were all very impressed with the document on Streamlining. Indeed, it addressed some areas
79 where I had some concerns. Are there other areas where such review and streamlining will occur?

80
81 A. This was one document where I received the largest number of reactions, all positive. Yes, we
82 are working, among others, on streamlining ITS services, on the Stephens Institute, on streamlining
83 student documents, and on research software.

84
85 Q. Regarding the enrollment issue, it seems that we are above target on freshmen, transfers and
86 spring admits. On one hand this says great things, but what does it mean to exceed targets? Is this
87 being driven by budget concerns?

88
89 A. We do that on purpose. Each year, every school that runs a surplus can transfer those funds into
90 a reserve account that can be deployed in the future. This is one of the reasons USC has such
91 financial strength. If it was a very large number, we might wonder, but this is within the comfort
92 zone.

93

94 Q. We have 3,000 new freshman and 1,600 new transfer students. So that means that the number
95 of freshmen is roughly double the number of transfer students. Is there a particular strategy about
96 admitting transfer students?
97

98 A. We have always targeted transfer students. Often students who may have not been ready to
99 come to USC can do so after spending time at community college. We carefully watch the
100 graduation rates of transfer students. They are at the same success rates as incoming freshmen.
101

102 Q. What is the current graduation rate?
103

104 A. 90% 6 year graduation rate. It is up from 83%.
105

106 Q. Is the University Village on track?
107

108 A. We are ready to go, but waiting on the city. The first phase would comprise largely graduate
109 student housing, retail (to serve both the academic and local communities) and possibly some
110 academic buildings. We are confident that given how important USC is to the city that we will be
111 able to move forward and not be unduly delayed.
112

113 **2. Update Regarding Tree Beautification** 114

115 Robert Abeles, Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer was introduced.
116 We are doing beautification of both campuses but questions have arisen about trees being cut down.
117 We are currently doing hardscaping because of some renovations: i.e. Childs Way to Alumni House
118 and most recently, Hahn Plaza. President Nikias has requested that circa 1,000 trees be planted.
119

120 We are doing this in two phases. Phase One is almost complete – this is along Exposition in order
121 to get more separation from the new Expo Line train. This runs from Vermont almost down to
122 Figueroa. We have also done the part from Vermont to around the Davidson Conference Center.
123 Before planting more we need to 1) engage a landscape architect, 2) look at utilities and 3) engage
124 with units occupying these spaces to ensure that we are not planting trees where events are held. By
125 the time this phase is completed we will have around 500 trees and many plants.
126

127 Phase Two will involve looking at the hardscaping: how to narrow streets and have more beautiful
128 plantings in those areas. Because of utilities and traffic we project that this will take approximately
129 seven years and much planning. This will involve the planting of another 500 trees.
130

131 Why have we cut down trees? Usually for safety: some were near the sand volleyball courts. There
132 were coral trees subject to breakage. It is dangerous to have these kind of trees of this age hanging
133 over people attending games. We are trying to plant trees that are safer. Pat Haden has requested
134 that we put in 18 Palm trees.
135

136 Q. What we need on the campus is shade. UCLA is a leafy shaded campus. We need shady spaces
137 to sit down and meet with colleagues and students. There is a concrete arbor in Leavy but no shade.
138

139 A. President Nikias and I don't want to take down any trees that we don't have to. The President
140 also wants more shade.
141

142 Q. These trees are very small. It will be 30 years before they are fully grown.
143

144 A. Larger trees are very expensive. Some of these are \$10,000 each. Please look at what we have
145 done on Exposition. If you have any suggestions, please send them to me.
146

147 Q. It would be beneficial to have a committee of advisors from the School of Architecture, many of
148 whom are experts in this field.
149

150 A. Look at what has been done to date. Then after that I'd be happy to have people look at the
151 plans for Phase Two.
152

153 C. President Riley suggested that it would great to get faculty involved in this. Our School of
154 Architecture has some of the best experts in the world. This is an optimal time to collaborate. Also,
155 we can put it on our website. It would be ideal to have a two page executive summary of what has
156 been done and what is planned. This will spur interest among other faculty.
157

158 A. It would be nice to keep it to one committee.
159

160 Q. You have talked about what is going on at UPC campus but we haven't heard anything about
161 HSC.
162

163 A. We have started work on the utilities on Soto St. We are trying to get permits to narrow the
164 streets and plant. The issues involved are 1) underground utilities, 2) narrowing the street and doing
165 planting and 3) instituting better signage. In the next few months you should see more development
166 on HSC than UPC.
167

168 **3. Approval of May Senate Meetings** 169

170 Giving the members a moment to review them, the minutes of the May Senate meetings were
171 approved with zero 'no' votes and three abstentions.
172

173 **4. Presentation Regarding Transfer and Veteran Student Populations at USC** 174

175 Syreeta Greene, Assistant Director, Office of Campus Activities was introduced.
176

177 I work specifically with our Transfer and Veteran Student Program. This program is a little over a
178 year old and is part of the Provost's Initiative which was handed down to Student Affairs. Our main
179 focus is to assist transfer and veteran students to assimilate to USC as quickly as possible. USC has
180 1,691 new transfer students; most veterans are typically transfer students. If you have worked with
181 veteran students, you will find that they are typically more mature, more motivated and work very
182 hard, although there are problems that do arise.
183

184 We have 30 incoming veteran students and 63 returning veteran students for a total of 93. The most
185 popular major for these students is social work, with business a close second.
186 The veteran students are generally an older population and much more diverse. They bring in
187 significant experience and would like to have that regarded that as a strength.
188

189 They feel uncomfortable when singled out in class and would prefer to share their experience offline.
190 There is a problem because they are considered financially independent, but the Veteran
191 Administration is a mess. Often it takes at least one month before they can get their educational
192 benefits.

193
194 They would like faculty to be mindful of certain topics or expression with regard to PTSD. The
195 number one question they tend to receive is whether they've killed someone. It is recommended for
196 faculty to be sensitive about politics; don't make sweeping generalizations about the military and
197 remember that there are five branches within it.

198
199 The majority of our programs are geared to undergraduate students. For these students we have a
200 first year experience program that helps them learn to utilize the resources at USC. These students
201 feel they have to figure it all out in two years; the program helps them develop strategies to succeed.
202 We have a mentoring program where the students are put into small groups with two mentors.
203 There is also a drop in center where students can go for help. We work with a number of different
204 departments – housing, financial aid, etc. to help students negotiate the red tape.

205
206 Many transfer students are accustomed to consulting with a faculty member instead of a staff
207 member for information on policies. At other institutions the faculty was often their advisor.

208
209 Often these older students struggle in comparing their prior school to USC. They look for faculty to
210 be open-minded to an adult population. Sometimes they feel as though they are being treated as a
211 17 year old when in fact they are 30 with a wife and children. Many of them are also commuter
212 students, which pose extra challenges.

213
214 Sometimes they have a lack of preparation – i.e. Physics 151 at USC does not equate to what they
215 were taught at their prior institution.

216
217 Q. Can you elaborate about being mindful of topics with regard to PTSD?

218
219 A. For instance showing a graphic film such as Wounded Warrior in class. A few students have
220 been very uncomfortable in discussions about war and the politics of war. Misconceptions or gross
221 assumptions can make them very uncomfortable.

222
223 Q. Are there more programs to bring more veterans into USC? 93 is a very small number.

224
225 A. We are working on that with Admissions. There is much interest in Engineering. Cost is one of
226 the biggest factors. They only receive \$18,500, which doesn't go very far at USC. Many opt to go to
227 state schools where their entire education is paid for.

228
229 Q. It is unclear whether students are being encouraged to tell faculty if they are transfers or vets.
230 The teacher may not know.

231
232 A. It depends. Many transfer students may feel bad that they did not do well in high school and
233 don't want to be seen as transfers. The vets are older and have different experiences. They tend to
234 seek out groups for veteran students. While they may not feel it necessary in math and science, they
235 do so in history, political science, etc.

236

237 C. We have many international students who have already served their countries. They experience
238 similar things and older students may not connect as well.

239
240 A. I am focused on U.S. vets, but there is an Office of Student Affairs, which encompasses vets of
241 all countries.

242 243 **6. August Annual Planning Retreat Preliminary Report**

244
245 President Riley summarized the August Senate Retreat, highlighting the task forces that were
246 formulated as a result:

247
248 1) Leadership Development Task Force. This will look at best practices and will be charged with
249 determining what might be the best beginning program. Chair: Patti Riley

250
251 2) Faculty Evaluation Process Task Force. This will investigate whether or not the current system
252 gives people the best information to make improvements in their performance. Chair: Sandeep
253 Gupta. As a sidelight I learned that the University is forming a committee to look at student
254 evaluations. Should they be a primary vehicle? Is the form is appropriate? Can we effectively do
255 them online?

256
257 3) Task Force to prepare for the Provost Retreat. Beth, Marty and I met last year and chose the
258 topic of technology and how it is changing education. This will be chaired by John Silvester.

259
260 We have created a list of people for these task forces based on their fields of expertise or expressed
261 interest, but if you are interested in serving, please see me after the meeting.

262
263 Q. We need not only to develop leadership for the university as a whole but leadership from a
264 faculty point of view. We used to have an educational program that new senators were given on
265 how the Senate works, etc. that was very useful. Perhaps we should do this again.

266
267 A. We could look at creating something like that. We have had requests from faculty councils with
268 no bylaws. We want to get the entire packet on the website in order to show best practices across
269 the university. Please tell me how this was done and we'll try to put something together along these
270 lines.

271 272 **Announcements**

273
274 We need names for the WASC committee. According to Robin Romans, this will be a considerable
275 time commitment, but you learn an amazing amount; it begins in January. WASC covers different
276 levels, so the university at large is being reviewed.

277
278 The meeting was adjourned at 4:15pm

279
280 Respectfully submitted,

281
282 Lucinda Carver, D.M.A.
283 Secretary General of the Academic Senate