Academic Senate
Meeting of December 10, 2014
University Club, Scriptorium Room

MINUTES


Guests: M. Eshaghian, M. Levine, M. Quick, R. Romans, D. Sloane, C. Truhan

President John Silvester called the meeting to order at: 2:04pm

Melanee Vicedo standing in for Ange-Marie Hancock as secretary

1. Dialogue with Michael Quick, Interim Provost
Provost Quick’s main goal is to have a nice hand off to the permanent provost when that happens. He wants to continue the work we’ve been doing and continue moving initiatives forward.

Status of the Provost search: President Nikias has named search committee and he is visiting different groups to gather information on what we need.

A question about faculty evaluations was asked. A report was submitted to Provost with recommendations. Provost Garrett submitted an answer to recommendations but it’s still unresolved. Faculty are concerned about evaluations being metrically numbered and recommendation is to be more qualitative instead of quantitative. Provost Quick is aware of the report and will continue to work on it.

Provost Quick was asked about the University’s incentive behind a memo encouraging early faculty retirement. Provost Quick indicated that the University wanted to help the people who are interested in retiring with the process. The Office of Provost learned of concerns among those who did want to retire and was hesitant because of the abrupt transition to retirement, changes in finances, and not being aware of resources available to help with the process. The University hired a retirement navigator who is working with 14-15 faculty members. The faculty who have worked with the navigator have had positive experiences.

Navigator will be present at the January Academic Senate meeting.
The subject of sustainability was brought up and the desire for candidates for Provost to address this topic during their interviews. The President is aware of this topic and will include this in the process. Provost Quick agreed we need to do more on campus in terms of environmental sustainability. The lack of recycling bins on campus was also brought up.

Provost Quick was asked about block grant proposals in Biology and how the new system is unnecessarily complicated. Provost Quick indicated that in the past, the University has given a block of money to schools to use for graduate programs. It was difficult to track the funding and which projects it was applied to. The new model has the Provost’s office in charge of granting fellowships. Deans can use their money in other ways and help attract students with grant funding. Tracking where the money is going is important. The Provost office is trying to find a happy medium with fellowships while still allowing schools to move money where they need it. They aren't changing how much money is going into graduate programs, just ability to track the money.

The topic of diminished faculty parking was discussed. More spaces in the structures are reserved and it is especially difficulty for those people who come midday. Handicapped parking is also dwindling and some structures have moved them further away from building entrances. There have been no consultations with the Schools about parking issues. There seems to be no apparent parking strategy. John Silvester will invite the head of transportation to a future meeting to discuss these issues.

Making disability issues a priority for the new Provost was brought up. Doheny Library’s handicap access is cumbersome since the entrance is on the side and has to be opened by a library staff member. In thematic option, there is a dedicated classroom for writing and a student had to drop a class because the classroom was not accessible. Provost Quick acknowledged this was an important issue.

General Education in the Humanities have not heard back about which courses have been approved. Provost Quick will follow up.

Issue with non-smoking campus resolution was asked. There have been motions to designate smoking sections on campus. Keck is non-smoking. The conversation on this issue is continuing.

In relation to the School’s global reach, are there certain countries we would not go because of discriminatory policies, lack of freedom of thought, privacy, and protected speech? We have students from all over the world and are sending faculty to areas all over the world. Most of the conversations relating to these issues in the Provost’s office have been treated in a case-by-case basis.

Thank you to Provost Quick for the dialogue.

2:32pm – noted the RSVP list circulating about the holiday party on January 23\textsuperscript{rd}. 
2. Approval of Senate meeting minutes from November 19
Minutes approved.

3. Faculty Council Updates

Paula Cannon, Chair, Keck School of Medicine Faculty Council
Professor Cannon shared information about the composition of Keck: 1550 FT faculty (42% of USC faculty), 315 Tenure, TT faculty, 135 clinical located HSC, Children’s Hospital. There are 36 Vice and Associate Deans and 13 institutes. There are 9 members in the Faculty Council; 6 are clinical, 3 are non-clinical, most of whom are more able to participate in governance.
Ballot for FC election went out to all 1500 members and probably 250 responded. Part time faculty does not vote. Elections are held for 3 members each year and slate should have two candidates for each position. Current members nominate candidates. Elections are held toward the end of the summer. Council selects the chair.

The FC meets every month, not with Dean, but with vice Dean, Judy Garner. FC meets with the Dean about 2x a year. Dean seeks advice of the council when issues come up. Also, will ask for nominations for the committee in promotions and tenure. In the past, the biggest action item was getting the faculty center remodeled. The medical school and pharmacy faculty were surveyed about the center and they received many responses. One frustration with the FC is the size of Keck. It’s hard to represent over 1500 people with disparate interests.

David Sloane, Chair, Sol Price School of Public Policy Faculty Council
Formed out of former School of Public Administration and was named three years ago. Currently, Price has 50-65 faculty and the numbers are growing fast. Price has added a lot of NTT faculty. The School has a diverse portfolio of programs from public policy to healthcare management.

There are seven members in the FC from all ranks (TT and NTT) with annual elections in the Spring and there is at least one NTT faculty in the group. The FC meets with the Dean and Vice Dean once a month. Primary role is to provide advice to the Deans. Dean usually brings issues on new initiatives that are not public yet. Topics have included recommendations for committee appointments and annual merit reviews. Some of the issues and challenges the FC is facing are the growing faculty numbers and logistics. Faculty are dispersed in different buildings and space is always a concern.

James Steele, Chair, School of Architecture Faculty Council
The School celebrated its 100th anniversary this year. The FC or Executive committee consists of 5 members who are full-time faculty and acts as an advisory committee to the Dean. It does not advise on tenure and retention. The staff also elects an ex-officio member that report back to the staff. There is also one graduate and undergraduate student. The terms are two years and terms are staggered. There is a limit of three consecutive terms. Members are assigned to committees that include academics, facilities and financial issues.
Some issues the FC are addressing are representing the faculty as both faculty council and executive committee and communication among the Dean, faculty and executive committee.

4. Call for Nominations for the Distinguished Faculty Service Award, Peter Conti, Task Force on Distinguished Faculty Service

P. Conti was not able to attend.

Charles Gomer spoke instead and encouraged senate members to nominate colleagues from our Schools who have done outstanding work. There can be 3-4 of these prestigious awards given out per year. The call for nominations will come out soon and the award will be presented in May.

5. Update on Strategic Transformations Committee and the Joint Provost/Senate Retreat - John Silvester, Academic Senate President and Robin Romans, Associate Provost

Robin Romans shared that the Strategic Transformation Committee grew out of the strategic plan itself and sought to make the strategic planning more of a participatory process. The first strategic plan in the 90’s had action points. The focus now is to create a vision and have the Schools create the plan or action points.

The Committee has gone to each of the Schools, the Libraries and Student Affairs and asked for a liaison to the Committee. They Committee have also asked these groups for information on what they’ve done that links back to the Strategic Vision.

John Silvester shared the content of the Joint Provost and Senate Retreat being held on January 31st. There will be break out session with discussion on topics within the context of strategic planning and visioning. There will be three sessions that will on these themes:

- Education for rapidly changing world (residential college, gen ed requirements)
- Connecting the individual to the world (globalization initiatives of USC, challenges to these outreach initiatives, helping our students to be citizens of the world)
- Scholarship with consequence (transformative hiring, interdisciplinary work, sustainability)

More details about the retreat and the keynote speaker will be forthcoming.

6. Announcements

Academic Senate holiday party is being held on January 21st after the Academic Senate meeting. Holiday Party. All senate members and their guests are invited.

Retreat January 31

A mini-retreat on student evaluations is being planned in partnership with the Center for Excellence in Teaching. This is planned for late January or February.

A suggestion on making student evaluations more longitudinal was raised (i.e., evaluating in the third year to assess whether what they learned was useful).
7. New Business
No new business.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanee Vicedo
Senate Member

USC Libraries