MINUTES


Guests: E. Garrett, K. Howell, M. Levine, L. Macchia, P. Siegel, K. Howell

Provost report

Pleased to report Arieh Warshel has been awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

Football game on a school day went very well. One incident on the row was handled by DPS.

Discussion of changes to GE

Limited access to other schools
Tags/themes: student expected to have a class in these categories
Website to include learning objectives

Advancing scholarship in Humanities/Arts/Sciences
Internal grant program reviewed
Beth Meyerowitz looked at ASHES and changed it
Full and Associates sabbatical TT and NTT
Newly promoted Associates, T and NTT
Grant writing mentorship program, T and NTT
Help junior faculty to think about applying for fellowships in their field and mentor them

advice been helpful, e.g. rephrasing for arts colleagues, expanding target group to newly minted full profs, expanded grant mentorship to senior faculty to enter new field of inquiry, also to clarify evaluation process for NTT

Introduction of Vice Provost for Information Technology Services Administration and Chief Information Officer, Pete Siegel

Partnership with faculty most important in providing resources
Committee on info resources working with him to advise him on tech policies affecting “academic matters”—a broad charge but crucial in determining how to spend resources over time, e.g. informatics
going to move to having a formal liaison from each school so there’s someone to
call to champion faculty issues re technology
also embarking on a strategic plan tied to the USC strategic vision—no reason to
isolate tech from goals, pillars of strategic vision. Not about ITS as organization, but
about info services at USC, partnership with schools and how we can work together.
Exciting, also hard, since there needs to be real plan
Informatics building on driving forces of 21 century; initiative tremendous opportunity
for USC. Such range of extraordinary research and teaching scholarship here, we can
only be successful. From gaming, security, digital humanities, and beyond. We are
ready to compete with Stanford, Cornell, UCLA, and their emerging initiatives and in
fact be successful in our niche
1. transforming education for a rapidly changing world; helping faculty lead in
new directions and getting what they do in their research to the teaching environment
2. creative scholarship with consequences
3. connecting the individual to the world: national and global networking, using
USC through NSF infrastructure from USC to China, we can shape what they develop
high performance networking infrastructure: one of the first campuses to use this
capability for real science and scholarship between institutions. Not just demos.
Fifth fastest academic supercomputer in the world, enabling top-notch research to help
get those grants
We support 110 research groups in a variety of disciplines, computing of course but
Shoah also, humanities using high speed computing
Earthquake consortium, Nobel prize winner uses these computing resources, etc.
Also important to be a destination campus for that next generation of Nobel prize
winners—we have the resources to become that campus
Digital repository can be more agile but this initiative leverages Shoah to solve problems
having nothing to do with the original initiative—many other users involved, medicine,
humanities, film, all using this repository, where technology problems that need solving
are getting solved
Also what other areas might we be able to support faculty? Big data, informatics, please
let me know how to provide support for those grants you are writing
John Silvester gained us admission via a large grant into NSF club
Big data is about size yes but also storage technology; statistical algorithms fall apart;
research topic about how to get through cross-discipline problems. Not about storage and
 terabytes but intellectual capacity
Emphasis must be on partnerships, faculty, deans, schools, experts, students and with other institutions.

q. historical records are an area of concern. It’s difficult to find academic records, history of schools. Preservation is difficult as there’s no physical space but could be archived electronically. System needed so as to not lose this information.

a. transformation from physical to electronic data difficult. Shoah foundation looking at how to maintain data over 100 years. Requires library expertise on metadata.

q. the GE discussion is ongoing. Sustainability not one of our outstanding areas.

Suggestion from undergrads and grad government, since education is the issue in sustainability, the GE should require a course in this area.

a. the discussion is over about category/themes and cannot be added. But classes that take on issues of sustainability can be done in interesting ways, in humanities, social sciences, natural sciences. Global questions, climate, etc, could fit one of the themes.

q. it depends on how you look at the issue. Nature is not a sub-category. As leaders of the next generations, we need to get them all aware of what they are not aware of. Do we as a university say we are going to do something about it or are we going to stay decentralized? Are there themes that include these issues?

a. yes there’s room across the categories. Students are also well informed on sustainability. Committees decided and provost has accepted these themes. This framework is not going to change.

q. The USC webpage is handled by ITS?

a. it is from communications.

q. we wanted to see all of the opportunities at USC on the web page, theater, etc, without having to search. We would like to see a calendar of events.

a. yes there is support for this. It’s a challenge due to the number of events and is a logistical rather than philosophical issue.

q. are you and ISD doing stock taking of basic services to faculty and students?

a. system is beyond its capacity and we are taking steps to implement a new one. First we want to know when there is a problem. ITS directors need to know so that everyone else can know. We are past that phase and now need to have a way to get that information out to all. Third of course is not having it break as much.
q. in line with the points about big data does not match algorithms, there’s lots of work on campus to supplement current tools, PYTHON programs, other software, and so it’s all piecemeal and doesn’t all interface together. We should coordinate.

Approval of minutes suspended until next meeting

Update senate committee nominating membership. Four members from Senate needed. Please nominate officers for the nominating committee. There will be an email reminder.

Update from Keck Faculty Council President Vicki Marx. Overview of varied emphases of campus, teaching, research, seeing patients. Council began there in 2009. Governance difficult due to the disparate nature of Keck. Peter Conti organized new council, third academic year of implementation. We make sure all constituencies are represented and all faculty are eligible to serve. Three members rolled over each year. Voting participation modest but growing. CHLA brought in and has a large presence.

Medical school strategic plan was gone over and matched with USC strategic plan (which came out later). Also developed a way for faculty to have input in dean review process. Five chairs reviewed, council had significant input into surveys for those reviews. Council reviewed the dean’s final reports and made recommendations. Enormous faculty participation. 61% response. On a building trend in getting the faculty to see themselves as a unit.

Eating options improved on HSC. Dialogue between HSC and CH improved. Input into new research space policy too. We provide representation on promotions and tenure committee. And we have had semi-annual town halls. Small but well received programs so far. Medical student quality increasing.

q. does the dean attend these meetings?

a. no he is not a part of it. The Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs acts ex-officio and provides admin support. We have met with him but he’s not a part of the council.

q. would it be effective if he were a part of the council?

a. no.

q. Keck is under a new governance document. Engineering is forming one. How is yours different from the previous one?

a. faculty representation was through an assembly, large unwieldy set-up. Dean had no investment in it. We modeled ourselves on what other schools have done. Have a smaller body, the whole faculty can vote, we have relationship with dean through the vice dean, we have definitive roles in reviews. We are meaningful to the dean. He values us as liaison. It’s much more collaborative.
q. administrators as part of the faculty council needs to be reviewed. In some schools the dean has joined to a degree and has an influence on the council in that school. There’s a gamut and that could present problems.

q. council has influence on promotion and tenure?

a. that committee has a council member on it who joins in the recommendations to the dean.

q. in the chair reviews, what kind of information did you present to the dean? How strong were your recommendations? Were they valued?

a. we looked at all of the surveys and we pointed out trends. We are advisory to the dean.

Health Benefits update

Mike Nichols: relatively few benefit changes, only premium changes for Anthem and Kaiser. There’s a new navigator program for in-network appointments. Also trying to get UPC faculty and staff aware of Engemann clinic. Also the acquisition of Verdugo Hosp will offer tier one physicians there. Disabled dependent language will be added to the website. Vision co-pays going up slightly. Relatively modest changes.

Four benefit tiers: rates adjusted to approx an 8% raise. There are a number of provisions in ACA that will impact large employers. There’s a tax on all the covered lives at USC. This substantially impacts USC. All three plans have a 1 1/2 % to pay for this component. Also Plan C is affected by ACA. This plan is for employees who get their health care from another employer. Now USC must certify that the other plan meets the minimums of health care. So the committee recommended dropping Plan C. Also ACA requires that all plans have minimum value. Our plans meet that criteria but we don’t know about plans from a spouse.

q. if you have two plans, comparing those plans, how can we tell which plan to make primary?

a. primary and secondary issue is that the plan you have had the longest would be primary

q. assuming someone is covered by their spouse’s plan, is there anything they have to do to meet the requirements of the USC plan?

a. you will be asked to sign something saying you elect not to be covered

q. what is plan C?
a. for people who have their primary coverage elsewhere, you get free dental, free vision, and prescription co-pay

q. what is the impact on employee contribution from these premium raises?

a. about 11%

q. what is the fraction of employees on plan C?

a. about 1400, half of whom get it through a spouse, the other 700 get it from elsewhere

q. can you comment about the changes in what the university pays and the co-pay given that Keck now sets the rates? There was a co-pay change for the better a few months ago. What impact has that had?

a. changes in co-pays across all three plans have not happened. The practice of medicine in the hospital has to adhere to certain regulations. So office visits are less for example because they no longer include rent and malpractice. But there is a facility charge not paid by the patient but by the plan.

q. does the provision changes in lifetime cap and pre-existing conditions of ACA affect our plans in terms of eligibility or premiums?

a. most plans had already eliminated the lifetime cap. When you are hired you are eligible for health care regardless of pre-existing conditions. The preventive care should result in a 400k increase for the university.

q. you quoted premium increases. Are these due to the ACA?

a. one for sure is 1 ½% but no other information on that is available.

q. what percentage of employees take advantage of flexible spending?

a. smaller than you would think. And ACA cut it to $2500. But people don’t understand it.

q. for retirees, the rumor is it will be cut

a. that might be a confusion about the retiree stipend. It’s a different issue.

ACA raises the question about people retiring before medicare-eligible age; now they can and not have a problem if there’s a pre-existing condition.

Announcements
Save the Date: February 28 and March 1, 2014 for the joint Provost/Senate Retreat, venue will be determined at a later date. Theme to be Globalization, both in teaching and research.

Establishment of Childcare Advisory Committee includes Academic Senate representative. Stacy Geck will be this year’s representative.

Senate recognition of the 2013 Nobel Prize Winner, Distinguished Professor of Chemistry, Arieh Warshel

No new business

adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Blaine
Member-at-Large of the Academic Senate