AGENDA

Paula Cannon, Academic Senate President, called the meeting to order at 2:03 pm.

Dialogue with USC's Provost, Michael Quick

Michael Quick, USC Provost, provided updates on smoke free campus, unionization, diversity & inclusion, campus safety, and center for faculty excellence.

Anti-Smoking Policy

Thanked the Academic Senate on the new anti-smoking policy. USC is now a smoke-free campus.

https://policy.usc.edu/smoke-free/

Unionization

SEIU has decided to not move forward with unionizing USC faculty at Dornsife. USC shows how shared governance works and the provost thanked the senate for its leadership.

Diversity & Inclusion

Week of January 20, 2017 is Diversity and Inclusion week. Number of different speakers and events. He foresees this as something we do on an annual basis.

https://academicsenate.usc.edu/files/2017/01/Summary-Schedule-for-USC-Presentations-V5_1-12-17.pdf

Schools are currently submitting their 5-year diversity plans, which represent where each school wants to be 5 years from now. The Provost office and the Diversity Council will be reviewing them.

Provost office will turn the plans back to the schools by the end of the semester. Goal is to have them ready for implementation for the new academic year. Many schools are engaged in this endeavor and the initial plans reviewed so far have been really specific to each of the schools.

School of Social Work is using their plan for recruitment purposes.
Shaun Harper, from University of Pennsylvania’s Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education, will be joining USC [on July 1, 2017]. He will be creating the USC Race and Equity Center, and will start looking at what are the proper ways to measure diversity and inclusion, and what research frames them.

Professor Tjan Tragedy and Campus Safety
We reached out to Professor Tjan’s wife and got her in touch with USC services. Worked on supporting her and also looking at what the future looks like for their children. Existing policy is that if you’ve been at USC for 5 years and you pass away, your children get full tuition benefits.

In an open entity like we are, sadly these kinds of things can happen. An external team has come on campus to review our campus safety in the past month. They were brought in to assess if we are doing everything we can, including having the right structures in place to deal with campus safety. The review is focusing on the location of our personnel and if we have enough resources for them. The administration is open to sharing the best practices that come out of the resulting reports.

We are looking at policies and procedures around mental health. In this case, the student had mental health issues. Did we have the right threat assessment teams in place? Wants to make sure we are doing what we can that is right for the students and faculty. Are we educating our faculty on what to do when they have a concern?

Campus safety training and resources will be discussed further at the Joint Provost/Academic Senate retreat.
http://academicsenate.usc.edu/meetings/joint-provostacademic-senate-retreat/

Center for Faculty Excellence
Faculty are asked to do a lot of different tasks – mental health, mentoring, etc. Not just about teaching and research. There is consideration of a Center for Faculty Excellence that will focus on overall faculty excellence.

Approval of December Senate meetings draft minutes
December draft minutes were presented for discussion and approval.

Rebecca Lonergan moved; Jeff Chisum seconded; 25 in favor; 0 opposed; 2 abstentions

Discussion re Employee Benefits
Patricia Riley, Chair, USC Employee Benefits Committee
Michael Nichol, former Chair, USC Employee Benefits Committee

Increases in the costs of health benefits at USC led to a discussion on benefits. Patricia Riley and Mike Nichol were invited to provide an overview of the benefits committee and their work related to faculty benefits.

Employee Benefits Committee – oversees and is the recipient of benefits information from the administration. Since six years ago, oversight by the Provost has diminished to almost nothing. A
large part of the work is done by staff and then the committee just reviews from a “does it make sense” perspective. There is also a separate committee, the Retirement Committee, which handles negotiations with Fidelity.

The university ‘taxes’ a percentage of total payroll to create the benefits pool. Benefits pool pays for healthcare, retirement, sabbaticals, disability, tuition reimbursement, and other benefits. Faculty with 50% or greater appointment are benefits eligible.  

https://benefits.usc.edu/

There are many unknowns due to the new US administration, and the committee is waiting until after the inauguration to see what has changed regarding healthcare. Committee is in the process of asking the university, including Keck, to see if there is a better way to reduce the cost of healthcare. A large part of the healthcare benefits costs is the cost of prescription drugs.

Concern is that the USC health plan will fall into a “death spiral” where the healthier employees move to lower price options and the USC health plan becomes more and more expensive, causing more of the healthier employees to move to the lower price plans.

Committee has been discussing moving benefits towards tiered pricing, where what you will pay is variable based on salary level.

Increase in healthcare costs have been offset by efficiencies in other areas (e.g. disability). Modifications to tuition reimbursement, vision and dental have also helped to offset increased healthcare costs.

Benefits costs are considered part of overhead costs and may start impacting federal grants (if we have too heavy overhead costs).

Contact Patricia Riley with any feedback.

Endorsement of the Campus Climate Committee Report

Robert Parke, Chair, Campus Climate Committee provided an overview of “Actionable Recommendations from the 2016 Provost / Academic Senate Retreat on Enacting Access and Opportunity.”

Friendly amendment was made to remove “White Paper” from the title of the report.

Maria Arande moved to endorse with modification of the title; Jeff Chisum seconded; 27 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstention.

Faculty in Residence for the USC Village Residential Colleges

Emily T. Sandoval, Director, Office for Residential Education, made a request for faculty for the residential colleges.

Looking for faculty who will live in the new Village residential colleges with 8 to 10 hours per week of commitment. Commitment includes organized activities, informal meals, and weekly faculty dinners. Goal is to break down walls between faculty and students.
Application deadline: January 22, 2017
Interview finalists: Early to mid-February

More information can be found at:
http://resed.usc.edu/employment/facultyinresidence/

**Plans for joint Senate/Provost retreat**
Paula Cannon, Academic Senate President, provided an update concerning what will be covered at the retreat.

Friday afternoon: Progress on diversity and inclusiveness
Saturday earlier morning: First year student learning and wellness
Saturday later morning: Faculty training and resources around campus safety

More information can be found at:
https://academicsenate.usc.edu/meetings/joint-provost-academic-senate-retreat/

**Discussion re venue and date for March meeting**
Paula Cannon, Academic Senate President, asked for feedback on whether we should have the meeting at HSC. Issue we face is that we often do not get a quorum when we hold meetings at HSC. And even when meeting at HSC, the senate members from HSC may still not be able to attend due to their clinical responsibilities. However, feedback and an informal poll indicated support to keep the March meeting at HSC.

It was noted that it is during the April meeting that we present the officer candidates for the following year.

**Announcements**
Paula Cannon, Academic Senate President
(a) Save the Date: February 17 and 18, 2017 for the joint Provost/Senate Retreat
Venue: Westin Bonaventure

**New Business**
- USC faculty action – a request was made to discuss further how faculty should respond to acts of bigotry, racism, and lack of inclusiveness.

**Adjournment**
Meeting was adjourned at 3:57pm

Respectfully submitted,

Mike S. Lee
Secretary General of the Academic Senate