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ASHLEY UYESHIRO SIMON (CO-CHAIR), NEERAJ SOOD (CO-CHAIR), REBECCA LONERGAN, GUILAN SIASSI,
SEAN CURRAN, DOUGLAS VANDERBILT, FRANK QUIAMBAO, CONSUELO SIGUENZA-ORTIZ, C. KERRY
FIELDS

Childcare Governance Recommendations

The Academic Senate's Faculty Environment and Employment Committee (FEEC) would like to express their appreciation that USC and its administration continue to recognize the importance of onsite childcare for faculty and staff members.

Moving forward, the FEEC has explored different approaches for childcare center governance, and compiled a list of processes that we would like to recommend:

- I. The FEEC is very grateful for the substantial expansion of the childcare centers at both the Health Sciences and University Park Campuses, and we feel very fortunate that USC has responded to requests for additional childcare capacity. This expansion, along with contracting with two different vendors for each site and being in a transitional period with the new vendors, has greatly increased the complexity of this arrangement, which makes oversight of these childcare centers a key component in continuing best practices for early childhood education.

The FEEC therefore recommends designating a **primary childcare administrator (PCA)** to provide and lead comprehensive oversight of the childcare centers. We recognize that this oversight will demand a large amount of time, and thus will likely encompass the larger part of this person's job duties, possibly even rising to the level of full-time status. Currently, the staffing in the Office of Benefits Administration may not be sufficient to accommodate this designation, especially during this transitional period. Examples of the PCA's duties may include:

- a. Create processes to continuously monitor the physical state and functioning of each center
- b. Send out biannual parent satisfaction surveys, and present the results to center directors and parent groups
- c. Provide oversight and follow-up for other recommendations listed below
- d. Provide reports to the Provost and the Provost's Work and Family Life Committee on an annual basis, detailing the status of both centers, major or recurrent issues that have arisen and the statuses of resolution, and any other relevant points.

The FEEC also recommends this PCA be a carefully sought person with an understanding of the complexity of childcare issues and parental concerns, who possesses a high level of interpersonal skill, and can navigate the often-challenging task of working with parents and their children.

- II. It would also be important to have more formal **UPC and HSC advisory committees** overseen by the PCA that meet regularly (the FEEC recommends meeting once per month, at least during

transitional period). Members may include elected parents from each age bracket at the centers, a USC facilities representative, an early childhood education representative (possibly), and the respective center director. (Note: these advisory committees would be separate from the “parent engagement groups” which address center enrichment activities, teacher/staff appreciation, parent/children social events, etc.) Suggestions for these advisory committees are as follows:

- a. Publicize meeting dates/times online to allow parents to send issues to their class representative ahead of time
 - b. Post meeting minutes (if available, or agenda/notes) and record of attendance
 - c. PCA and Center Director bring results of parent satisfaction surveys, results of facilities/supply monitoring, walk-throughs, problem resolutions or status reports, and any other relevant or important information
- III. To increase transparency and accountability for center operations, and to ensure parents feel they have a process by which to communicate with USC, the FEEC recommends the PCA, center directors, and advisory committees work together to **create a policy that delineates the process by which parents can express their concerns.**
- a. For example:
 - i. Nominal (administrative, non-health & safety) concerns that occur infrequently, report directly to director
 - ii. Health & safety or quality of care matters, document in writing and copy center director, PCA, and parent committee
 - iii. Require center directors to respond to health and safety concerns within 48 hours; for other concerns up to 1 week
 - iv. Require center directors to bring unresolved, recurring, or more serious items to monthly advisory committee meetings to address strategies for collective resolution and future prevention
 - b. Place this policy online to ensure ease of access for all parents
 - c. Orient all returning and new parents to this policy, as well as how to get involved with the advisory committee versus the “parent engagement groups”
 - d. Create a ticketing and/or email system for parent concerns that goes directly to the PCA and the director of the childcare center, to allow the PCA to triage concerns effectively and follow-up as appropriate. This will also allow for communication to be tracked, which can be especially important in addressing larger items (health and safety concerns, facilities and maintenance issues, serious and/or repeated infractions, quality of care such as teacher: student ratios and teacher feedback)

The FEEC thanks the Academic Senate and USC’s administration for their time and continued collaboration in working towards optimal childcare benefits oversight. Please feel free to contact the committee chairs if you have any questions:

Ashley Uyeshiro Simon: uyeshiro@med.usc.edu

Neeraj Sood: nsood@healthpolicy.usc.edu