ACADEMIC SENATE

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Meeting of January 17, 2018
HSC, The Eli and Edythe Broad CIRM Center
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.


Guests: M. Levine, E. Graddy, J. McLaughlin Gray, V. Soni, R.S. Von Almen, C. Wang

AGENDA

Paul Rosenbloom, Academic Senate President, called the meeting to order at 2:04 pm and introduced the guests of the Senate.

No quorum was established during the meeting, which requires “51% of the voting members of the Academic Senate.” For this academic year, there are 48 voting members (39 senators and 9 executive board members) which require 25 voting members to be present to establish a quorum. 19 members were present.

Approval of December Senate meeting draft minutes
Mike Lee, Secretary General, presented the December draft minutes for discussion and approval.

No quorum was established. The approval of the minutes was moved to the next Senate meeting.

Coors and Billboard
Paul Rosenbloom provided a summary of a concern raised by faculty related to alcohol advertising near campus. Professor Rosenbloom spoke to Brenda Maceo, Vice President for Public Relations and Marketing, to get additional background for this summary.

This particular advertisement is a Coors beer billboard that highlights USC Football near campus. The deal with MillerCoors was made in 2012, with approval up to the Board of Trustees. At the time, USC was the only Pac 12 school, other than Stanford, without such a deal. The deal has a provision that states that the advertisement may not be within 5 miles of campus. This deal brings in about $1M per year at this point.

We have a university sponsored advertising and sponsorships policy that states that the “university does not participate in, sponsor, or accept advertising in its publications or university-owned or supported media for tobacco, hard alcohol and sex-related products, or any other companies, brands or products that may harm or bring disrepute to the university.” Any third-party advertising and promotion must be reviewed by the Vice President for Public Relations and
Marketing. Beer and wine “require specific brand and product review prior to consideration.”

The specific billboard may have violated the details of the agreement in several ways, but there as also a discussion of whether or not it makes sense at this point for the university to be tied to such advertisements. When the deal comes up for renewal this summer, faculty feedback will be considered.

**Update from the Task Force on Workplace Standards and Employee Wellness**

Paul Rosenbloom provided an update on the task force and a summary of the [Fall 2017 Progress Report from the Task Force on Workplace Standards and Employee Wellness](#).

The task force worked in a confidential setting until last week, where this progress report was presented to the Executive Board and Staff Assembly. Now the report is being presented to the Academic Senate. Feedback will be sent back to the task force. This is not a final report of the task force.

In seeking a set of recommendations, the task force came up with 4 themes:

- we cannot simply weigh toxic behavior and abuses of power in the balance
- need for well-being
- need for improved transparency, accountability, shared governance, and a shared sense of ownership
- need to be able to express concerns

Recommendations are organized into four core areas, but with a few additional ones that cut across the areas:

- A new culture among faculty and staff
- Improving wellness
- Handling of concern of the community members
- Adjusted leadership model

Feedback provided by the Senators include:

- Include the students in the university core values and culture discussions
  - Abuse of power may include professors and graduate students
- May be difficult to define a reasonable test of toxicity and this may be walking a fine line
  - Legislate non-toxicity and do not legislate civility
- Important to think about what is at the school level vs university level
  - Centralized system that is out of the school’s chain of command
  - Traditionally considered a failure to go outside of your unit
  - Deans needs to see it as a success and encourage people to report outside of their school
- Need to cultivate trust in a centralized system.
  - Define and institute anti-retaliation recommendations
  - Make sure rumor and gossip does not come into play on these reporting scenarios
- Importance of training heads of schools/chair on the new set of responsibilities
  - Support for the leaders to do well and be aware of their responsibilities
- University training on an equity and inclusion perspective
- Consistent set of questions that can used as part of background checks/interviews to avoid bias
Consider how we can incentivize the best people to take these jobs
  o Not only academic background, but has to have EQ to take on these jobs

The Joint Provost/Academic Senate Retreat will discuss these recommendations in more detail. Contact Professor Rosenbloom to provide direct feedback.

**Joint Provost/Senate Retreat**

Paul Rosenbloom announced that the main topic for the Joint Provost/Senate Retreat in February will be the topics addressed by the Task Force on Workplace Standards and Employee Wellness.

Speakers and sessions will address core values, ways to strengthen shared governance, and employee wellness. Each session will include a panel and break out group/Q&A session.

Reference link: [https://academicsenate.usc.edu/meetings/joint-provostacademic-senate-retreat/](https://academicsenate.usc.edu/meetings/joint-provostacademic-senate-retreat/)

**Ombuds Office**

Varun Soni discussed his current thoughts on the new university Ombuds office and requested feedback/concerns from the Senate.

Dean Soni was asked by the Provost to put together a proposal for an ombuds office. Most top tier research universities have an ombuds office. In the absence of one, some of the traditional responsibilities of ombuds has been decentralized.

Ombuds are typically centered around 4 core principles:

- Confidentiality – safe space to discuss without fear
  o Most use Tarasoff standard – absent imminent harm, confidential
- Informality – no formal process
  o No independent decision-making authority
  o No records are kept
  o Half of the work will be referral
- Impartiality – conflict resolution, if consensual
  o Can also engage a 3rd party if permission is giving
- Independent
  o No reporting structure – only a financial line
  o Some of ombuds offices meet with president on a yearly basis to talk about aggregate data

UCLA’s ombuds office consists of 3 ombuds and 2 support staff. Ombud will meet with anyone connected with the university. UCLA gets about 550 cases a year.

For our university, minimally need one on HSC and one at UPC with support staff. The ombuds office will follow the 4 core principles. Two of the challenges expected concern educating the university on the role of the ombuds and finding the right person for the role.

Dean Soni asked the Senate to contact him to provide feedback/concerns.

**Provost Activities**

Elizabeth Grady, Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs, and Marty Levine, Vice Provost and
Senior Advisor to the Provost, provided an update from the Provost office.

Provost office is moving forward with the Ombuds office (discussed earlier), new faculty sanctioning body, and new investigative unit for non-protective class issues.

Disciplining and Sanction Body

In the current system, the Dean or Vice Provost/Provost makes an upfront decision on what type of sanction to consider. Depending on the sanction, the case goes for recommendation from various ad hoc or select committees or other faculty bodies, per the current handbook, or some sanctions can be imposed without consulting any faculty committee.

In the new system the provost has approved to start functioning now as a prototype, a faculty committee recommends the appropriate sanction, instead of a Dean or Vice Provost/Provost. A standing committee (a subcommittee of the Tenure & Privileges Appeals Committee) will be a pool, with panels for specific cases. This system will allow for uniform application university-wide as the committee gains experience. The faculty committee will look at the facts and then determine what sanction to pursue.

Faculty handbook amendments will be proposed so that this new committee will handle sanctioning of faculty in lieu of the existing ad hoc committees, etc., based on the results of the investigation related to the cases. There would still be appeals/reviews by the provost. For cases involving RTPC faculty, panels will include at least 1 RTPC faculty on the panel. Panels will be chaired by a past president of the Senate if available.

Investigative Unit for Non-Protected Classes

The Provost office is looking to fund 2 investigators to handle non-protected class cases. This should address some of the investigative bandwidth issues. There will be no new rules and the investigators may report into Gretchen Means, Executive Director, Equity and Diversity, and Title IX Coordinator.

Central Reporting Structure

In response to a question on a central reporting structure for complaints, Professor Graddy stated that all complaint reports are now flowing through her office and that they have started a central list of complaints to make sure nothing gets lost. The Provost has also made it known to Deans that he would like final oversight on complaint reports. The processes are still being determined.

Feedback was provided that faculty should be able to see their own files to monitor for not in good faith or bias.

Announcements

Paul Rosenbloom, Academic Senate President

(a) Remaining Academic Senate meetings in University Club 2nd floor Scriptorium

(b) Please hold February 23-24, 2018 for the Joint Provost/Senate Retreat.

Venue: The Westin Bonaventure Hotel & Suites, DTLA; Topic: Towards a 21st Century University: Culture, Concerns and Governance.

(c) The Senate meeting schedule and venues for 2017-2018 is posted on the Senate website:

https://academicsenate.usc.edu/

(d) The roster of Senate members and committee chairs is posted on this link:

https://academicsenate.usc.edu/senators/senators/
New Business
None stated.

Adjournment
Meeting was adjourned at 3:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike S. Lee
Secretary General of the Academic Senate