ACADEMIC SENATE

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
Meeting of March 21, 2018
University Club, Scriptorium Room
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.


Guests: R.S. Von Almen, C. Zachary

AGENDA

Paul Rosenbloom, Academic Senate President, called the meeting to order at 2:03 pm and introduced the guests of the Senate.

Dialog with Provost Quick

Michael Quick, USC Provost, provided updates on the university.

Fall Admissions - Undergraduate

On March 22 64,000 letters will be sent to students that applied to our university. About 8,100 will be good news. Approximately 20K to 23K applicants had SAT scores above 1,500. The admit rate is now in the 13% range which puts us in the top 20 universities based on admit rates. Typically get about a third of the students accept our offer and attend our university. We are targeting around 2,700-3,000 will accept for fall admits. Any given class size is approximately 4,600, which also includes the spring and transfer students. We focus on diversity, first generation, and social economic diversity.

Joint Provost/Senate Retreat

He wants to ensure that beyond discussions on building a culture of compliance, we also focus on building a culture of excellence and looking out for each other. Culture of making things better. What does it mean to build excellence? What does it mean to build a culture of excellence? How do we do better in scholarship/teaching/research and how to reward excellence?

Wicked Problems Homelessness

Several steps were taken based on a campus survey on food insecurity. These included launching of a physical pantry now and working with the graduate student body to give students with food insecurity debit cards that can be used at stores. We have been working with USC’s Executive Chef to better use leftover food.

Other examples include joint education and service learning options for students to better understand homelessness through service, hosting NGO job fairs for low income people, creation of inter-disciplinary graduate programs training students on law and social issues around

US News Rankings
Some highlights from the US News College rankings include #2 in public policy (Price), #1 in urban policy (Price), #10 in education (Rossier) from #15, #20 for business (Marshall), and law and medicine stayed the same.

Issue of reduction of costs – Project Renewal
We did not message this well. Looking at efficiencies is an ongoing thing that the university does every couple of years. This is the fourth time in 10 years. Previously we didn’t give it a name and this time we named it unfortunately – project renewal. The goal of these initiatives is to ask ourselves are we being as efficient as possible to reach the missions of the university.

Tuition was only raised 3.5%. We have competition for faculty – leads to pressure on salaries. Other issue that are critical (e.g. pay of RTPC faculty), raising pay for Ph.D students across the university (still note where we should be). There are not a lot of places to find revenue, so we must look at cost savings every few years.

Boundaries set within this initiative include no faculty impact, school level savings will stay within the schools to use, and central university-level savings will go to a central pot to use for new initiatives such as safety, etc.

Question was asked regarding the status of implicit bias training and faculty hiring. This is run out of Elizabeth Grady’s office.

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

Daniel Pecchenino moved to approve the minutes; Trisha Tucker seconded; 26 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstentions.

Update from Nominating Committee
Yaniv Bar-Cohen, Chair, Nominating Committee and Academic Vice President, provided an update from the Nominating Committee.

Candidate slate for the 2018-2019 Faculty Senate Executive Board (Academic Vice President, Secretary General, and 4 Members-at-Large) is being finalized. There must be at least two candidates for each open position.

Write-in nominations for an office are permissible with the signed endorsements of five Academic Senate members and prior agreement that the nominee will serve if elected. Write-In Nomination Forms will be sent shortly.

Candidates will be presented at next month’s meeting. Votes will be taken for two weeks after that meeting.
Ruben Davila, At Large Member, Senate Executive Board, reported back on Project Renewal based on meeting with Jim Staten, USC’s CFO.

USC is in a strong financial position. This is a recurring exercise to look at overhead and see how efficient we are running as a university. There are areas that are restricted from cost reduction – faculty (e.g. salaries and headcount), the educational experience (e.g. student class size), and grants. The target is 5% savings over 3 years or 1.67% per year. 5% cut is not of the total expense, it is the 5% of what is left over after the exclusions are removed.

Central administration is being helped by an external entity to identify areas of efficiency. Some ideas being floated around are not accepting credit cards for tuition payment, and centralizing purchasing and travel.

Each school is charged with finding those savings. School-level savings will be put back into the schools to spend. This is not a grab by central administration to get school funds. They are at the beginning of the process and are looking for ways to save money.

Question was asked if this is a top down decision at the school level – e.g. will the Deans make the decision? Don’t know across the board. At Marshall the CFO and the Dean will decide.

Question was asked if anybody looked at Trojan Care EPO, which is the new Trojan-provider-only health insurance option, and how much is being saved by the university? Benefits committee is set to meet with the administration to look at that. Goal of Trojan Care EPO wasn’t for cost savings for schools, but for the USC faculty and staff to access Keck Medicine without paying for the higher cost PPO.

We are hoping that the credit card option will still be available to pay tuition, but there may have to be an additional fee to pay to cover the credit processing fees.

Suggestions included having planned cuts in the individual schools discussed with faculty for feedback and planned cuts at the central level be discussed with the Senate leadership.

Office of Research Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion 2018

Ricky Bluthenthal, Chair, Joint Research Committee, shared their Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion.

Plan was recently completed and is organized by constituencies (e.g. faculty, students & postdocs, and staff).

USC used to have a McNair program and is working to get it back. In the meanwhile, there are lot of opportunities at the schools to get a pipeline of under-represented students into research.

One of the things that came out of this process was a need to identify faculty that are already involved in the process and making that information available to more students and especially underrepresented students. A research diversity open house – a way to let student organizations know early on what’s available – increase awareness.

Lastly, we institutionalize diversity pipeline. Happy to report that USC has a great reputation in
the community. We have programs like the Neighborhood Academic Initiative to help low-income students attend college. Now we can bring that to the undergraduate level. This will allow us to take 6th grader through Ph.D program. Unique opportunity for this university.

Some key recommendations related to faculty include:

- Include diversity criteria in hiring, merit, promotion, and tenure
- Come up with ways to attract diverse faculty
- Incentivize faculty to mentor on diversity
- Training on implicit bias on faculty searches – process of identifying unspoken biases
- Assess the research climate on a recurring basis

Question was asked regarding the process for progressing on these recommendations. As a Senate we can endorse the plan to give it more weight. This plan should be presented to the Diversity & Inclusion Council. This plan may fill the gap in diversity in research for the Council. For the inclusion of diversity criteria in promotions and tenure, this can be written into the Faculty Handbook. Ruben Davila can make the connection to the Diversity & Inclusion Council and community.

Research Strategic Plan link:

Threat Assessment
Patrick Prince, Chief Threat Assessment Officer, provided an overview of the university’s approach to threat assessment and his Threat Assessment Office.

When Bosco Tjan lost his life in December 2016, the university relooked at threat assessments. As part of this, the Campus Wellness and Crisis Intervention group was formed under Vice Provost Varun Soni and the university hired its first Chief Threat Assessment Officer (CTAO). “The Chief Threat Assessment Officer will provide proactive collaborative oversight and support of the university in the identification, assessment and management of threats and/or threatening behavior that may lead to acts of targeted violence against the USC campus and community.” Mr. Prince was hired in September 2017 to fill the CTAO position. He brings a wealth of knowledge through contacts in the FBI, universities and other sources.

The CTAO office focuses on targeted violence, which is more lethal, versus reactive violence.

Key Concepts

- Threat vs. Threatening
  - Not only focus on people making threats
  - Most people who make threats do not take action
  - Most people who take action do not make threats
- Assess vs. Investigate
  - His job is to assess and attempt to predict the future
  - Identify people early and redirect them in a different direction
  - We are going to assess future behavior based on past behavior
- “Zero Tolerance”
  - The meaning and goal behind the behavior versus zero tolerance
  - Look at situations to see what is really going on
Manage Risk vs. Manage Fear
  o Committed to not just identifying the risk, but to identifying and addressing the fear

Key Lessons Learned from Past Incidents of Workplace Violence
  o No one “just snaps.” Targeted violence is the end of a long pattern of behavior. Someone knows what is coming! Despite what we hear in the media, there are very few true surprises.
  o There are opportunities to intervene in ways that can help to prevent a violent act from occurring.
  o Not all warnings are “red flags.”
  o Very few things are random, they are first reported: responsible actions require assessment by qualified personnel.
  o Targeted violence occurs within a context and violence prevention must address both the individual and the campus environment around that person.
  o Everyone has a responsibility or their own conduct and for not tolerating unacceptable behavior from others.

Almost 50% of people aware of a threat (or threatening behavior) told someone, but it was not acted upon or reported further. If you see something, say something.

Plan is to make threat assessment training available by Fall.

Concerns involving students, faculty or staff can be reported directly to University Threat Assessment at 213-740-0243 or Chief Threat Assessment Officer at PrinceP@usc.edu.

Announcements
Paul Rosenbloom, Academic Senate President
(a) Remaining Academic Senate meetings in University Club 2nd floor Scriptorium
(b) The Senate meeting schedule and venues for 2017 - 2018 is posted on the Senate website:
https://academicsenate.usc.edu/
(c) The roster of Senate members and committee chairs is posted on this link:
https://academicsenate.usc.edu/senators/senators/
(d) The ‘End of the Year’ dinner will be held on May 9, Cocktails: 5:30 to 6:00; Dinner: 6:00 to 9:00pm;
   Venue: University Club, Main Dining Room (First Floor, Right Side when entering the main door of the Club)
   Please RSVP with Connie by April 25th

New Business
None.

Adjournment
Meeting was adjourned at 3:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike S. Lee
Secretary General of the Academic Senate