ACADEMIC SENATE

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Meeting of January 16, 2019
Doheny Memorial Library, Room 121
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.


AGENDA

Rebecca Lonergan, Academic Vice President, called the meeting to order at 2:06 pm.

Distinguished Faculty Service and Walter Wolf Awards
Julie Nyquist, Chair of the Senate Awards Committee, asked for nominations for the Lifetime Service Award and the Walter Wolf Award (see memo here). The committee of faculty who decide who should receive the awards is made up of past award recipients.

Student preferred names and gender identity in Blackboard and in GRS
Douglas Shook, Chief Information Officer, presented modifications being made to the IT system so students can choose to identify their preferred name and/or pronouns, to be used in several different systems at USC. This will be a phased rollout, with Blackboard, the Grading and Roster System, and the student directory reflecting these changes first. The Registrar’s office will review all name changes. Other institutions are starting to do this as well. Shook asked the Senators for feedback and comments before these changes are made. It was suggested that instead of the entire community receiving notification on the day of roll-out, faculty should be notified before the students are able to make these changes, so faculty will not be confused if the names of some of their students have changed. A clarification was made that students’ email IDs will not change as a result of a name change.

Approval of December 5 and 10 Senate meeting draft minutes
Ashley Uyeshiro Simon, Secretary General, presented the December 5, 2018 draft minutes for discussion and approval.

Todd Brun moved to approve the minutes; Sofia Gruskin seconded; 26 in favor; 0 opposed; 1 abstention.

Uyeshiro Simon then presented the December 10, 2018 Special Meeting draft minutes for discussion and approval. It was clarified that the Office of Human Resources is different from legal counsel, and a friendly amendment was proposed to include “office of the General Counsel” in line 59. No objections were made.
Adam Gilbert moved to approve the minutes with the friendly amendment; Jessica Parr seconded; 24 in favor; 0 opposed; 4 abstentions.

Discussion regarding agenda for the Joint Provost / Senate Retreat
Lonergan asked the Senate to give feedback and identify important questions that need to be discussed at the Joint Provost/Senate Retreat in February surrounding two main topics:

1. How to work through barriers and siloes across schools
2. The current composition of faculty, and what we want it to be in the future

The first topic was discussed at length, and vital issues were identified, such as: barriers to teaching in more than one school, collaborative/shared teaching, technological needs for collaboration, faculty load issues when co-teaching, assigning credit for scholarship, seemingly unequal access to collaborative research opportunities, fully including geographically dispersed faculty, and slow hiring processes and collaborations with other universities (national and international). Several arguments were made that the revenue-sharing/cost-center budgeting systems used at USC promote siloes between schools, as well as between the administration and schools. Final questions were posed about whether collaborative teaching includes programming, and how these problems may influence promotion and tenure.

The second topic was not discussed because of time limits; Lonergan asked the Senators to send ideas and questions about both Retreat topics to her and Yaniv Bar-Cohen, President of the Academic Senate. Provost Michael Quick stated Vice Provost Elizabeth Graddy has good data about our current faculty composition to help with the topic of faculty composition.

Dialogue with Provost Michael Quick
Provost Michael Quick opened by stating how glad he is to have the new meeting room, which honors faculty and provides them with a space on campus. He noted Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Week was occurring that same week, and spoke admiringly of how it has grown from 28 events two years ago to 99 events this year. He announced that a fund has been created to encourage additional inclusive/diverse faculty hiring, and that requests from schools have already been received.

Regarding the Marshall school, Quick reported having three meetings with the Marshall Faculty Council thus far (one including President Austin), and reported they are now mutually focused on how to move forward. He will be co-chairing the search committee for a new dean, and he has asked the Marshall Faculty Council to give him suggestions of deans to co-chair the committee, as well as suggestions of Marshall Faculty to be committee members. He will also ask for an informal board of advisors during this search, possibly including a Marshall affiliate from the Board of Trustees, a representative from the Marshall Board of Leaders, and both an undergraduate and a graduate student from Marshall. He anticipates that the dean search will start soon and move quickly.

Quick reported he has been working with the Senate Executive Board to think about new processes that will give faculty more input and consultation during dean reviews. The tentative plan is to have a fairly large school-wide faculty committee perform an academic review of the dean, and to also have a separate, very small University-wide committee that would be given access to the school committee’s findings, as well as personnel files and other information. The smaller committee would advise him about the reappointment. He later clarified that a summary
of the findings concerning a dean’s reappointment could be shared with faculty from the school, but the summary would not include sensitive personnel or other confidential information. He stated that he hopes to have an improved reappointment process in place by the end of this semester.

There are three Senior Vice President searches going on right now (Human Resources, Communications, and External Relations), which the President is leading. Quick is also searching for a new Vice Provost of Student Affairs, and will have a committee of faculty and students help his team with this search. He would like to get input from faculty about the role of Student Affairs at USC, and will be reaching out to talk about this in the future.

The window for students’ applications closed this week; there were about 68,000 undergraduate applications, a 5% increase from last year, with about a 10.5% admission rate. He noted we will need to discuss what our optimal student body size will be long-term, as more students puts a larger strain on resources, which may impact our educational mission, despite the revenue benefits.

Quick stated he is looking forward to the Sustainability retreat, and thanked the Sustainability committee for working on it. He also thanked the other faculty who have served on all of the joint and University committees and task forces.

Quick reported his office is about to send a memo to all faculty about the current processes for merit and salary review, including what to do if you have concerns about your merit review. A comment was made about RTPC salaries and a sustainable of cost of living in Los Angeles. He has also worked with Executive Vice Provost Elizabeth Graddy to create and staff a committee that has been tasked with better understanding our research faculty, including their roles, needs, and school differences, so that they can be better supported. In addition, he asked for more discussion surrounding a comprehensive University strategy for managing our growing number of online programs, as well as how to get students out of the traditional classrooms and more interested in research.

A question was asked about a memo the Dworak-Peck School of Social Work received today stating the school’s dean search was on hold until the new University president was decided. Quick stated he believes a new president will be decided soon, so it hopefully should not delay the dean search much.

A senator asked how the University is supporting parents of children in LAUSD during the current teachers’ strike, and Quick replied he is actively working on a plan. Another question was asked about the status of USC’s current UPC childcare center vendor, and Quick stated they are aware of the problems that exist, and they are looking into whether the HSC vendor could help them oversee the UPC center (at least temporarily), for which the University would bear most of the cost increase. He authorized David Wright to budget for a staff member to be assigned fulltime to overseeing the childcare situation. He also confirmed they are consulting with the faculty/staff childcare advisory group in creating the new childcare plan.

Follow-up of Marshall Business School issues and Dean-related decisions

Lonergan asked for comments and questions regarding the proposed changes to how dean reappointments will be conducted (as reported by Provost Quick above). Statements were made that these potential process changes are good, but that faculty involvement in the early termination of a dean, despite “at-will” status, is essential for shared governance and to reduce
bias. An argument was made that the smaller, confidential University committee should not be anonymous, or it could be perceived as lacking transparency and accountability. A comment was made that there may be a difference between what information the administration can disclose because of legal and privacy concerns, and what faculty would like to hear. A suggestion was made to have the General Counsel come to a future Senate meeting to explain this difference. A suggestion was also made that the ultimate decision-makers in a dean’s review should at least be asked to explain the reasons for their choices, especially if the administration’s decision was contrary to the advice of the faculty groups. A question was asked if we can strengthen regular-term dean reviews because doing that might lead to better data being available when we need to make an early-termination decision.

**Draft Report from Task Force on Communication and Engagement**

Lonergan, Co-Chair of the Task Force on Communication and Engagement, quickly summarized the Task Forces’ draft report. The goals of the Task Force were to get faculty more engaged, and to improve communication at the Senate and Faculty Council levels. The Senate has historically used emails, newsletters, Senate meetings, some social media, and a few in-person meetings for communication. Read rates for the newsletters have been about 23%, with a 14% click-through rate. The Task Force conducted an informal survey. That survey revealed that most faculty prefer to receive information via email. The information they want to receive is generally information about significant policies, programmatic changes, and big problems. Most faculty also indicated that they also prefer to provide feedback by email. In looking at other universities, there were not a lot of universities found that were proficient at internal communications. However, change management and communication literature stresses multiple communication methods should always be used, with difficult topics communicated in-person. Large organizations also need to be sensitive to information overload, meaning that someone needs to curate the number of communications.

The Task Force draft recommendations include using multiple methods to repeat important information to the university community, while also being selective about what is important enough to communicate it to everyone. The report also recommends continued use of video conferencing for inclusivity, training of Senators about communication responsibilities, website reformatting, improved communication among Senators between meetings (i.e. creating an intranet), more support for communication management, to always include opportunities for feedback, and a request to the administration to look at University-level communication practices.

A clarification was made that an anonymous feedback box was being created currently on the Senate website. A suggestion was made that emails include executive summaries, and that the Senate improve education for faculty regarding the Senate’s role and purpose.

**Discussion regarding Task Force for Gender Violence and Harassment**

Shafiqa Ahmadi, Devon Brooks and Ruth Wood, Co-chairs of Task Force on Gender Violence and Harassment presented the preliminary recommendations of the Task Force, which included faculty, staff, and undergraduate and graduate students. After receiving feedback, these recommendations will be sent to the Senate and Provost’s office. General categories of recommendations included offering a public apology, developing and revising policies and procedures, transforming cultural norms, improving response systems, and strengthening infrastructure (including education and training, data collection and use, and Human Resource practices). The co-chairs emphasized there should be a standing committee, as well as a new Vice President for Sexual Misconduct and Gender Harassment, tasked with continuing this work after
the Task Force is done. A more detailed report is currently being written, and the plan is to engage
with the community to request feedback.

A suggestion was made that the Task Force talk with faculty who have experienced gender
violence or harassment and gone through reporting processes, and to ask them to volunteer
feedback on the recommendations.

**Announcements**

Bonaventure Hotel & Suites, DTLA; Topic TBD.

b) The Senate meeting schedule and venues for 2018 - 2019 is posted on the Senate website:
https://academicsenate.usc.edu/New Business

**Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 4:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Uyeshiro Simon
Secretary General of the Academic Senate