ACADEMIC SENATE

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
Meeting of September 11, 2019
Doheny Memorial Library, Room 121
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.


Present Online: B. Belcher, A. Mackay, T. Ton (alternate for C. Park), A. Zoto

Absent: D. Armstrong, S. Wickersheimer, G. Zada


AGENDA

Rebecca Lonergan, Academic Senate President, called the meeting to order at 2:03 pm.

A moment of silence was observed to honor victims of the September 11th, 2001 attacks.

Introductions

All persons present stated their names, titles, schools, and role in the Senate, if any.

Dialogue with USC President Carol Folt

President Folt stated she and the new Provost will attend portions of as many Senate meetings as possible. She has been making her way around to as many faculty and Faculty Council meetings as possible, and (with the Provost) will continue to do so. Folt stated she is getting a sense of the depth and breadth of USC, including the importance of shared governance; but while she will always try to be candid and honest, she acknowledged that she cannot always be completely transparent. She recognized that although there are many issues that need to be addressed, the two that top her list are:

1. Doing a “deep-dive” into athletics and admissions, to take a comprehensive look at all the processes, policies, etc. from recruitment through after graduation. She will also be putting some things into place very soon, but would like for the Provost to get here first as this will affect academic life.

2. Enhancing our sustainability efforts. Folt stated Daniel Mazmanian (Price, Dornsife) has agreed to lead the initial Task Force on Sustainability, and that she has spoken to the deans about getting people from their schools involved.

A question was asked about a timeline for structural changes of the Board, administration, and deans that Folt would like the University to have. Folt answered that she feels she can build a framework for the deans and administration in a matter of months, as most problems are about operational structures, inclusion of deans in decision processes, and getting them more realistic information. She stated expectations for deans (e.g., how they work with faculty) need to be put in place and informed by Faculty Councils, the Senate, the Provost, and the AAUP. Regarding the Board of Trustees, Folt stated that they are working on their own governance structures, but although it is difficult for the Board to change, this process should not hinder the other opportunities for change at the University.

Another question was asked about whether the Stevens Institute operations will be reexamined, given
Randy Hall’s recent announcement that he will be stepping down as Vice President of Research soon. Folt stated she does not know enough at this point to give an answer, but the Provost will likely be the one to examine this.

Approval of May Senate meeting draft minutes
Ashley Uyeshiro Simon, Secretary General, presented the May 2019 draft minutes for discussion and approval. She clarified that anyone not present at that meeting should abstain from voting.

Chimene Tucker moved to approve the minutes with a friendly amendment to correct the meeting date (year); Paul Adler seconded; 19 in favor; 0 opposed; 17 abstentions.

Orientation for new Senators
Lonergan stated that a proposed Senator Orientation document was emailed to all Senators prior to this meeting, and went on to highlight certain aspects:

- Representation: Senators represent all faculty in their respective schools, not just full-time faculty
- Voting and non-voting Senators, and voting procedures including how to vote via video conference
- Election of the Executive Board
- Term limits of six concurrent years
- Attendance to ensure representation
- Senate meeting dates, documents, minutes, and “talking points” that are sent to all faculty after each meeting with hyperlinks to relevant documents to keep faculty informed of what was discussed
- Communications: Senators are responsible for communicating what happens in the Senate back to their faculty and Faculty Councils. They should also bring school-based issues to the Senate’s attention, especially when University-level issues may also be implicated, or they involve difficulties working with administration.
- Committee oversight and structures: There are over 80 committees and the Senate oversees or helps to staff many of these; some are Senate committees, some are University committees, and many are joint Provost/Senate committees. Senate committees have websites and report histories, but other types of committees may not. Lonergan stated she will try to keep the Senate appraised of these committees in an effective manner (e.g., inviting committee chairs to talk about the charges and progress of their committees, having end-of-year reports to give out, and perhaps establishing a “Committee on Committees”), despite the large number. [To read an article about the Ins and Outs of Senate Committees, click here.]
- Senate retreats in Fall and Spring

A question was asked if there are plans to hold at least one meeting on the Health Sciences Campus (HSC) to show more inclusivity. Concerns were raised about previous attempts to have Senate meetings on HSC which yielded low attendance rates and sometimes not having a quorum. A Senator stated he has attended both in-person and online, and the online experience has been fine.

Lonergan stated that for technological or website questions, Senators should contact Uyeshiro Simon (Secretary General), and for agenda questions contact Lonergan (President) or Paul Adler, Senate Academic Vice President.

Clarification questions were asked regarding committee structures, nominations, and established Senate processes. It was explained that the Executive Board is still in the process of finalizing some committees and their charges for this year, as well as navigating which committees will be needed this year due to changes in administration. A statement was made about how involvement in committee work can be tied to recruitment and engagement of faculty in the Senate. Dan Pecchenino, Senate Administrative Vice President, explained the process of self-nominations, staffing to consider diverse representation of opinions, and acknowledgement/gratitude to self-nominees. He also addressed the misperception that
serving on a committee requires dean or Faculty Council approval.

An inquiry was made about where Senators can find more information about Faculty Council purposes, roles, and responsibilities. Lonergan identified the Progress Report from the Task Force for Shared Governance contained proposed language to better define Faculty Councils, but that the Deans have resisted this language. She stated they are arranging a meeting with the Deans to discuss this further, but that they are also waiting until the new Provost can decide his position on this issue because it likely will be impossible for the Senate to change the language with the Provost’s support. It was noted that the Marshall Faculty Council spent a lot of time on this, and that a confidential place for Senators to share documents would be good to have despite differences between schools.

Lonergan reported that the Executive Board is in the process of setting up a closed online forum for Faculty Council Chairs and Senators, from which people can opt-out. This is so people can pose questions to one another, share documents, and more without having to wait until Senate meetings. She also stated there will be an anonymous feedback and comments link on the Senate website soon.

Resolution 19/20-01 (Trojan Council)

Lonergan presented Resolution 19/20-01, which endorses the creation and existence of a Trojan Council. A friendly amendment was proposed to correct the spelling of “WHEREAS” in Line 14.

The Executive Board moved to approve Resolution 19/20-01 with a friendly amendment to correct the spelling error in Line 14; Devin Griffiths seconded. Motion unanimously passed with 36 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstentions.

Priorities for the Senate during the 2019-2020 academic year

Lonergan discussed key issues and initiatives for the Senate this year.

- Continue working on shared governance. The Task Force on Shared Governance is continuing its work again this year and will be talking about Executive Board elections, committee membership and construction, and more.
- Modify Faculty Council language in the Handbook.
- Continue efforts towards culture change. The Barrett Values Survey comes out in mid-October; all Senators should encourage their faculty to participate. This process will involve lots of follow-up discussions about the survey results, which will lead to concrete things that can be done to improve our culture.
- Continue efforts towards student wellness. Lonergan stated she sits on the Provost’s Cabinet, where they are discussing this and she is able to push hard for initiatives the Senate supports. Other Senators stated we also need to think about faculty and staff wellbeing, as well as graduate student needs.
- Work with administration to improve investigatory procedures and policies through the Office of Conduct, Accountability, and Professionalism (OCAP). Lonergan stated she has been working with Mike Blanton, Vice President of Professionalism and Ethics, and Felicia Washington, Senior Vice President for Human Resources on this issue. She has asked for two working groups to be set up, one to examine investigatory procedures and the other to look at informal processes to handle misconduct (similar to the Professionalism Program at Keck). She has also asked for an expansion of the Ombuds offices and leadership and misconduct/reporting training for all people in supervisory positions to help them understand when to handle issues internally, when to report to OCAP, etc. Other Senators raised concerns about OCAP membership, lack of clarity of procedures, lack of support throughout the process, unreasonable timelines, and a culture of fear that has been perceived by some faculty due to the OCAP processes. It was clarified that this office was announced in 2017, and was intended to address non-protected class complaints that do not fall under the Office of Equity and Diversity or Title IX.
- Address Master Program quality through a Task Force co-chaired by Paul Adler and John Matsusaka, Interim Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs.
• Represent faculty in the new working group on athletics and admission reform, which President Folt is creating.
• Oversee the four Strategic Plan Committees which will each be giving out $500,000 in grants to faculty.

Discussion regarding Proposal for Bike-Free Zone
Mark Ewalt, Executive Director for Administrative Operations, gave a brief overview of and requested feedback about a proposal developed years ago to make central portions of campus accessible only to pedestrians, vendors, and facilities vehicles (see summary email, full campus map, specific maps, and full report here). The feedback will be taken to the Vice Presidents and Provost, then the President to see if we can move forward on increasing safety on campus. He stated that the last representative bodies that saw this proposal were the memberships of the Senate, Staff Assembly, and Student Government bodies three years ago (which were supportive of this type of proposal at that time), but this year the Staff Assembly desired a more aggressive plan while Undergraduate Student Government only wanted to ban electric vehicles and increase other traffic management strategies.

The floor was opened for questions, which included clarifications about what vehicles are banned, enforcement (including need for quality control training of CSC officers), boundary establishment, bike parking, and student education. Ewalt clarified that the proposed plan includes all vehicles (bikes, skateboards, etc.) except vendors and utility/Facilities vehicles. He stated enforcement would be heavy in the first 3-4 weeks, then DPS would do “spot” enforcement for the rest of the semester, and this schedule would continue for four years. A lot of reinforcement at intersections is currently done by CSC (third-party vendor), but this is very expensive. Ewalt specified the zones that are proposed would allow students from off-campus to reach the various functional zones of campus, without pushing bike traffic onto a city street. The solutions for bike parking (with an estimated 5,000 bikes needing 2,800 bike parking slots) that were proposed were to move bikes to the perimeter or use the first floor of parking structures for all bike parking; however, no decision has been made about this issue yet.

Ewalt identified having a statement of support or opposition from the Senate to present to upper administration would be helpful; however, Lonergan stated that there was not enough consensus at this time. After a straw poll, most Senators were in favor of the proposal, but many wanted more information.

Announcements
a) The Senate meeting schedule is posted on the Senate website:
https://academicsenate.usc.edu/
b) The roster of Senate members and committee chairs is posted on this link:
https://academicsenate.usc.edu/senators/senators/
c) Sustainability Committee would like to announce that the Global climate strikes will be September 20th, 3-4:30pm (same day as inauguration) in support of climate strike movement and urgent action.

Adjournment
Meeting was adjourned at 4:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

Ashley Uyeshiro Simon
Secretary General of the Academic Senate