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2 **ACADEMIC SENATE**
3

4 **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

5 Meeting of February 19, 2020
6 Doheny Memorial Library, Room 121
7 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.
8

9 **Present:** P. Adler, S. Ahmadi, M. Apostolos, Y. Bar-Cohen, S. Bucher, T.A. Brun, A. Cannon, D. Crombecque,
10 M. Crowley, M. Daniels-Rauterkus, G. Davison, S. Dincer (alternate for C. Park), E. Fife, M. Finberg
11 (alternate for S. Wickersheimer), D. Griffiths, L. Gross, L. Holding, A. Imre, J. Israel, M. Jacobson (alternate
12 for C. Pike), G. Kung (alternate for L. Gazette), R. Labaree, R. Lonergan, A. Mackay, L. Matchison, T.J.
13 McCarthy, J. Parr, D. Pecchenino, G. Polidori, S. Rich, A. Samkian, A. Uyeshiro Simon, C. Tucker, G.
14 Ulkumen, J. B. Walker, T. Wattenbarger, A. Wilcox, A. Wu, A. Zoto

15 **Present Online:** D. Armstrong, B. Belcher, B. Blair, J. Cederbaum, J. McLaughlin Gray, D. O’Leary, C.
16 Redfearn, A. Samkian, J. Parga, G. Zada,

17 **Guests Present:** R.E. Cislowski, J. Cunningham, A. Elefano, C. Folt, S. Gatwick, A. Gross, M. Levine, D.
18 Mazmanian, C. Neuman, N. Olmos, B. Shuster, C. Zukoski
19

20
21 **AGENDA**
22

23 Rebecca Lonergan, Academic Senate President, called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.
24

25 **Approval of January Senate Meeting Draft Minutes**

26 Dan Pecchenino, Administrative Vice President, presented the January 2020 draft minutes for discussion
27 and approval.
28

29 *Chimene Tucker moved to approve the minutes; Jessica Parr seconded. Motion passed with 26 in favor, 0*
30 *opposed, and 1 abstention.*
31

32 **Dialogue with President Carol Folt & Provost Chip Zukoski**

33 President Folt began by telling the Senate an [announcement](#) will come out tomorrow about increasing
34 financial aid for students whose families are slightly above or below the median income, as these students
35 often do not qualify for other aid. She added home ownership will no longer be included when determining
36 aid eligibility, and that this plan should significantly reduce debt for many students upon graduation. She
37 stated she continues to work with the deans to help raise funds for financial aid, equity, emergencies,
38 accessibility, and inclusivity. They also plan to establish a “First Generation Plus” Center for students who
39 are first generation, transfer, undocumented, etc., in order to have a central location for resources and
40 guidance for these students to ensure an equitable experience. Folt also told the Senate she will create
41 five-year capital plans to establish goals and be able to see progress in different areas. Faculty and staff will
42 be included in determining capital priorities and working with deans on development for needs such as
43 renovating classrooms, employee salaries, sustainability, and more. Finally, Folt stated she continues to
44 work on the request stated in the Senate [Resolution 19/20-02](#) about Misconduct Investigation Reporting.
45

46 Provost Zukoski began by thanking the Senate for a great retreat, and for the stimulating conversations
47 around trauma-informed pedagogy and the values journey thus far. He stated he would like to continue
48 thinking about how we can do more to de-stress our students. Zukoski went on to state he has established
49 a new financial process this year called “The Path Forward,” which serves to gain advice on budget needs
50 and priorities in order to establish common goals. He stated he plans to announce an “Executive Sponsors
51 Committee” made up of faculty, staff, students, and administrators to discuss how we build budgets, create
52 five-year plans, and other budget planning needs such as having competitive salaries, research,

53 cybersecurity, student wellness, and more. These are areas that they have not built budgets around
54 previously. He stated the budget reform process will be ongoing and budgets will be shared, in order to
55 ensure better alignment with current priorities.

56

57 Zukoski brought up the February 18th [memorandum](#) to faculty and staff announcing the establishment of a
58 joint committee to review processes and practices related to the Office of Conduct, Accountability, and
59 Professionalism (OCAP). He stated this committee will have representation from Central HR, the Senate,
60 and the Staff Assembly. Their first charge is to post the current OCAP process by the end of this semester,
61 as these are not yet posted online. Their next charge is to make recommendations to the HR Steering
62 Committee (chaired by Felicia Washington, Senior Vice President for HR) about how to improve current
63 processes, while balancing the needs of both complainants and the accused as they have heard frustrations
64 from both sides. Folt added that in her role as Chair of the AAU committee on preventing sexual
65 harassment and assault, they have never seen such rapidly changing rules from the Department of
66 Education and the Office of Civil Rights, but that being on this committee allows her to be at the center of
67 everything that is happening.

68

69 Lonergan thanked the Provost for taking action around OCAP and the budget, as these are issues the
70 Senate has been asking to address.

71

72 Questions were asked of the Provost about why he did not decide to suspend OCAP, how members of the
73 Joint Committee were appointed, and where OCAP will be housed moving forward. Zukoski stated he felt it
74 was inappropriate to suspend cases in process while reforms are being considered. Zukoski stated the
75 Senate Executive Board, Staff Assembly leadership, and Felicia Washington made recommendations for
76 committee members from their respective constituencies. He further explained the reorganizational
77 process that Central HR is currently going through will help decide where OCAP and investigations will go,
78 but the answer is not clear yet. Folt explained that some steps were taken quickly as they were
79 recommended by OCR to be compliant with the law (e.g., Title IX). Lonergan clarified Devin Griffiths,
80 Senator from Dornsife, is on the committee, not Devon Brooks (as incorrectly stated in the Memo).

81

82 A statement was made that RTPC faculty in some schools feel unfairly burdened, that there is concern
83 about the merit system in general, and that there should be a standard pay raise for all faculty, separate
84 from the merit process to aid with cost of living increases. Zukoski responded by stating salaries and
85 methods of paying faculty are very heterogeneous across schools, making this issue more difficult. Pay
86 increases are needed, especially for RTPC faculty. The five-year plan (with staggered changes each year) will
87 deal with these salary issues, but there are no details yet as this requires a lot of conversation. Regarding
88 the merit process, he is currently learning how this works, and recognizes one challenge is the need to
89 balance limited budgets against the high and increasing cost of living in Los Angeles while still being able to
90 award exemplary behavior. Folt added that when she worked on this issue at Dartmouth as Provost, they
91 worked service contributions more purposefully into the merit process to ensure all faculty are rewarded
92 for all of the work they do. She stated we need to think about what we are trying to achieve, then fix the
93 process in order to get us to those goals for different types of faculty.

94

95 Strengthening the roles of school Faculty Councils was raised, in order to help deans understand and better
96 address issues. Zukoski stated the roles of Faculty Councils was being discussed currently.

97

98 A question was raised about whether the tuition-exchange benefit program could be reconsidered to be
99 less cumbersome and more valuable for employees. Folt stated this program costs well over \$150M due to
100 the large size of the University, and the extent to which this program is used by people across the income
101 spectrum. She stated reviewing the way the funds are spent in this program is a good idea, and
102 acknowledged this benefit is one of the reasons some employees choose to work at USC.

103

104 A final question was posed about whether the university is considering divestment from investments in
105 anything related to fossil fuels. Folt clarified the Board of Trustees have met with students about this, and

106 she is in conversations with the Board as well. She stated new investments in the fossil fuel industry have
107 been halted since 2018, but the Board has not decided whether to divest current holdings.
108

109 **Presentation regarding the Presidential Working Group on Sustainability**

110 Dan Mazmanian, Chair of the [Presidential Working Group on Sustainability](#) which looks at sustainability in
111 education, research, and operations, presented the group's [recommendations for sustainable education](#).
112 Mazmanian stated the group is made up of 21 members and contains faculty, students, and staff including
113 Lonergan, Adler, and the Provost, with representation from HSC and UPC, and from many different schools.
114 Their charge was to develop recommendations for building a more sustainable USC, the first step was to
115 look at the educational experience for our students, and the group recommended a focus on the existential
116 threat of sustainability through the prism of every different school as a way to incorporate this issue into
117 students' learning. They are proposing a mandatory course, as well as an experiential learning course, as
118 they felt it was essential to change the whole University.
119

120 Regarding research, they are looking at the key thematic areas that they would like the University to focus
121 on, that also allow USC to be recognized for this work. Financially, Mazmanian stated there are already
122 many things in place such as courses and operations that have not been brought together, so the funding
123 for some of these recommendations would not start from scratch. Folt stated it will take a lot to get this
124 plan in place, but that there is great interest in funding these efforts already.
125

126 A question was asked about how these recommendations would overlap with the Interdisciplinary
127 Environmental Studies Program. Mazmanian stated they are not yet in the implementation phase, but will
128 start discussing rollout of these recommendations with the Provost on Friday. A comment was made that
129 the interaction of this educational initiative with General Education courses could create problematic
130 incentives within schools, and thus it would be important to consider what the reactions of students may
131 be when they are deciding which courses to take. Mazmanian clarified that any other schools and deans
132 who request to join the committee are able, and those requests should be from the deans to the
133 President's office.
134

135 A question was asked about how much is being devoted to capital investment. Mazmanian stated there is a
136 2028 plan in the works now, and the group is working closely with investment to ensure carbon neutrality
137 and zero waste planning are being incorporated into the plans. He added part the working group is
138 recommending the creation of a Chief Sustainability Officer, whose job will be marketing, communications,
139 and outreach to get people excited about and involved in this effort.
140

141 **Discussion regarding OCAP proposed resolutions**

142 The "Open Letter" from the Dornsife Faculty Council, as well as the Resolution proposed by the Gould
143 School of Law Faculty Council were discussed. Lonergan stated the joint committee to review OCAP
144 processes is something she has been continually asking for, so she is glad this is now in place. She
145 reiterated the first charge of the committee is to post current OCAP procedures, then afterwards decide if
146 OCAP should continue with changes to its processes, or if it should be replaced by something else.
147

148 A Senator from Dornsife clarified the "Open Letter" was also co-signed by Dworak-Peck and Annenberg,
149 but that they did not finish putting this forward as a resolution yet.
150

151 A question was asked about whether the Provost would be willing to share the joint committee's
152 recommendations with the Senate and Staff Assembly for comments, prior to Provost approval. Lonergan
153 stated she believed this would be the case, but that timing could be an issue as the end of the academic
154 year is soon.
155

156 Stephen Rich, Senator from Gould, stated Gould's Faculty Council is willing to withdraw the resolution
157 given the creation of the new joint committee, unless other Senators would like to move forward.
158

159 A concern was raised about the Senate process by which people are nominated to serve on committees
160 such as this joint committee, and the absence of opportunities for conversation prior to taking action.
161 Lonergan stated staffing the many Senate, joint, and University committees is one of the main tasks of the
162 Executive Board.

163
164 A concern was raised about the request in both the resolution and letter for the re-examination of all
165 previous OCAP cases and sanctions, as well as to suspend all OCAP investigations. A countervailing concern
166 was raised that suspending OCAP would harm victims of harassment, who had no office to turn to prior to
167 the establishment of OCAP. An argument was made that the biggest issue now is urgency, as neither the
168 current processes nor suspension are ideal, so the priority should be to fix the process as soon as possible.

169
170 It was argued again that OCAP should be suspended anyway due to its precipitous establishment and poor
171 process, which unfairly impacts faculty. A suggestion was made that if OCAP were suspended, the
172 University could go back to using its traditional HR processes to handle the pending cases. Concerns were
173 raised with this proposal regarding leaving these types of decisions about past misconduct within the
174 schools.

175
176 A statement was made that having better knowledge about what goes on in the investigations and
177 publicizing anonymous aggregate data would be helpful. Lonergan stated the Provost supports putting out
178 anonymized data so people can see overall trends.

179
180 The Cinema Faculty Council stated it was strongly in favor of keeping OCAP but reforming its processes.
181 Keck also was in favor of keeping OCAP, as they felt this was key in helping victims have a place to turn for
182 help. Rossier was in favor of putting energy into holding the joint committee and Provost accountable for a
183 reasonable timeline and actual changes made to OCAP, as opposed to suspension. A comment was made
184 that suspension may mean putting employees back under their supervisor where there is potential abuse
185 and/or toxic environments. Another statement was made that we should not do away with a process that
186 is helping victims.

187
188 Annenberg endorsed both the "Open Letter" and the proposed resolution, and also stated concern about
189 not reviewing previous decisions that were made under a faulty process. Dworak-Peck ultimately decided
190 to support the letter due to the desire to reexamine previous decisions and increase shared governance.

191
192 Marshall supported the spirit of both documents, but had concerns about what the alternative to
193 suspension would be, and wanted more details of current procedures and data before co-signing anything.
194 Viterbi also did not reach a conclusion.

195
196 A statement was made that suspension and reexamination are two different courses of action, and that if
197 we did not suspend OCAP we could still examine previous findings (specifically if the reexamination
198 demonstrated that the previous processes were inappropriate), and this rule could apply to cases currently
199 under investigation. A comment was made that of the three issues presented in the letter and resolution
200 (creation of shared governance to review the process, suspension, and reexamination of cases), there is
201 more information, data, and background needed to make an informed decision about suspension and
202 reexamination. However, people can bring ideas to the members of the new joint committee, who will
203 have access to this information and be able to make informed recommendations.

204
205 Marty Levine, Vice Provost and Senior Advisor to the Provost, clarified that prior to OCAP, non-protected
206 class issues went to the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) for investigations, but OED prioritized
207 protected-class cases which consumed all of their time. In regards to reexamination of cases, there have
208 been eight findings of Faculty Handbook violations; these then went to a committee of faculty who had
209 experiences with sanctioning who received a detailed file of information, and who could ask for more
210 information if they chose. If the accused wanted to appeal, the appeal went to a different faculty
211 committee for a full review.

212
213 A friendly amendment to the proposed resolution was proposed by Devin Griffiths, Senator from Dornsife,
214 to strike the third bullet point only. The friendly amendment was accepted by the mover, Stephen Rich,
215 Senator from Gould.

216
217 *Stephen Rich (Gould School of Law) proposed the resolution with friendly amendment; Todd Brun (Viterbi)*
218 *seconded. Motion passed unanimously with 39 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.*

219
220 **New Business**

221 No new business was raised.

222 -
223 **Announcements**

- 224 (a) March 2: deadline to receive nominations for the Distinguished Faculty Service and Walter Wolf
225 Awards
226 (b) Next Senate meeting March 11

227
228 **Adjournment**

229 Meeting was adjourned at 4:07 pm.

230
231 Respectfully submitted,

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233 

234
235
236
237 Ashley Uyeshiro Simon
238 Secretary General of the Academic Senate