



# How can we take action to ensure the greatest possible learning experience for our students this fall?

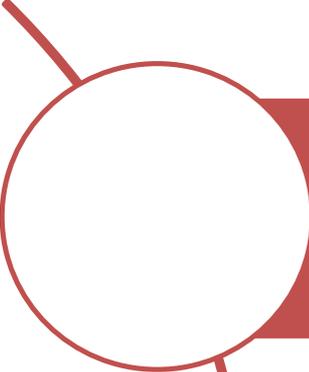
Committee on Information Services  
AY2019-20 Report

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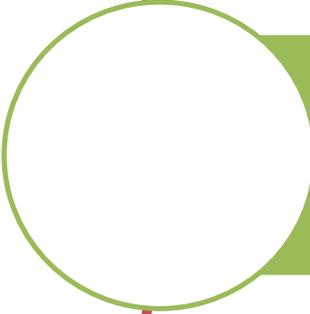
**USC** University of  
Southern California

# CIS Subcommittees



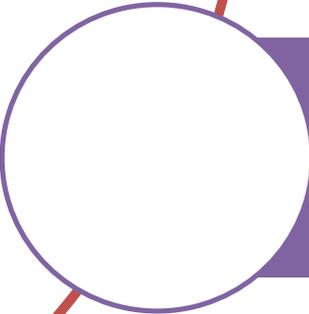
## Disaster Preparedness

How can the university help faculty to prepare to teach following a disaster?



## Virtual Faculty Integration

How can the university better support geographically dispersed faculty who teach and attend meetings fully online?



## Core Information Technology Services

What are the minimum technology requirements for 21<sup>st</sup> Century teaching and learning?



How can the university help faculty to prepare to teach following a disaster?

# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS



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# Disaster Preparedness Pilot



December 2019 Request for Faculty Volunteers in Pilot Study

January 2020 Pilot protocols sent to Volunteers

February 2020 Pilot of virtual class meeting

March 2020 COVID-19 Campus Closures: All classes go online

# Disaster Preparedness Pilot



**Purpose:** Simulate a disaster response scenario in which faculty teach and students learn fully online

**36** faculty, **807** students from Dornsife, Dramatic Arts, Rossier, Marshall, Keck, Pharmacy, and Iovine Young Academy partook in the study.

Faculty and students were surveyed on their disaster preparedness, technology needs, and how to improve online teaching and learning experiences.

Survey Findings were presented to USC Information and Technology Services and the Provost's Office prior to USC emergency response to COVID-19 pandemic.

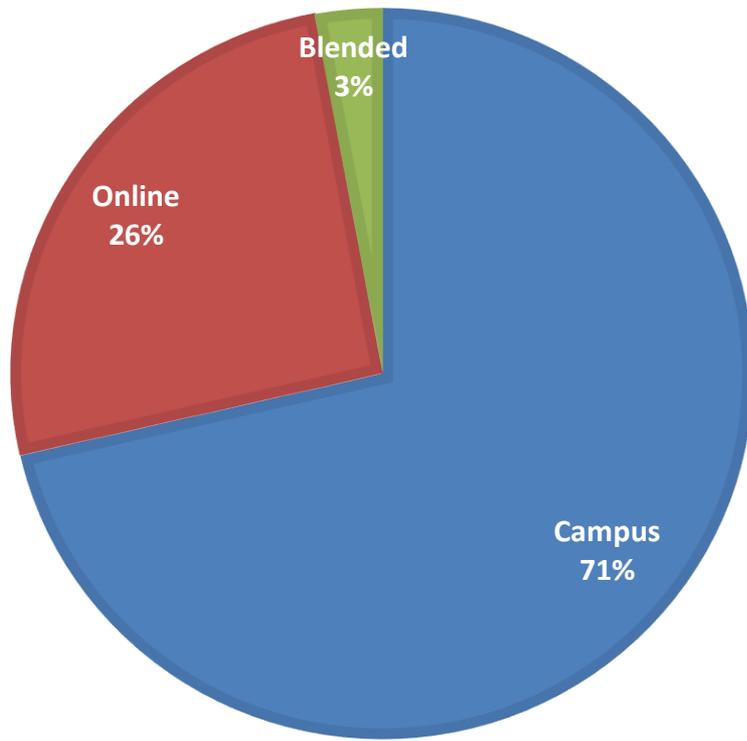
# Disaster Preparedness Pilot

## Faculty Survey Results



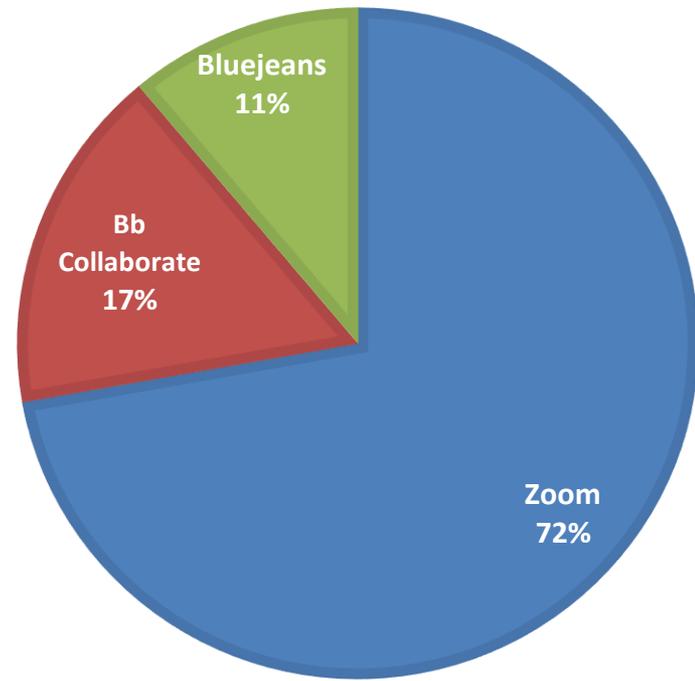
### PRIOR TEACHING EXPERIENCE

■ Campus ■ Online ■ Blended



### VIDEOCONFERENCE SOFTWARE

■ Zoom ■ Bb Collaborate ■ Bluejeans



# Disaster Preparedness Pilot



## Summary Findings

- ✓ Faculty with little online teaching experience were not adequately prepared to continue classes online following a disruption of the physical classroom.
- ✓ **97.3%** of 807 students surveyed felt adequately prepared by the professor ahead of the online pilot class and attendance was similar to on campus classes.
- ✓ **33.5%** of students and **44.4%** of faculty surveyed rated students' level of engagement in the virtual class at 3 on a scale of 1-5.
- ✓ **44.4%** of faculty surveyed ranked their effectiveness of teaching in the virtual class at 3 on a scale of 1-5.
- ✓ **37.9%** of students surveyed ranked their effectiveness in learning in the virtual classroom at 3 on a scale of 1-5.

# Disaster Preparedness Pilot

## Survey Results: Comments



### Faculty Said...

- More preparation needed. Practice helps.
- Some students had mic/camera problems. Muting mics. Feedback issues if together. Helpful documents came too late.
- Got through more material. Less interaction with students. Retention?
- Structure syllabus to accommodate as lecture. Out of pace/sync with rest of semester.
- Important for students to be prepared with platform ahead of time.
- Faculty with more experience had better experiences.

### Students Said...

- Internet connection issues will vary among Students and Faculty.
- Mic connection/audio problems. Recommend separate headset/mic for instructor?
- Mute mic issues. Explain especially when students are together.
- Minimum hardware? Close other resource-hogging programs on computer (while in class).
- Browser compatibility? Browser dependent if using app?
- Playing multimedia from presenter desktop? Audio issues.
- Be prepared for increased power usage (fully charged battery or powered computer).

# Disaster Preparedness Pilot



## Subcommittee Recommendations

- ✓ All classes should conduct at least one session entirely online each Fall semester, during ShakeOut week. Conduct a similar exercise each Spring semester, on a common week to be determined.
- ✓ In all academic units, at least one faculty meeting should be conducted entirely online each semester.
- ✓ As part of the onboarding process, all new faculty should be trained in university-contracted video conference software (presently, Zoom). Annual refresher training should be available to those wanting it to ensure continued familiarity and facility with such software.
- ✓ All course syllabi should contain boilerplate language to direct students to Blackboard for course continuity, should in-person classes become impractical. Early in each course, faculty should address safety in the physical classroom and protocols of moving to virtual teaching.



How can the university better support geographically dispersed faculty who teach and attend meetings fully online?

# **VIRTUAL FACULTY INTEGRATION**



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# Integrating our Virtual Faculty

## Who are Virtual Faculty?



“Virtual Faculty” are full time and part time RTPC faculty who conduct their teaching and service obligations fully online.



Virtual Faculty do not have a university-based physical office space. They conduct all university business remotely.



Faculty in this arrangement typically teach a higher teaching load (e.g., 95% teaching 5% service).



Virtual Faculty are also referred to as “geographically-dispersed,” “off-site,” or “off-campus” faculty.

(Since our Campus Closures, we are all “Virtual Faculty” until further notice...)



# How can the university better support virtual faculty who teach and attend meetings fully online?



- ✓ **165 virtual faculty**, full-time and part-time, participated in the survey from 13 schools: Ostrow, Keck, Annenberg, Bovard, Dornsife, Dworak-Peck, Gould, Iovine Young, Leventhal, Price, Roski, Rossier, and Viterbi.
- ✓ **5 schools reported having no virtual faculty**: Davis (Gerontology), Thornton, Cinematic Arts, Dramatic Arts, and Pharmacy.
- ✓ **4 schools were unresponsive**: Architecture, Marshall, Bio-kinesiology & Physical Therapy, and Chan (Occupational Science and Therapy).

# Inconsistent Quality Standards for Home-Based IT Equipment Across 13 Schools



- The majority of off-campus faculty (46.6%) reported paying for all home-based equipment used for the purpose of teaching and attending meetings online, whereas other faculty have ample or lucrative technology funding to spend on equipment and home office furniture and supplies. (Q7: 118 responses)
- More than half of off-site faculty (52%) reported being unaware of IT equipment replacement plans offered by their academic unit/school. 27% said their school did not offer any plan and 20% said their school did offer a renewal plan. (Q7)

# Inconsistent Quality Standards for Home-Based IT Services Across 13 Schools



- Great disparities exist in the standards for IT service provisions and reimbursements between academic units throughout the university.
- Nearly half of faculty (**48.6%**) do not receive any reimbursement for IT services such as home-based internet plans, landline plans, or mobile service data plans. (Q9: 138 responses)
- **17%** of participants report receiving reimbursement for high-speed internet services. **12.3%** receive reimbursement for landline phone. **7.3%** receive reimbursement for mobile data phone plans. (Q9)

# Inconsistent Quality Standards of Participation in USC Meetings



- Virtual Faculty in this survey were more likely (**29%**) to join a meeting held in an on-campus conference room by using a video-conference technology. (Q15: 160 responses)
- Some campus-based meetings (**22%**) are held entirely online. Some can join by teleconference line only (**12%**) and others (**12.5%**) are not provided any options to join meetings held on campus. (Q15: 160 responses)
- **55%** of virtual faculty described their experience as having very few opportunities to meaningfully engage with colleagues in “blended” or fully online meetings and limited or no opportunities to physically participate in on campus meetings or events. (Q21: 119 responses)
- To these experiences, Virtual Faculty attributed feelings of isolation and missed opportunities for networking and career advancement, raising issues of equity and inclusion. (Q22: 125 Responses)
- **39%** of faculty never come to campus meetings in person, whereas **39%** report attending on campus meetings 5 or more times annually. (Q18: 118 responses)
- For those faculty attending on campus meetings, the majority (**69%**) paid for their travel costs out of pocket without reimbursement. (Q20: 114 responses)

# Virtual Faculty Integration

## Subcommittee Recommendations



- ✓ **Improve Quality of Home-Based IT Equipment Standards:** Generate and introduce higher and consistent University-Wide Quality Standards for providing home-based ITS Equipment Provisions, Equipment Renewal and Replacement, and Equipment Servicing in all academic units with faculty teaching online from home.
- ✓ **Improve Quality Standards for Home-Based IT Services:** Generate and introduce higher and consistent University-Wide Quality Standards for reimbursing home-based ITS Services in all academic units with faculty teaching online from home. Fund highest available broadband quality access for faculty teaching online from home.
- ✓ **Improve Quality Standards for Participation in USC Meetings:** All schools, programs, and departments should adopt and implement meeting participation standards that ensure full inclusion of virtual faculty. Introduce higher and consistent University-Wide Quality Standards for reimbursing VF travel to major school level and university level events, such as school and program faculty retreats, school and university commencement events.

# Important Considerations

(Given Our University Mission...)



- How will the university ensure all faculty and staff have access to adequate and appropriate technology devices, services, and reimbursement costs that meet and exceed:
  - California’s minimum standards for providing ITS equipment and services to home-based employees?
  - Competing universities’ standards for ITS equipment and services?
- How do we provide historically marginalized and economically at-risk students adequate and appropriate technology devices, services, and reimbursement costs? What is our long-term plan?
- How can we redesign and re-equip our classrooms and learning spaces to support a hybrid teaching model where some students are in the room while others are self-quarantining at home?



# Possible Senate Action

- Generate a Senate Resolution that calls for the university to:
  - Review and implement increased quality standards and funding for home-based IT equipment, services, and participation in USC meetings and events.
  - Introduce, evaluate, and improve short-term and long-term professional learning opportunities for faculty that increase the quality of online teaching.

