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2 **ACADEMIC SENATE**  
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4 **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**  
5 Urgent Meeting of May 26, 2020  
6 Virtual Zoom Meeting (due to COVID-19)  
7 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
8

9 **Present (Senate Members):** P. Adler, S. Ahmadi, M. Apostolos, Y. Bar-Cohen, D. Becker (alternate for J.  
10 Parr), B. Belcher, B. Blair, R. Brown, T. Brun, S. Bucher, P. Cannon, J. Cederbaum, H. Choi, A. Crigler, D.  
11 Crombecque, M. Crowley, G. Davison, E. Fife, R. Filback, L. Ferguson, M. Finberg, M. Frey, S. Gibson, L.  
12 Grazette, D. Griffiths, L. Gross, S. Gruskin, S. Gupta, L. Holding, A. Imre, J. Israel, M. Jacobson (alternate for  
13 C. Pike), K. Konis, G. Kung, R. Labaree, R. Lonergan, M. Mataric, L. Matchison, A. Mackay, T.J. McCarthy  
14 (alternate for C. Redfearn), J. McLaughlin Gray, D. O'Leary, C. Park, J. Pascarella, D. Pecchenino, J. Perren  
15 Cobb, G. Polidori, M. Press, G. Ragusa, C. Resnik, S. Rich, A. Samkian C. Tucker, A. Uyeshiro Simon, J.  
16 Walker, E. Warford, T. Wattenbarger, S. Wickersheimer, A. Wilcox, T. Williams, A. Wu, G. Zada, E. Zeamer  
17 (alternate for M. Daniels-Rauterkus), A. Zoto.

18 **Absent:** G. Ulkumen

19 **Guests:** 768 guests  
20

21 **AGENDA**  
22

23 Rebecca Lonergan, Academic Senate President, called the meeting to order at 10:06 am.  
24

25 **Discussion regarding proposed COVID-19 financial recovery plans**

26 A discussion regarding the COVID-19 financial recovery plans proposed by administration was held.  
27 Lonergan opened the discussion by stating she has received many varying opinions about the budget plan  
28 that the Provost presented to faculty on May 24, 2020. Such variance in opinions makes it difficult to reach  
29 consensus, so the purpose of this meeting is to try and find themes and commonalities about faculty  
30 responses and thoughts. She then asked each school in turn to share general feedback from their faculty.  
31 Senators were asked to refrain from merely reiterating things that were stated previously.  
32

33 Annenberg's Senator shared first, stating there is an underlying concern about things their faculty feel were  
34 not adequately explained, such as why we are not able to use the endowment, and how to cut the costs  
35 related to the growing size of administration. There was a strong desire that any cost reductions be made  
36 as progressive as possible, so as to not affect younger or more junior faculty as much. He also stated the  
37 Annenberg faculty had questions about whether other cut-backs (e.g., travel restrictions) could be  
38 progressive as well, as research or conference travel may be more important for junior faculty. He  
39 emphasized the need for more faculty involvement and better representation in key decisions, not just at  
40 the school-level, but at the university level as well. He proposed a joint Senate/Provost budget advisory  
41 committee be formed and given access to all relevant data including university- and school-level data, and  
42 recommended this committee be consulted by administration prior to making decisions. Lonergan stated  
43 there is currently a Committee on Finance and Enrollment (COFE), and that administration has shared with  
44 her that they plan to put more faculty on the University Finance Committee soon.  
45

46 The Senator from Architecture echoed the recommendation of putting more faculty on the university  
47 finance decision-making body, and reported the faculty in Architecture also wondered about use of  
48 endowment funds. He stated there are concerns about the retirement contribution benefit pause being  
49 uniform rather than progressive, due to the disproportionate affect this will have on younger faculty. He  
50 also stated a desire to clarify what the actual total costs to employees will be, including lack of merit raises,

51 furloughs, and the retirement contribution pause. Lastly, he stated there are worries about a large percent  
52 of their part-time faculty not continuing next year, and about possible increased faculty loads.

53  
54 Bovard College did not give a report, as their Faculty Council was constituted only recently.

55  
56 A Senator from Marshall added that some of their faculty were concerned that some of the university's  
57 financial situation was due to incurred expenses from previous lawsuits, and that faculty should not bear  
58 the brunt of those costs. Their faculty also raised questions about the length of time these proposed  
59 shortfalls would continue, whether the Chief Financial Officer could itemize the budget line items to be  
60 more transparent, how the retirement benefit cuts would be rolled out, and whether furloughs would  
61 apply to all of the administrative units as well. He also raised concerns about the continuation of non-  
62 essential budgets (e.g., sports programs).

63  
64 Cinema's Senator reported getting questions from their faculty about whether adjunct professors have any  
65 job security, if health insurance benefits can be kept if classes are cancelled or jobs are lost, if multi-year  
66 contracts for RTPC faculty would be honored, whether people will still have access to childcare support (on-  
67 ground or reimbursement), and if employees can access their contracts to review relevant language at this  
68 time. She also stated there was strong concern about the proposed furlough and retirement benefits cuts  
69 (how they will take place, if they will be progressive, when they will take place and for how long, and  
70 whether it will get paid back), how much the total lost income will be for individuals due to all the different  
71 proposed cuts, and where the money is coming from to pay for previous lawsuits. She expressed the need  
72 for stronger "rank-and-file" faculty input at the university level about budget decisions. Lonergan stated  
73 the Provost specified in his presentation to faculty that furloughs would be progressive, and that they  
74 would not apply to employees who have income under a certain threshold. She also stated all employees  
75 can access their contracts at all times, and they can ask their school's HR departments for these.

76  
77 The Senator from Kaufman reported their faculty, who are mostly RTPC and have performance-based  
78 courses, have worries about workload, furloughs, retirement (as many are younger and just building their  
79 retirement portfolios), and childcare coverage (including on furlough days). She voiced a concern about  
80 faculty morale in general, recalled that the Provost stated USC is not the only university to furlough faculty,  
81 and verified the Senate Executive Board did not agree to or endorse the proposed financial plans prior to  
82 the Provost's presentation.

83  
84 A Senator from Dornsife stated that while administration's sharing of budget information and plans is good,  
85 consultation is meaningless if we are not able to help shape how cuts are being made. He stated the  
86 proposed resolution does not take enough of a stance at this point as it is written. He reported many  
87 Dornsife faculty are upset that much of the budget balancing falls upon the backs of faculty, especially  
88 since most will have the same workload expectations while furloughed. The Senator also stated there is a  
89 perception that this will primarily impact research and teaching faculty, as it was mentioned by the Provost  
90 that clinical faculty seeing patients may be exempted. He emphasized the need to ensure the furloughs will  
91 be progressive, as many faculty are struggling financially already. He concluded by stating their faculty  
92 would like to see cuts to things like purchasing (currently estimated at 3%) that are least comparable in size  
93 to the cuts being proposed to pay.

94  
95 Comments from the chat were summarized, mostly echoing what senators already stated. There were  
96 many questions regarding the impact of recent lawsuits on finances, athletics spending, a decreased ability  
97 to recruit faculty due to these changes, and continued confusion about why we are unable to use more  
98 funds from the endowment.

99  
100 Ostrow's Senator stated most issues of concern had been raised already, but there were still questions  
101 about what furlough days will mean for clinical faculty who see patients, the timing and duration of

102 furloughs and retirement pauses, and why we are unable to use more endowment funds. She emphasized  
103 the importance of impressing upon the Provost that each school's faculty representatives need to be  
104 involved in school-level decisions with the deans, and that faculty are central to maintaining academic  
105 excellence.

106  
107 The Senator from Dramatic Arts echoed concerns about the multiple proposed cuts to employee income,  
108 especially since their school is very small and the budget is tight already. She also reiterated the previous  
109 call to add more detail to the proposed resolution, and restated how furloughs do not make sense for  
110 many faculty who need to complete their job duties regardless of how many days they are not going to be  
111 paid.

112  
113 Rossier's Senator stated their faculty had a meeting with the Provost which engendered a good discussion,  
114 plus there will be a townhall today to talk about unit-level budget cuts. He stated there are some questions  
115 about the proposals, but there was also generally an attitude among Rossier faculty of acceptance of the  
116 proposals, although concerns were raised about the pause in retirement benefits (on top of merit freezes  
117 and furloughs). He suggested the Senate advocate for measures to offset the total pause on retirement,  
118 such as a partial pause. He also agreed with the suggestion from Annenberg's Senator to ask for a financial  
119 advisory group with meaningful consultation, as these may be somewhat prevalent around the country.

120  
121 A Senator from Viterbi reported there was widespread concern and some anger about these budget cuts  
122 from their faculty, and most people want more information and details about what the costs will be. The  
123 biggest concern was about retirement benefit cuts due to the long-term impact and tax law limitations on  
124 individual contributions. He reiterated the suggestion of drawing on the unrestricted endowment funds  
125 instead of requiring large sacrifices from employees, and suggested possibly having school cuts be varied as  
126 opposed to universal. He noted a wide distrust of administration driven by scandals and the current crisis,  
127 and recommended administrative "bloat" be cut first as faculty are responsible for the University's core  
128 mission and generate most of the revenue. He proposed explicitly naming administration in the resolution  
129 in calling for progressive cuts to ease some distrust, as well as having all offices go under regular budgetary  
130 review to find cost savings. The other Viterbi Senator offered the idea of structuring the retirement cuts as  
131 a loan or bond from the faculty to the University, to be repaid sometime in the future.

132  
133 The Gerontology Senator proposed the possibility of progressive retirement benefits changes with match  
134 levels based on salary, or potentially dipping into each school's endowments. She stated the faculty want  
135 more clarity about why Keck faculty may not be taking furloughs, how furloughs would work with NIH  
136 funding, and whether there should be so many staff dedicated to fundraising if our mission is to generate  
137 knowledge.

138  
139 The Senator from the Chan Division reported their faculty are feeling the multiple-level cuts to employees,  
140 with particular concerns around the compounding effects of retirement benefit cuts and how furlough days  
141 will be implemented as 40 of their 100 faculty are involved in clinical practice. She posed a question about  
142 whether people could be compensated for the extra time and work they have had to put in, and echoed  
143 previous questions about endowment funds. She also stated concerns about these cuts in contrast with  
144 cost-of-living in Los Angeles, and stated the UC schools and Cal Tech did not seem to be making these types  
145 of cuts. Finally, she reported faculty feeling a lack of transparency about what the savings from all these  
146 cuts would be used for, and recommended administrative cuts for those with much higher salaries.

147  
148 The Gould Senator stated there was general support from their faculty for the underlying principles of  
149 progressivity, as well as for solidarity between faculty and staff. Regarding compensation, she reported  
150 their faculty want more evidence to support the decisions that are being made, proof that these cuts to  
151 employees are truly a last resort, and more information about how furloughs will be calculated as faculty  
152 are on 9- or 12-month contracts. Other areas of concern were not wanting to lose sight of our long-term

153 academic mission as decisions are being made and issues of safety for faculty and their families. She closed  
154 by stating all concerns can be addressed through truly meaningful faculty consultation and representation,  
155 and that people would be able to lend more unified support towards these cuts if they knew more about  
156 what was being done.

157  
158 A Senator from Keck stated their faculty support the proposed resolution, desire more time to look over  
159 the proposed budget cuts to avoid rash decisions, feel unanimously that faculty need to be more  
160 meaningfully involved as decisions are being made, and feel more transparency at the administrative and  
161 bureaucratic level is needed. Keck is unique in number and diversity of faculty (e.g., clinical, research, those  
162 based at LAC+USC or CHLA who derive their salaries separately), and the hospitals are also part of a  
163 medical group, so enacting universal cuts such as the ones proposed by the Provost is very challenging. He  
164 stated the Keck Faculty Council has been meeting weekly with the dean, and the dean, Tom Jackiewicz, and  
165 the Provost will all be meeting tomorrow as well. Common faculty concerns include layoffs or furloughs for  
166 those working on the front lines of this pandemic, NIH grant issues, childcare, and whether keeping staff  
167 who were underperforming pre-COVID is worth furloughing other very productive people. He also raised an  
168 issue of Keck's revenue from clinical and research faculty being taxed and used to support the UPC budget  
169 which is meant to cover some benefits that are now being cut, and this has led to questions or whether the  
170 tax should be reduced.

171  
172 The Senator from Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy reported in addition to topics raised previously, their  
173 faculty had additional questions about how exactly central funds are being spent, if the savings from  
174 furloughs can be kept within the units and potentially be used to lower central taxes, and whether the  
175 University should be rethinking our sponsorship of athletics so those funds can instead be used to support  
176 our main mission of education.

177  
178 Thornton's Senator stated health and safety are their faculty's primary concerns, as their jobs require high-  
179 risk interactions (e.g., singing, playing wind instruments) and many faculty also depend on outside  
180 performance engagements. She reported concerns about shared governance, as many Vice Deans who also  
181 hold faculty appointments are asked to serve on committees to represent the faculty voice. In addition,  
182 there are concerns amongst the many part-time and RTPC faculty about being asked to do more labor  
183 despite pay and benefits cuts, which is creating a feeling of resentment and speaks to a need for the  
184 consideration of well-being. Thornton faculty also preferred a progressive retirement cut if possible, or  
185 even reduced (but not eliminated) rates of 1-2%, as there is skepticism about whether these benefits would  
186 ever return to normal. Lonergan stated the health concerns stated by the Senator should be addressed in  
187 Project Restart plans, and that she was told there is already a subgroup looking into the concerns about  
188 voice and wind instrument courses.

189  
190 Comments from the chat were summarized, including how the budget analysis should look beyond fiscal  
191 year 2021 (possibly to 2025), the Provost should get the Senate Executive Board's approval before going to  
192 the Board of Trustees (with the ability to withhold this approval if applicable), there is curiosity about how  
193 much is being spent on President's sustainability initiatives, and whether the President's former mansion  
194 can be sold to generate revenue. Concerns were also raised about the indirect costs from NIH funding  
195 being diminished if faculty choose to leave, and that the overall outreach about these cuts has not been  
196 very compassionate.

197  
198 The Senator from Pharmacy agreed with issues that were already raised, and also reported that most of  
199 their faculty concerns are focused on retirement benefit cuts. There was a question of whether merit raises  
200 might be maintained to properly recognize those who have worked hard this year, as well as concern that  
201 sweeping decisions are being made too quickly without truly meaningful faculty input.

202

203 The Retired Faculty Association Senator stated he did not feel that he had contributions to make that  
204 would be useful at this time.

205  
206 Dworak-Peck's Senator stated their school has had these types of discussions over the last couple of years,  
207 and that their biggest concerns are about school-level changes on top of University-level cuts, which will  
208 place even more burden on faculty. The proposed retirement benefit cuts were also the most significant  
209 concern for their faculty, but there were also concerns about how much the Board of Trustees is driving  
210 some of these decisions, and whether these decisions had business or academia as the first priority.

211  
212 The Senator from Price stated their faculty feel it is difficult to provide meaningful feedback when all the  
213 specifics are unknown. They are concerned that precluding the possibility of taking out loans – which would  
214 achieve the same stated goal as the pause in retirement benefits to avoid loss of current income – seems to  
215 be short-sighted. They are also concerned about the extent to which these cuts, which are being imposed  
216 to solve a temporary problem, could become permanent (e.g., merit freeze versus merit deferral). He also  
217 suggested that administration should promise faculty and staff they will be made whole again should the  
218 actual budget deficits not reach the currently projected levels which these cuts anticipate.

219  
220 The USC Libraries Senator stated faculty are concerned about furloughs and retirement benefit cuts, as well  
221 as about contract librarian contracts not being renewed and unrealistic work-load expectations for others.  
222 She stated the Libraries do not create revenue like other schools, but are simultaneously expected to  
223 maintain a level of service to the entire University, so many of their faculty felt it did not make sense to  
224 subject them to the same level of cuts as other units. Many of their faculty signed also a letter to urge  
225 administration to include more faculty in making financial decisions.

226  
227 The Senator from Roski reported their faculty are also against a wholesale cut to retirement benefits, and  
228 share the concern expressed by others that information about where central administration can save funds  
229 (e.g., outside consultants) is not being shared transparently. Although their faculty feel it is reasonable that  
230 there be some cuts and that pain will be shared by all, Roski is a very small school and asked for  
231 consideration of making cuts to schools progressive as well. They also shared the need to get back on  
232 campus soon, but with a lot of safety precautions and thoughtfulness for this process. She concluded by  
233 emphasizing that there is already existing disparities in salary and labor (in both Roski and across the  
234 University), as well as faculty's desire to participate in the specifics of budget planning.

235  
236 Iovine and Young Academy's Senator stated their dean has not had a conversation with faculty about  
237 budget cuts, so he had nothing report at this time.

238  
239 **Discussion regarding Proposed Resolution 19/20-08: Key Shared Governance Principles**  
240 Paul Adler, Academic Vice President, introduced Resolution 19/20-08 (attached to the [meeting agenda](#)),  
241 proposed by the Executive Board. He stated faculty should be involved with both school- and University-  
242 level budget issues, and that this Resolution was to articulate principles to guide faculty engagement with  
243 that process at both levels and across the schools, without stating specific demands which could vary  
244 widely. He posited that the budget proposed by the Provost should be seen as a "restart" budget focused  
245 on operational continuity and minimizing damage, and the Executive Board's Resolution addresses the  
246 issues posed by this budget, as distinct from the issues we will need to address in the future when we will  
247 likely see new budgets aimed at "reshaping" of the University and when we will need to address issues  
248 such as administrative bloat and academic programs that need investment or downsizing.

249  
250 Viterbi's Senator restated his previous suggestion to modify point 3 by adding "and including university  
251 administrators."  
252

253 Annenberg's Senator proposed an amendment to replace the first two items in the Resolution to specify  
254 and strengthen the demand for faculty participation, which he read to the Senate. The first change was to  
255 ask for the immediate inclusion of faculty representation in budget decisions, and the second was to ask for  
256 a jointly appointed faculty budgetary advisory committee to be formed and consulted prior to making  
257 budget decisions. He also responded to Loneragan's previous point about using existing committees (such as  
258 COFE) for this purpose, arguing that this is a special circumstance which requires the formation of a  
259 different type of committee.  
260

261 A suggestion was made that a report from such a proposed committee should be made every 4-6 months.  
262 Recommendations were also made to strengthen the language by replacing "should" with "shall," "must,"  
263 or "will." Other senators supported the idea of forming a financial budgetary advisory committee, to make  
264 more of a specific recommendation to administration.  
265

266 Concern was stated about the prioritization of endowment, construction, or other material things over  
267 protecting employee interests right now, which may then cause faculty to leave for other universities that  
268 do not penalize them as much during these times. A suggestion was made to add a new point about  
269 prioritizing the protection of human resources, and to recommend cuts to compensation be proportional  
270 to cuts in procurement and other material investments. Adler stated this idea would be difficult to support  
271 without sufficient financial data that has not been shared. An argument was made that the urgency with  
272 which budget decisions are being made may preclude the Senate from waiting to take a concrete position  
273 until such detailed information is shared.  
274

275 A statement was made that these principles seemed to apply beyond the COVID situation, and a  
276 recommendation was made to have both a set of principles that are enduring, and another set of "asks"  
277 which are an immediate response to the situation. Other suggestions were made to mention progressive  
278 burdens when specifying "equity" in item 3, and to add "for discussion and shared decision-making" at the  
279 end of item 7.  
280

281 The meeting was then closed to Senators only for the vote. Loneragan stated the vote and attachments will  
282 be posted for all faculty to review. A first vote was held regarding the adoption of amendments proposed  
283 by Larry Gross (Annenberg).  
284

285 *Motion made by Larry Gross to amend the proposed Resolution by replacing items 1 and 2 with:*

- 286 1. *Faculty must have a leading voice in decisions concerning the educational and research mission of*  
287 *the university, as well as their working conditions. A representative or representatives of the Faculty*  
288 *must be included immediately in the making of decisions having profound impact on their lives,*  
289 *livelihoods, and the academic mission of the university of which they are principal stewards. At a*  
290 *minimum, this means the immediate inclusion of the President of the Academic Senate in the*  
291 *decision-making bodies having responsibility for developing the University's strategy for addressing*  
292 *the budget crisis.*
- 293 2. *The Senate and the Provost shall jointly appoint a Faculty Budget Advisory Committee that will have*  
294 *access to all relevant data, including sufficiently detailed university-, school-, and unit-level budget*  
295 *data. The Faculty Budget Advisory Committee would be consulted by the senior administrators*  
296 *before making or modifying decisions in response to the financial crisis created by the COVID*  
297 *pandemic.*

298 *Motion seconded by Rebecca Brown. Motion passed with 35 in favor, 2 opposed, and 1 abstention.*  
299

300 A second vote was held regarding the adoption of Resolution 19/20-08 with the above amendments.  
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302 *Motion made by Paul Adler; seconded by Todd Brun. Motion passed with 36 in favor, 1 opposed, and 0*  
303 *abstentions.*

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Loneragan stated if there is further follow-up needed, another meeting will be called.

**Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 12:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Ashley Uyeshiro Simon  
Secretary General of the Academic Senate

DRAFT