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2 **ACADEMIC SENATE**
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4 **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**
5 Urgent Meeting of June 24, 2020
6 Virtual Zoom Meeting (due to COVID-19)
7 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
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10 **Present (Senate Members):** P. Adler, S. Ahmadi, M. Apostolos, D. Armstrong,
11 Y. Bar-Cohen, B. Belcher, B. Blair, R. Brown, T. Brun, S. Bucher, P. Cannon, B. Carrington
12 (alternate for L. Gross), J. Cederbaum, C. Clerc (alternate for A. Zoto), H. Choi, A. Crigler, D.
13 Crombecque, M. Crowley, G. Davison, D. Davies (alternate for A. Mackay), E. Fife, R. Filback,
14 L. Ferguson, M. Finberg (alternate for S. Wickersheimer), S. Gibson (alternate for M. Daniels-
15 Rauterkus), D. Griffiths, S. Gruskin, S. Gupta, S. Helfter, A. Imre, J. Israel, M. Jacobson (alternate
16 for C. Pike), K. Konis, G. Kung, R. Labaree, R. Lonergan, M. Mataric, T.J. McCarthy (alternate
17 for C. Redfearn), J. McLaughlin Gray, J. Nyquist, D. O’Leary, N. Olmos (alternate for C.
18 Tucker), C. Park, J. Parr, D. Pecchenino, G. Polidori, M. Press, G. Ragusa, T. Sandmeier, G.
19 Ulkumen, A. Uyeshiro Simon, A. Van Speybroeck, J. Walker, E. Warford, T. Wattenbarger, A.
20 Wilcox, A. Wu, G. Zada

21 **Guests (Senate Members alternates and newly elected for 2020-21):** P. Cardon, M.
22 Chodorowska-Pilch, R Cislowski, J. Clemens, E. Collins, J.D. Connor, S. Dincer, C. Folt, T. Kata, M.
23 Levine, T. Mayfield, C. Neuman, R. MacKenzie, T. J. Mutlow, C. Neuman, R. Pak, C Resnik, B.
24 Shuster, T. Tambascia, C. Tucker, B. Turner, S. Wickersheimer, C. Young, C. Zachary, E. Zeamer, A.
25 Zoto, C. Zukoski, and 129 additional guests
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27 **AGENDA**
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29 Rebecca Lonergan, Academic Senate President, called the meeting to order at 2:01 pm.
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31 **Approval of June 23, 2020 Urgent Senate Meeting Draft Minutes**

32 Ashley Uyeshiro Simon, Secretary General, presented the June 23, 2020 draft minutes for discussion and
33 approval.
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35 *Rebecca Lonergan moved to approve the minutes; Devin Griffiths seconded. Motion passed with 33 in favor,*
36 *0 opposed, and 1 abstention.*
37

38 **Second read and vote on Handbook Amendment re: Emergency changes to the Academic year of service**

39 Lonergan presented the [second read of Resolution 19/20-09](#) which proposes emergency calendar changes
40 to Section 3-B(5) of the Faculty Handbook. She reminded the Senate that these modifications were a result
41 of the Public Health Policy Working Group recommending the Fall semester end before Thanksgiving, and
42 the Academic Quality Working Group recommending the Provost build in paid time for course preparation
43 prior to classes starting, which would require a change in the period of service. The Senate Executive Board
44 agreed this would be beneficial to faculty on 9-month or semesterly contracts, and asked the Handbook
45 Committee to create a draft.
46

47 Lonergan highlighted the only change to the resolution and Handbook language after the Senate discussion
48 the day prior, which clarifies that faculty on 9-month contracts cannot be asked to work more than 9
49 cumulative months within the academic year, even if their start date is moved earlier. She further stated
50 the longer winter break would balance out the earlier start date.

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Lonergan clarified that the language about individual exceptions to the period of service remains in the Handbook (e.g., if a faculty teaches graduate students who have a different start-date than undergraduates), and that faculty would need to resolve these exceptions with the Provost. Paul Adler, Academic Vice President, asked any Senators who encounter operational issues to contact the Executive Board.

A motion was made by the Executive Board. Motion passed unanimously with 37 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

Dialogue with President Folt and Provost Zukosi

President Carol Folt thanked the Senate for allowing her and the Provost the opportunity to speak. She stated that the COVID-19 situation is deteriorating rapidly, and that even three weeks ago they could not have predicted the state we are in today. As a result, the proportion of classes that will be taught on campus is likely to be lower than anticipated. She thanked the faculty who sent a [petition about teaching principles](#) to her office, stated she sent a [response](#) earlier today agreeing that faculty are responsible for curricular decision and that there is no intention to force faculty to teach on campus in the Fall. She further articulated that most schools in the country, including USC, are now planning to be mostly online, and although there are about 1000 people back on campus now, no one is expecting all faculty and staff to return in the Fall. She stated that she hopes the new course catalogue will be released early next week to give students time to re-register and that more restart decisions will be made shortly. She also communicated her hope that people feel they can voice their concerns to administration, as they are trying to listen to the diverse opinions across the entire community. She has also met with other constituencies such as the student governments, alumni, and student-athletes. She assured the Senate that safety is top-of-mind, and that safety is particularly difficult to ensure at USC because we are in a big city, many people take public transportation, many have families and live with older relatives, and we are so large. She also stated we need to be good neighbors, and that she has talked with almost every regional legislator, who look to USC for leadership as well.

Folt reported recently meeting with AAU university presidents. She recommended the AAU bring on Shaun Harper to help them design programs around race and equity in higher education. She articulated concern about restrictions on visas, as we are a global university and this affects faculty, staff, and students.

Regarding the Black Lives Matter movement, Folt stated she was pleased the Von KleinSmid name and bust were quickly removed, and that an important part of the process of renaming the building should be to consult the faculty. She also stated that her [memo on June 11th](#), listing six actions to address anti-Blackness and systemic racism at USC, was just the start. She would like to do much more, like creating a University History Task Force as the Senate Executive Board indicated in their [June 19th response letter](#). She also stated she is actively assembling the DPS community advisory board, has referred back to former Provost Quick's previous announcement about this group, and has been talking with a number of faculty leaders in this area. She stated this group will have faculty, staff, student, and community neighbor representation, that she has already received many names to consider for membership, and that she hopes to announce in the next two weeks. The advisory board members will develop their mission and goals after she provides them with a rough idea of their task, and this will be brought to the Senate leadership for feedback. She indicated that she would like to have DPS be the primary safety officers in our neighborhoods and with our students, as we are one of the only universities that have peace officers (as opposed to sworn officers), and that we might be able to use this to our advantage. Folt noted that if we do not have DPS, then we must use LAPD, for which we will not have oversight. She stated the need for the board to ensure robust racial profiling trainings, investigatory processes, independent assessment of complaints, hiring, disciplinary actions, neighborhood engagement, and more.

102 A question was asked about how the current culture journey, the Black Lives Matter movement, and
103 Project Restart will be adjoined. Folt stated she will put some of the leaders of the culture group on the
104 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force to ensure these issues become part of the changes. A second
105 question was posed about what access and decision-making power the DPS Advisory Board will have. Folt
106 responded by stating anything is “fair game,” and that this board will report directly to her and will be
107 constituted for the long-term.

108
109 Regarding the President & Provost’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force (DEI TF), Folt stated this
110 group would also report directly to her, and will build upon previous task forces and committees that
111 offered recommendations (e.g., curriculum, financial investments, diversity pipelines, enrollment), some of
112 which were implemented and some of which still need to be addressed. This task force will also define their
113 own mission on how to make real progress on diversity at USC, and she is hoping to get it populated and
114 started on developing the first set of tasks soon.

115
116 A comment was made that the Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer (CDEIO) should be a scholar,
117 expert in racism and anti-Blackness. Folt responded that she agrees, and that the CDEIO will need to work
118 with the diversity liaisons to create a positive and effective structure. She stated no preference for tenured
119 or RTPC faculty for this position, and they will also be looking at internal candidates for this position, given
120 the great scholars we have at USC. Another comment was made that previous DEI funding was very helpful
121 and impactful in moving initiatives forward within schools. Folt replied by saying she envisages a robust
122 budget for the CDEIO and diversity liaisons.

123
124 A question was asked if funding would be announced for hiring faculty of color this year. Folt stated they
125 do plan on announcing this soon, despite the current budget difficulties.

126
127 In addition, Folt stated she was able to do some fundraising for the new “first-gen plus” space, and
128 reported there are plans to increase space for each cultural center. She also expressed hope that the
129 cultural centers could be connected to academic departments and programs, but that this was longer-term
130 and faculty would need to be involved.

131
132 Finally, Folt stated the mandatory unconscious bias training will likely be online for the Fall due to time
133 restraints, but that for the future we will need to work together to create a more extensive training
134 through the DEI Task Force and CDEIO. She also noted that Shaun Harper has agreed to do a program for
135 USC that he does for many other universities on this issue.

136
137 Provost Chip Zukoski updated the Senate on Project Restart plans and his [June 19th communication](#). He
138 began by stating the objective has always been to provide educational and research continuity in a safe
139 manner, considering public health policies, classroom availability, faculty availability, protocols, and more.
140 He reiterated that faculty continue to have the responsibility of determining what is taught and how to
141 teach, and they should continue to make these decisions about classes held online or on-ground. The
142 recent increase of cases in Los Angeles is challenging, and public health guidelines for courses and
143 universities remain uncertain.

144
145 Zukoski reported that they are working to de-densify campus for Phase 3 in the Fall, and all those that can
146 work from home should continue to do so. He anticipates many courses to be online, and that they are
147 working with public health to determine how to conduct classes where online teaching is not possible. They
148 are asking everyone who returns to campus to sign a “Trojan Commitment,” which attests that people will
149 follow the proper protocols in and out of class for the sake of their own health and the health of others. He
150 stated some research activities were able to resume two weeks ago, and that over the course of the
151 current week 30% of faculty and researchers will be able to return. He also reported that the online
152 learning module and tracking efforts have been going smoothly.

153

154 A question was posed about whether there is a limit to how long people can be in a room together, and
155 whether the priority is currently creating more on-ground experiences for students or doing what is best
156 for faculty. Zukoski confirmed that deans and faculty should decide how to teach in the best way for their
157 students, given the current conditions, and that we are not trying to meet a certain threshold of on-ground
158 courses. He stated that in attempting to learn what it would take to have lots of in-person experiences,
159 they discovered this effort did not fit public health policy, faculty availability, classroom needs, and more.
160 Folt added that she has not yet seen regulations about how long people can be in a room together, but that
161 if anyone has information or research on this, she would greatly appreciate it being shared with
162 administration.

163

164 Another question was asked about the current federal restriction on international visas for incoming
165 students who may be taking online classes, and how the administration plans to address this issue. Zukoski
166 stated they do not have new guidelines as of yet, but one modality to work around this issue may be to
167 offer hybrid courses with some people in class and others online. He stated prioritizing in-person slots to
168 any one group of students would be a challenge, but that this is worth exploring.

169

170 A comment was made that administration should make a similar commitment (like the [response](#) to the
171 faculty petition above) to staff. A question was also posed about what communication students have been
172 receiving. Folt stated messaging to students is just starting, but that she has recently told parents to keep
173 their students home if they can. They are reducing housing to one student per room which greatly reduces
174 our housing capacity (from 10,000 to 4,900) , and they also may save 300-400 beds for faculty, staff, and
175 students that are unable to safely quarantine where they live. They are still trying to figure out more
176 details, including who gets priority for housing. She expects that the first-year students will be the least
177 likely to come back, as they are at the greatest mental health risk and won't have the same opportunities
178 to connect, but that there are other factors to consider, such as program type when deciding who gets
179 priority.

180

181 Folt and Zukoski were asked about how or if the Committee on Finance and Enrollment (COFE) has
182 continued to be consulted for financial decisions, after the faculty on the committee created a [report and](#)
183 [recommendations](#). Zukoski stated they have been in contact with Adler about next steps and how to
184 integrate COFE more into these financial decisions, but the large decisions (e.g., retirement matching
185 freeze) have already been made and we are now in the process of understanding the implications and
186 evaluating where we are. Folt added that while the good news is that the summer sessions did not lose
187 much revenue, we are also adding a lot of costs. She stated the biggest decisions will be after students
188 return and we know more about how many have decided to come back. She stated she would like deans
189 and faculty to talk about the online experiences they are creating, as there are many creative ideas, and we
190 want to get students excited to come.

191

192 Regarding testing, Zukoski stated this plan is still coming together, but that they are now considering
193 having all students tested before coming to campus and are working through the logistics. They are also
194 thinking about doing sentinel testing, which uses regular statistical sampling to pinpoint hotspots. They are
195 building capacity to have over 10,000 tests every two weeks and are scaling up this capacity for sentinel
196 testing, but the exact protocols have not been worked out. They know they will not be able to test
197 everyone on a regular basis, but are still waiting for these recommendations to come in. Folt added that
198 the country is running out of reagents to do tests, and this shortage is also a limiting factor in how many
199 tests we can run regularly.

200

201 **Further Discussion**

202 Adler continued the discussion by asking Senators about their priorities of action. Suggestions were made
203 to add university-wide upgraded "building blocks" to Blackboard in order to support online pedagogy,

204 continue to push for financial consultation from COFE with updated budget information, collaboratively
205 think of ways to build community in the Fall, and to think of ways to create communication channels within
206 and between schools' faculty (Slack was suggested as one option) to be able to discuss plans and actions
207 that are occurring.

208
209 A recommendation was made that the Executive Board continue to convey that many faculty are feeling
210 scared, angry, and sometimes suspicious, and that more transparency and communication to faculty, staff,
211 and students would help people pull together and be less suspicious of decisions that are being made.
212 Adler also encouraged faculty to talk with their Faculty Councils and the Senate Executive Board if they are
213 feeling pressured to teach on campus, to ensure that schools followed through on the assurance in Folt's
214 letter. A question was posed about how to manage the mixed messages that may be coming from central
215 administration, the deans, and other faculty colleagues. Adler suggested these types of questions be
216 posted on the Senator and Faculty Council Chair Slack forum. A Senator from Keck added that the anxiety
217 that people feel is understandable, but that the protocols in place of distancing, hand hygiene, and wearing
218 masks work, as seen in Keck where over 3,000 faculty have been tested and there have been no work-
219 related exposures so far. She hoped that this could alleviate some anxiety, and shared that she believed
220 there can be safe ways to return to work and teaching (including people working from home when
221 possible).

222
223 Regarding the CDEIO, a Senator reiterated the need for this to be a scholar recognized for their work in
224 diversity. The Senator also wondered about the search process, given Folt's stated desire to get someone in
225 this role quickly. In addition, a question was asked about the mechanism for ensuring the right people are
226 chosen for the DEI Task Force. Adler stated the Executive Board has recommend faculty, and that if other
227 faculty have names to suggest they should send these directly to the President's office. Lonergan added
228 that it was her understanding that the committee was going to start small at first (akin to a steering
229 committee), but be expanded later as the committee further clarifies its charge and subsequently has the
230 need for subcommittees.

231 232 **Appreciation of Service**

233 Adler thanked the outgoing Executive Board members, Yaniv Bar-Cohen (Immediate Past President), Ashley
234 Uyeshiro Simon (Secretary General), Shafiqah Ahmadi (Member At-Large), Brent Blair (Member At-Large),
235 and Alison Wilcox (Member At-Large), for their service and leadership through a difficult year. He stated
236 they have been a terrific team with whom to work.

237
238 Adler also expressed his gratitude to Rebecca Lonergan for her exceptional leadership as President of the
239 Senate this year. He stated it had been a privilege working with her, and that the Senate wanted to honor
240 and acknowledge her dedicated service.

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242 Lonergan then thanked all of the Senators as well, stating it had been an extraordinary year, and everyone
243 had gone above and beyond in terms of their service and willingness to get work done together. Adler
244 added that as soon as we are allowed, they plan to host an on-site dinner to celebrate this year's work.

245 246 **Adjournment**

247 The formal meeting was adjourned at 3:55 pm.

248
249 The Senate awards ceremony was held afterwards, honoring the 2019-2020 recipients. Professors Gerald C.
250 Davison, Tracy Tambascia, and Yaniv Bar-Cohen received Distinguished Faculty Service Awards for their
251 outstanding contributions to faculty service, presented by Deans Amber Miller, Karen Symms Gallagher,
252 and Laura Mosqueda, respectively. Dean Laura Mosqueda then also presented Charles Gomer with the
253 Academic Senate's Walter Wolf Award for the Defense of Academic Freedom and Faculty Rights,
254 commending his long history of service to his school, the university, and Children's Hospital of Los Angeles,

255 and admiring his reputation for fairness, inclusion, and concern for faculty wellbeing. She expressed her
256 appreciation for his leadership, achievements in teaching and research, and mentorship that he has given
257 over the years.

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259 Respectfully submitted,

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265 Ashley Uyeshiro Simon
266 Secretary General of the Academic Senate

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