ACADEMIC SENATE

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Meeting of May 13, 2020
Virtual Zoom Meeting (due to COVID-19)
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.


AGENDA

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

Dialogue with President Folt, Provost Zukoski, and Senior Vice President Jim Staten

President Folt thanked the faculty for their flexibility and hard work during this uncertain time. She stated senior administration reassesses USC’s situation frequently to reflect the quickly and constantly changing situation of COVID-19. She stated there are still things to celebrate such as recently conferring 18,500 degrees, more students committing to enroll than this time last year, 80% of employees still working with no employees having missed a paycheck, and funding coming in to distribute to students and employees in need. She added working closely with the City has saved the university close to $50-$100M from two LA ordinances.

Folt identified three principles that senior administration has used to guide all decision-making as 1) health & safety first, 2) advance our academic mission, and 3) emerge stronger. She then went on to give examples of decisions that reflect each principle, in total amounting to about $50M in new expenditures. She stated senior administration is doing their best to listen and engage with the USC community, by responding to every email promptly, meeting with many student groups, and holding regular meetings with school and department leadership. Folt confirmed that many decisions will be made at the school level (such as how to teach classes or run programs), but decisions which affect the entire institution, employment, or other large-scale impacts will be made centrally. She ended by stating dealing with our financial situation and reopening the university is difficult and complex, but she is optimistic about the future.
Jim Staten, Senior Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer, gave the Senate a brief overview of the current financial status of the university, as well as plans for remediating budget gaps due to COVID-19. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 budgeted revenue was $5.8B, with 34% from tuition and fees and 32% from Keck Medicine. The expense budget for FY 2020 was $5.6B, with $3.3B for compensation ($709M of which is for benefits) and $2.0B for “Other current expenses” (e.g., materials and supplies, online program partners, utilities, rentals and leases). He estimated the negative impact of COVID on the university to be about $200-290M for FY 2020 and $320-520M for FY 2021 (not including federal stimulus funds, insurance recoveries, or corrective actions to the COVID-induced gap), but stated as Restart decisions are made and the pandemic plays out, these numbers will change.

Staten went on to describe a stepwise approach to closing the FY 2021 budget gap, which was based on a model in which some students were able to return to campus. The five steps included:

- A salary freeze, hiring pause, and travel pause for one year ($69-98M in savings)
- Procurement and benefit changes ($25-45M in savings)
- Unit-level additional savings ($30-40M in savings) which do not include additional salary changes
- A pause in retirement contributions ($127-140M in savings)
- Progressive furloughs ($24-87M in savings)

He stated in addition to these items, they are prioritizing and deprioritizing other areas of savings, and looking at what other universities are considering or choosing to do as well. He addressed questions about whether borrowing funds was possible, how furloughs affect exempt employees, legislative actions to raise support funds, and whether funding directed at advancement or consultant fees can be redirected.

Provost Chip Zukoski introduced the different phases of Project Restart, which correlate with the California Stages for reopening. He also outlined the various working groups (with over 100 people involved overall) which support and inform the restart decisions, which are ultimately made by the President’s Senior Leadership Team.

Questions were asked about bulk buying opportunities for cost savings, DACA and international student support due to being excluded from the CARES Act, long-term salary impact mitigation strategies, how priority is determined for in-person classes/programs, student housing, and tuition rebates.

Announcements
Lonergan stated end-of-year committee reports will be posted on the Senate website, and encouraged people to read them and bring any questions to the committees.

Approval of April Senate Meeting Draft Minutes
Ashley Uyeshiro Simon, Secretary General, presented the April 2020 draft minutes for discussion and approval.

Paul Adler moved to approve the minutes; Todd Brun seconded. Motion passed with 44 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

Presentation of CIS Survey Results
John Pascarella and Jennifer Parga, Co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Information Services, presented information gathered from surveys they conducted this year about disaster preparedness and virtual faculty integration. The disaster preparedness survey took place in February, with 36 faculty and 807 students from 7 different schools participating. Most faculty concerns were about needing more preparation and practice teaching with online technology, and most student concerns were with the quality of audio/visual connection. The committee identified a list of recommendations moving forward for emergency teaching preparedness, and the results of this survey were shared with ITS as classes were moved online in March due to COVID-19.
The virtual faculty survey took place in January and February, with 165 faculty participating from 13 different schools. The primary concerns identified were inconsistent quality standards between schools for home-based IT equipment (e.g., reimbursement or funding for necessary home equipment or connectivity) and inconsistent quality standards of participation in USC meetings. They also identified a list of recommendations.

More information on both surveys can be found in the end-of-year CIS committee report.

Presentation regarding new Student Health Leave Policy
Olivia Wills, Student Health Leave Coordinator in Campus Support and Intervention, and Rachel Goold, health leave specialist, presented the new student health leave policy which covers both undergraduate and graduate students. They stated the goal of a health leave is to take a break from school to engage in meaningful treatment, so when the student returns they are ready and able to engage in school. The coordinators check in with the students, and ensure the students are ready for return. They offered suggestions for how faculty can refer students of concern for consultations by emailing Olivia or Rachel directly with the student. For students of concern who are not yet ready or wanting to take a leave, faculty can contact USCsupport@usc.edu.

Second Read & Vote regarding Resolution 19/20-07: Miscellaneous Handbook Amendments
Sandeep Gupta, Chair of the Handbook Committee, presented Resolution 19/20-07 for a second read and vote on the proposed Handbook amendments. Two changes were made since the first reading based on Senate feedback about creation of new intellectual property and modification of “absent from campus” language (to include geographically dispersed faculty). A friendly amendment was offered by Lonergan to delete the sentence in 3-I (3) that lists intellectual property faculty do not have a duty to disclose, after a discussion about recent changes to federal law concluded in the decision that it would be better to simply refer to the law.

Motion made by Executive Board with friendly amendment. Motion passed with 37 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

Senate Executive Board Election Results
Paul Adler, Academic VP (President Elect), announced the results of the recent Senate election for the 2020-2021 Academic Year:
- Academic Vice-President: Tracy Tambascia (Rossier School of Education)
- Secretary General: Kyle Konis (School of Architecture)
- At-Large positions:
  - Ben Carrington (Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism)
  - Aniko Imre (School of Cinematic Arts)
  - Jennifer Israel (Keck School of Medicine)
  - Elisa Warford (Viterbi School of Engineering/Writing)

He thanked those who ran in the elections, and congratulated those who were elected. Adler reported 875 faculty (12.5%) voted in this first direct election, with the votes mostly proportional to school size and with good distributions across tenured/tenure track, RTPC, adjunct or part-time, and retired faculty. He asked for any feedback or recommendations on how to make this better next year.

Communication during Summer Months
Lonergan asked that Senators notify the Executive Board of any new Faculty Council Chairs or Senators that have been elected, and informed the Senate that urgent Senate meetings may have to be called over the summer due to the nature of the pandemic and restart efforts. She stated the Senate is a communication
channel, and urged Senators to be in touch with their faculty so that the Senate can make the best decisions and present any major themes or issues of concern to senior leadership. She encouraged Senators to use the confidential Slack forum to communicate, or to email the Executive Board, with any issues that arise.

Lonergan thanked the Senators for all of their hard work this year, and the Senate thanked Lonergan, Adler, and the rest of the Senate leadership for their hard work as well.

**Announcements**

No regular Senate meetings until Fall 2020.

**Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Uyeshiro Simon

Secretary General of the Academic Senate