

1  
2  
3

**ACADEMIC SENATE**  
**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

4 Meeting of September 16, 2020

5 Virtual Meeting

6 2:00 - 4:00 pm PST

7 **Present (Senate Members):** P. Adler, M. Apostolos, D. Armstrong, J. Baker, D. Becker, B. Belcher,  
8 M. Bodie, D. Brooks, R. Brown, S. Bucher, P. Cardon, K. Carlson, B. Carrington, E. Collins,  
9 M. Crowley, G. Davison, J. Dopheide, L. Ferguson, R. Filback, G. Giuliano, L. Gross, S. Helfter,  
10 A. Imre, J. Israel, M. Jacobson (alternate for M. Mather), J. Kirschner, R. Labaree, R. Lonergan,  
11 J. Matsusaka, T. Mayfield, J. Moore, C. Neuman, J. Nyquist, B. O'Connell (alternate for C. Clerc),  
12 D. O'Leary, N. Olmos, L. Palinkas, J. Pascarella, D. Pecchenino, G. Polidori, G. Ragusa, C. Resnik,  
13 V. Rindova, A. Samkian, A. Sanchez, T. Sandmeier, T. Tambascia, T. Ton, T. Tucker, A. Uyeshiro  
14 Simon, J. Walker, E. Warford, T. Wattenbarger, A. Wilcox, G. Zada, E. Zeamer

15  
16 **Guests (Senate Members alternates & invited guests):** R. Cislowski, D. Crombecque, C. Finch  
17 C. Folt, C. Jones, K. Kensek, G. Kung, M. Levine, J. Loeb, R. MacKenzie, M. Mataric,  
18 J. McLaughlin Gray, A. Rechenmacher, B. Shuster, B. Turner, A. Van Speybroeck, J. Wong,  
19 C. Young, C. Zukoski

20  
21 **AGENDA**

22 Academic Senate President Adler called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm and introduced the guests  
23 of the Senate.

24 **Approval of August Senate Meeting Draft Minutes**

25 Adler presented the August 2020 minutes for discussion and approval.

26 *Motion to approve the August minutes was moved and seconded; 24 in favor; 0 opposed; 1*  
27 *abstention.*

28 **President Folt and Provost Zukoski**

29 President Folt made the following announcements:

- 30 1. She plans to release a statement to the USC community about voting and local polling places.
- 31 2. Committees involved in diversity initiatives previously announced by Folt have started  
32 meeting, including the President's and Provost's Task Force on Racial Equity, Diversity and  
33 Inclusion (REDI) and the Community Advisory Board for the Department of Public Safety. Folt  
34 expressed her hope that these committees and the Academic Senate will work together  
35 closely.
- 36 3. Felicia Washington, Senior Vice President of Human Resources, disseminated a memo on USC  
37 childcare and dependent care resources.
- 38 4. The university is working actively to develop testing programs. Folt's goal is to implement a  
39 daily testing regime for the entire campus, if possible.

40 Provost Zukoski updated the Senate on a range of issues. He began by stating that the semester  
41 was going smoothly and that students appear to be having positive experiences. He informed  
42 senators that the remainder of the semester would be online.

43 Zukoski then discussed the transition in Keck and acknowledged achievements made over the past  
44 three years by former Dean Laura Mosqueda. He and President Folt are studying options for the  
45 future of Keck and see a great need for integration of the Keck health system with the medical  
46 school and of both those entities with the rest of the university.

47 Next, Zukoski offered a COVID update. We continue to have a downwards trend; our positivity  
48 rate among students who were tested dropped from 27% to 17% in the previous two weeks.  
49 Zukoski praised Sarah Van Orman, Associate Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Chief Student  
50 Health Officer and indicated that we continue to work closely with public health authorities,  
51 parents, and student groups to help students understand their obligations to one another and to  
52 the community.

53 Zukoski then provided an enrollment update, suggesting that the enrollment situation is strong  
54 and that faculty have done a remarkable job in building programs that are exciting to students.  
55 Overall enrollment declined 3.5% since last year, reflecting the following:

- 56 • Bachelor's level enrollments are down 2%
- 57 • Master's level enrollments are down 6.5%
- 58 • Professional practice enrollments are down .7%
- 59 • Doctoral level enrollments are down 1%

60 Much of the overall decline is explained by the 12% decline in enrollments of *international*  
61 students, reflecting the following:

- 62 • Bachelor's level enrollments are down 6.5%
- 63 • Master's level enrollments are down 16%
- 64 • Professional practice enrollments are down 15%
- 65 • Doctoral level enrollments are down 4%

66 The overall decrease of 3.5% corresponds roughly to a loss of \$35 million to our tuition revenue.

67 Zukoski engaged Senate members in discussion about planning for the spring semester. He first  
68 established that the university's goal is to develop a flexible plan that, in the face of uncertainty,  
69 would provide faculty and students maximum time to plan and ideally would get students and  
70 faculty back to campus. The current plan is to offer hybrid (i.e., mixed delivery) programming in  
71 the spring. Deans have been asked to work with faculty on this, and faculty get to decide the best  
72 way to deliver programming. A decision about how to move forward in the spring will be made  
73 mid- to late- October. As part of planning for the spring, the provost is also interested in exploring  
74 ways to de-stress education while still delivering an extraordinary quality education that is  
75 rigorous and that provides students with the USC brand of learning that we're so proud of.

76 Zukoski and Folt paused for questions and comments before remarking on the Greg Patton case.  
77 Zukoski shared that the case involved a classroom situation where students felt threatened and  
78 made a formal complaint to the university. The complaint was credible and had to be acted upon.

79 This resulted in the faculty member stepping back from delivering the class, which was a  
80 compressed three-week class. Zukoski emphasized that the faculty member was not terminated  
81 and agreed to separate from the complainants since there was an active investigation. Results of  
82 the investigation will be shared in the appropriate ways when done. He reiterated his  
83 commitment to academic freedom. At the same time, students cannot feel threatened and if they  
84 do, there must be an investigation. Zukoski pointed out that there needs to be a balance. Senate  
85 President Adler suggested that this might be an interesting case for the diversity, equity and  
86 inclusion (DEI) workshops to lean into, which Zukoski agreed with.

### 87 **Reports from Each School**

88 Next, senators provided updates on their academic units. Among the issues shared were those  
89 related to the following:

- 90 • Project Restart and planning for the spring semester, including student enrollment concerns;  
91 support for graduate students, completion of degree requirements, and preparing students for  
92 the job market; and whether faculty will be expected to teach on campus in the spring.
- 93 • Online programming and teaching, including capacity to develop and deliver online  
94 programming; preparing TAs for teaching online; privacy issues; and sharing of online tools  
95 and best practices.
- 96 • Setting up functional offices and classrooms at home, and associated expenses and IT issues.
- 97 • DEI issues, including ways to address implicit bias, anti-racism and anti-blackness in the  
98 classroom; best practices; and policies/procedures related to removal of faculty from the  
99 classroom.
- 100 • Lack of leadership from the Graduate School, including a replacement for Sally Pratt, former  
101 Vice Provost for Graduate Programs, and involvement of faculty and deans in the direction of  
102 the Graduate School.
- 103 • Faculty expectations and workload; morale; and well-being (including potential for burnout).
- 104 • Financial and budgetary issues including concerns about transparency of decision-making;  
105 pausing retirement benefits; and possible cuts in non-salaried compensation.
- 106 • Dependent care and other burdens on faculty, particularly junior faculty and staff (including  
107 performance assessment and tenure and promotion issues).
- 108 • RTPC and adjunct faculty issues, including contracts terms; compensation; and teaching load  
109 inequities.
- 110 • Salary and non-salary compensation equity; promotions and raises (NOTE: Senate President  
111 Adler clarified that there is a pause in merit increases but promotions and pay increases  
112 associated with promotions are still allowed and expected).
- 113 • Performance and merit reviews, including the use of Zoom recordings for evaluations, merit  
114 and promotions.
- 115 • Shared governance and engagement of faculty in a variety of issues (e.g., curricular direction  
116 and marketing).
- 117 • Lack of clarity around chair appointments and reappointments, and how faculty can have a

118 louder voice.

- 119 • The dean's transition at Keck; searches for deans; and reviews of deans and senior personnel.
- 120 • Lack of / irregular communication from deans and administration.

121 **Adjournment**

122 Meeting was adjourned at 4:05 pm.

123

124 Respectfully submitted,

125 

126

127 Devon Brooks

128 Secretary General of the Academic Senate

APPROVED