ACADEMIC SENATE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Meeting of November 18, 2020
Virtual Meeting
2:00 - 4:00 pm PST


Absent: D. Brooks


AGENDA

Call to Order
Academic Senate President Adler called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm and introduced guests of the Senate.

Approval of Minutes of October Senate Meeting
Adler presented the October 2020 minutes for discussion and approval.

Motion to approve the October minutes was moved and seconded; 37 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstention.

President Folt and Provost Zukoski
President Folt began by thanking the Senate, faculty, students, and staff for their work and dedication this semester. Other important updates include:

- She is heartened by what appears to be progress on vaccines. Still, vaccines will not be available immediately and we probably will be deeply involved in testing for more months ahead. Our health team is developing a plan for distributing vaccines once they are available and the team continues to implement our testing and surveillance strategy. We have the capacity to implement up to 100,000 tests a week even though we do not need that right now. We continue to meet with the county and Folt has been in direct contact with the supervisors.
She believes if we were not surging we would be receiving more permissions to return to campus.

- Folt provided an overview of the Culture Commission’s work to date.
  - Folt, the leadership team, and the Board of Trustees have all signed on to the hard work of the Commission. Over the past year, over 24,000 faculty, staff and students participated in the poll conducted by the Commission or by participating in Culture Sessions carried out across campus. Folt acknowledged Stacy Giwa, Vice President of Ethics and Compliance and Senate President Adler for their efforts, as well as members of the Senate who contributed their insights and perspectives.
  - Six University unifying values were identified: integrity; diversity, equity and inclusion; open communication; excellence; well-being; and accountability. These values are reflected in our University’s unifying values statement: “We act with integrity in the pursuit of excellence. We embrace diversity, equity and inclusion and promote well-being. We engage in open communication and are accountable for living our values.”
  - Folt is committed to these values and asks Senators, as leaders, to commit to them as well. She believes that if we all commit to the values it will help rebuild trust and provide us with a strong foundation for advancing the University.
  - The Commission recommended actions for improving systems and processes, some of which she hopes will be integrated into the work of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force. By Spring 2021, we would like to incorporate the unifying principles and values statement into a re-imagined USC Code of Ethics.

- Folt reminded faculty that they can get free COVID testing and wished everyone Happy Thanksgiving.

Provost Zukoski thanked Senators for all they have done and then provided important updates.

- The deadline for students to choose the pass/no pass option was extended this semester so that students could decide on an option through the last day of the semester, after grades have posted. This alleviated stress for students.

- It is becoming increasingly clear that we are unlikely to bring large numbers of students back to campus in the beginning of the spring semester. We may be able to open the campus more and to bring students back partway through the spring semester. There will be no Spring Break in order to cut down travel and wellness days will be incorporated throughout the spring semester.

- Zukoski explained that USC is committed to and require by law to have equal opportunity and pay equity. Every year we examine pay equity and this year we worked with an outside law firm that conducted a series of regression analyses. Results revealed no statistically significant differences by gender or majority status. The analyses only examined protected classes and included full-time faculty at UPC and both full- and part-time faculty at the Keck School of Medicine. Separate analyses were carried out by academic unit and division, and for RTPC and non-RTPC faculty, controlling for numerous factors such as rank. Zukoski emphasized that this is a systemic analysis. If individual faculty members feel they are not paid appropriately, they should go to faculty affairs to address individual pay issues.

Task Force Report on 2019 AAU Survey of Campus Climate and Sexual Assault and Misconduct:
Sarah Van Orman and Winston B. Crisp

Co-chairs of the ‘USC Task Force on the 2019 Association of American Universities (AAU) Survey on Campus Climate on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct’ Sarah Van Orman, USC Chief Health Officer and Winston B. Crisp, Vice President of Student Affairs presented highlights from the Task Force Report. They were joined by Catherine Spear, Vice President for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX/Title IX Coordinator. Van Orman described the Task Force’s extensive efforts to engage students, schools, and colleges in reviewing results and exploring solutions. Ultimately, the Task Force formulated a series of nine recommendations and action steps which Van Orman outlined briefly. Crisp expressed concerns about the high numbers and percentages of people who do not report or seek help, the role of alcohol, and particularly vulnerable population. Spear discussed various strategies being implemented by her office including trainings designed to prevent sexual assault and misconduct, to demystify the reporting process and investigative measures, and to raise awareness about support options.

Open Discussion

The floor was opened for discussion about issues presented earlier in the Senate meeting. A Senator expressed concern about the trauma-informed approach reported to be used in investigations of sexual assault and misconduct. Another Senator asked about opportunities for Ming Hsieh, a member of the Board of Trustees, to meet with the Academic Senate or the Executive Board. Another Senator expressed support of a Senator’s earlier suggestion to survey the faculty about their position on salary transparency, and concerns about results from the AAU Survey. Finally, a Senator recommended that we explore creating a faculty listserv in order to enhance communication among faculty. Senate President Adler indicated that he and the Executive Board would follow up on these issues. He also encouraged Senators to propose ideas for enhancing communication amongst faculty.

Announcements

Adler noted that there will be a Senate meeting in December.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 3:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Devon Brooks
Secretary General of the Academic Senate