Progress Report from the Task Force for Shared Governance

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The Task Force for Shared Governance was created by the Academic Senate in July 2018 and was tasked with helping determine the best ways forward for shared governance at the University of Southern California. The Task Force met throughout the academic year and discussed general issues around shared governance as well as specific events that took place at the University as the year progressed. Throughout the deliberations of the Task Force, best practices at other institutions were considered as well as guidelines and standards around shared governance that have been developed by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). During the Senate Fall Planning Retreat on August 18, 2019, shared governance was one of two topics discussed. As part of that discussion, Task Force members Paul Rosenbloom and William Thalmann reported on existing shared governance at USC and the Task Force's early work, respectively. Those presentations were followed by a panel discussion with the members of the Task Force, discussing a broader view of shared governance with those attending (including faculty and members of the administration). These discussions were taken into account and helped guide further conversations of the Task Force throughout the year.

The Task Force was given the following Charge:
> **Effective shared governance is essential for any well-functioning university, and particularly for any university that has ambitions for greatness. This task force is charged with recommending how to improve shared governance at USC, at both the School and University levels. This will involve exploring and rethinking as necessary such topics as: the faculty governance structures at these levels and how they are elected, operate and work with the corresponding administrative units; what kinds of policies and decisions faculty are involved in at these levels and how that involvement proceeds; how committees at these levels are established, appointed and function; and the relationship of faculty to, and possible role in, school advisory councils and the university board of trustees. This task force will also be charged with recommending how to establish an ongoing process for reviewing and revising our approach to shared governance in the coming years.**

Early in its work, the Task Force defined a conceptual framework for shared governance at USC, categorizing governance at USC into three broad levels: the Board of Trustees level, the University level (which includes the Academic Senate structure), and the School level (which includes Faculty Councils). Although many processes at USC bridge these levels, this categorization system serves as a useful

framework for discussing shared governance and will be used to define the work of the Task Force thus far.

I. <u>Board of Trustees Level Shared Governance</u>:

The Task Force discussed the potential role of faculty in the work of the Board of Trustees and the most appropriate ways to bring the voice of the faculty to those discussions. As the Board of Trustees is charged with the fiduciary responsibility of the University, faculty should be key partners in this endeavor as we embody the core values of the institution, including premier teaching, research, clinical work, and practice. The valuable experience, expertise, and commitment of the faculty should be leveraged to ensure organizational effectiveness, accountability, and insight. Faculty members have historically been included as "observers" on four Board Committees: Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Alumni Relations, and University Development.

During this academic year, a Board of Trustees Special Committee on Governance was tasked with determining the optimal structure for USC's Board of Trustees. The Task Force met with this Committee, chaired by Suzanne Nora Johnson and Chris Cox, to discuss the optimal relationship between the Board and USC's faculty. Although the ultimate restructuring of the Board has not been finalized, the Task Force offered suggestions about how the Board could better include the faculty voice in Board discussions: possibilities included faculty representation as voting or non-voting members of the Board itself, inclusion of faculty as voting and non-voting members of individual committees (inclusion as voting members which would require a revamping of committee structure), and other mechanisms for adding faculty to governance bodies and ensuring communication between Trustees and faculty members.

Over the course of this past year, the Academic Affairs Committee, chaired by David Bohnett, included faculty in its discussions much more than had been done previously. On two separate occasions, the entire Academic Senate Executive Board was invited to Academic Affairs Committee meetings to discuss issues relevant to faculty, with open and frank discussions resulting. During another meeting, the Senate Academic President, Vice President and immediate Past President led a discussion on issues relevant to faculty. These discussions proved important for clarifying the perspectives of faculty members and Trustees, as well as identifying important topics for the university. This was a very welcome step forward in Trustee–Faculty relations.

II. <u>"University" Level Shared Governance</u>

The Task Force discussed the ideal role of faculty in various areas and levels of university decision-making.

A. Primary, joint and advisory responsibility for decisions: The AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities

(https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-government-colleges-and-universities#4) states: "The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process." This statement served as a basis for many of the Task Force deliberations, and we endeavored to identify a set of expectations regarding the appropriate role of faculty in various areas of university decision-making at USC. Although consensus was not reached about the optimal level of responsibility of faculty in every area, there was agreement that the faculty role in decision-making in general needs to be expanded throughout the university. In the view of the Task Force, shared governance requires that faculty have primary decision-making responsibility over at least three fundamental areas: 1) curriculum; 2) subject matter and methods of instruction; and 3) faculty status, including tenure decisions, promotions, tenure dismissals, RPTC Continuing Appointment, and sanctioning decisions. For faculty-status decisions, the Task Force recognized that, while faculty may be primarily responsible for decision-making, final implementation must be done by the Provost or President. However, in exceptional circumstances when the faculty and the Provost or President disagree as to a status decision, the Task Force recommends that the President or Provost provide a justification to the appropriate faculty committee.

The Task Force deliberated on other decision-making areas and believes that that faculty should have at least joint responsibility with the Administration over the following areas: 1) strategic planning; 2) program review; 3) employee benefits; 4) research; 5) campus climate and culture; and 6) policies relating to students that directly affect the academic enterprise (including student discipline, financial support, and wellness). In addition, the Task Force recommends that faculty should also serve in at least an advisory capacity for decisions that relate to the following areas: 1) budget; and 2) policies relating to students that do not directly affect the academic enterprise (including undergraduate admissions, tuition, and scholarships). The Task Force further recommends that student representation should also be sought for these decisions.

     B. Oversight of Faculty on Committees: Faculty currently serve on a number of committees throughout the university. The different levels of committees can be generally categorized as Senate committees, Joint Senate / Provost Committees, and University committees. In the past, faculty have often been asked individually to serve on certain committees, especially University committees, but their individual role has often not been tied into the broader faculty governance structure, including the Academic Senate. To ensure better communication of information between the broader faculty and all committees, the Task Force recommends that the Academic Senate be consulted as to and given oversight over the faculty membership on all committees. Allowing this oversight should allow better communication between faculty on the committees, the Senate, and the faculty as a whole. The Task Force discussed two different potential methods to accomplish this oversight but did not reach a consensus. First, the Senate's Standing Committees (e.g., the Campus Climate Committee, the Faculty Environment and Employment Committee, etc.) could each

be assigned to monitor a certain number of the university committees whose work concerns the same basic subject matter as the standing committees. In turn, each of the standing Senate Committees would be encouraged to communicate with the Senate's Executive Board through the assigned Executive Board liaison. This system would hopefully allow a better flow of information between the Senate, the various committees, and the faculty as a whole. Some Task Force member were concerned that an excessive amount of time and effort would be required of the standing committees serving this role, especially given that all the committees also have specific substantive charges for each academic year. A second, different system of oversight was also suggested by the Task Force: the Senate could create a new "Committee on Committees," which would be chaired by the Senate Administrative Vice President. This new committee would be staffed by faculty and tasked with determining membership of all other committees and monitoring the work of all of the committees. Some members of the Task Force were concerned that it would be difficult to find volunteers to serve on this kind of committee because it would have a primarily administrative function.

Regardless of the mechanism ultimately developed, because the individual faculty members on committees often speak as representatives of the entire faculty but are often not elected in that capacity, better oversight mechanisms must be developed. This should involve an established system for supervision and reporting back to the Senate, as well as the need for term limits. It is important to note the Provost's office has frequently sought the Senate Executive Board's input this year about decisions that might impact faculty, including the membership of a large number of university committees, but the Task Force recognizes that the Executive Board also has many other responsibilities and therefore recommends that a better system be developed to ensure consultation, communication with, and oversight over all committees.

C. Policy development and implementation: Both major and minor new policies and policy changes are frequently put in place at USC. Although not all policies implicate specific faculty concerns, when policies do affect faculty, faculty input and guidance can be vital. In the past, faculty often did not know about new or modified policies until after they were formally announced. The Task Force discussed potential mechanisms that would allow a determination of which policies should be discussed with faculty prior to implementation. One such mechanism that was suggested is to have a faculty member attend the Provost's Cabinet meetings where important policies and strategies are often discussed. After discussion with Provost Michael Quick, the President of the Academic Senate is now invited to attend the Provost's Cabinet meetings (held every 2-3 weeks). This change has allowed a very important collaboration with the administration, allowing administrative leaders to hear a faculty voice related to important discussions and to better determine the optimal role of faculty early in the process of policy making.

Another important area of policy implementation stems from work done by Senate or Joint Senate/Provost Committees and Task Forces. While many of these Committees and Task Forces provide recommendations and reports, their recommendations have unfortunately often not been implemented for unclear reasons. Indeed, not infrequently, it is difficult to know how much weight to give to a particular committee's recommendation because those

recommendations are being offered by a limited number of faculty and may not truly represent the desire of the majority of faculty. Therefore the Task Force discussed the need to provide opportunities for a wider audience to discuss possible policy changes, so that a broader consensus can be reached before new policies are instituted. One potential way to address this concern is to ask all committees to clearly state in their reports the issues / recommendations that they believe should be moved forward, with the expectations that each of these specific recommendations would be voted on as resolutions by the Academic Senate as a whole.

    D. Senate and Faculty Council elections. Determining the optimal Academic Senate (and Executive Board) structures is crucial for the ultimate goal of increasing faculty engagement in governance and enhancing the Senate's credibility in decision-making. Accordingly, the Task Force discussed the need to ensure a democratic process for electing senators and Executive Board members, as well as the desire to continue to draw on a diverse and involved faculty representation. The topic of the Senate Executive Board elections was a particular focus. Currently, voting Senators (each elected by their Schools) vote on Executive Board membership in the Spring of each year. The possibility of changing the election procedure to instead have all Executive Board members directly elected by all faculty university-wide was discussed, but a number of concerns were raised, including whether faculty from small schools could ever get elected (because most faculty are not known outside of their home schools and large schools may benefit greatly from this bias), how the Senate could ensure diversity of representation, and how to avoid having Executive Board members be "career politicians." As an alternative election method, a suggestion was made to allow all Faculty Council members (from each of the Schools) to vote to elect the new Executive Board members (as opposed to the current system that only allows senators to vote), but concerns were raised that this could result in a disproportionate number of faculty from certain schools voting because each Faculty Council determines their own total number of members (i.e. a small school could have twenty faculty council members, while a very large school might have only ten faculty council members).

Although no consensus was reached on an ideal voting mechanism for the Executive Board, there was agreement that a more open nomination policy would be appropriate. Thus, for the 2019-2020 election, in addition to write-ins being allowed for the Executive Board ballot with the signed endorsement of five Senators, the following nomination method was proposed and approved: (1) write-in nominations by all USC faculty were allowed with the signed endorsement of ten supporting faculty (no more than five from one school) for Member-At-Large Executive Board positions; and the signed endorsement of twenty supporting faculty (no more than ten from one school) for Executive Board officers. The Senate voted on a resolution to implement this new system, which passed. The changes were implemented during the last election.

As to the Faculty Councils at the school level (also relevant to School-Level Shared Governance section below), the Task Force recommends that all faculty

representatives (i.e., Senators and members of Faculty Councils) should be directly elected by the constituents they represent but different breakdowns may be appropriate. While a school-wide vote for Faculty Council representatives may be appropriate at many schools, larger schools may see benefits in voting within certain constituencies (such as departments) for representatives. In addition, to ensure that they appropriately represent their schools, it is imperative that Senators be members of their elected Faculty Council (Senators should either be determined by the Faculty Council or voted on directly by their School). While there is an overall preference for the Senators to be the Chairs of their Faculty Councils, this may not be ideal at every School, and thus some leeway is appropriate here. The methods for determining the Faculty Council members and Senator for each school needs to be outlined in each School's handbook/policies and reviewed by the Senate.

   E. University Forum. The Task Force discussed various additional models for improving the effectiveness of shared governance at USC on a university-wide level. One model that was suggested was to create a "University Council," which would be comprised of leaders representing faculty, staff, students and the administration. The Council would meet regularly to discuss issues of interest to all of those groups, and to help determine optimal policies to address those issues. Although USC does not currently have a "University Council" that follows this model, and no consensus on the creation of such an entity was reached, a group called the "Trojan Council" has been meeting regularly for the last two years; the Trojan Council is made up of the presidents of the Academic Senate, Staff Assembly, Graduate Student Government, and Undergraduate Student Government. They meet to discuss issues of common interest to their constituencies. The Task Force also developed an idea for a "University Forum," and the Trojan Council sponsored this Forum, which was held on March 19, 2019. The Trojan Council invited all the members of the Academic Senate, Staff Assembly, Graduate Student Government and Undergraduate Student Government – as well as all interested faculty, staff and students – to attend the forum, where issues relevant across these groups could be discussed. A direct audio-video feed between HSC and UPC enabled participation by people from both campuses. An agenda was developed by the Trojan Council and discussed with the Administration (including the President and Provost) before the forum. At the forum, members of the faculty, staff, students and administration (including Interim President Wanda Austin and Provost Michael Quick) successfully had a frank and open discussion about issues of concern to members of these groups. The Task Force recommends continuing to regularly offer this kind of forum, and will continue to discuss the optimal ways to engage the various USC constituencies through this and other mediums. Although the University Forum as currently implemented does not accomplish all of the goals of a "University Council" – specifically in relation to policy making – the Task Force will also continue to explore ways to expand and improve the effectiveness of university-wide shared governance policies, programs, and infrastructure, whether through a "University Council" or other means.

III. <u>School-Level Shared Governance</u>

Faculty Councils should serve as the main framework for shared governance at the school level. To strengthen Faculty Councils, efforts should be made to enhance the relationship between Faculty Councils and the Academic Senate, as this will serve to empower Faculty Councils and allow better oversight of School affairs.

A. Description of the Faculty Councils: A survey was sent to all Faculty Council chairs early in the academic year to better understand the make-up, structure and function of the Faculty Councils at each school (every Faculty council responded). Tremendous variability in Faculty Council organization and functioning was evident from these surveys. These results, as well as further discussions regarding the roles of faculty in governance at the school level, made it clear that many faculty did not understand the role of Faculty Councils, including the Faculty Council members and Chairs themselves. The Task Force sought to understand where and how a unified description of Faculty Councils could be developed in light of the tremendous differences across Schools in terms of faculty size and role in governance. The President, Academic Vice President and Immediate Past President of the Academic Senate held two meetings with Faculty Council chairs to better understand their challenges. Both the Task Force and the Faculty Council chairs discussed potential wording changes to the Faculty Handbook that would serve to describe the role and obligations of Faculty Councils (See Appendix A). We anticipate consensus being reached between faculty and the administration as to the appropriate language to be used and then asking the Senate to vote on using this language in the Faculty Handbook in the Fall of 2019.

B. Faculty Authority Matrix: The concept of a Faculty Authority Matrix was developed at the Marshall School of Business. This document is a table that includes various types of decisions made at a school and the expected role of Faculty Councils, other Faculty Committees, and the Faculty more broadly in these decisions. This document has served as an important starting point for discussions with both Deans and Faculty Councils towards improved collaboration between Faculty and Administration at the school level. During the meeting between the Senate Executive Board officers and the Faculty Council Chairs (discussed above), the possibility of generating such a matrix for each School was explored. Members of the Task Force also met with a group of Deans to discuss the possibility of drafting and discussing this kind of Faculty Authority Matrix with the Faculty Councils at their schools. As a result of those meetings, many of the Faculty Councils have already begun to generate a matrix for their schools (as well as changing their Faculty Council Guidelines) with this new approach to shared governance in mind.

C. Basic expectations for Faculty Councils: To function successfully in a shared governance structure, Faculty Councils need to function independently of their School's administrative bodies. Certain "basic rights" must be afforded to the Councils in order for them to maintain this independence, including the following:

    1. Email lists – Faculty Council must be able to email their faculty broadly (and have access to faculty email lists). While this is already the case

in many Schools, administration at some schools have raised concerns regarding whether access to email lists will result in some schools being inundated with inappropriate emails. Most believe this concern is unfounded, and in a worse-case scenario, the Academic Senate can determine (and act to address the issue) if inappropriate use of email lists occurs.

2. Budget for administrative functions. A limited budget may be required for the administrative functions of a Faculty Council, and when available, that budget is currently paid directly by the respective school's Dean's office. Although this relationship functions appropriately at many schools, there is some concern that if any given Faculty Council's funding is at the discretion of their Dean, it could potentially impair the independence of the council, especially in cases of strained relationships. One way to prevent this would be to mandate that Faculty Council budgets could not be changed unless approved at the Senate / Provost level. Another model would place the funding for Faculty Councils in the Academic Senate budget (with the funding to be paid by all the Deans and then distributed from a single Academic Senate account). In this model, the Senate would oversee the funding of each Council to help ensure each council's independence. If this model were used, the Senate could potentially hire additional administrative staff (or possibly student workers) to help support the work of the individual Faculty Councils, Consensus was not reached by the Task Force regarding the desirability of this kind of centralization of Faculty Council budgets.

D. Dean Appointments, Re-appointments and Termination: The important role for Faculty in decisions regarding Dean's appointments, re-appointments and terminations was raised throughout the Task Force discussions.

1. Dean Appointments: Search Committees involving faculty members are often created in appointments of Deans. This has not always been the case, however, and we encourage the creation of such faculty-centered committees in all dean searches going forward. In addition, we encourage these committees to have wide access to information regarding the candidates (including confidential information that could prove to be of paramount important in appointment decisions).

2. Dean Re-Appointments: Re-appointment decisions have traditionally sought the voice of Faculty Councils and other faculty members from the School, but limited feedback or transparency had occurred. In close discussions with Provost Michael Quick and the Provost office, a new process is being developed to assure both that the voice of faculty within the school is heard, and that a faculty voice (including from outside the school on confidential matters) is included in the final decision, with complete access to reviewable data. The current mechanism being developed (and partly implemented in the law school dean re-appointment process) includes two levels of faculty involvement and consultation. First, the Faculty Council is

responsible for collecting feedback from faculty within the school, using survey questions and other methods. The feedback collected (with a summary created by the Faculty Council), as well as other confidential reports (including related to budgetary spending, information from the Office of Equity and Diversity, information from the Compliance Office, and other confidential information) will be provided to a group of three faculty members, chosen jointly by the Provost and the Senate President, and including: 1) one faculty member selected by the Faculty Council – potentially an ex-chair of the Faculty Council at that School; 2) one Past President of the Academic Senate; and 3) one faculty member from the Committee on Professional Responsibilities. This three-member group would evaluate all of the available data and advise the University President on re-appointment decisions. While there was not complete agreement by the Task Force members that having only one faculty member from inside the school and only a total of three faculty members was sufficient for this reviewing body, limiting the number of members is intended to take into account the need for absolute confidentiality in these processes and a desire for an independent review from neutral faculty who are mostly from outside of the involved school.

3. **Early Terminations of Deans:** Tensions regarding the processes around dean-termination decisions developed over the year among certain faculty after the early termination of Dean James Ellis at the Marshall School of Business. Although consensus has not been reached on this issue, the Task Force has advocated for the USC President to consult with a similar group of three faculty members (i.e. similar in membership and function to the three-person group described above) about early termination decisions. However, there is concern that early termination decisions create an even greater need for absolute confidentiality, including the need to keep the names of the three individuals being consulted confidential to prevent any form of retaliation or attempts to influence their decisions. This could perhaps necessitate not releasing any information about the creation of the group or that the review was occurring. We anticipate further discussions concerning this possible model with the incoming administration.

IV. Ongoing Issues for Discussion:

The Task Force unanimously recommends that it should continue its work on shared governance issues during the next academic year. This work should take place in collaboration with the incoming President Carol Folt and the future Provost. The Task Force hopes to achieve a number of things, including the following:

- Continuing to work with the Board of Trustees and the Board's committees to ensure appropriate inclusion of faculty in the Board's discussions, especially concerning issues that impact faculty, such as academic and educational policies;

- Amending the Faculty Handbook and the Senate Bylaws regarding the role of faculty in shared governance at the university and school levels, including finalizing the language in Attachment A concerning the role and functions of Faculty Councils for inclusion in the Faculty Handbook;

- Working to determine the best mechanisms to ensure appropriate inclusion and consultation with faculty in university-level policy decisions, including a mechanism for assuring oversight of faculty serving on university committees, the possible development of a University Council, implementing future university forums, and other means of assuring a faculty voice in university-wide policy-making decisions;

- Continuing to work with the Faculty Councils and Deans to improve shared governance policies and practices at the school level, using tools such as the Faculty Authority Matrix to facilitate these discussions;

- Continuing to determine optimal election procedures for Senate Executive Board members, Senators and Faculty Council members;

- Determining the optimal way for faculty to be included in decisions relating to the early termination of Deans.

Appendix A

DRAFT Faculty Handbook 2-B (3) Faculty Councils

The faculty of each school elects a Faculty Council, or its equivalent, to participate in the governance of the school and the University.

   a. *Purpose*

The Faculty Councils are fora for faculty decision-making and are the voice of the faculty in making policy and advancing academic values. In accordance with the Academic Senate Constitution, the Faculty Councils contribute to the intellectual vitality of the University, faculty governance and the faculty environment.

   b. *Responsibilities*

School faculties differ on allocation of faculty governance responsibilities between the faculty at large and faculty committees, between departments and the school, and between the Faculty Council and other elected bodies.

The Faculty Council
- Serves as the committee that, jointly with the School's administration, makes determinations on academic policies, curriculum, instruction, annual faculty review, academic programs, admission management policies, academic priorities for the budget, student-life initiatives, and diversity and inclusion. However, the school faculty or the Faculty Council may assign responsibility to a separate committee in any of those areas. These functions remain subject to university policies on confidentiality. Recommendations related to appointments, promotions, and tenure are made as provided in Section 4-H (2);
- Provides input to the Provost on the recruitment, review and re-appointment of Deans
- Provides input to the dean on the recruitment, review and re-appointment of vice deans, associate deans, and assistant deans.
- Ensures that department chairs are selected after departmental election or consultation as provided in Section 2-A(3)(b).
- Plays a central role in strategic planning for the school. In addition to contributing advice on strategic decisions, the Faculty Council identifies the views and visions of its faculty, so that it may provide those views to the school administration.
- Works with school administrators and University leadership, either directly or through the Academic Senate, to address other faculty issues.

b. *Communications*

As the voice of the school faculty, the Faculty Council is tasked with understanding and representing faculty views. The Faculty Council undertakes studies and issue reports on issues and initiatives of importance to faculty at the school, especially academic issues. The Faculty Council communicates the faculty's views and interests to the school administration and to the Academic Senate, as appropriate.

d. Membership and Structure

The Academic Senate Constitution requires that each school have a democratic and fair nomination and election process for its Faculty Council, with opportunity for open nominations, at least two candidates for every seat, and secret ballots counted by neutral tellers.

Faculty bear the responsibilities of leadership in the university, and in order for shared governance to play its full role, those whom their colleagues most respect must take their turn in leadership roles, including service on the Faculty Council.

It is recommended that large Faculty Councils elect a small executive committee (or committee of officers) to facilitate interaction with the School's administration.

e. Academic Senate representation

The elected faculty president (or chair) of each school's Faculty Council (or a substitute elected by the Faculty Council if the president cannot serve), represents it as a member of the Academic Senate, as do additional delegates elected by the Faculty Council as designated by the Senate Bylaws with regard to the size of the academic unit.