

1
2
3

ACADEMIC SENATE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

4 Emergency Meeting of August 11, 2021

5 Virtual Meeting

6 2:00 - 4:00 pm PST

7 **Present (Senate Members):** P. Adler, M. Apostolos, D. Armstrong, J. Baker, D. Becker,
8 C. Beckman, B. Belcher, M. Bodie, D. Brooks, A. Campbell, A. Cannon, P. Cardon, B. Carrington,
9 J. Clements, D. Cole, E. Collins, L. Ferguson, E. Fife (alternate for A. Rechenmacher), L. Gale,
10 S. Gruskin, S. Gupta, A. Imre, J. Israel, G. Keating (alternate for L. Klerman), J. Kickul, T. Kobza, G.
11 Kung, R. Labaree, F. Liley, K. Lincoln, A. Mackay (alternate for J. Dopheide), J. Matsusaka,
12 T. Mayfield, J. McLaughlin Gray (alternate for C. Resnik), D. Milstein, J. Moore, A. Motamed,
13 J. Nyquist, J. Parr, A. Parra, S. Payne, M. Press, D. Pecchenino, N. Rajagopalan, G. Ragusa,
14 B. Salhia, A. Sanchez, T. Sandmeier, T. Tambascia, M. Townsend, A. Uyeshiro Simon, A. Van
15 Speybroeck, J. Walker, E. Warford, K. Wilber (alternate for C. Finch), C. Young, G. Zada, E.
16 Zeamer, S. Zweig

17
18 **Absent:** M. Crowley, L. Gross, R. Wood

19
20 **Guests (Senate Members alternates & invited guests):** G. Davison, L. Gale, S. Gibson,
21 M. Levine, R. Lonergan, S. Narayanan, C. Neuman, A. Rutkowski, B. Shuster, M. Townsend,
22 O. Trujillo, L. Vest, C. Zukoski

23
24

AGENDA

25 **Call to Order**

26 Academic Senate President Tambascia called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

27 **Establishing Quorum**

28 Academic Senate Secretary General Brooks established that a quorum had been met for the
29 emergency meeting.

30 **Approval of Minutes from the Emergency Meeting on August 4**

31 Tambascia presented the August 4 Emergency Meeting minutes for discussion and approval.

32 ***Motion to approve the August 4 minutes. Seconded and passed: 37 in favor, 0 opposed, and 3***
33 ***abstentions.***

34 **Re-Introduction of Faculty Handbook Resolution #21-22-01, Second Reading, and Continued**
35 **Discussion**

36 Tambascia re-introduced [Faculty Handbook Resolution #21-22-01](#) for continued discussion. The
37 resolution involves the addition of new Faculty Handbook language pertaining to EEO-TIX 2020
38 policies. A Senator expressed concern about proposed changes in wording that would exist until
39 new wording is created. He suggested sunseting the proposed changes by specifying a deadline in

the Faculty Handbook, after which the changes would expire. Discussion and debate of the suggestion and other issues ensued amongst Senators and invited guests. Tambascia suggested amending the resolution by adding a sunset clause or date to the resolution rather than to the Handbook. Finding no agreement on amending the resolution, Tambascia called for the vote. She also asked that the minutes reflect the discussion had amongst Senators about holding ourselves responsible for updating Chapters 6, 7, and 8 in the Faculty Handbook and engaging as a Senate and as faculty with Catherine Spear in the annual review process to provide feedback, clarify, and discuss the important points raised during discussion of the resolution.

Vote on the Resolution

Brooks opened the floor for a vote on the resolution.

Motion to amend the Faculty Handbook. Seconded and passed: 35 in favor, 3 opposed, and 8 abstentions.

Provost Zukoski: Update on Restart

Provost Zukoski thanked Senators for being present and for the important work done during the August 4 and 11 Emergency Senate meetings. He then provided an update on Project Restart.

- 44,000 students and 4,000 faculty and staff will be coming to campus over the next week and a half. This drove the decision for administration to call for “all hands on deck” two weeks prior. Administration felt it was imperative that we all return for the first month in order to determine what services and supports are needed by students and faculty as we achieve our in-person academic mission.
- Going forward, Zukoski expects the lessons learned during the pandemic about remote work will be examined by administration and allow administration to figure out how to do a substantial amount of work remotely. This will be determined through an evaluation process that will be undertaken after the first month of the semester.
- Zukoski stated that the university has put in an enormous amount of effort to create a safe environment, one that is compliant with county, state, and federal guidelines. He reminded Senators about a webinar taking place the following day to discuss health and safety measures put into place by the university.
- Faculty, students, and staff are required to be vaccinated or to get an exemption for medical or religious reasons. Less than 1% of faculty, 4% of undergraduate students, and about 5% of staff have an exemption for religious or medical reasons. About 91% of faculty, 93% of postdocs, and 94% of staff are vaccinated; over 90% of undergraduate students are compliant with our vaccine policy. The university is serious about enforcing vaccine protocols. They have contacted those who are non-compliant and will continue contacting them. Sanctions for non-compliance are significant. Registration holds have been placed on about 3,000 students who are non-compliant. Faculty and staff who are non-compliant as of August 16 will be prohibited from entering campus and are at risk of disciplinary action, including unpaid leave of absence and termination. Administration has created subcommittees to review faculty and staff cases and to determine sanctions.
- On campus, masks will continue to be required indoors and at large outdoor events. Faculty can wear clear, transparent facial covering or regular masks, and microphones if needed. We are reestablishing Trojan Check access points and instituting regular testing for students regardless of vaccination status, and for onsite faculty and staff who are unvaccinated.
- Outdoor canopies are being set up across campus to help de-densify buildings and to provide

students with more study spaces. New and stringent cleaning measures have been instituted for all classrooms and offices. Each classroom and indoor space meets new, heightened air quality standards, and there have been tremendous efforts across campus to ensure that airflow meets the appropriate safety standards.

- Faculty are in control of their classrooms. Students must wear masks in classrooms until we come out of the surge and the public health order requiring masks has been lifted. Faculty can tell students that they must wear masks. Students who do not wear masks are violating university policy, which is a health and safety matter. Willful defiance of this manner is considered disruptive classroom behavior and a violation of our policies. Faculty can tell students engaging in such behavior to leave their classes and if they do not, faculty can end class. Students engaging in disruptive classroom behavior will then be sanctioned and go through the SJACS process.
- When students return, we can expect an uptick of COVID cases because of the Delta variant. We have increased our ability to isolate students in the USC Hotel where a substantial number of beds have been set aside. There may be an unusual number of students who are ill and unable to attend class. The university will not require sick notes. Zukoski encourages all faculty to ensure continuity of education for students and to be flexible in how they approach classroom attendance. The university is not asking for high-flex or streaming of classes, however.
- Those who feel sick should not come to work or class; they should stay home and if their symptoms are COVID-like, they should be tested. Zukoski reminded Senators that the USC Office of Institutional Accessibility has a dedicated team and will continue working with faculty and staff who have needs for ADA accommodations.
- Zukoski closed by stating that the university is re-emerging and that we all need patience and flexibility. He suggested that we must learn to be flexible and work in a new environment that contains this transmissible disease. At the same time, we are a residential university and our students are enormously excited about coming back to campus, in-person.

In response to a question from a Senator about health and safety protocols of cleaning staff contracted by the university, the Provost maintained that such staff are vaccinated and required to comply with the same protocols as everyone else on campus. He encouraged those with concerns about cleanliness of classrooms or offices, or compliance with cleaning protocols, to speak with managers in their departments/schools. A Senator asked what faculty should expect if they defy directives to return to campus. Those faculty, Zukoski indicated, would be referred for disciplinary action, such as leave without pay and movement towards termination. Teaching modalities, including remote teaching policies and protocols, should be determined through curriculum committees at the school/departmental level, not at the individual level. Another Senator inquired about the nature of accommodations for students who cannot attend class in-person. The Senator was especially interested in whether faculty are expected to provide particular types of online or remote experiences, such as asynchronous content or recorded lectures. Zukoski indicated that the university expects continuity of education and is not mandating particular types of accommodations. He pointed out again that we are a residential campus and much of the education that is offered comes from that residential experience, and that in-person attendance is expected. A Senator sought clarification on whether faculty in her school (Kaufman) are required to be tested weekly and asked on the record if it would be OK to request special classroom/space accommodations. The Provost indicated that weekly testing of faculty might be required in some instances, but that he would need to explore the matters

further. Finally, a Senator expressed concerns about data suggesting that vaccinated faculty and students can catch and spread the Delta variant, and take it home to their unvaccinated children and older family members. Zukoski assured the Senator that the administration has been talking in depth about such concerns and encouraged the Senator to attend the forthcoming webinar where others with more expertise than him can address risk.

Adjournment

Tambascia thanked the Provost and encouraged faculty to attend the webinar he mentioned. She thanked Senators and adjourned the meeting at 3:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Devon Brooks

Secretary General of the Academic Senate