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2 **ACADEMIC SENATE**

3 **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

4 Meeting of May 12, 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, B. Belcher
8 M. Bodie, D. Brooks, R. Brown, S. Bucher, A. Cannon, P. Cardon, K. Carlson, B. Carrington,
9 R. Cislowski, J. Clements, C. Clerc, E. Collins, M. Crowley, G. Davison, J. Dopheide, L. Ferguson,
10 R. Filback, G. Giuliano, L. Gross, S. Gruskin, A. Imre, J. Israel, M. Jacobson (alternate for M.
11 Mather), J. Kirschner, R. Labaree, R. Lonergan, T. Mayfield, P.T. McNiff, A. Motamed, J. Moore
12 C. Neuman, J. Nyquist, D. O'Leary, N. Olmos, S. Payne, D. Pecchenino, G. Polidori, M. Press,
13 A. Rechenmacher, C. Resnik, V. Rindova, B. Salhia, A. Sanchez, T. Sandmeier, T. Tambascia,
14 T. Tucker, A. Uyeshiro Simon, A. Van Speybroeck, L. Vest (alternate for T. Kobza), J. Walker,
15 E. Warford, R. Watanabe (alternate for M. Karp), R. Wood, G. Zada, E. Zeamer

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17 **Absent:** G. Kung, F. Liley, T. Ton, T. Wattenbarger

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19 **Guests (Senate Members alternates & invited guests):** M. Chodorowska-Pilch, E. Fife, C. Finch,
20 C. Folt, S. Helfter, J. Keim, B.-S. Kim, M. Levine, R. MacKenzie, M. Matarić, J. McLaughlin Gray,
21 T. Mueller, L. Nieto, R. Pak, R. Parke, A. Rutkowski, B. Shuster, S. Simon, R. Turner, N. Warren,
22 C. Young, C. Zukoski

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25 **AGENDA**

26 **Call to Order**

27 Academic Senate President Paul Adler called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.

28 **Approval of Minutes of April Senate Meeting**

29 Academic Senate Secretary General Brooks presented the April 2021 minutes for discussion and
30 approval. A Senator suggested one edit to line 40 of the minutes (involving incorrect tense).

31 ***Motion to approve the edited April minutes. Seconded and passed: 35 in favor, 0 opposed, and 2***
32 ***abstentions.***

33 **Results of EB Election**

34 Academic Senate Vice President Tracy Tambascia thanked all faculty who stood for election to the
35 Executive Board and presented winners of the election: Daniel Pecchenino (Academic Vice
36 President); Alisa Sanchez (Administrative Vice President); and Ben Carrington, Sofia Gruskin, Elisa
37 Warford, and Gabriel Zada (Members-at-Large). She reminded attendees that she will serve as
38 President, Paul Adler will serve as Immediate Past President, and Devon Brooks will continue
39 serving as Secretary General. Tambascia also shared information about voting representation by
40 school/unit and faculty track, noting that school and faculty type representation are similar to the

representation in the previous two years.

President Folt Presentation

Adler handed the floor to President Folt who added her congratulations to new members of the Executive Board and to those stepping into faculty leadership roles. She reflected on the past year and discussed the “deep dive” undertaken by senior leadership into the root cause analysis of the previous problems in the university. Folt noted that a website called change.usc.edu contains more than 600 pages of information about the problems experienced by the university and solutions. For example, it contains the Office of Civil Rights’ (OCR) findings letter against the university, our resolution agreement, summaries of data we are required to collect since we are under investigation by the OCR, Cleary data, detailed FAQs about varsity blues and admissions, and our agreement with UC San Diego. Our re-accreditation report and the response from the accreditation report will also be posted on the website. Folt then offered her opinions about three root causes for strengthening the university. Root causes include (1) not having the right governance structures in place to ensure accountability at all levels of the organization from the Board of Trustees on down; (2) inadequate investment in critical infrastructure, including cyber security; and (3) inattention to the cultural gaps between our values—what we said about ourselves and what we were actually doing. Folt discussed best practices and changes made in response to each of the main root causes, including those pertaining to the Board of Trustees, compensation of leadership, appointment and re-appointment of deans, advisory boards, governance of the health system board for Keck Medicine, changes in HR structure, complaint processes, IT systems, student health and wellness, culture, and DEI.

Questions for President Folt

Folt then responded to questions from the floor. A Senator asked Folt if she was aware of any deliberations to include faculty on the Board of Trustees. Folt does not see the Board putting on voting members of the faculty but noted efforts to bring faculty voices into meetings of the Board, which she strongly supports. Two Executive Board members expressed concerns about faculty serving as ‘observers’ and wondered whether it makes more sense for them to serve instead as ex-officio members. Folt agreed before thanking senators for their patience and expressing her appreciation for all the work they have done.

Provost Zukoski

Provost Zukoski began his remarks by congratulating faculty and senators for all they have done this year. He discussed issues related to vaccinations, class modalities, and fall restart planning. We are expecting a safe return to a normal range of on campus activities in the fall. To achieve this, we are requiring faculty, students, and staff to be vaccinated. If someone is not vaccinated by declination, they will be tested twice weekly. We expect classes to be close to full density and we will require masks and face shields in accordance with Los Angeles Department of Public Health guidance. We have assessed every building and classroom, made updates where necessary, and we are confident about the safety of the teaching environment when we return to campus. Students who request continued virtual instruction due to health conditions can be accommodated by our disability services programs, as is appropriate. Faculty and staff will be accommodated by their deans of faculty or through their HR partners. Although we expect in-person attendance in the fall, Zukoski encouraged continued creativity in developing and delivering course. There will be two first year classes—the rising second year students and true first year students who are coming in.

Zukoski also discussed the financial outlook of the university. Largely because of COVID and the Tindell settlement, we will end the year with an operational deficit, though we have the reserves to cover the deficit. Despite the deficit, we will pursue key university priorities, including sustainability, DEI, collaboration, some construction, and a series of other initiatives. We expect to continue being the strongest private university on the west coast... the university forever in and of the city of Los Angeles and we will strengthen our global presence. President Folt asked Zukoski and Steve Shapiro, incoming Vice President for Health Affairs, to work with the schools on expanding and supporting new teaching methodologies, including online, virtual, and augmented reality; expanded credentials; increasing our global engagement; launching our Cancer Moonshot and computation in AI projects; promoting and rewarding interdisciplinary and interschool collaboration; and developing a five year plan for the infrastructure needed to expand our research and creative expression. Investments will be made to advance these priorities. Zukoski will ask each academic unit to develop plans for understanding the future of their disciplines and to imagine how and what they will teaching going forward, and what sort of research programs they wish to build. He would like us to think about the definition of excellence we wish to use and how excellence of our programs can measured by the impact of our work in a discipline or in society. He also encouraged us to establish lofty aspirations.

Questions for Provost Zukoski

Following his remarks, Zukoski answered questions from the floor. A Senator asked for additional details on how faculty with health concerns will be accommodated in the fall by their deans. Zukoski encouraged faculty to turn to Deans of Faculty or HR professionals to learn about accommodations that might be possible. Another Senator asked the provost to speak about involvement of faculty, staff, and students in upcoming dean searches. Zukoski described some of the ways that faculty, staff, and students participate in dean searches. In response to a question about diversity hiring, Zukoski discussed the \$50 million pool established by the previous provost to support diversity hiring. He and the president are exploring ways to expand opportunities to help schools higher in diverse ways.

Senate Awards

Robert Labaree, member of the Senate Awards Committee, announced award winners: Ashley Uyeshiro Simon and Nick Stoubis received the Distinguished Faculty Service Award, and Jody Armour received the Walter Wolf Award for Defense of Academic Freedom and Faculty Rights. Labaree encouraged senators to attend the award ceremony immediately following the Senate meeting.

Tambascia presented Paul Adler a plaque in honor of his outstanding leadership, intellectual integrity, innovation, and dedicated service as president of the faculty, 2020-2021.

Resolution Faculty Handbook: 2nd Reading, Vote

Adler introduced for a 2nd reading, a resolution to the Faculty Handbook. Academic Senate Secretary General Brooks opened the floor for a vote on the resolution.

Motion to amend the Faculty Handbook. Passed: 44 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

State of the Senate Report

Paul Adler provided a State of the Senate Report, intended to provide Senators his impressions on where we stand as an Academic Senate. He began by indicating his main priority for the year: to

strengthen shared governance. He believes we made modest progress in this area. Adler than explained how he sees the basic challenges of shared governance, reviewed a few of the big agenda items tackled by the Senate, and offered a few words about the work ahead. Regarding challenges, our goal as a faculty and as a Senate requires us to integrate two sets of interests—those that are specific to the Senate and those that are shared with administration. Achieving this integration is complicated by the fact that faculty are dependent upon their income from USC and far more dependent on USC than USC as an institution is dependent on any particular member of the faculty. So there is a tension between financial needs of the faculty and the financial priorities of the institution. The absence of public funding, Adler suggested, leaves USC competing for students and their fees, as well as for other sources of revenue. He believes this creates pressure on faculty salaries and for the university to use resources in ways that sometimes undermine our shared mission and that tempt senior leaders to defensively protect the university's reputation rather than expand transparency and accountability. In this context, shared governance means looking for ways to advance both sets of interests. This is challenging by nature and made more challenging by three factors: most faculty and students are dispersed across 22 very independent schools, resulting in lots of different types of education and research aspirations and processes; other stakeholders' interests need to be considered and sometimes those interests do not always align with ours; and as the university has grown, so too has its administrative and support functions, overshadowing the academic core.

Next, Adler discussed shared governance strengths and weaknesses, and achievements made over the year. He believes the administration heard our voices and that we made progress on some issues (e.g., revisions to the constitution, representation on important issues and committees), but that we failed in a couple of key respects (e.g., there was a pause in merit pay, we did not avoid staff layoffs, lack of faculty involvement by deans in COVID and budget planning). Adler lamented the persistent tone of distrust that he believes characterized conversations with and about senior administration. This distrust, he suggested, is corrosive.

Looking forward, Adler sees 5 big challenges that we face in the Senate and in shared governance: (1) the changing context of higher education, (2) development and deployment of research capabilities, (3) expansion of patient care, (4) growing administrative infrastructure, and (5) economics of education in private universities. He closed by acknowledging and thanking those involved in faculty leadership and governance this past year.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 3:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Devon Brooks

Secretary General of the Academic Senate