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ACADEMIC SENATE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

4 Meeting of September 15, 2021

5 Virtual Meeting

6 2:00 - 4:00 pm PST

7 **Present (Senate Members):** P. Adler, M. Apostolos, D. Armstrong, D. Becker, C. Beckman,
8 B. Belcher, M. Bodie, D. Brooks, A. Campbell, B. Carrington, J. Chamberlin (alternate for
9 D. Milstein), M. Chatterjee, J. Clements, D. Cole, J. Dopheide, C. Finch, L. Gale, L. Gross,
10 S. Gruskin, S. Gupta, A. Imre, J. Israel, J. Kickul, L. Klerman, T. Kobza, G. Kung, R. Labaree,
11 K. Lincoln, T. Mayfield, J. McLaughlin Gray, P.T. McNiff, J. Moore, J. Parr, A. Parra,
12 S. Payne, M. Press, D. Pecchenino, G. Ragusa, A. Rechenmacher C. Resnik, B. Salhia,
13 A. Sanchez, T. Sandmeier, T. Tambascia, B. Turner (alternate for J. Baker), A. Uyeshiro Simon, A.
14 Van Speybroeck, J. Walker, E. Warford, N. Warren, R.Wood, C. Young, G. Zada,
15 E. Zeamer, S. Zweig

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17 **Absent:** P. Cardon, K. Carlson, E. Collins, M. Crowley, M. Karp, F. Liley, D. Milstein,
18 A. Motamed

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20 **Guests (Senate Members alternates & invited guests):** F. Bar, A. Chen, G. Condell, E. Fife,
21 C. Folt, M. Levine, R. MacKenzie, C. Neuman, R. Pak, P. Riley, A. Rutkowski, B. Shuster,
22 M. Townsend, C. Zukoski

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AGENDA

25 **Call to Order**

26 Academic Senate President Tambascia called the meeting to order at 2:03 pm.

27 **Establishing Quorum**

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

30 **Approval of Minutes**

31 Brooks presented the May 12 and August 11 Emergency Meeting minutes for discussion and
32 approval.

33 ***Motion to approve the May 12 minutes. Seconded and passed: 26 in favor, 0 opposed, and 3***
34 ***abstentions.***

35 ***Motion to approve the August 11 minutes. Seconded and passed: 33 in favor, 1 opposed, and 1***
36 ***abstention.***

37 **Conversation with President Folt and Provost Zukoski**

38 President Folt thanked everyone for their attendance and hard work. She expressed her hope that
39 Senators are aware of how grateful students, parents, and alumni are for their efforts. Other
40 updates included:

- 41
- The university tests 9,000 people a day and is seeing compliance with its vaccination policy.

- 42 ● Fall enrollment is expected to be the highest, strongest, and most diverse in USC history. Folt
43 suspects that our in-person return contributed to the high enrollment.
- 44 ● We are recovering financial and having a pretty good year in our endowment. We also
45 increased financial aid to students and continued offering free tuition to students from
46 families earning less than \$80,000 a year, which we have no intention of backing away from.
- 47 ● We doubled mental health services for students and provided more psychiatric help than in
48 past years. We will have 107 health providers and we have significantly increased education
49 and sexual violence prevention services, adding nine new staff members.
- 50 ● Advancement finished significantly ahead of our goal of \$450 million at over \$520 million.

51 Folt then took questions from Senators before handing the floor to Provost Zukoski.

52 Zukoski offered brief updates:

- 53 ● Steve Shapiro was installed as the university's first Senior Vice President of Health Affairs and
54 the Keck School of Medicine (KSOM) leadership team is being solidified with the selection of a
55 new dean. Three deans will be installed later in the fall: Emily Roxworthy (School of Dramatic
56 Arts), Dana Goldman (Sol Price School of Public Policy), and Thanassis Rikakis (Irvine and
57 Young Academy). Robert Cutietta is stepping down as dean of Thornton School of Music and
58 Gloria Kaufman School of Dance (positions Zukoski expects to fill by the end of the year).
- 59 ● Recommendations made by the Racial, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) Task Force will
60 be implemented over this academic year. Workgroups are currently being assigned and
61 timelines are being developed.
- 62 ● The PhD outcomes assessment being carried out by Andy Stott, Vice Provost for Academic
63 Programs and Dean of the Graduate School is ongoing. Data are due October 1 and will be
64 analyzed by a faculty committee that will make recommendations on improving PhD outcomes
65 at USC. Stott surveyed undergraduate and graduate students about their advisement
66 preferences.
- 67 ● Ishwar Puri has joined the university as the Vice President for Research. The Office of Research
68 awarded about \$4 million in seed funding this year (as it has done in past years) and built
69 infrastructure to support large-scale grants.
- 70 ● Nominations will soon be sought for University and Distinguished Professors. These are the
71 university's highest honors for faculty. The Provost would like to see more diverse
72 representation in the nominations, reflecting growth in diversity of our faculty.

73 Zukoski stated that the university is in remarkably good shape and thanked Senators for their
74 efforts. He then took questions from Senators.

75 **Welcome back and working together as a Senate**

76 Tambascia welcomed returning and new Senators. She then discussed how the Senate conducts
77 business and how Senators will work together this year. She reminded senators that Senate
78 meetings generally follow Robert's Rules of Order in managing business and that voting matters
79 are handled after establishing quorum and via motions. Faculty Handbook and Bylaws changes
80 take place over two Senate meetings. Meeting minutes are posted online. Tambascia asked that
81 Senators raise their digital hand to participate in discussion (in virtual meetings) and that
82 discussions taking place via the chat function retain the same level of collegiality and respect as
83 the comments voiced to our colleagues and guests. She also asked Senators to reach out to
84 colleagues within their schools and programs and to bring concerns to the Senate meetings, and
85 encouraged those who tend to be quiet to please make the needs and concerns of their faculty
86 known in Senate meetings, to her or the Executive Board, or some other way.

87 **EBAC presentation (Paul Cannon and Patti Riley; guests Greg Condell and Alice Chen)**

88 On behalf of the Employment Benefits Advisory Committee (EBAC), Patti Riley, Alice Chen, and
89 Greg Condell gave a [presentation](#) and answered questions about benefits and open enrollment
90 (October 25 – November 8) changes for 2021. A similar presentation will be made to the Staff
91 Assembly, and virtual seminars will also be available. Riley, Chen, and Condell took questions from
92 the floor.

93 **Return to campus and start of the academic year conversation: FC survey responses & topics**

94 The meeting ended with a conversation facilitated by Tambascia about issues and concerns
95 related to our return to campus and start of the academic year. The conversation considered
96 responses to a survey sent out by the Executive Board in the previous week asking questions
97 about teaching and learning experiences, teaching modalities, and about communication within
98 the schools. Responses revealed challenges with hybrid instruction and concerns about classroom
99 conditions. Responses about communication within schools was mixed, with some reporting good
100 communication from deans and leadership and others reporting inconsistent or a lack of
101 communication. Tambascia invited Senators to share their experiences and concerns. Senators
102 expressed concerns about availability of PPE, improper masking, and misuse of Trojan Check.
103 Others shared that classroom space has not been available, that there continue to be technology
104 issues, and that there is angst and confusion about continuity of education expectations and
105 messaging, particularly as it relates to hybrid instruction. There was also discussion about how
106 these issues might impact student and faculty wellness, student evaluations, and faculty workload
107 and compensation. Another Senator expressed frustration about the Provost's response when
108 safety issues are raised. Tambascia indicated that the information shared will help with
109 communications with the Provost and she encouraged Senators to continue trying to address
110 issues through Faculty Councils and school leadership.

111 **Adjournment**

112 Tambascia thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting at 4:01 pm.

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114 Respectfully submitted,

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117 Devon Brooks

118 Secretary General of the Academic Senate

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120 Respectfully submitted,

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123 Devon Brooks

124 Secretary General of the Academic Senate