

**ACADEMIC SENATE**  
**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

Meeting of November 17, 2021

Virtual Meeting

2:00 - 4:00 pm PST

**Present (Senate Members):** P. Adler, M. Apostolos, D. Armstrong, D. Becker, C. Beckman, M. Bodie, D. Brooks, A. Campbell, P. Cardon, K. Carlson, B. Carrington, J. Chamberlin (alternate for T. Mayfield), M. Chatterjee, J. Clements, D. Cole, E. Collins, P. Crispen, C. Finch, L. Gale, S. Gruskin, S. Gupta, L. Hoffman, K. Imagawa, A. Imre, S. J. Israel, J. Kickul, L. Klerman, T. Kobza, G. Kung, R. Labaree, J. McLaughlin Gray, P.T. McNiff, A. Motamed, J. Moore, J. Nyquist, A. Parra, D. Pecchenino, L. Perin Gallandt, A. Rechenmacher, B. Salhia, A. Sanchez, T. Sandmeier, L. Serna, T. Tambascia, B. Turner (alternate for J. Baker), A. Uyeshiro Simon, A. Van Speybroeck, J. Walker, E. Warford, N. Warren, R. Wood (alternate for S. Iqbal), C. Young, E. Zeamer

**Absent:** M. Crowley, J. Dopheide, M. Karp, F. Liley, K. Lincoln, D. Milstein, S. Payne, M. Press, C. Resnik, A. Yang, G. Zada, S. Zweig

**Guests (Senate Members alternates & invited guests):** M. Allard, F. Bar, Y. Bar-Cohen, P. Cannon, K. Culpepper, E. Fife, Beong-S. Kim, M. Levine, C. Manning, C. Neuman, R. Pak, M. Price, A. Rutkowski, B. Shuster, M. Townsend, C. Zachary, C. Zukoski

**AGENDA**

**Call to Order**

Academic Senate President Tambascia called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.

**Approval of Minutes**

Secretary General Brooks presented the [October 20 minutes](#) for approval.

***Motion to approve the October 20 minutes.*** Seconded and passed: 20 in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 abstention.

**Update from Provost Zukoski**

Provost Zukoski began his remarks by expressing how pleased he was to be in attendance and conveying President Folt's regrets for not being able to attend. He recognized that it was the week before Thanksgiving and gave thanks for all that has been accomplished by the faculty this semester despite all the challenges. Zukoski then made other announcements:

- Dr. Carolyn Meltzer was named as the new dean of the School of Medicine. There are ongoing searches for the deans of the Thornton School of Music and the Kaufman School of Dance. The committees for the searches are undertaking listening sessions currently and the process can be followed at <https://deansearch.usc.edu/>.
- As we enter the Thanksgiving holiday, students, faculty, and staff will be traveling. We

need to recognize that the pandemic is still with us and that the flu season is upon us; we should therefore continue to take safety measures. Beginning December, flu shots are required and Trojan Check will not approve those coming to campus if they are not in compliance with the vaccination policy. In the final three weeks of the semester there is likely to be an uptick in illness. Students should not come to campus if they have flu- like symptoms. Zukoski encouraged faculty to continue being flexible in ensuring continuity of education.

- This semester there were no major COVID outbreaks on campus, something we should celebrate while still being vigilant. Zukoski encouraged Senators to get their COVID booster shots and to contact the COVID Response Team or his office with questions.

Zukoski engaged Senators in conversations about three topics: (1) fraternities and sexual assault and drugging allegations; (2) the former dean of the School of Social Work; and (3) where we are going as a university and how we will get there. Regarding fraternities and allegations of sexual violence and drugging, the Provost emphasized that sexual violence is criminal and that we stand firmly with survivors. We want to reduce and eliminate sexual violence on campus and will continue working towards this goal. Zukoski urged Senators to review the President's messages to the community and the FAQs prepared for the community and the public. He noted that Beong-Soo Kim, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, and Monique Allard, Interim Vice President for Student Affairs, were available to address questions. Zukoski thanked Allard for stepping into the interim position and both Allard and Kim for their attendance.

Zukoski indicated that Administration has stressed the need to improve our culture and to be accountable. As part of the effort to be accountable, he pointed out that President Folt leaned in and discussed the delay in reporting, which was complicated by the confidential nature of reports to RSVP. When the delay was found, it was immediately made public. There has since been considerable activity to ensure that delays in the process will not occur again. There were also interactions with student groups, including the Interfraternity Council (IFC) and the Panhellenic group, and a webinar with students. There was some controversy about why the meeting with students was held online. Zukoski said this was done so that students, especially survivors, could participate safely and anonymously if they wished. Other events continue to take place across campus. In the previous week, the Working Group on IFC Culture, Prevention, and Accountability was announced. This group will guide and help us think about future actions with regard to IFC social events, accountability, sexual assault, drugs and drinking, and prevention strategies. The Provost asked the group to act rapidly and give clear guidance to him and to President Folt about what it will take to bring back social activities for students. Additionally, the University is working on revising our Clery policy so that it is clearer to everyone when information from confidential sources is to be brought forward to campus security authorities and reported under the Clery Act. We also are enhancing our training so that employees and students have a better understanding of reporting processes. Zukoski pointed out that when the University noticed the gap in reporting, the Administration reached out immediately to the Department of Education, which is conducting an audit of our processes and with whom we are working closely. The Provost noted that the Administration often receives requests for an independent audit and that the audit by the Department of Education is an independent one. The Department of Education will issue findings once it completes its audit and the University will systematically address the identified issues. Zukoski stated that the Administration is interested in hearing ideas from the Senate about how the Administration can communicate better about these issues, particularly changes made by the

Administration, and then took questions on the topic. A Senator suggested that more video communications could be helpful, while another Senator suggested that the Provost respond directly to the Senate rather than just to the Executive Board or by posting materials online. The same Senator made suggestions with respect to membership of the Working Group on IFC Culture, Prevention, and Accountability. A Senator asked if there could be input into the membership of the working group, to which the Provost responded that the membership was already fixed and would not be expanded. The Provost apologized for the oversight of not reaching out to Senate President Tambascia about membership on the working group. Tambascia asked the Senator who asked the question to send her recommendations if he had them, in the event that membership is reconsidered. The Senator pointed out that recommendations were offered in a letter from the Dornsife Faculty Council (DFC). Zukoski stated that the letter was received and considered, and he thanked DFC for the recommendations.

The Provost then addressed the reporting in the press about the alleged past misconduct involving the former dean of the School of Social Work, as well as the debt of students in the School and admissions processes. He stated that these issues happened under a prior administration and that as soon as the alleged misdeeds of the dean were recognized, the situation was handed over to federal investigators, with whom we have cooperated. Federal investigators informed the University not to conduct an internal investigation. It took them about three years to complete their investigation and when they did, they announced their findings. Zukoski indicated that the Administration learned of the nature of the indictments only when they came out a few weeks ago.

With respect to concerns about admissions processes and student debt, Zukoski explained that the School of Social Work dramatically changed admissions requirements and other aspects of their program in response to noted concerns. He stressed that the University does not endorse the strategies described in reports in the press. He acknowledged, however, that debt is a problem for several of our professional programs in particular and for higher education in general. He reminded Senators that one of President Folt's first priorities was to increase the affordability of a USC undergraduate degree and to that end, she launched the program that allows students from families with incomes less than \$80,000 a year to attend USC tuition-free. We are currently examining how to provide high quality education and reduce student debt for the PhD programs, as well as for all the Master's and professional degrees. Zukoski noted that he has asked the deans to develop budget narratives and that the deans specifically address how they will recognize student debt as a growing issue when they are doing their financial planning. This is a key issue not just for students in the School of Social Work; he noted that across the University we have debt-to-income ratios ranging from 0.27 to 4. In our case, these ratios reflect the amount of debt owed by students relative to their income two years after graduation.

The Provost also addressed the issue of working with online program management operations (OPMs). When USC got into online education, we were pioneers, discovering with the rest of the world how to deliver high quality programs. We partnered with different OPMs, including 2U in the case of the School of Social Work. The OPMs are paid for the array of services they provide, such as student recruitment and building technology frameworks. We are in the process of reviewing our contracts with the OPMs to make sure the OPMs are delivering high quality services in an ethical manner, and to understand the cost structure as the online market continues to evolve. Closing his remarks on the topic, Zukoski emphasized that the professional education programs that USC offers are of high quality and high value to students and to society. He sees

130 online programs as potentially expanding in response to changes in the economy and in  
131 professions, and as professionals wish to upskill or change their careers. The Provost then  
132 responded to questions and comments on the topic from Senators. A Senator followed up on the  
133 Provost's discussion about debt-to-income ratios, first observing that programs vary in the  
134 number of units required for programs and then asking if we should create a revenue sharing or  
135 some other mechanism for students in some fields. The Provost stated that the question is one we  
136 should pursue. Senate President Tambascia suggested that it might be worthwhile for the Provost  
137 to discuss the University's efforts to build central capacity to offer online programming. The  
138 Provost indicated that indeed Dean Bailey and Mike Nichol have been working on building this  
139 capacity, and that some schools have been working together to enhance their online teaching  
140 capacity. Immediate Past Senate President Adler observed that the multiple problems  
141 encountered by the School of Social Work seem to reflect a serious governance problem and that  
142 these issues should have surfaced in the Provost's Office. Adler asked if the Provost could discuss  
143 how the incidents in the School of Social Work led to changes in the relationship between the  
144 Provost's Office and the deans. Zukoski said he could only refer to anecdotal histories about what  
145 happened before he arrived and then went on to describe how he works with the deans, relying  
146 on the concept of the budget narrative to provide him with insight into finances, vision, outcomes,  
147 etc. But criminal behavior, the Provost lamented, is always more likely to be caught after the fact.

148 The Provost closed with a discussion of future directions and ambitions for the University. He sees  
149 the future of USC as very bright and asked Senators to consider three topical areas and related  
150 questions. First, regarding expansion of the health sciences campus and our healthcare system,  
151 Zukoski posed the following questions: What does healthcare look like in the future? What will it  
152 look like in Los Angeles? What will it look like around the world? What areas [of healthcare and  
153 translational biomedical research] should we be working on? How can our university advance  
154 healthcare delivery?

155 On this first topic, a Senator suggested that it would be helpful to hear from the Provost what we  
156 are doing with what we have in place now, and how we can best support our faculty currently, in  
157 addition to recruiting and engaging even more faculty. The Provost discussed efforts to address  
158 problems with WorkDay and ways to support existing faculty, research infrastructure, and  
159 research activity, for example, and not just growth. In response to a question about where to go  
160 for support with WorkDay, the Provost offered a few suggestions depending on the nature of the  
161 problem.

162 Academic Vice President Pecchenino expressed concerns about lack of investment in the  
163 infrastructure needed to support growth, not just physical infrastructure but in human  
164 infrastructure as well. The Provost agreed with the concerns and emphasized the importance of  
165 sustaining quality over growth.

166 Continuing with his vision for USC, Zukoski discussed the President's Working Group on Climate  
167 Change and Sustainability and related priorities, such as educating future leaders in their fields  
168 with an inclusive problem-solving sustainability mindset; generating innovative transdisciplinary  
169 solutions for sustainability; aligning university operations and national systems with sustainability  
170 goals; inclusive decision-making and social equity; and engaging communities in solving  
171 sustainability problems. Related to these issues, the Provost posed the following questions to  
172 Senators: How are we going to infuse sustainability thinking across the entire curriculum? What  
173 barriers are in place and how can we in our teaching and research bring people [from various  
174 disciplines] together?

The final topic the Provost presented to the Senate for further consideration is the role of digital education. The Provost noted that because of the pandemic, we learned that digital education can be effective for both training and educating. He asked Senators to consider the following kinds of questions: How are we going to enhance student experiences? How important is virtual reality going to be in education? How do we prepare faculty? What content will we be delivering? What role will digital platforms play? A Senator asked the Provost about ways to encourage and incentivize faculty to engage in digital modalities. The Provost indicated that he is looking for help and advice on that front. Another Senator suggested that we consider what we are already doing at USC, specifically through the libraries and across disciplines and departments. The Provost agreed that it is important to build on the expertise and quality of programs we already have. He is particularly interested in research and scholarship around teaching, and in the content of what is being taught. The psychological impacts of online learning and the importance of investing and focusing on our immediate surroundings and community were issues raised by another Senator. The Provost agreed that these are important issues and suggested that a challenge for educators is to determine how to use digital technologies to provide access and education that is valued. A Senator highlighted challenges associated with online education, particularly for students of architecture and other fields where hands-on experience is essential, and barriers to access to education, including tuition. Agreeing with the Senator, the Provost suggested that solutions to these challenges and barriers will require creative thinking and problem-solving as we shape education of the future.

#### **Nominations committee elections: Dan Pecchenino, Academic VP**

Academic Vice President Pecchenino described the purpose of the Nominating Committee and its importance. He explained that his role as Academic VP includes chairing the committee and developing the ballot for the committee, and he described the structure and process of developing the ballot, which includes identifying at least four nominees to be elected to the committee and four members of the Executive Board: Tambascia (President, Rossier), himself (Academic Vice President, Dornsife), Sanchez (Administrative Vice President, Dornsife), and Adler (Immediate Past President, Marshall). Pecchenino explained that nominations for the committee also can come from the floor and invited nominations, of which there were none. He then presented nominees for the Nominating Committee: Darnell Cole (Rossier), Sandeep Gupta (Viterbi), Anikó Imre (Cinematic Arts), and Jennifer Israel (Keck). Secretary General Brooks instructed Senators on how to complete the electronic ballot for elections of committee members before opening the ballot, which remained open for the duration of the Senate meeting. All four nominees were elected to serve on the Nominating Committee, with each receiving a majority of the vote. Results of the elections were announced at the end of the meeting.

#### **Update from Christopher Manning, Vice President and Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer**

Christopher Manning, Vice President and Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer, shared the [strategic vision for his office](#), beginning with a brief discussion of the urgency for USC of addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) issues. He then asked Senators to share their concerns related to DEI, which included challenges stemming from the size, structure, and complexity of USC; getting adequate support to be successful and to sustain any gains achieved; engaging faculty; supporting transdisciplinary opportunities; ensuring housing for commuters and transfer students; and helping faculty of color not just get hired but also retaining them and helping them to thrive.

Manning went on to discuss his DEI strategy, which he hopes to align with goals articulated by the

community so that “USC will become a place where all of its communities can succeed and fully contribute to our excellence as one of the world’s leading universities.” He suggests that this can be achieved by innovating and expanding our DEI capacity; synergizing our existing strengths; and harnessing new capacities to move forward existing and new collaboratively created DEI goals. Manning then gave an overview of short and mid-range strategies for his office, and long range strategic planning.

**Senate Resolution 2021/22 03, on Contracts, submitted from Viterbi**

Viterbi Senator James Moore presented [Resolution 21-22-03](#) on behalf of the Engineering Faculty Council resolving that the Academic Senate call upon the administration to revise faculty contracts effective Fiscal Year 2022-23 (FY23) to include the University’s commitment to make employer nonelective and matching contributions to faculty retirement accounts referenced to a percent of salary. Moore provided an overview of the resolution before Senate President Tambascia opened the floor for discussion of the motion. Proponents argued that adoption of the resolution would make it harder for Administration to cut benefits as they did last year. Opponents argued that the only plausible outcome would leave the Senate’s position unchanged.

***Motion to approve Resolution 21-22-03. Seconded and passed: 10 in favor, 6 opposed, and 17 abstentions.***

**Adjournment**

Tambascia thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Devon Brooks

Secretary General of the Academic Senate