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ACADEMIC SENATE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

4 Meeting of October 20, 2020

5 Virtual Meeting

6 2:00 - 4:00 pm PST

7 **Present (Senate Members):** P. Adler, M. Apostolos, J. Baker, D. Becker, C. Beckman,
8 D. Brooks, A. Campbell, P. Cardon, K. Carlson, B. Carrington, M. Chatterjee, J. Clements,
9 D. Cole, E. Collins, J. Dopheide, C. Finch, L. Gale, S. Gupta, A. Imre, K. Imagawa, S. Iqbal,
10 J. Kickul, J. Kirschner, L. Klerman, G. Kung, R. Labaree, K. Lincoln, T. Mayfield, J. McLaughlin Gray,
11 P.T. McNiff, D. Milstein, A. Motamed J. Moore, J. Nyquist, J. Parr, A. Parra, S. Payne,
12 L. Perin Gallandt, D. Pecchenino, S. Rao, A. Rechenmacher, C. Resnik, B. Salhia, A. Sanchez,
13 T. Sandmeier, T. Tambascia, A. Uyeshiro Simon, A. Van Speybroeck, E. Warford, N. Warren,
14 R. Wood, A. Yang, C. Young, E. Zeamer, S. Zweig

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16 **Guests (Senate Members alternates & invited guests):** F. Bar, Y. Bar-Cohen, J. Chamberlin,
17 J. Chobdee, M. Dalrymple, E. Fife, L. Hilton, J. Keim, M. Levine, M. Morgan, C. Neuman, R. Pak,
18 A. Rutkowski, D. Shook, B. Shuster, S. Tincher, M. Townsend, B. Turner, C. Zukoski

19
20 **Absent:** D. Armstrong, M. Crowley, S. Gruskin, J. Israel, M. Karp, T. Kobza, F. Liley, M. Press,
21 J. Walker, G. Zada

22
23
24 **AGENDA**

25 **Call to Order**

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

27 **Approval of Minutes**

28 Tambascia presented the September 15 minutes for approval.

29 ***Motion to approve the September 15 minutes.*** Seconded and passed: 30 in favor, 0 opposed, and
30 0 abstentions.

31 **Announcements**

32 Academic Vice President and President Elect Pecchenino announced that elections for the
33 Nominating Committee will take place during the November 17 Senate meeting. Four members
34 from the Senate will be elected to serve on the committee along with four members from the
35 Executive Board: Pecchenino, Tambascia, Sanchez (Administrative Vice President), and Adler
36 (Immediate Past President). Tambascia discussed the Faculty Lifetime Achievement Award and
37 encouraged Senators to [nominate](#) colleagues deserving of the honor.

38 **Update from Provost Zukoski**

39 Provost Zukoski provided detailed updates before answering questions from the floor.

- 40 ● USC is 95% fully vaccinated and the current positivity rate is .01% for students and .03% for
41 employees, which is substantially lower than the overall rating for LA County, which is about
42 .09%. We have had no outbreaks, but we must be vigilant especially with Thanksgiving break
43 coming up.
- 44 ● Regarding student attendance, course modalities, and where we find ourselves with COVID,
45 Zukoski indicated that to his knowledge faculty have been flexible and that there have been
46 few concerns from students, who appear to like hybrid courses. He encouraged faculty to
47 continue being flexible about class attendance since we are still in a pandemic and do not
48 want students coming to class when they feel ill. On the other hand, he noted, we must figure
49 out how to teach going forward given growing expectations from students that they can take
50 courses online. Additionally, Zukoski reported, many faculty feel that teaching online can lead
51 to better pedagogy and outcomes. Although faculty and units determine teaching modalities,
52 some policies can be conceptualized and applied campus-wide.
- 53 ● State and federal authorities are pressing for more vaccinations. President Biden has issued an
54 executive order for vaccine requirements for federal contractors (which we are) to extend
55 vaccine policies to remote employees who work in the United States. The deadline for
56 implementing the executive order is December 8. Additionally, an LA City Council ordinance
57 signed by Mayor Garcetti will require patrons to show proof of vaccination when entering
58 many indoor locations in the city, including restaurants, gyms, and event venues. This
59 ordinance applies to USC and we are working on the best ways to handle vaccination
60 verifications.
- 61 ● The budget process for next year has begun and continues into November. Budgets are
62 approved for units initially in April and then by the Board of Trustees in May or June; they go
63 into effect July 1. In November, the President's senior leadership team will formulate budget
64 parameters for the following academic year (2023-2024); the Finance Committee of the Board
65 of Trustees will review and approve the parameters in December, and the parameters will
66 then be disseminated to units so they can build their budgets in January and February.
- 67 ● The budget situation of the University is improving. Auxiliary services (e.g., residence halls and
68 eating facilities) have resumed, so our revenue situation is strong. Although we ran a
69 substantial operating deficit last year, retirement benefits will be re-established in January. We
70 are, however, facing some pressures on our budget, including pressures related to tuition. The
71 overall cost of operations is increasing, which typically is offset by tuition increases. Revenue
72 to cover growing costs can come from sources other than tuition, including the endowment
73 (which currently pays about 6% of our operating budget and will not increase significantly),
74 auxiliary revenues, and by reducing costs. It will be a challenge for us to continue covering
75 operational costs by raising tuition, especially for some graduate and professional degree
76 programs. Another way to grow tuition revenue is by increasing enrollment—a path that is
77 successful only if the education provided to additional students costs less than the revenue
78 generated by that tuition.
- 79 ● Zukoski pointed out that lack of income last year from athletics (including ticket sales and
80 media rights) had an enormous impact on revenue, which now is being mitigated because we
81 are playing at full season and athletics revenues are returning. However, we continue to face
82 local and national pressures on athletics. Athletics is very important for USC and we are
83 committed to athletics. They are part of our mission and brand, they deepen the Trojan family,
84 and they tighten our community bonds.
- 85 ● The Provost gave a brief update on the PhD Outcomes Assessment Initiative overseen by Andy
86 Stott, Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Dean of the Graduate School. The aim of the

87 initiative is to ensure that the content and structure of our PhD programs are aligned with
88 student educational and career outcomes. Data collection for the initiative is nearly complete
89 with approximately 90% of our 78 PhD programs having submitted data. Stott and his team
90 are organizing the data and will be publishing it through the Graduate School in January. The
91 Graduate School is working with the Senate to form a faculty committee to review the data
92 and make some initial observations. These observations will be used to engage PhD
93 stakeholders across campus in discussions about the future shape, content, and intellectual
94 direction of PhD programs at USC.
95

96 Before turning the floor over to Senators for questions for the Provost, Tambascia asked Zukoski
97 how former dean Marilyn Flynn was able to facilitate faculty hiring without a lot of engagement or
98 oversight apparently from faculty in the school. Tambascia also asked if a report of the Tyndall
99 investigation will be shared with the USC community. Regarding Flynn, Zukoski indicated that
100 much of what occurred took place before his arrival at USC and that there is little he can offer by
101 way of a response, noting as well that the situation is still a legal matter. With respect to the
102 Tyndall situation, Zukoski stated that there is no written report, and because there is often
103 confusion on the matter, he clarified that there also is no written report on Puliafito. Marty
104 Levine, Vice Provost and Senior Advisor to the Provost, reminded Senators that the University has
105 made many documents and past reports related to Tyndall available online at
106 <https://change.usc.edu/>. Tambascia followed up with a request for the Provost to discuss faculty
107 hiring and how to prevent situations like the one involving Flynn. Zukoski explained that each year
108 he receives a hiring plan from the deans, which he then discusses with deans. From there, the
109 standard hiring processes (e.g., advertising, reviewing candidates, approving hires) go into effect.
110 Additionally, some hires are “targets of opportunity,” which involve sudden hires of an individual
111 with unique characteristics. Even those hires are meant to go through the routine faculty review
112 and governance processes within schools.
113

114 A member of the Executive Board (EB) had a follow-up question for Zukoski about the role of the
115 Committee on Finances and Enrollment (CoFE) in the budget process. Zukoski explained that CoFE
116 plays an important role and that tuition and enrollment will be discussed at the next CoFE
117 meeting. The EB member then asked if the Provost could speak to how much the University
118 subsidized athletics last year, the kinds of cuts athletics made to get their budget in line, and
119 whether the University plans to subsidize athletics this year. The Provost indicated that losses for
120 athletics were in the 10s of millions of dollars due to lost ticket sales and media rights, and that
121 athletics worked hard on cutting costs last year, but that he did not have additional details at the
122 moment. He went on to state that he has not seen the projections for next year, but losses are not
123 expected to be in the 10s of millions as they were last year.
124

125 A senator asked the Provost if he had any sense as to why it has taken USC so long to reinstate
126 retirement benefits, **identifying several prominent research universities that had continued these**
127 **benefits or reinstated them relatively quickly**. Zukoski suggested the reasons were twofold: our
128 benefits packages apply to an annual year and our deficit was likely larger than deficits of other
129 universities.
130

131 Immediate Past Senate President Adler asked Zukoski if he thought it would be helpful to have a
132 more honest accounting of the administrative and other failures that gave rise to the problems
133 with Tyndall and Puliafito. Zukoski responded by pointing out that a root cause analysis was

134 carried out and that enormous changes have taken place as a result of the analysis.

135

136 Finally, a senator raised the issue of the student loan crisis and asked how the marketability of
137 students' skills and the salaries graduates can earn play into decisions about which programs to
138 accentuate. Zukoski stated that these factors are vital and that review processes for all new
139 programs consider student demand and outcomes such as whether there are opportunities for
140 students to become gainfully employed once they graduate. He then discussed the debt to income
141 ratio and posed the question, "What is a reasonable debt to take on to get an education?" for
142 Senators to consider.

143 **Doug Shook, Chief Information Officer – Update on Microsoft Accounts**

144 Doug Shook, Chief Information Officer (CIO), and Susan Tincher, Associate CIO for Infrastructure
145 Services, discussed the rising costs of maintaining our Microsoft and Google accounts and
146 associated challenges. Both Microsoft and Google are changing how they charge for licenses.
147 Previously they charged based on headcounts and now they will be charging by how much storage
148 is used and how many accounts have been created, for example. Next year, these changes are
149 expected to result in about \$3 million more in licensing fees to Microsoft and possibly the same to
150 Google (for as much as about \$7 million in total). Additionally, changes in who qualifies for
151 academic pricing will likely triple the price for those not inclusive of academic pricing. Other
152 conditions have prompted rethinking about licensing types, storage consumption, and how long
153 users maintain their licenses. Feedback from listening tours and surveys, as well as other data, will
154 be used to inform decision-making about licensing agreements. Decisions will be made between
155 December and late spring.

156 **Michele Morgan, Campus Support and Intervention and Lara Hilton, Center for Work and Family 157 Life**

158 Michelle Morgan, Director of [Campus Support & Intervention](#) (CSI), Lara Hilton, Director of the
159 Center for Work & Family Life (CWFL), and Julie Chobdee, CWFL Health and Well-being Program
160 Manager, spoke about support systems and services for faculty, staff, and students. Morgan
161 explained that CSI is housed in the Provost's Office and provides support, problem-solving, and
162 referrals for complex situations. To contact CSI, email should be sent to uscsupport@usc.edu.
163 Hilton and Chobdee gave an overview of the Center for Work & Family Life and a new initiative
164 called USC Healthy Campus. The CWFL is the University's employee assistance program and has
165 served the Trojan community for the last 40 years. USC Healthy Campus aims to enhance health
166 and well-being in four key areas: individual/personal well-being; leadership and culture;
167 infrastructure and sustainability; and institutional practices, policies, and systems.

168 **Mick Dalrymple, Chief Sustainability Officer**

169 Mick Dalrymple, Chief Sustainability Officer, addressed sustainability at USC, beginning with a
170 discussion of climate change, philosophical approaches to sustainability, and definitions of
171 sustainability. To advance sustainability at USC, Dalrymple suggests that we work from a common
172 vision and definition of sustainability: "the alignment of economic and social systems with nature
173 life support systems, maximizing positive feedback loops and minimizing trade-offs, in order to
174 enable people and other species to thrive now and into the future." He closed by discussing
175 opportunities for faculty and the Senate, including those related to scholarship and teaching (e.g.,
176 courses, certificates, minors, and maybe a major); supporting policies and programs that support
177 solution-based learning around sustainability; encouraging administration to move towards

178 centralization of non-mission, support functions; and supporting the 2028 Sustainability Plan.

179 **Senate Resolution 2021/22 02, Merit and Retirement**

180 Senator James Moore presented [Resolution 21-22-02](#) resolving that the Academic Senate call
181 upon the USC administration to reinstate merit pay increases forgone by faculty members in Fiscal
182 Year 2021 and to pay 401(a) employer non-elective contributions to accounts withheld from
183 faculty members during 2021. Moore suggested that the University has the means and obligation
184 to pay increases and contributions, that faculty relied on promises made when accepting
185 employment, and that faculty performed. Academic Vice President and President Elect
186 Pecchenino proposed an alternative resolution to call upon administration to retain the merit
187 portion and use the retirement portion to address the bottom quartile of the faculty's salary
188 problem, which has been acknowledged by administrators and faculty, to raise the salary floor and
189 deal with compression issues. Following discussion of the resolution and proposed alternative
190 resolution, Tambascia called for a vote.

191 ***Motion to approve Resolution 21-22-02. Seconded and passed: 25 in favor, 4 opposed, and 7***
192 ***abstentions.***

193 **Executive Board Projects and Priorities; Building Capacity**

194 This item was postponed.

195

196 **Adjournment**

197 Tambascia thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting at 4:05 pm.

198

199 Respectfully submitted,

200

201



202 Devon Brooks

203 Secretary General of the Academic Senate