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2 **ACADEMIC SENATE**

3 **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

4 January 19, 2022

5 Virtual Meeting

6 2:00 - 4:00 pm PST

7 **Present (Senate Members):** P. Adler, D. Armstrong, M. Apostolos, J. Baker, D. Becker, C. Beckman,  
8 M. Bodie, D. Brooks, A. Campbell, P. Cardon, K. Carlson, B. Carrington, J. Chamberlin (alternate for  
9 M. Chatterjee), J. Clements, D. Cole, E. Collins, P. Crispen, J. Dopheide, S. Enguidanos, E. Fife  
10 (alternate for S. Gupta), C. Finch, A. Foster, L. Gale, A. Grossman, S. Gruskin, L. Hoffman, K.  
11 Imagawa, A. Imre, S. Iqbal, C. Jones, L. Klerman, G. Kung, R. Labaree, K. Lincoln, T. Mayfield, J.  
12 McLaughlin Gray, P.T. McNiff, D. Milstein, A. Motamed, J. Moore, J. Nyquist, J. Parr, A. Parra, D.  
13 Pecchenino, L. Perin Gallandt, M. Polikoff, S. Rao, A. Rechenmacher, A. Sanchez, T. Sandmeier C.  
14 Soto, T. Tambascia, A. Tzoytzoyrakos, A. Uyeshiro Simon, A. Van Speybroeck, L. Vest (alternate for  
15 T. Kobza), J. Walker, E. Warford, N. Warren, R. Watanabe (alternate for J. Israel), C. Young, G.  
16 Zada, E. Zeamer, S. Zweig

17  
18 **Absent:** M. Crowley, F. Liley, W. Mack, M. Press, C. Resnik, B. Salhia, C. Soto, A. Yang

19  
20 **Guests (Senate Member alternates & invited guests):** Y. Bar-Cohen, K. Culpepper, C. Folt, J. Keim,  
21 M. Levine, C. Neuman, R. Pak, M. Price, A. Rutkowski, B. Shuster, B. Turner, C. Zachary, C. Zukoski

22  
23 **AGENDA**

24 **Call to Order**

25 Academic Senate President Tambascia called the meeting to order at 2:01 pm.

26 **Approval of Minutes**

27 Secretary General Brooks presented the [revised December 8 Academic Senate meeting minutes](#)  
28 for approval.

29 ***Motion to approve the December 8 minutes.*** Seconded and passed: 30 in favor, 0 opposed, and 2  
30 abstentions.

31 **Update from President Folt and Provost Zukoski; FY '22 Update**

32 President Folt welcomed everyone and gave important updates.

- 33 ● The additional week the University added to the winter break was appreciated, particularly by  
34 staff.
- 35 ● Folt's senior leadership team and the deans have been setting priorities for the first few weeks  
36 of the semester and beyond; Folt encouraged others to prioritize as well. Offering competitive  
37 compensation, retention, and maintaining quality of our top programs are among her main  
38 priorities. Senior leadership is still responding to the Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion  
39 (REDI) Task Force report and the work of the USC DPS Community Advisory Board (CAB). Folt

40 highlighted the [hire](#) of Dr. Errol Southers as Associate Senior Vice President of Safety & Risk  
41 Assurance.

- 42 ● The University needs to continue its work on principles of community. Managing social media  
43 is difficult and USC, like other universities, has not determined how deeply to get involved in  
44 social media. If anything goes wrong, it can influence the way USC is perceived. We have to  
45 think about how best to address free and protected speech, online identities and the online  
46 atmosphere, all of which will require building on the work of the Culture Committee. Many  
47 schools at USC have a code of conduct or behavior that students are expected to read, but  
48 very few require students to sign and agree to honor their respective code. This could help  
49 students better understand expectations and shape student behavior. Folt plans to work with  
50 the Senate, Student Assembly and other student groups to examine and address these issues.
- 51 ● Sexual assault is another community-wide issue that Folt plans to continue addressing. This  
52 involves working with our Inter-Fraternity Council and other student organizations.

53 A Senator asked the President about involvement of faculty in efforts to address sexual assault,  
54 particularly among fraternities and sororities. Folt emphasized that there was no intention to  
55 minimize involvement of faculty and that she expects new groups to be formed to address these  
56 issues in a larger context. Another Senator asked if a date has been set for the dedication of the  
57 Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow Center for International and Public Affairs. Folt indicated that a date has  
58 been set and that a wonderful weekend of events is planned for the dedication. A final question  
59 for Folt addressed her earlier comments about social media. Folt stated that USC faces social  
60 media issues, including some that involve serious bullying and harassment of students and  
61 antisemitism. These issues could have significant consequences for the individuals involved in  
62 them as well as reputational consequences for the University. Folt does not want to control  
63 speech, but she does want to make sure that we keep people safe and that we follow the law.

64 Provost Zukoski began his remarks by expressing his joy of the semester and classes starting. He  
65 provided updates on the work of the Interfraternity Council Culture, Prevention and  
66 Accountability Task Force and on the Restart Process, as summarized below.

- 67 ● The two charges of the Task Force are to (1) create long-term strategies for improving the  
68 culture, enhancing accountability, and addressing systematic challenges within the IFC  
69 chapters, and (2) develop short-term [guidelines](#) for the resumption of social activities at the  
70 IFC organizations. The Provost echoed what the President expressed earlier about needing to  
71 work together as a campus and as a community to end sexual assault across our entire  
72 campus. He appreciates everyone who brings these issues forward and alerts us of sexual  
73 assault or other issues impacting the safety and well-being of our community. Zukoski  
74 reminded Senators that in the fall, social activities of all 16 fraternities were paused  
75 indefinitely and one fraternity was placed on interim suspension. Since then, three additional  
76 fraternities were placed on interim suspension and one on modified suspension pending the  
77 outcome of investigations by EEO-TIX. Sigma Nu remains on interim suspension. Currently, the  
78 University has placed five fraternities on suspension, which is one of the most stringent actions  
79 taken by any university in the nation in recent years in response to the kind of behavior  
80 reported last fall. The eleven chapters in good standing have been provided details about  
81 actions required under close university oversight and partnership before social activities can  
82 resume. IFC chapters in good standing have been allowed to resume recruitment activities and  
83 are expected to resume hosting social gatherings by February 3, assuming they meet specified

84 requirements. Academic Vice President Pecchenino asked what constitutes an “event.” The  
85 Provost pointed out that our risk analysis involves large-scale parties but some provisions  
86 apply to other activities. Another Senator asked for clarification about the [Centralized](#)  
87 [Reporting Directive](#) issued by the University, specifically the requirement to report regardless  
88 of how the information is learned— whether from a direct report from a reporting party, from  
89 social media, from a concerned third party, or through any other source, which might include  
90 reporting rumors. The Provost confirmed that reporting rumors is indeed expected and that  
91 the EEO-TIX office is designed to assist those who report rumors. President Folt shared that  
92 this is one of the areas that people are trying to clarify and that we are following the guidelines  
93 of the Office of Civil Rights (OCR). She indicated that the University will share with OCR the  
94 question posed by the Senator and encouraged anyone concerned about whether to report to  
95 err on the side of reporting to EEO-TIX.

96 ● Regarding Restart, the plan is to be back in person on January 24<sup>th</sup>. Zukoski suggested that we  
97 are beginning to move past the peak of the Omicron surge. There have been no outbreaks on  
98 campus and we are essentially 100% vaccinated and soon to be 100% boosted, which—along  
99 with masking, surveillance testing, and isolating those who test positive— gives us a very high  
100 level of protection. Zukoski explained that the University chose January 24 as the return date  
101 because it would allow us to re-populate slowly and not overwhelm our infrastructure. We are  
102 requiring boosters and the enforcement guidelines will go into effect January 31<sup>st</sup>. In terms of  
103 classroom expectations, our Public Health Policy Advisory Group suggests that we are on the  
104 right course and will be able to protect our population with the practices we have in place.  
105 Still, we need to consider how to provide continuity of education for our students, especially  
106 since we expect to have more students with COVID than we had in the past. This means  
107 making content available online, including streaming, recording of lectures, posting of lecture  
108 notes, providing handouts, etc. The Provost encouraged Senators to think about how we can  
109 make accommodations for students and to reach out to the Center for Excellence in Teaching  
110 (CET) for support. For those concerned about ventilation, USC’s Office of Environmental Health  
111 & Safety (EH&S) maintains the [building readiness dashboard](#) on their website. Zukoski  
112 pleased that we will be back in person. We will not be risk free, he points out, but we are  
113 navigating the transition from COVID where we had no tools to protect ourselves to COVID  
114 that is endemic.

115 The Provost addressed questions and comments related to the plan to return to campus on  
116 January 24<sup>th</sup>. He indicated that he is sympathetic about concerns about exposure, but believes our  
117 campus is protected. The positivity rate is lower on campus than in the community. He pointed  
118 out that Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) would have allowed us to return  
119 in person on January 3<sup>rd</sup> and that there are no DPH stipulations limiting our ability to return. A  
120 Senator suggested that January 31 might be a more appropriate return date than the 24<sup>th</sup> since  
121 the 31<sup>st</sup> is the date by which everyone is required to have received their booster shot. Zukoski  
122 expressed his appreciation for the suggestion and reiterated his belief that the University is  
123 following the best available public health guidelines.

124 In response to several questions about teaching, the Provost indicated that hybrid teaching is not  
125 expected (though those who choose to do so, may) and that the rules that were in place last  
126 semester are the rules in place this semester. He also affirmed that there should be no penalties  
127 for teaching remotely when doing so has been approved by those responsible for such approvals  
128 (e.g., curriculum committees, deans, chairs, etc.).

129 A Senator asked if there is an official position on whether students should resume face-to-face  
130 meetings when engaged in research in K-12 settings. Zukoski replied that yes, there is an official  
131 position but that it will vary depending on the nature of the activity. He encouraged the Senator to  
132 reach out to Ishwar Puri, Vice President of Research or Sarah Van Orman, Associate Vice Provost  
133 for Student Health, for additional guidance.

134 As we transition out of COVID, another Senator offered observations about how well we are  
135 managing continuity of education, and rigor and expectations of our educational system. He asked  
136 the Provost if there is a plan for getting standards back on the table so that the education we offer  
137 is rigorous and valuable. The Provost indicated that he has heard similar concerns and shares  
138 them himself. His expectation is that we will return to having high standards and that it will take  
139 time to think through how we do that. The Senator also pointed out the need to consider the  
140 possible impact of imposing tougher standards on student evaluations, on which RTPC faculty and  
141 pre-tenured faculty rely heavily. The Provost agreed and suggested that these types of  
142 conversations should continue.

143 Tambascia closed the conversation with the Provost by summarizing comments made by Senators  
144 in the Zoom chat: several Senators would like to see another week of online instruction, either at  
145 their discretion or in consultation with their dean; aligning the return date with the booster  
146 deadline date of January 31 might reassure faculty that their concerns are being addressed; some  
147 faculty face childcare issues due to school closures and disruptions; the mental of faculty is  
148 important.

#### 149 **Resolution, FRR Bylaws Changes, Second Reading**

150 Tambascia presented for a second reading [Resolution 21-22-04](#) resolving to amend the Academic  
151 Senate's Bylaw 18 to reflect the following:

#### 152 **Bylaw 18: Composition of the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities.**

153 The co-chairs of the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities shall be one  
154 tenured professor and one full-time RTPC associate professor or professor (or equivalent  
155 ranks). The committee will also have other members.

156 Upon opening the floor for discussion and receiving none, Tambascia called for the vote.

157 ***Motion to approve Resolution 21-22-04. Passed: 41 in favor, 0 opposed, and 2 abstentions.***

#### 158 **Faculty Awards Nominations: Julie Nyquist, Chair of the Faculty Awards Committee**

159 Julie Nyquist, Chair of the Senate Awards Committee, announced the [Call for Nominations](#) for the  
160 Distinguished Faculty Service Award, which honors faculty service related to governance through a  
161 life-time of service (typically 10 or more years) and the Walter Wolf Award, which is bestowed on  
162 a USC faculty member for defense and advocacy for academic freedom or other manifestations of  
163 social conscience. Nominations are due March 4.

#### 164 **Open Discussion Related to Spring Semester Restart & School FC Priorities for the Semester**

165 Tambascia facilitated an open discussion on the Spring semester Restart and school Faculty  
166 Council priorities for the semester. Among the Restart topics discussed were those related to lack  
167 of availability of IT support; concerns about safety; students' expectations for faculty to teach in a  
168 hybrid format despite lack of faculty and institutional capacity to support hybrid teaching;  
169 confusion around the concept of continuity of education and challenges of ensuring continuity of  
170 education; vulnerability of part-time and adjunct faculty; trauma and anxiety experienced by

171 faculty and overall morale and well-being of faculty; heavy workloads and the impacts of heavy  
172 workloads on staff and faculty; compensation, COLAs, and merit increases; lack of  
173 communications from administration to faculty and students regarding learning and attendance  
174 expectations; roles of the Senate and Faculty Councils; the desirability and logistics of the Senate  
175 formulating formal positions and offering them to senior leadership; confusion about university-  
176 wide versus school-level expectations, guidelines, and flexibility around online instruction.

177 Before opening the floor for Senators to discuss priorities of their Faculty Councils, Tambascia  
178 presented [Executive Board \(EB\) priorities](#) (shared governance; building faculty leadership capacity;  
179 faculty well-being; and faculty salary and compensation) and described several initiatives to  
180 support the priorities, including the convening of a Task Force on Faculty Councils (co-chaired by  
181 Elissa Grossman and Morgan Polikoff) and a Task Force on Merit and Annual Review (co-chaired  
182 by Jessica Cantiello and Larry Picus); formation of a Faculty Leadership Fellows program; and  
183 development of a Faculty Service database. Among the priorities shared by Senators were faculty  
184 governance, compensation, faculty recruitment, and Deans Review policies and processes.

185 **Adjournment**

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

187

188 Respectfully submitted,

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191 Devon Brooks

192 Secretary General of the Academic Senate

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