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2 **ACADEMIC SENATE**

3 **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

4 April 20, 2022

5 Virtual Meeting

6 2:00 - 4:00 pm PST

7 **Present (Senate Members):** P. Adler, D. Armstrong, M. Apostolos, D. Becker, C. Beckman, M.  
8 Bodie, D. Brooks, A. Campbell, P. Cardon, K. Carlson, B. Carrington, R. Cislowski, D. Cole, E. Collins,  
9 P. Crispen, C. El Haddad, E. Fife (A. Rechenmacher), C. Finch, A. Foster, L. Gale, S. Gruskin, S.  
10 Gupta, L. Hoffman, K. Imagawa, A. Imre, J. Israel, C. Jones, L. Klerman, G. Kung, R. Labaree, K.  
11 Lincoln, T. Mayfield, P.T. McNiff, A. Motamed, J. Moore, J. Nyquist, R. Parke, J. Parr, A. Parra, D.  
12 Pecchenino, L. Perin Gallandt, M. Press, B. Pyatak, S. Rao, C. Resnik, B. Salhia, A. Sanchez, T.  
13 Sandmeier, S. Sofian, T. Tambascia, A. Tzoytzoyrakos, A. Uyeshiro Simon, A. Van Speybroeck, L.  
14 Vest (alternate for T. Kobza), J. Walker, E. Warford, N. Warren, R. Watanabe (alternate for S.  
15 Iqbal), R. Wood (alternate for F. Liley), C. Young, E. Zeamer, G. Zada, S. Zweig

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17 **Absent:** J. Baker, J. Chatterjee, J. Clements, M. Crowley, J. Dopheide, W. Mack, D. Milstein,  
18 C. Soto, A. Yang

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20 **Guests (Senate Member alternates & invited guests):** L. Blair Lewis, R. Davila, M. Levine,  
21 C. Neuman, J. Pascarella, M. Price, R. Randhawa, H. Rodman, A. Rutkowski, B. Shuster,  
22 M. Townsend, C. Zachary, C. Zukoski

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24 **AGENDA**

25 **Call to order: Tracy Tambascia, Senate President**

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

27 **Approval of minutes from the last meeting: Devon Brooks, Secretary General**

28 Secretary General Brooks presented the [March 9 Academic Senate meeting minutes](#) for approval.

29 ***Motion to approve the March 9 minutes.*** Seconded and passed: 25 in favor and 0 opposed, with 2  
30 abstentions.

31 **Update from Provost Zukoski**

32 After greeting attendees, Provost Zukoski provided important updates.

- 33 • He was pleased to announce that Shrikanth (Shri) Narayanan, USC University Professor and  
34 Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Computer Science, Linguistics, Psychology,  
35 Pediatrics, and Otolaryngology has been named a 2022 Guggenheim Fellow. Narayanan is one  
36 of only 180 Fellows named this year and one of only two honored for contributions in the field  
37 of computer science. Earlier in the year, Brendesha Tynes, Dean's Professor of Educational  
38 Equity and a Professor of Education and Psychology at the USC Rossier School of Education  
39 was named an American Educational Research Association Fellow.

- 40 ● Andy Stott, Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Dean of the Graduate School, and his  
41 team held an event entitled ‘What should a Trojan Know?’ Even though the event was a  
42 preliminary and casual exploration of what a core curriculum should consist of, the need to  
43 understand how to undertake interdisciplinary studies and how to gain more access to  
44 experiential learning were key elements that emerged. Follow-up events are planned for next  
45 year.
- 46 ● Zukoski has been thinking about the Joint Provost-Senate retreat that recently took place,  
47 which he enjoyed and got a lot out of. He reflected on the retreat topics—student  
48 assessments, freedom of speech, and research—and shared preliminary thinking about  
49 implications and next steps. He encouraged senators to attend future retreats and thanked the  
50 Executive Board for organizing such a fabulous event.
- 51 ● Earlier in the day, the Provost attended President Folt’s State of the University address. He was  
52 particularly excited about the four moonshots that Folt presented, which lay out her plan for  
53 the University’s future. Collaboration is a common thread in the moonshots. Regarding the  
54 “USC Competes” moonshot, Zukoski emphasized that central leadership wants to ensure  
55 competitive salaries for faculty and staff. He reminded Senators of Folt’s message from March  
56 29 in which she stated that closing the salary gap is a multi-year effort and that the University  
57 is going to invest more than \$700 million in the salary closing exercise. The University is now  
58 preparing compensation packages and allocating \$150 million dollars toward the first year of  
59 the salary closing plan. A second moonshot the President talked about was transforming  
60 health sciences by investing in our Health Sciences Campus and all the health enterprises that  
61 we have as a university. Five health sciences schools will come together to think about how to  
62 educate the next generation of health providers, drive down the cost of healthcare delivery,  
63 and eliminate disparities in healthcare delivery and outcomes. This will be a massive  
64 undertaking that will also involve the rest of the campus. Folt discussed the importance of USC  
65 athletics, another moonshot, and the role that athletics plays in bringing us together across  
66 the University and with our Community. The economic development aspects of collegiate  
67 athletics are very important to USC, and sports and related industries hold a promise for job  
68 growth. The final moonshot is in the frontiers of computing, which will deploy significant  
69 resources that have come to us from a gift from the Lord foundation. Over the next decade,  
70 there will be large investments to accelerate developments in computing, particularly in  
71 business, the creative economy, and the health sector (broadly imagined).
- 72 ● The University has taken legal action against two people who were entering and disrupting our  
73 classrooms. Errol Southers, Associate Senior Vice President of Safety and Risk Assurance,  
74 recently sent out a memo regarding these serious incidents and how faculty can respond to  
75 intrusions. If faculty experience an intrusion in the classroom they should ask the person to  
76 leave and if the person does not leave, they should end class and ask everyone to leave. The  
77 incident should be reported using the [LiveSafe mobile app](#), if it is possible to do so discreetly.  
78 Zukoski encouraged Senators to consider downloading and getting familiar with the app.
- 79 ● Whether there will be hybrid classes in the fall is an area of ongoing debate that faculty need  
80 to participate in. The modality of teaching is up to the faculty member, as approved by the  
81 curriculum committee in the department in the school. Students are pressing for hybrid  
82 classes, which faculty find very cumbersome. Hybrid classes are welcome, but there will be no  
83 mandate to have hybrid classes. The Center for Excellence in Teaching is available to discuss  
84 the best ways of transferring material and experimenting with teaching.

Before taking questions from the floor, Zukoski mentioned that he is looking forward to the Sexual Citizens events taking place on April 28, which were arranged by his office, the Senate, and Student Affairs, and he encouraged Senators to participate in the events.

Based on his experiences and observations as a resident faculty member, a Senator shared his concerns about partnering closely with Student Affairs on curricular matters, particularly those related to general education.

Another Senator asked if the Provost could elaborate on why students are interested in hybrid classes. The Provost indicated that his conversations with student leadership suggest that the interest stems largely from desires for flexibility and convenience—students do not always want to come to campus or to come to class in person. Some students like hybrid classes because they can learn more easily in them and some like having class recordings available as study tools.

A Senator requested an update from Zukoski on the rankings issue uncovered by the current dean of the Rossier School of Education. Zukoski explained that in late fall, the dean contacted him about what appeared to be inaccurate reporting of data to U.S. News & World Report for at least five years. Further examination suggested that was indeed the case and USC pulled Rossier from the ranking process. Rossier was highly ranked and the data being used could have a material impact on their rankings. This is very serious and the University has hired an outside law firm to investigate the issue further. The law firm's report is being finalized and will be released in the next two weeks.

A Senator suggested a strategy for offering in-person and hybrid versions of multi-section classes. The Provost encouraged exploration of these kinds of strategies and testing of them to see how students respond. Another Senator asked if there have been discussions about upgrading or investing in technology or staffing support to make hybrid classes easier and a better experience for students. Zukoski stated that the University is responsible for upgrading centrally-managed classrooms and that schools are responsible for upgrading their classrooms. If schools want to spend their money upgrading classrooms, Zukoski encourages them to do so. There is a process of updating technologies in centrally-managed classrooms, but Zukoski is not sure where things stand with those updates. He is not aware of an effort to enable hybrid classes or to develop fully online classes across the University. This is being looked at though and Zukoski is working with Mike Nichol, Associate Vice Provost for Online Education, to explore resources to help develop hybrid classes, while staffing and management of classes would be left to the schools, at least in our current model.

#### **Introduction of Spring 2022 Senate election candidates**

Senate Academic Vice President Pecchenino thanked the Nominating Committee and reminded Senators of the returning members of the Executive Board (Tambascia, Pecchenino, and Sanchez) and the roles that are to be filled (Academic Vice President, Secretary General, and Member-at-large). He informed Senators that all faculty will receive an individual link to the ballot on or around April 26<sup>th</sup> and will have until May 4<sup>th</sup> to cast their vote. He asked Senators to encourage faculty in their schools to vote and to check their spam folder if they cannot locate the ballot in their inbox. He then presented the [slate](#) for the election, and invited candidates who were present to introduce themselves.

#### **Presentation from USC LMS Assessment Taskforce co-chairs, John Pascarella (Rossier) and Sandeep Gupta (Viterbi), with ITS Product Manager Daanyaal Khan**

John Pascarella (Rossier) and Sandeep Gupta (Viterbi), co-chairs of the USC LMS Assessment Taskforce, and Daanyall Khan (ITS Product Manager) provided an [update](#) on the LMS Assessment Project. This project assessed Blackboard Ultra (the updated version of Blackboard) and other leading LMS products on the market in order to determine which LMS would best meet the needs of the University. Blackboard Learn (the current LMS) is not perceived as meeting the needs of our faculty and students, and schools are shifting towards alternative LMS solutions. Additionally, research suggests that students struggle with the lack of course standardization and lack of accessibility capabilities makes for a disproportionate experience for those needing those capabilities. LMS products under consideration include Blackboard Ultra, Canvas, and D2L (Brightspace). The Project began with market research, prioritization of features, and vendor demonstrations. Eventually, cases were used for teaching and learning, and surveys were completed for each LMS. Regarding market trends over the past few years, there have been significant shifts from Blackboard and Moodle to Canvas, which has gained the most new customers, followed by D2L. In terms of survey results, ease of use scores were highest for D2L among instructors and students, and for Blackboard Ultra among administrators. D2L was ranked higher on overall accessibility and support than Blackboard Ultra and Canvas. By May or June, ITS expects to hear back from central administration about the proposed LMS budget, followed by a 2-3 month competitive RFP/RFQ process to select the final partner. Even though the Assessment Committee came out strongly in support of D2L, all three products will continue to be considered as part of the competitive bidding process.

#### **Senate committee updates: CTAL**

Christine El Haddad (Marshall) and Sheila Sofian (Cinematic Arts), co-chairs of the Committee on Teaching and Learning (CTAL) gave an update on the work of CTAL (see [here](#) and [here](#)). USC has taken important steps to demonstrate that teaching is valued at USC and to promote teaching excellence. Indeed, our mission statement recognizes that our first priority is to the education of our students. The Excellence in Teaching Initiative strives to promote teaching excellence in the same way USC promotes research excellence. The Initiative's model focuses on defining, developing, evaluating, and rewarding teaching excellence. Rewarding teaching excellence was the focus of CTAL's charge this year. Specifically, the charge involved answering the following questions: (1) Is USC's current reward system (merit, promotion and tenure, awards and honors) aligned with USC's stated values on teaching excellence? (2) How are other universities rewarding teaching excellence? (3) What recommendations for change can the committee provide at the university and school levels to increase the teaching practices we say we value at USC?

Two subcommittees were convened to address the charge. One subcommittee reviewed schools at USC while the other subcommittee researched other universities. Key findings include the launch of the Excellence in Teaching Initiative; the expansion of the Center for Excellence in teaching; multi-year appointments for teaching-track faculty upon successful promotion reviews (3-year and 5-year contracts); and greater participation of teaching-track faculty in school and university governance (such as school faculty councils and the Academic Senate). The Committee identified several critical areas of change in USC's rewards systems: faculty salaries; career pathways and job security; merit and promotion criteria; faculty development of adjunct and part-time faculty; teaching awards; and named chairs and professorships. The Committee recommends that (a) senior leaders at USC ensure that all schools have a teaching evaluation system that is equitable, rigorous, and systematic and primarily based on a peer review of instructor teaching performance; (b) faculty salaries be competitive, fair, and equitable; (c) the career pathways,

salaries, and job security of teaching-track faculty be reformed; (d) the merit and promotion criteria for tenure-track and tenured faculty be revised to reflect a higher value on teaching excellence; (e) adjunct and part-time faculty appointment, support, and contract renewal policies be reviewed and revised; (f) school-level course allocation policies be reviewed; (g) guidance be provided to schools on the number, type, frequency, and accessibility of teaching awards; and (h) named chairs and professorships be established to recognize the University's most outstanding teachers. An example of how career pathways can be reformed is the Career Framework for University Teaching commissioned by the UK Royal Academy of Engineering and designed in partnership with universities across the world, based on research and best practice. This framework can be adapted to fit USC's career structures and promotion policies. The Committee suggests that the UK Royal Academic of Engineering's "Roadmap for Change" be used to guide large-scale structural and cultural change at USC around teaching and learning and implementations of CTAL's recommendations.

Following CTAL's presentation, a Senator expressed his dislike of the current position that our teaching faculty are in with respect to appointment periods and contract renewal policies, which he thinks impedes academic freedom of teaching faculty. He also expressed his dislike of the way that administration and schools treat teaching faculty. The Senator suggested that there is a market for talented teaching faculty and that faculty who are not satisfied can be replaced, which drives down wages for teaching faculty. He advised the Committee to be careful about making recommendations that defy or attempt to defy the realities of the marketplace.

Another Senator asked if there are models in the United States or from USC's peer institutions that are comparable to the model developed by the UK Royal Academy of Engineering. El Haddad clarified that CTAL reviewed multiple models and that the Career Framework model is the one that stood out. She pointed out that prominent American universities, such as Harvard and MIT, along with prominent European universities have used and been involved with the Career Framework model. Additionally, El Haddad reminded Senators that USC does not have to adopt the entire Career Framework model but can use elements of it. CTAL especially loved that the model provides a track parallel to that of research and tenure track faculty—one that allows for national recognition and thus opportunities for continued appointment or tenure.

A Senator asked El Haddad and Sofian if they have noticed anything of interest in the Teaching Excellence Plans that have been submitted. Sofian pointed out that last year the Committee for Teaching and Academic Programs studied all the Teaching Excellence Plans and found significant variation in the stage of development of the plans. This makes it difficult to have a unified plan that can be applied to all schools and units. El Haddad highlighted Bovard for its exemplary plan and suggested that it be shared with other schools. COVID stalled many of the plans but now that COVID is hopefully under control, CTAL would like the President and the Provost to bring back and call attention to the Excellence in Teaching Initiative and to continue on the path to achieving teaching excellence at USC, in addition to research excellence.

Finally, a Senator from Viterbi shared that the School's CFO pointed out that 92% of Viterbi's revenues are from tuition. Such an environment, suggested the Senator, is an extremely powerful incentive to maintain the status quo.

## **Announcements**

Pecchenino announced that the May 11 Academic Senate meeting will be a hybrid meeting, taking place in person at Doheny Main Library (DML) 121 and online. Immediately following the meeting

217 will be the Senate Awards presentation. We will then move to the University Club for the Annual  
218 Academic Senate Dinner. Invitations will be sent out shortly.

219 **Adjournment**

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

221

222 Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Devon Brooks". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Devon" and last name "Brooks" clearly distinguishable.

223

224

225 Devon Brooks

226 Secretary General of the Academic Senate

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APPROVED