ACADEMIC SENATE  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  

May 11, 2022  
Virtual Meeting  
2:00 - 4:00 pm PST


Absent: C. Beckman, A. Campbell, P. Cardon, M. Crowley, L. Gale, S. Iqbal, K. Lincoln, W. Mack, L. Perin Gallandt, B. Salhia, A. Yang


AGENDA

Call to order: Tracy Tambascia, Senate President

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

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

Secretary General Brooks presented the April 20 Academic Senate meeting minutes for approval.

Motion to approve the April 20 minutes. Seconded and passed: XX in favor and XX opposed, with XX abstentions.

Senate Executive Board Elections Outcomes: Dan Pecchenino, Academic Vice President

Academic Vice President Dan Pecchenino announced results of the election for the 2022-2023 Academic Senate Executive Board. Margo K. Apostolos (Kaufman School of Dance) was elected Academic Vice President for 2022-2023 and will go on to serve as Senate President for 2023-2024.

Christal Young (USC Libraries) was elected to serve a two-year term as Secretary General. Elected to serve a one-year term as members-at-large were Sofia Gruskin (Gould School of Law and Keck School of Medicine); Rima Jubran (Keck School of Medicine); Lavonna Lewis (Sol Price School of Public Policy); and John Matsusaka (Marshall School of Business).

President Folt and Provost Zukoski

Comment [DB1]: Connie, do you have the final vote? This part of the meeting is missing from the recording.
President Folt began her remarks by thanking those who serve in faculty governance and wishing her best to those continuing on and to those stepping down from governance, particularly faculty who are retiring. She mentioned the two State of the University addresses she gave—one at Health Sciences, the other at University Park Campus. Although the addresses differed somewhat, they both included what we have been doing and will be working on in the coming years, such as new programming around sustainability, advances in computational sciences and artificial intelligence, health sciences, and our biggest moonshot which is to rightsize our compensation and other benefits to reflect not only the expense of our city but also our quality and aspirations for our faculty and staff. Provost Zukoski has been working closely with the deans around the rightsizing effort. Folt emphasized that we are investing significantly in rightsizing—more than $150 million in salaries—and that this investment will cost the endowment more than the amount expended on salaries since there are long-term, yearly expenses associated with the increases. She thinks it will take three to five years to reach our commitment. To date, some of our most significant advances towards the rightsizing commitment were made in graduate student stipends and stipends for Research, Teaching, Practitioner, & Clinical-Track (RTPC) faculty. We are increasing base salaries across the university and particularly for new faculty, and we are working hard to recruit and retain faculty and staff at all levels. Folt, however, expressed concern and stressed the need to be mindful about inflation and recession.

The President went on to discuss changes in the health sciences. She shared that when she was hired, she was asked to rethink and rebuild the University’s health sciences enterprise. She pointed out that health sciences are regulated federally and by the state, which she suggested makes them different from other enterprises even though they share teaching, research, and collaborative missions. Before she arrived, the Board of Trustees set up the Healthy System Board, which is similar to what most major universities with complex academic medical centers do. The Board of Trustees then hired Steven D. Shapiro, Senior Vice President for Health Affairs, to oversee the new Board. Folt, Zukoski, and Shapiro have been working to move the healthcare-related schools, especially the ones that have complicated clinical work and clinical care, under the leadership of Shapiro. As Provost, Zukoski runs most of the schools at USC and Shapiro leads the health sciences organizations. Folt suggested that this strategy is designed to improve management and oversight and to ensure that the University never again experiences the kind of scandals we witnessed in the past. USC has more schools than other big research universities. Bringing on Shapiro means there are three people “sitting at the top,” working to make things run smoothly. Zukoski continues to be responsible for tenure and academic programs, whereas Shapiro is responsible for all our clinical work and related enterprises. Everything that is shared, such as finances and legal services, remains in a single location.

Folt answered questions from the floor. A Senator asked whether faculty have a role in setting the academic mission of the University. Folt indicated that the faculty have the same role they have always had in setting the academic mission of the University. She went on to say that she has responsibility for ensuring that the University does not end up in court and that the Board of Trustees has overall oversight of risk related issues. Folt asserted that having 22 schools is part of the underlying reason the University has been in court with many failed processes. Shapiro suggested that bringing the schools together while still maintaining their relationship with the Provost and Academic Affairs should present opportunities that will allow us to better address the challenges of healthcare. He further suggested that the future of healthcare is interprofessional, team-based care and new interdisciplinary models of care. Zukoski added that the changes that have happened are not a separation but an integration of health schools. He sees the changes as
an opportunity for advancing research, education, and clinical care for all schools and the entire
campus, not just the health system.

Another Senator expressed her excitement hearing administration discuss collaborative practice
and encouraged administration to support inter-professional collaborative practice opportunities
for students. Folt agreed that the University could do a better job supporting inter-professional
training and collaboration. The Senator pointed out that the University is missing a center for
interprofessional excellence in education, practice and research. Folt indicated that such an idea
could sit with either Zukoski or Shapiro.

Pecchenino shared concerns he has heard pertaining to the budgetary and financial processes and
mechanisms of the health sciences schools versus those of other schools. Pecchenino suggested
that it might be helpful for the Senate to work with Folt, Zukoski, and Shapiro to advance
budgetary transparency so the financial benefits of the health sciences enterprise to the rest of
the University can be seen. The Provost agreed that this should be discussed.

A member from the retired faculty suggested that some training and employment challenges
experienced by students who obtain their master’s degree in gerontology might be addressed by
bringing the Schools of Gerontology and Social Work together as part of the health sciences
enterprise. Both Zukoski and Shapiro agreed with the suggestion.

Assuming that a change as large as the one being discussed “has a document underneath it with
Mckinsey’s name on it” (referring to external consultants), a Senator asked President Folt if she
was in a position to share anything with respect to analysis or implications of the change. Folt
stated emphatically that the Senator was “completely wrong” about his assumption.

The Provost closed by thanking the Senate and faculty for all they have done throughout the year.

Employee Relations (ER) Update

Tambascia provided an update on the Employee Relations Functions and development of those
functions. She reminded Senators that in the previous year there was a lot of discussion in the
Senate about ways in which Human Resources would like to develop unit-based support systems
to support faculty and staff. She then explained that Employee Relations focuses “on cultivating
positive working relations and addressing concerns in a respectful, proactive, and supportive
manner that serves the USC community and institutional mission.” Importantly, this happens
within the units that faculty and staff are working. There has been concern recently about cases in
which there have been policy violations or misconduct. Employee Relations Functions is intended
to address issues at the lower stages at which they begin and to potentially prevent them from
ever occurring. This can be achieved by helping faculty and staff learn to identify problems before
they become bigger and to seek help resolving those problems. Priority action items included: (1)
convening the ER Advisory and Consultative groups (consisting of both faculty and staff), (2)
building a team with ER knowledge and expertise, and (3) mapping, piloting, and refining ER
processes. On November 1, the Provost Zukoski and Senior Vice President Washington charged
the Advisory group with developing a principles framework, reconciling policies, and educating
and training. Three subgroups (Principles, Processes, and Communications) were created to
dress each component of the charge. The subgroups were given their assignments on
December 17 and began carrying out their assignments at the start of the spring semester. The
subgroups are finalizing their work and hope to be able to share it by the end of May. Several
themes, however, emerged in all the subgroups: unifying values; caring and supporting; and

Commented [DB2]: Connie or Christal, can you please provide the link to Tracy’s slide deck?
building trust. It is expected that the full Consultative group will convene in June to review the
work produced by the subgroups. Final recommendations will then be developed and shared with
the Provost and Senior Vice President, and with the Faculty Handbook Committee for further
consideration. Tambascia noted a Senator’s deep concerns about the Senate displacing the
emergency policy language in the Faculty Handbook earlier in the year and the Senator’s hopes
that the Senate makes progress in that area.

**Update from Faculty Rights & Responsibilities (FR&R); Faculty Committee on Equity and
Inclusion**

Ashley Uyeshiro Simon and Devon Brooks, Co-chairs of the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities
Committee (FRR), provided an update on the work of FRR. Uyeshiro Simon began by
acknowledging and thanking members of FRR. She then explained the primary role of FRR: Helping
faculty who are considering filing a grievance under Chapter 7 of the Faculty Handbook.
Additionally, she explained, FRR members are available to provide collegial problem-solving
consultation and informal mediation. Uyeshiro then summarized activities carried out the past
year by FRR, which revolved around faculty consultation and committee capacity-building and
development. She also shared major issues encountered by FRR, including issues related to
committee transition, roles and responsibilities, understanding procedures and policies, and being
"on-pause” while the Employee Relations groups completed their work as described earlier in the
meeting by Tambascia. Brooks then discussed priorities FRR plans to recommend for 2022-2023,
which generally relate to faculty consultation, outreach, capacity building, case tracking and
reporting, and case meetings. He closed by identifying issues for FRR, the Senate and the
University to consider further.

Co-chair of the Faculty Committee on Equity and Inclusion, Rob Parke, updated the Senate on the
work carried out by the Committee. He began by presenting the Committee’s charge for the year,
which involved addressing the following questions: (1) How is DEI-centered service and leadership
valued, recognized, and rewarded within each school? (2) How are faculty from groups
underrepresented in academia able to participate in service and leadership apart from DEI-
centered endeavours? To move their work forward, the Committee focused on three areas:
analysis of peer institution practices; review of relevant literature and publications; and
conducting focus groups with USC DEI stakeholders. Park then presented nine recommendations
the Committee developed based on the work they completed over the year.

**Closing comments: Tracy Tambascia, Senate President**

In closing the last Senate meeting of the year, Tambascia thanked the Senate for a full year of
work in support of USC faculty and offered a few concluding thoughts. In preparing her thoughts,
she reviewed the agendas for all the Senate meetings of the year. She noted that the agendas
represented a lot of work—there were resolutions and updates, and lots of discussion and
deliberations. Among the discussions and deliberations, Tambascia was especially struck by the
topic of ‘valuing faculty’ and how we see ourselves in the eyes of University leadership. She gave
examples of the kinds of questions she heard from her faculty colleagues, questions about faculty
involvement and faculty governance. She acknowledged hearing the voices of frustration and
stressed that faculty are valued at USC. She went on to express her confidence in the collective
wisdom and will of the USC faculty. “I know we’ll continue to bring tremendous value to the
University,” she exclaimed, “but we need to persist, to engage, to bring our expertise to the
table... to be ready to problem solve and to focus on the academic mission of the University.
That’s the value we bring.” Tambascia cautioned that shared governance requires care and feeding and does not work without careful attention. She highlighted the need to look ahead while at the same time paying attention to the immediate issues in front of us, which is not easy. She further highlighted the importance of caring not just about USC and our professional fields but changes in higher education as a whole. Tambascia warned that attacks on academic freedom, tenure, curriculum, science, and books, along with declining enrollments and regard for the value of post-secondary education, have real implications for the future of our work. We need to continue building our own capacity for leadership at USC, she suggests, which means saying yes to service both within one’s own academic unit and at the university, and to opportunities to learn and ask questions. She asked Senators to recommit to mentoring, not just in their own style and mold but in ways that will ensure career sustainability and longevity for faculty colleagues that will succeed us. “The whole is stronger than our respective parts,” Tambascia asserted, “we don’t have to agree but we are stronger as a faculty when we seek to elevate and support our collective work, regardless of rank, track or department.” She ended by thanking everyone for their service, time, laughter, and great insight and critique.

Adjournment

Before adjourning the meeting and transition to the 2022 Academic Senate Awards ceremony, Tambascia thanked the Awards Committee, including Julie Nyquist (Chair), Jody Armour (Co-Chair), Paula Cannon, Ginger Clark, Mike Nichol, Jessica Parr, and Nick Stoubis. She asked for a round of applause for everyone on the Senate and adjourned the meeting at 3:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Devon Brooks
Secretary General of the Academic Senate