

USC Mrs. T.H. Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy

Chan Faculty Council Progress and Activities

January 2022 – May 2023

The inaugural Chan Faculty Council began its work in January 2022 following ratification of the Council bylaws and constitution in September 2021 and election of council members in January 2022. As defined in its bylaws, the Council is charged with discussing, building consensus on, and making recommendations to the Chan Division Leadership Team on issues of importance to the Chan Division faculty. Below includes a summary of the Chan Council's progress and activities for the above specified period.

Council Start-up/Process-related Work

As a new entity, the Council first focused on establishing processes and logistics required for its function. The Council elected officers and set term limitations for each inaugural member as outlined in the bylaws. The Council then established various methods and channels of communication with faculty constituents, including: hosting general Council meetings with dedicated time for public comment; presentation at monthly Chan Full Division meetings to relay key information (e.g., Academic Senate calls to action) to faculty; offering and regularly reminding faculty constituents of opportunities for individual or small-group consultation with any Council member; disseminating faculty-wide email announcements and reminders as relevant issues arose; establishing a secure shared faculty governance folder accessible to all Chan faculty; and initiating development of a Chan Faculty Council webpage. Based on feedback from Chan faculty constituents as well as information gathered from other faculty councils, the Council established a practice for interfacing with the Chan Leadership Team (i.e., Associate Dean and Associate Chairs) in general Council meetings. In February and March 2023, the Council held an election to replace two of seven Council members whose inaugural terms were coming to an end. Simultaneously, the Council audited and subsequently revised its governance documents (i.e., bylaws and constitution) to determine alignment with the Academic Senate's recommended "minimum requirements" for faculty council bylaws as well as with the Council's own processes after having engaged in the first year of Council work. The revised bylaws were adopted by the Council in March 2023. A proposal to amend the constitution was sent for faculty vote in April 2023 but did not achieve the threshold of votes needed to ratify; this proposal will be revisited in Fall 2023.

Constituent-related Issues Tackled

Council members met regularly with constituents to understand their concerns, directed faculty to University resources when appropriate, communicated general faculty needs to the Chan Leadership Team, and engaged in discussions with Leadership about work the Leadership Team thought suitable for the Council to spearhead. Two key issues arose from these activities: improving the Division's merit review process and compensation and equity concerns. The Council initiated a merit review audit with a focus on increasing transparency and reducing burden for faculty. Recommendations were made to Leadership to increase transparency related to the peer and Associate Chair review process, promotion, and connection of merit review to pay increases. The Council also established ongoing smaller workgroups to make recommendations for changes to merit review evaluation criteria and examples, key performance indicators (KPIs) for clinical faculty, and Watermark Faculty Success (the database used by the Division to collect merit review related information). The Council began gathering resources and information regarding salary transparency by collecting information about faculty concerns at general Council meetings, gathering comparative information from other schools/units to learn about their processes, and educating Chan faculty about discussions at the Academic Senate level and relevant activities happening within other schools/units across the university.

Participation in University Shared Governance

Our Council engaged in University Shared Governance, participating in all Academic Senate meetings and Faculty Council Chair/President meetings. Our senator voted on faculty handbook changes and a resolution regarding pay transparency. Our Council shared our processes and documents with the other faculty councils across the university and encouraged Chan faculty to vote during Senate Executive Board member elections.