

Report of DFC Initiatives and Achievements, 2022/2023

Salary Initiatives

The DFC has [applied consistent pressure over](#) the past several years to rectify issues surrounding salary equity, compression, and competitiveness. This work has led in part to President Folt's recently-announced commitment to addressing these issues, and the larger-than-usual raises in 2022. We hope that this year's annual raises continue this trajectory.

We launched the Faculty Salary and Compensation Committee (FSCC), which was created via [DFC Resolution 21/22-002](#) in the 21/22 academic year. This committee, chaired by Laura Isabel Serna, will collect and share salary data relevant to faculty in an annual report, and make recommendations to the administration.

In cooperation with the Faculty Salary and Compensation Committee, the DFC passed [Resolution 22/23-002](#) on Faculty Compensation Transparency and Oversight. This resolution, sent to accompany Senate [Resolution 22-23-02](#) on Compensation Reporting, requests the publication of an annual disclosure that includes all pay ranges within the College by Department and Title. This resolution will allow the FSCC to compile their annual report, and make recommendations to promote salary equity.

Resolution 22/230-002 also calls for the inclusion of three faculty members designated by the council in the annual Faculty Affairs review of salaries within the college, including the review of pay equity for protected classes.

Merit Review Initiatives

In the 21/22 and 22/23 years, the DFC launched two major surveys on perceptions of the merit review process, the first sent to faculty, and the latter to chairs and directors. The DFC Faculty Affairs Caucus compiled reports on both, which can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Based on the results of these surveys, the Dornsife Faculty Council made a number of recommendations, which can be found [here](#).

The central issue revealed by the survey was that many faculty struggle to see the connection between their performance (as quantified in the Merit Review process) and the resulting annual raise. As a result, the DFC passed [Resolution 22/23-001](#) on Changes to Annual Salary Letter to Promote Confidence in Pay Equity. This Resolution asks that the annual salary letter explicitly states how much of the pay increase is the result of the merit review score and how much is the result of equity adjustments. The DFC is in ongoing conversations with Dean Miller about realizing this request.

One concrete result of the DFC's Merit Review recommendations is that Dean Miller has instructed all department chairs and directors to create a transparent rubric for the Merit Review

process, as these did not exist in all departments. These rubrics will be created in consultation with the faculty council, who will work to ensure fairness and equity across departments.

Also as a result of these recommendations, Dean Miller has agreed to allow faculty to include a [prefatory statement](#) to their course evaluations, which can be included in the Merit Review Dossier. This statement allows instructors the ability to offer context to their evaluations. In this statement, they could:

- Identify trends in positive feedback, especially if they are consistent with their teaching philosophy and/or represent improvement from previous semesters
- Explain why certain teaching practices were employed, especially if those practices elicited negative feedback
- Describe how they might adapt their teaching practices in response to certain pieces of constructive feedback
- Correct or clarify false or misleading statements
- Identify trends in feedback that may reflect biased evaluations of their teaching
- Provide any additional context they believe will be helpful for the merit review committee

We have also begun the process of piloting a program to ensure that all faculty members involved in the Merit Review process have an understanding of how to read for bias (implicit or explicit) in both student evaluations and peer evaluations. We will have more information on this in the 23/24 academic year.

While many of our other recommendations could not be made official policy (either because of differences between departmental needs, or the fact that they already exist as policy, despite not always being followed), Dean Miller supported the publication of a document of [Best Practices for Merit Review](#), as requested by the Dornsife Faculty. This document has been sent to all department chairs, and the DFC will follow up next year to make sure that these practices are being followed wherever possible. We encourage all faculty involved in the Merit Review Process to do the same.

Changes to the Dornsife RTPC Lecturer-Track Promotion Guidelines

Until this year, Dornsife RTPC faculty on the lecturer track (those teaching with a non-terminal degree, or a terminal degree outside of their teaching field) had only three promotion steps, while those on the professor track had four. This year, the DFC supported the creation of a fourth step, to bring these two tracks into alignment, and offer those faculty members the benefit of an extra promotion and salary bump.

However, as the new title was added on the bottom of the rank tier system, it would only benefit incoming faculty. The Dornsife Faculty Council successfully lobbied against this decision on behalf of current faculty in this stream, and worked in cooperation with the Dornsife administration to allow current faculty in this stream to go up for promotion an additional time, allowing them to benefit from the same number of salary bumps as incoming faculty.

Opposition to Changes to the Office of Academic Integrity

This year, significant changes were made to the office previously known as the USC Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards, or SJACS. The most significant changes were (1) the splitting of this office into two parts: The Office of Academic Integrity (OAI), tasked with monitoring academic integrity violations, and the Office of Community Expectations (OCE), and (2) the creation of the Faculty Student Resolution process (FSR), which allows faculty to handle minor breaches of academic integrity without involving the central office.

The Dornsife Faculty were, and remain, concerned about the FSR process, particularly how it might impact instructors whose authority is less likely to be respected by students. The DFC consequently called for the removal of the FSR process [via a letter to President Folt](#). While the request was rejected, Vice President for Academic Programs Andrew Stott heard our argument, and promised a review of the process after its rollout to see if our concerns were founded.

We therefore wish to remind all Dornsife faculty members to report all incidents of harassment to the Office of Community Expectations by emailing communityexpectations@usc.edu. In the event of an imminent safety concern, DPS can be reached (at their 24-hour emergency line) at 213-740-4321. For more extended support related to these issues, faculty can contact the [Office of Campus Wellbeing and Crisis Intervention](#) at 213-740-0411.

Course Assignment Survey

One of the DFC's initiatives in the forthcoming 23/24 academic year will be to help implement in each department a set of equitable and consistent practices for the assignment of courses, course release, and overloads. Towards this end, the DFC has sent a survey to all department chairs and departments to identify the current methods in place. Once all department chairs and directors have completed this survey, a report will be created, followed by a list of recommended best practices, which the DFC will call on Dean Miller to implement across all departments.

Response to Disaffiliation of USC Greek System

In the 21/22 year, following the series of horrendous sexual assaults and druggings within the USC Greek System, the DFC wrote a [letter to President Folt](#) supporting her creation of the [Working Group on Interfraternity Council Culture](#), and making specific recommendations of how that Working Group should be composed, and how it should operate.

After the Working Group made [recommendations](#), and those recommendations were made policy, eleven of USC's fraternities disaffiliated with the university, electing to forgo oversight and the support resources and other benefits offered by official recognition. In response, the DFC consulted with the Office of Student Affairs to create strategies to encourage students to look for other avenues for social and professional development outside of these unofficial organizations. These recommendations were disseminated into departments via DFC members.

Support of the Open Access Initiative

In November 2023, the DFC wrote a [letter](#) to the President in support of the Open Access Initiative. This initiative would create an online, open access repository, to which faculty would add their peer-reviewed articles after they have been published, allowing the public to access and benefit from the world-class scholarship conducted by our faculty. Since then, USC Libraries has made good progress on USC's open access transformative agreements, which you can read about [here](#).

Other Initiatives

Changes to DFC Bylaws: The DFC made several changes to the faculty council bylaws, including the creation of the "Immediate Past President" position to help with institutional memory, and passages to make clearer the role of the Faculty Council and the obligations of the council members. We also added passages to define more clearly the voting blocs of several departments.

Childcare: The DFC approached USC's benefits office to discuss expansion of the childcare benefit. Currently, permanent full-time daycare is only subsidized if children attend the USC-owned centers run by Bright Horizons at the UPC and HSC campuses. However, many faculty do not live near campus, or do not have to be on campus five days a week. We have therefore requested that USC begin to subsidize childcare at other Bright Horizons centers across Greater Los Angeles. A similar problem is that faculty are on nine-month contracts, yet the daycare operates on a twelve-month system, and faculty who remove students in the summer months are not guaranteed a spot to return in August. We have also requested a change to this system.

Office of Student Accessibility Services: The DFC executive board met with the Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) to discuss support for faculty when accommodating our students with disabilities. The office has assured us that they are working to create additional class space and proctoring resources for exams. The DFC remains committed to maintaining equity for our students with disabilities. Starting in January, OSAS convened an Advisory Committee that meets quarterly to brainstorm solutions to help faculty effectively support disabled students. Faculty who have questions, or need additional support in accommodating their students with disabilities, can reach out to OSAS directly by emailing osasfrontdesk@usc.edu or calling 213-740-0776.