

# USC Academic Senate

## Summary of 2022-2023 Academic Senate Activities

### Meetings

This year, the Academic Senate met once a month from September to May in a fully hybrid format, with in-person attendees gathering in DML 121 and online participants joining via Zoom. The Senate Executive Board met weekly between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023. The Senate also held two special events focused on the work of the Faculty Councils, one in the [Fall](#) and one after [Commencement](#). These were held in lieu of our traditional Fall planning retreat and Spring Senate-Provost Retreat both to allow for more focused conversation and to test out new meeting models.

### Major Senate Priorities

With university operations returning to mostly pre-pandemic norms, the Senate turned its attention to addressing three key issues. While this is not an exhaustive list of the issues and topics discussed by the Senate and Executive Board, these were significant areas of emphasis throughout the school year:

- Better coordinating and supporting the work of the Faculty Councils, including encouraging more collaboration between and more consistent practices across Councils.
- Working with the Faculty Handbook Committee and administration stakeholders to completely rewrite Chapter 6 of the Handbook in order to improve processes around non-protected-class misconduct investigations and sanctions.
- Working with the administration to make more and better salary information available to faculty.

### Major Accomplishments

In each of the areas listed above, the Senate made significant progress:

#### *Supporting the Faculty Councils*

In addition to focusing the Fall and Spring working lunches on the Faculty Councils, the Executive Board established the Faculty Council Chairs Working Group (FCCWG) as a forum for Faculty Council leaders and members of the Executive Board to share questions, concerns, updates, and strategies around school-level shared governance. This year, the FCCWG paid particular attention to revising or writing bylaws and other governance documents; discussed ongoing concerns related to merit review and compensation; and expressed concerns about a lack of clarity around the role Faculty Councils should play in Dean searches. To see more detailed

annual reports from the Faculty Councils, please visit our updated [page dedicated to them on the Senate website](#).

### ***Reforming Non-Protected-Class Misconduct Investigations***

Under the leadership of John Matsusaka and Ruth Wood, the [Faculty Handbook Committee](#) spent the year revising primarily Chapter 6 of the Faculty Handbook based on input from colleagues, recommendations from [previous reports](#), and discussions with administrators from a range of offices. In May, [the Senate unanimously approved the changes](#). While the Handbook Committee and Executive Board recognize that there is still work to be done around non-protected-class misconduct investigations, both groups believe this year's Handbook changes improve readability and address many longstanding concerns. [This summary and rationale](#) outlines the most substantive changes in both [Chapter 6](#) and [elsewhere](#). The revisions to the Handbook have been sent to President Folt for her signature.

### ***Compensation Transparency***

Following last year's Senate resolution [calling for an annual cost of living adjustment](#) and the university's announcement that it will [invest \\$700 million in faculty and staff salary adjustments](#) over the next five years, the Senate Executive Board established a [Compensation & Benefits Committee](#) in order to begin developing a more prominent faculty voice in compensation policies at the school and university levels. In consultation with several Faculty Councils, the committee [drafted a resolution](#) calling for Deans to work with their Faculty Councils to produce an annual report of the [salary information they are required to disclose to individuals under SB 1162](#). The resolution passed unanimously, and the Executive Board is working with the Provost's Office to try and move it forward.

### **Senate Engagement with Administration**

This year, the Senate met with administrators from across the university, including President Carol Folt, Provost Chip Zukoski, Interim Provost Elizabeth Graddy, Senior Vice President for Health Affairs Steve Shapiro, Senior Vice President for Research and Innovation Ishwar Puri, Senior Vice President of Human Resources Felicia Washington, Senior Vice President and General Counsel Beong-Soo Kim, Interim Senior Vice President of Finance and Chief Financial Officer Erik Brink, Vice President for Student Life Monique Allard, Vice President and Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer Chris Manning, Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Dean of the Graduate School Andy Stott, Vice President of Ethics and Compliance Stacy Giwa, and others. For detailed summaries of Senate's conversations with the administration, please see the [meeting minutes](#) and [monthly Senate newsletters](#) on the Senate's website.

### **Executive Board Activities**

The Senate's work is coordinated via weekly meetings of its Executive Board. The [monthly Senate newsletters](#) outline the topics covered in Executive Board meetings that in turn helped shape Senate meeting agendas. Members of the Executive Board act as conduits of information to and from administrative offices, Faculty Councils, student groups, and anyone else on campus hoping to engage the Academic Senate. Members also

serve on a number of committees and working groups, including Board of Trustees subcommittees and the Provost's Leadership Team. This year, the Executive Board met with most of the administrators named above and many other campus partners (including Board of Trustees Chair Suzanne Nora Johnson) and discussed a range of topics, including:

- The federal government's proposed open access research requirements
- The university's move to the Big 10 Conference
- The importance of maintaining affordable childcare on our campuses
- The implications of upcoming Supreme Court decisions around race and college admissions
- Changes to the adjudication of academic integrity violations
- Pedestrian safety on our campuses
- Improving access to resources for students who have experienced sexual assault
- The necessary preparations for our upcoming learning management system (LMS) change

### **Committee Accomplishments**

Much of the Senate's work that influences university policies emerges from the Senate and Joint Senate-Provost committees and task forces. This year's committees took on many challenging issues and produced recommendations that have already begun shaping the future of the university's mission. You can [find out more about each of the committees](#) and read [reports from this year and previous years](#) at the Senate website. Here are just a few highlights from the 2022-2023 committees:

#### ***RTPC Faculty Affairs Committee***

[The committee](#), co-chaired by Amber Foster (Dornsife) and Reyes Enciso (Ostrow) developed a proposal to expand access to sabbaticals for RTPC faculty. Currently, access to RTPC sabbaticals is both limited and unevenly distributed. And in cases where sabbaticals are available, the criteria to get them are not always well aligned with the actual work performed by RTPC faculty. [The committee's recommendations](#) focus on creating a stable funding source for RTPC sabbaticals, making assessment criteria for sabbatical applications public, and ensuring consistency across schools.

#### ***Faculty Environment and Employment Committee***

[The committee](#), co-chaired by Ruth Cislowski (Social Work) and Jim Condon (Dornsife) assessed the experiences of our remote faculty colleagues by conducting a targeted survey and performing a literature review. [One of their key findings](#) is that USC lacks a consistent definition across the schools of who is considered remote faculty, potentially making it difficult to ensure consistent support across the schools. The committee also found that while many remote faculty have positive feelings about their work-life balance and productivity, they also have concerns about feeling disconnected from their school cultures and about policies that can impede both their day-to-day work and career trajectories.

#### ***Committee on Teaching and Learning***

[The committee](#), co-chaired by Christine El Haddad (Marshall) and Carmen Lee (Annenberg) conducted a faculty-wide survey about their experiences working with student course accommodations. They found that while faculty are generally satisfied with the work of the Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS), more support and resources are needed, especially toward dealing with accommodations stemming from both documented and undocumented student mental health conditions. [The committee made recommendations for reforms](#) at both the university and school levels, as well for OSAS itself.

### ***Committee on Information Services***

In addition to running a faculty-wide survey about the intersection of technology and academic integrity issues (a report on this should be available soon), [the committee](#), co-chaired by Patrick Crispin (Keck/Rossier) and Clifford Neuman (Viterbi), responded mid-year to the emergence of generative AI tools. [The committee's guidance for instructors](#) explains how these new technologies work, outlines potential challenges they present to academic and creative integrity, and offers suggestions for productive engagement.

### ***Joint Task Force on Annual/Merit Review***

Beginning in 2021, [the task force](#), co-chaired by Jessica Cantiello (Dornsife) and Larry Picus (Rossier) assessed annual/merit review practices across the university, identifying both best practices and areas of common concern. [In its recommendations](#), the task force focused on the need for greater clarity across multiple dimensions, including assessment criteria and the connection between merit scores and annual salary adjustments. The committee also called for greater faculty involvement in both the development of assessment tools and their implementation.