

USC Marshall Faculty Council Activity Report for 2022-2023

The Marshall Faculty Council was primarily focused on three issues during the year.

Passage of bylaws

Since its inception, the Marshall FC has operated under a set of formal rules from the Marshall Faculty Handbook along with a number of informal, self-imposed procedures. Importantly, none of these rules were approved by the Marshall faculty.

Following an open faculty forum, a written comment period, and separate discussions with administrators and former Faculty Council members, the Marshall FC's new bylaws were ratified by the faculty in mid-May.

Our new bylaws formalize some existing processes and improve on others. They introduce staggered terms, which we believe will help with problems of continuity in some years. They add two representatives, one T/TT and one RTPC, which should improve representation, add working capacity, and further increase continuity. They also change the leadership structure to include a president and a president-elect, who will each serve on the Academic Senate for two-year terms.

Annual Performance Review task force

In the Spring of 2022, the Marshall FC administered a survey in which it sought faculty input on our existing APR process. We identified several areas of dissatisfaction and concern. In the Fall of 2022, the FC and the Marshall administration initiated a joint task force to dig into these issues more deeply. The task force membership was about equally comprised of FC and non-FC members.

The task force held a separate focus group for each academic rank, with separate groups for T/TT and RTPC faculty. We met with department chairs, members of the administration, and faculty who have served on APR committees. The task force will issue a report documenting its findings soon.

Office sharing survey

Marshall faculty's use of personal offices appears to have declined since the Covid pandemic, and Marshall is currently considering a potential building project that would potentially increase faculty office space. The Marshall FC administered a survey to understand the faculty's view of office sharing, with the goal of informing how this new office space should optimally be configured.

The survey indicated that a large fraction of the Marshall faculty would be amenable to office sharing given moderate incentives. However, others are concerned that office sharing would further increase the tendency of faculty to work at home, worsening collegiality and the research environment. Our report provided suggestions for how the school might move forward with potential office sharing.