

1 **ACADEMIC SENATE**

2 **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

3 **November 15, 2023**

4 **Hybrid Meeting**

5 **2:00 - 4:00 pm PST**

6
7 **Present (Senate Members):** P. Adler, S. Aguilar, S. Altman, M. Apostolos, J. Armour, S. Barbot,
8 M. Bayiz, D. Becker, A. Cannon, M. Chatterjee, J. Dinalo, J. Dopheide, S. Dughmi, N. Duquette, C.
9 El-Haddad, S. Faris, d. S. Grimes, S. Hsu, K. Imagawa, R. Jubran, S. Kim, M. Kong, R. Labaree, D.
10 Lee, L. Lewis, TJ McCarthy, L. Matchison, M. Mather, J. Matsusaka, C. Neuman, S. Niemiec
11 Schepens, S. Nye, L. Olvera, T. Patel, D. Pecchenino, M. Philadelphia, S. Rao, C. Resnik, A.
12 Samkian, A. Siegel, B. Swartout, T. Tambascia, L. Turcotte, M. Turner, A. Tzoytzoyrakos, J.
13 Urbano, J. Walker, A. Yang, C. Young

14 **Absent:** L. Alfaro, M. Aranda, C. M. Beckman, S. Bradforth, D. Brooks, E. Brummel, K. Carlson, J.
15 Condon, T. D. Church, A. Das, A. Dukes, J. Ellenburg, S. Enguidanos, E. Fife, J. Godges, S. Gruskin,
16 A. Hollingshead, N. Houser, A. Imre, S. Iqbal, J. Israel, H. Jaddoud, J. Jones, J. Kirschner, G. Kung,
17 V. Kuhn, J. Kutch, D. Lainer-Vos, J. Lantz, C. Lee, J. Lin, W. Mack, C. Martinez, M. Nadim, J.
18 Nyquist, E. Ochi, R. Parke, L. Perin, G. P. Botana, B. Salhia, G. Sanchez, C. Soto, A. Uyeshiro
19 Simon, F. Valero Cuervas, D. Wadhwani, E. Warford, K. Wilber, J. Wild

20 **Guests (Senate Members alternates & invited guests):** M. Abram, F. Bar, P. Cannon, C. Folt, A.
21 Foster, J. Goodrich, S. Gupta, A. Guzman, H. Hu, E. Johnson, C. Kane, H. Kaslo, M. Levine, E.
22 Mann, L. McGinnis, J. Moore, R. Newmyer, R. Pak, H. Rodman, K. Salva, S. Shroyer, A. Stott, J.
23 Swift, S. Van Orman

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25 **AGENDA**

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27 **Call to order: Margo K. Apostolos, Senate President**

28 Academic Senate President Apostolos called the meeting to order at 2:01pm.

29 **Welcome**

30 Dr. Howard Hu, Professor & Flora L. Thornton Chair, brought a welcome and greeting from the
31 Department of Population and Public Health Sciences, Keck School of Medicine. He gave an
32 overview of the department's size and work.

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34 **Discussion with President Carol Folt and Provost Andrew Guzman**

35 President Folt recognized the first USC celebration Native American Heritage Month. More than
36 300 people attended and participated. President Folt also shared statistics about the current
37 student demographic who identify as Native, Indigenous, and Pacifica, which has increased
38 from 458 undergraduates and 356 graduate students in 2019 to 515 undergraduates and 375
39 graduate students. She shared "when we have numbers, we can help people feel more
40 belonging and see themselves and know more about their voice."
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President Folt addressed the current state of affairs with regard to those affected by the events in Gaza. She shared that “we are in a moment that is affecting so many people.” The [USC's Network of Informational and Support Resources in Times of Conflict page](#) is updated regularly. USC hosted the first seminar on anti-semitism in higher education last week.

Provost Guzman recognized the Office of Student Life, Religious Life, and DPS as these offices have done a fantastic job of ensuring the safety and support of students. He thanked all faculty, many of whom have been affected directly, but also who care for our students. Provost Guzman recognized that “a lot has to happen in the classroom and in the lab on a student level” and “we just haven’t had an enormous amount of dissatisfaction and unrest in the classroom and that tells me that faculty are doing the right thing and ensuring the educational mission continues.” He encouraged faculty to, whenever possible, to treat people with respect and act in ways that are building community.

A Senator asked about whether Native American scholarships would be made difficult due to the Supreme Court decision? President Folt shared that there is a team working on this and that there are many ways to bring prospective students in that have interests in these areas. She added that we have every right to be more aggressive in our pre-admission process so that we’re more diverse in our applicant pool. Provost Guzman added that the Supreme Court decision is relatively narrow in that it’s focused on the admissions decision.

A Senator asked about concerns regarding free speech for faculty. Provost Guzman shared that a lot of what’s online is not accurate in many different ways but the University wants to make sure that the campus remains safe. One of the things the University has managed to avoid on campus is confrontations. President Folt added that no one has been removed from campus. She added “we are deeply concerned about safety. If we think there’s real risk, we will act to protect the people while we try to understand it.” A suggestion was made to clarify language in the Faculty Handbook so that people have a clearer understanding of matters pertaining to faculty academic freedom and freedom of expression.

A Senator asked whether retired faculty have academic freedom. President Folt noted that academic freedom pertains to doing your job, teaching a class, etc. She posed the question, “What is the university’s responsibility to this?” and stated that “It’s more complicated than it sounds.”

Provost Guzman shared that a Union strike date is scheduled for November 28th if there isn’t an agreement. Andy Stott has been reaching out to Deans of Faculty to prepare for the eventuality of a strike. Provost Guzman asked faculty to make sure that they have access to their own research. “How will you complete your teaching responsibilities if there is a strike?” He shared that the rules around influencing students are complex and unfavorable to employers so it’s important to not persuade a student to not strike. It’s also the case that if a grad student chooses to come to work, they are entitled to do so and that’s absolutely ok.

Health and Safety Discussion

Dr. Sarah Van Orman, Vice President and Chief Campus Health Officer, gave an overview of her role and vision around campus health to support student, staff, and faculty. She discussed nutrition, Mental Health, and Sustainability and how we make choices that impact ourselves and our community.

Dr. Van Orman noted a convening of the Well Being Collective on Monday, November 13 to discuss how to promote student wellness. Her office will collaborate with the Office of Student Live and Chris Manning's office to bring Jean Twenge, a national expert on generations, to campus in February to discuss how generations are functioning both in the academic as well as the workplace.

Past President Pecchenino asked about the overlap of students and mental health. Dr. Van Orman shared information about the Student Wellbeing Index Survey which looks at eight key performance indicators. The measures they are following are "flourishing" and "belonging." They have good longitudinal data from the last 5 years from that survey which includes data from Counseling and Mental Health services. When looking at the undergraduates, they tend to be doing worse than graduate students with regard to belonging and flourishing. Anxiety is more common than depression nationally in young adults.

Dr. Van Orman addressed questions around mental health first aid curriculum, suicide rates, gender affirming care, first year and second year courses on consent for students, resources/workshops for faculty, and Narcan resources.

Approval of the September and October Meeting Minutes; Christal Young, Secretary General

Secretary Young presented the [September](#) and [October](#) Academic Senate meeting minutes for approval.

Motion to approve September minutes. Seconded and passed. 26 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstention.

Motion to approve October minutes. Seconded and passed. 25 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Discussion on Graduate Student Unionization

Andrew Stott, Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Dean of the Graduate school provided updates on graduate school unionization and strike. Of the students represented by United Auto Workers, 97% are PhD students and 3% are masters students. The students voted to go on strike on November 28th unless the University will offer them a "fair contract." The three outstanding issues include:

1. Wages - The minimum stipend that a graduate student will make for 20 hours a week of work as a teaching assistant, research assistant, or assistant lecturer.
2. Union security - Whether students are obligated to become members of the union (closed union shop) or can elect to be members of the union or not (open union shop)
3. Non-discrimination clause - Codifies prescribed behaviors that the University will not tolerate. The union would like this clause to be subject to the grievance and arbitration clause and would have a parallel process.

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Dean Stott encouraged faculty to consider alternative forms of grading in anticipation of the pending strike.

A senator asked if faculty are able to ask whether students are going on strike. Stott shared that faculty are not allowed to ask students about their intentions or activities around union organizing. Faculty can continue to have discussions with them about their academic progress.

Updates regarding graduate negotiations can be found at <https://graduateschool.usc.edu/uaw/>

Adjournment

President Apostolos reminded faculty to attend the Life Well Lived event on Nov. 29th.

President Apostolos adjourned the meeting at 4:04pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Christal Young

Secretary General of the Academic Senate

APPROVED