

**ACADEMIC SENATE**  
**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

October 16, 2024  
HSC/Hybrid Meeting  
2:00 - 4:00 pm PST

**Present and online (Voting Senate Members):** Rima Jubran (president), Lorraine Turcotte (academic vice president), Christine El Haddad (administrative vice president), Margo K. Apostolos (immediate past president), Clifford Neuman (secretary general), John Matsusaka (executive board), Miki Turner (executive board), Grace Kung (executive board), Sofia Gruskin (executive board), Anastassia Tzoytzoyrakos, Jennifer Swift, Stacy Schepens Niemiec, Ivan Bermejo-Moreno, Susie Kim, Nasrin Esnaashari, Bill Leach, Bruno Lemgruber, Christy Kane, Mari Kong, Artineh-Rossier, (Artineh) Julie Dopheide, Amy Cannon, Kiki Benzon, Marion Philadelphia, Will Coppola, Elizabeth Fife, Jason Buhle, Tom Davidson, Steve Hsu, Liz Blomstedt, Goretta Prieto Botana.

**Present and online (Non-voting Alternates, Ex-officio, Speakers, Guests):** Provost Guzman, Alexis Burchett, Ali Rachel Pearl, Amber Foster, Aneesah Smith, Dan Klerman, Devin Griffiths, Elisa Warford, Erik Johnson, Esther Margulies, Fayez Hammad, Gourab Mukherjee, Harvey Kaslow, Howard A. Rodman, Huriya Jabbar, Jerry Walker, Jim Moore, Joseph Nunes, Julianna Kirschner, Julie A. Dopheide, Kate Levin, Kelsey Vukic, Kendra Walther, Ketan Savla (alternate), Kristi Lewton (alternate), Kristin Carlson, Laurie Brand, Lavonna Blair Lewis, Lavonna Lewis, Marty Levine, Lee Olvera, Lodovico Pizzati, Lucio Soibelman, Mara Mather, Margaret Moser, Margaret Trost, Maria Aranda, Mayank Kejriwal, Melissa Miller (alternate), Michael Bodie (alternate), Morgan Polikoff, Naomi Warren, Olivia C. Harrison, Patricia Riley, Paul Adler, Renee Smith-Maddox, Reyes Enciso, Sara Hoffman, Shubha Kumar, Sibel Dincer, Sibyl Wickersheimer, Susan Enguidanos, Yaniv Bar-Cohen.

## **PROCEEDINGS**

### **Call to order: Rima Jubran, Senate President**

Academic Senate President Rima Jubran called the meeting to order at 2:00pm.

### **Approval of September Meeting Minutes**

The Secretary General presented the September Academic Senate meeting minutes. Several corrections were made regarding attendance at the meeting. Margo Apostolos moved to approve; the motion was seconded by Grace Kung. The September minutes were approved (23 in favor, 0 against, 2 abstentions).

### **Discussion and Welcome by with Dr. Steve Shapiro, Senior Vice President for Health Affairs**

Dr. Shapiro highlighted the importance of adapting to changes in healthcare, the potential for digital medicine to improve patient care, and the need for the university to be profitable. He also discussed the renegotiation of the contract with LA County and the changes at Verdugo Hills Hospital. There was a

discussion of around reducing the School of Medicine class size to 120, as well as having smaller residency programs. The school is rethinking how to organize some of the non-clinical departments like anatomy and physiology, with potential integration into other departments. There was also discussion as to whether a productivity-based compensation model for equity including aligning faculty activities with pay would make sense for the medical school.

**Presentation and discussion with Faculty Affairs Committee co-chairs Daniel Klerman, Professor of Law and History, Julianna Kirschner, Part-Time Lecturer of Communication and Elisa Warford, Associate Professor of Technical Communication Practice (2:30)**

Professor Kirschner discussed the evolution of the Faculty Affairs Committee, which previously had separate committees for different faculty tracks but now has a unified committee for open dialogue and identifying key issues that cross tracks. Elisa Warford, the co-chair, highlighted common challenges such as lack of transparency, data collection, and communication, and proposed solutions on behalf of the committee including a centralized data repository and more direct involvement with the Provost's office. This year,

This year the Faculty Affairs Committee was tasked with reviewing promotion policies across different schools and recommending changes to the School Faculty Councils and the Provost if necessary. The committee also aimed to work with the Faculty Councils to determine whether each school has its own promotion document approved by the Provost. The committee is also considering ways to improve data collection to review the information more efficiently. In response to questions, it was made clear the committee's work is seen as complementary and distinct from the Compensation and Benefits Committee's focus on salary transparency and assessing progress.

**Employee Benefits presentation by Greg Condell, Vice President of Finance and Alice Chen, Assistant Vice President, USC Health Plans (3:00)**

The initial focus of the presentation was a preview of the open enrollment presentation which included the elimination of the fitness incentive and the reduction in credit for the health assessment (or Vitality) from \$480 to \$300.

The subsequent focus included presentation of changes to the Tuition Assistance Benefit slated to go into effect in the Summer of 2025. Among these changes were to be rescission of the TAB for dependents of faculty and staff no longer working at the University, which would affect faculty and staff hired before 2011 who were continuously employed by the University for 15 years. There are additional changes to the TAB that would affect all faculty, including removal of certificate programs from the covered benefit for faculty and staff, reduction of the tuition savings for spouses from 50% to 25%, that graduate degree programs will no longer be covered for dependents, and a lowering of the age of qualifying dependents from 35 years to 26 years.

Finally, there was an announcement that the extended winter break would not be provided this year. This was described as not actually being a change of benefits, since those extended days had never been promised as an ongoing benefit, but simply offered since the first year of COVID several years in a row.

A lively discussion followed with faculty from across the university making clear their concerns about these proposed changes.

**Presentation and discussion with Lavonna Lewis, Teaching Professor of Public Policy, Vice Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Chair of the Task Force to Review Recent Campus Events and Associated Administrative Decisions and Communication (3:30)**

Professor Lewis discussed the task force's work, emphasizing the importance of the university's commitment to the values journey. The committee aimed to create a meaningful report that would consider future actions, not just past events. The presentation then shifted to the three main topic areas the task force was to review: the decision to ban Professor Strauss from campus, the cancellation of the valedictorian speech and the main commencement, and the handling of campus protests and the removal of protestors. Dr. Lewis highlighted the need for clarity in defining safety, the importance of balancing the right to be heard with the right to listen to others, and the need for accountability at all levels of the university. She also discussed the importance of open communication within the university, the need for shared governance and communication, particularly in crisis situations, and the importance of trust in decision-making processes.

A report summarizing their work and containing recommendations for improvement was posted to the Senate website. The Executive Board is committed to creating action plans and will be launching a joint Provost/Senate Task Force on Academic Freedom and Responsibility. An upcoming, lunch event aimed at promoting dialogue about the Task Force findings and recommendations was announced.

**The meeting was Adjourned at 3:57PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Clifford Neuman

Secretary General of the Academic Senate

(minutes approved by Academic Senate on 11/20/2024 [29 for, 0 against, 3 abstentions])

(portions of these minutes were drafted using Zoom's AI Companion)