

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

September 18, 2024  
UPC/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), Bruno Lemgruber, Marion Philadelphia, Amy Cannon, Lisa Hou, Nasrin Esnaashari, Christy Kane, Mike Andersen, Kiki Benzon, Andrea Hollingshead, Joseph Nunes, Lodovico Pizzati, Mari Kong, Yihyun Lim, Stacey Schepens Niemiec, Sabela Grimes, Sibyl Wickersheimer, Elizabeth Fife, K.K. Imagawa, Susan Enguidanos, Steven Hsu, Kristian Carlson, Suzie Kim, Anastassia Tsoytsoyrakos, Jennifer Swift, Ivan Bermejo-Moreno, Mayank Kejriwal, Liz Blomstedt, Susie Kim.

**Present and online (Non-voting Alternates, Ex-officio, Speakers, Guests):** President Folt, Provost Guzman, Lavonna Lewis, T.J. McCarthy, Jennifer Bankard, Clarissa Martinez, Melissa Miller (alternate), Kristi Lewton (alternate), Michael Bodie (alternate), Stephen Aguilar (alternate), Ketan Savla (alternate), Jim Moore, Tracy Tambascia, Eimmy Solis, Kelsey Vukic, Robert V. Labaree, Howard A. Rodman, Sheila M. Sofian, Elizabeth Brummel, Hanna Reisler, Shubha Kumar, Lodovico Pizzati, Jennifer Silverman, Sue Luftschein, Joan Flores-Villalobos, Morgan Polikoff, Erik Johnson, Karrie Kingsley, Amber Foster, Shubha Kumar, Judith Hirsch, Lisa Aziz-Zadeh, Julie McLaughlin Gray, Scott Faris, Christina Dunbar-Hester, Elyse Levine, Michele Kipke, Jessica Gambling, Yaniv Bar-Cohen, Ashley Bennett, Guilan Siassi, Sarah Bream, Guilan Siassi, Devin Griffiths, Ilan Rotstein, Laura Isabel Serna, Aniko Imre, Patrick Crispen, Cristina Visperas, Liz Phelps, T.J. McCarthy, Patricia Riley, Emily Zeamer, Aurorae Khoo, Mike Ananny, Aro Velmet, Jennifer Dinalo, Midhat Asghar, Lars Perner, Marty Levine, Shaddin Dughmi, and Jason Buhle.

(some individuals present may be missing from the above lists due to logistical issues)

**PROCEEDINGS**

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

Academic Senate President Rima Jubran called the meeting to order at 2:01pm.

**Approval of March Meeting Minutes 14:04**

The Secretary General presented the March Academic Senate meeting minutes, prepared by our previous Secretary General (Christal Young) for approval. Minutes were reviewed by the Senate. Lorraine Turcotte moved to approve, and the motion was seconded. The March minutes were approved (17 in favor, 0 against, 2 abstentions).

## **Welcome from President Carol Folt and Provost Andrew T. Guzman (2:09PM)**

President Folt emphasized the importance of keeping people safe, and discussed the current state of University compliance processes at the Federal and State levels. She provided updates on new sustainable buildings and on new student initiatives. Her remarks highlighted the excitement of new students and the importance of appreciating the field of education.

Provost Guzman focused on financial issues and budgetary concerns, explaining that USC is undergoing periodic reviews of its financial condition and that this ensures the University's long-term financial sustainability. One of the Universities goals is to create a more manageable financial system, with adjustments made every few years to keep up with changing costs.

Provost Guzman identified the main cause of the current financial challenges as the overall increasing cost of running a University, a situation that is not unique to USC. Among the identified increasing costs are insurance, legal, and compliance costs. Despite these challenges, the provost informed us that USC has successfully invested in faculty and staff compensation and is determined to continue to prioritize faculty salaries and financial aid. The university's financial stability was confirmed through a solid rating from rating agencies.

### **Approval of April Meeting Minutes 14:36**

The Secretary General presented the April Academic Senate meeting minutes, prepared by our previous Secretary General (Christal Young) for approval. Minutes were reviewed by the Senate. Bruno Lemgruber moved to approve and Loraine Turcotte seconded. The April minutes were approved (17 in favor, 0 against, 3 abstentions).

### **Approval of May Meeting Minutes 14:39**

The Secretary General presented the May Academic Senate meeting minutes, prepared by our previous Secretary General (Christal Young) for approval. There was a question posed (point of information) regarding the definition of "guests" as they appear in the meeting minutes, and whether that part of the attendance included other members of the faculty that were in attendance, since some faculty seemed to be omitted from the list of attendees. Going forward (starting with today's meeting) it is our intent to include all that are recorded as present either online, or on the sign-in sheet, in the list of attendees for the meeting minutes. Minutes were reviewed by the Senate. Motion to approve by Loraine Turcotte and second by Steven Hsu (20 in favor, 0 against, 2 abstentions).

### **Report and Update from the Task Force**

Lavonna Lewis, Task Force Chair, together with Lorraine Turcotte, Academic Vice President, and Christine El-Haddad, Administrative Vice President, provided an update on the activities of the Task force formed to investigate campus events related to the conflict in the Middle East and the administrative decisions made.

The task force's charge was to examine the processes by which safety and security decisions are made by the administration, balance security risks against academic freedom, and evaluate communication from senior leadership about recent events. The goal was to provide a balanced presentation and recommendations for improvement, rather than just a report on the events.

The group discussed their ongoing efforts to collect information and gather feedback from various stakeholders on campus, emphasizing the importance of thorough understanding and trauma-informed practices. They requested additional time for interviews and to complete their report, with a deadline extension to October 9th.

The Task Force chair emphasized the importance of fairness and the potential for disagreement when the report is released. There was a comment regarding USC's drop in rankings for protecting free speech on campus and the necessity of transparency in handling tough topics and it was pointed out that a second committee is being formed to focus specifically on academic freedom and protected speech issues.

A motion made by Lorraine Turcotte and seconded to extend the deadline for the Task Force report until October 9<sup>th</sup>. The extension was approved (28 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

### **Compensation and Benefits Committee Discussion**

T.J. McCarthy discussed the work and charges of the Compensation and Benefits Committee, co-chaired by T.J. McCarthy and Paul Adler. The committee monitors compensation and benefits issues at the university level, serving as a resource for faculty. A survey revealed variations in salary transparency among units. T.J. highlighted the need for transparency models, noting challenges in sharing information with faculty councils. Plans include forming an advisory group to gather input from schools' faculty councils and raising faculty needs at School and Department Meetings.

### **Committee on Information Services**

Jennifer Bankard and Clarissa Martinez provided an update on the work of the Committee on Information Services. Part of the previous years activities focused on monitoring and advocating for faculty regarding the LMS transition to Brightspace. The successes and

challenges (like gradebooks) were discussed and the need to integrate tools that faculty had been previously using under Blackboard.

Clarisa Martinez presented survey findings highlighting AI's impact on academic integrity concerns like cheating and privacy. They highlighted the need for post-AI teaching resources, a literature review, and a new survey aimed to understand the changing landscape's impact on faculty to inform decision-making.

Jennifer Bankard discussed potential AI technology adoption, and the need for responsible use guidelines, faculty support, system sustainability in an AI context, and proactively addressing AI's pedagogical implications.

**President Rima Jubran adjourned the meeting at 4pm.**

### **Distinguished Faculty and Appreciation Awards**

An awards ceremony was held following the adjournment of the meeting with awards presented to three faculty members who have shown exceptional dedication and service to the university. These awards were presented to Dan Pecchenino, T.J. McCarthy and Margo K. Apostolos.

Respectfully submitted,

Clifford Neuman

Secretary General of the Academic Senate

(minutes approved by Academic Senate on 10/16/2024 [23 for, 0 against, 2 abstentions])

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