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ACADEMIC SENATE

Resolution 24/25-02

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In support of proposal to implement undergraduate sustainability graduation requirement

WHEREAS, the lack of sufficient progress towards a more sustainable and resilient world jeopardizes the future that our students will inherit; recognizing that interdisciplinary solutions and collaboration across all disciplines are critical to addressing this; recognizing our duty as a university to prepare our students for this future and the evolving demands of the workforce, the Presidential Working Group on Sustainability’s Education Committee has recommended the adoption of a sustainability graduation requirement for all undergraduate students at USC;

WHEREAS, sustainability means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, and is traditionally conceptualized as resting on three foundational pillars of environment, economy, and society;

WHEREAS, sustainability is a lens that can be applied to the questions and critical issues explored by every academic discipline, and the complex nature of sustainability problems means that all disciplines are needed to develop sustainability solutions;

WHEREAS, sustainability is becoming increasingly recognized as a critical part of education, as evidenced by at least eleven other universities in the U.S. that have already instituted a sustainability graduation requirement; and USC has the chance to be a leader among major research universities in doing so;

WHEREAS, this proposal for a sustainability graduation requirement offers a flexible and interdisciplinary approach, allowing students to fulfill the requirement by taking a single sustainability-tagged course, which can be a course within their major or minor, a general education course, a writing course, or an elective, enabling them to connect with sustainability in ways that align with their academic and professional paths;

WHEREAS, departments will be empowered to integrate sustainability into curricula in ways that are meaningful to that discipline, by adapting current courses or creating new ones, which minimizes financial and administrative burdens, with some existing courses likely to already meet the criteria that are defined, recognizing that the exact criteria qualifying a course to be tagged as a sustainability course to be determined by a university committee;

Therefore, be it RESOLVED that the Senate expresses its support for the Presidential Working Group on Sustainability’s proposal to implement a sustainability graduation requirement for all undergraduates at USC. The full proposal is attached to this Resolution.

Resolution Number: 24/25-02

Submitted by: Marlon Boarnet

Moved to approve: Marlon Boarnet

Seconded by: Miki Turner

Date: December 11th, 2024, Proposal presented at Senate meeting.

January 12th, 2025, Resolution supporting proposal distributed to Senators.

January 15th, 2025 (Discussion and Vote)

Action taken: 17 Yes, 6 No, 7 Abstentions (resolution passed)