 Minutes of the Dornsife Faculty Council Meeting (Feb 7 2018)

Date: February 7, 2018
Room: Irani Hall, Rm. 321

Present (17): Brian Bernards; Iva Bozovic; Rebecca Broyer; Jessica Cantiello; Robert Chernoff; David Crombecque; Shannon Gibson; Assal Habibi; Michael Hadjidaniel; P.T. McNiff (secretary); Dan Pecchenino (vice-president); Gioia Polidori; Sergio Sanudo-Wilhelmy; Carolina Sitinsky-Cole; Trisha Tucker (president); An-Min Wu; Emily Zeamer

Absent (2): Antonio Idini; Geraldine Peters;

Guests (4): Kimberly Freeman, Associate Dean & Chief Diversity Officer; Carlos Delgado, The Writing Program; Daniel Dissinger, The Writing Program; Alisa Sánchez, The Writing Program

**Dialogue with Chief Diversity Officer**

*Trisha* welcomes the council back and introduces our special guest: Kimberly Freeman, Associate Dean and Chief Diversity Officer.

*Kimberly* shares with the Council her story of getting to this position, detailing her work with the Southern California Gas Company and UCLA, as well as her academic work at USC Price and UCLA Anderson. She emphasizes the intersectionality of her experience, especially in a STEM field as a first-generation student and through learning the nuances of communicating with different constituents during her time at SoCal Gas. These experiences have led to her current position on the dean’s cabinet, helping a private institution carry out a public mission.

She notes that she has been meeting with the rest of the cabinet, the vice-provost team, department chairs, staff, and now the faculty council to collect information and cull it into a framework for the college’s diversity plan. Public forums on diversity, equity, and inclusion will be held over the next few weeks, with the faculty one first on February 27th, one for students the next day, and a staff forum in March.

The goal is for the conversation to not be one directional, but instead a shared dialogue for her to understand campus and culture. Questions that need to be answered collectively: what are the priorities at Dornsife? And across the university?

She ends by reiterating that she is here to listen more than talk, and opens the floor for discussion. *Bob* asks if there are big picture themes that come to mind in the context of what progress may have been made in the last few years. The response is that it is very obvious that pipelines need to be grown in terms of diverse students and faculty, with Dean Miller wanting to focus on getting more of our undergraduate
students interested in becoming graduate students. In addition, many have shared some clear pain points around faculty recruitment as well as campus climate. The plan to deal with these would be arranged around the pillars of recruitment, retention, climate, and engagement. Doing so would mean linking up with campus partners that already exist while leveraging being the heart of a university that’s in the heart of the city.

**Sergio** says that over the last ten years, the number of under-represented students has increased, but the same cannot be said for faculty. What are the plans for addressing under-representation among faculty? The response is that we need to shift how we do recruitment and searches, with strong support from the divisional deans. The school needs to get rid of the pernicious idea that we have to sacrifice quality for diversity – that concept is the big counter that holds up progress. Work must be done to help the culture understand that isn’t true. This will require effort from a lot of the stakeholders. Sergio notes there is an urgency to this, as faculty searches are happening now. Kimberly replies that divisional deans and their contribution will be important in the short-term, and she has discussed this with each of them.

**Gioia** raises the point of limited funding during the search process, which limits the number of candidates (and by extension the potential range of diversity among candidates) that can be called in for on-campus interviews. Kimberly, in her dual-reporting role, will speak with Vice-Dean Mackey about this.

**Alisa** asks what the timeline is for all this work in general and the diversity plan in particular. Kimberly replies that the plan is a living document that will continue to evolve, but the first hard deadline is February 15th for submitting a draft to the Provost’s office. After that, a committee structure will be worked on around and based on the public forums, with the final draft of the plan due to the Provost’s office in May.

**Carolina** brings up the concern that first generation students sometimes get low grades or withdraw from difficult classes because they lack the support to help them. This is something Kimberly will be looking into and working on, as the first generation population is growing and resources in academic support need to shift accordingly.

**David** points out that there are not as many first-generation students in STEM as in other disciplines. Kimberly will be meeting with admissions to help increase attention to this matter.

**Dan** asks if part of the retention plan is to make sure to keep students in Dornsife, rather than having them transfer to other schools in the university. Kimberly says Dornsife needs to work with community groups and non-profits to help create a communications campaign so students from these populations know about the value of and options within a liberal arts education.
Kimberly reminds everyone that she is available in the administration building and also over email.

Trisha leads a discussion with the council about follow-up points from that conversation, which touches upon issues of diversity in Greek life, academic panels, and the broader campus culture. There are also notes made about incentivizing participation to increase the range of active faculty. Questions were raised by council members about the make-up and attitudes of hiring committees. Some members noted the importance of making sure diversity is reflected in administration as well. There was also a desire to have Kimberly and the administration in general clearly define their concept of “diversity” and where we stand within that definition. Transparency is noted as a key component for the conversation.

Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting

Trisha submits the minutes of the previous DFC meeting, on Jan. 10, for approval. Of the 17 members in attendance, 16 approve the minutes, one abstains.

Updates and Reports

I. Meetings with Chairs & Divisional Deans

Trisha and Dan discuss their outreach efforts to increase participation on the council from tenured and tenure-track faculty. They spoke to the assembled Humanities and Social Science chairs, as well as all three divisional deans. A breakdown of what the DFC has accomplished recently as well as its current projects will be drafted and sent around to the faculty in advance of the election process beginning.

II. Academic Senate Meeting

Trisha and Dan discuss updates from the January Academic Senate meeting. Verun Soni shared news about the USC Ombuds Office, emphasizing that it will be founded on the Four Core Principles of International Ombuds Persons: confidentiality, informality, impartiality, and independence. Verun thinks we need to start with at least one ombuds person per campus for UPC and HSC, with accompanying office/meeting space and staff.

The Interim Report from the Task Force on Workplace Standards and Employee Wellness was also discussed. The draft is publicly available on the Senate website, and an emphasis was placed on problems in the campus climate as well as chain of command issues.
They also discussed an update from Elizabeth Graddy and Marty Levine of the provost’s office about the forming of better ways to investigate and determine sanctions for violations of faculty standards. This includes hiring more investigators as well as forming a standing faculty committee that will review all files and reports related to a case. Marty confirmed the goal is to include at least one RTPC faculty member on every case involving an RTPC faculty; a similar goal is in place for part-time faculty, though the logistics of that are more difficult.

Carolina asks if there is a timeline for the creation of the Ombuds Office. Trisha is not certain and will follow up with Verun.

III. Reports of the DFC Caucuses

P.T. notes that the Part-Time Faculty Caucus has continued work developing a survey to gauge the temperature of part-time faculty in Dornsife. The caucus is coordinating with the Academic Senate’s Part-Time Faculty Affairs Committee on ensuring the planned surveys from each body would not overlap or conflict with each other. In addition, the caucus is scheduling meetings with the Vice-Provost’s office as well as the Benefits office to get clarity on how certain policies affect part-time faculty.

Michael and Shannon discuss the Curriculum Caucus’ work on student mentoring. They are developing a survey for students gauging the mentorship they are receiving; they are working with Dean Stott’s office to find some way to incentivize participation in the survey. Another group is looking into how connections are made across different areas of the college, how these can be improved and expanded, and ways to incentivize such connections.

Gioia updates on the Research, Policy, and Documentation Caucus, which is working in three main sub-committees. She anticipates having more feedback from these groups at the next meeting.

David discusses the Faculty Affairs Caucus and its different groups looking at equivalent salaries, job descriptions of RTPC faculty at other institutions, and what RTPC do in terms of scholarly work.

Thoughts on Diversity and Inclusion Week

Trisha asks what people thought of the week and asks for feedback. She notes that she has already emailed Provost Quick, and that he wants to get the program out earlier as well as have online streams of panels for people who are not able to make it. Carolina notes that having room numbers assigned and advertised further in advance would have helped people attend panels. Jessica shared her experience that panel members had to get their own rooms through their department’s support staff; having a centralized support system for such logistics would be helpful.
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**Upcoming DFC Election**

Trisha, Dan, P.T., and Carolina discuss the logistics of the upcoming election. The planned timeline is discussed, as well as the number of open seats: four Humanities representatives, three in Social Sciences, and two in Natural Sciences. A DFC fact sheet will be included with the call for nominations later in the month.

**Other Business**

Trisha asks if members have any other issues or concerns to raise.

Sergio notes a lack of clarity with regards to computer support for the faculty and the purchasing request policy. Trisha says she will ask the dean’s office to send out an update to all Dornsife faculty.

Assal brings up a seeming discrepancy across divisions in terms of graduate fellowship years. Is this discrepancy a pattern, and if so, is there a reason why it exists? Trisha says she will check with Dean Finkel about this.

The meeting is adjourned at 5:00pm

Respectfully submitted,

P.T. McNiff, Secretary

The Dornsife Faculty Council