Dear Dornsife Faculty,

Your elected members of the Dornsife Faculty Council have been working on your behalf on a variety of initiatives. A list of some of our current projects is below. For further information on any of them, please reach out to your DFC representatives, or write to facultycouncil@dornsife.usc.edu.

1. The Faculty Affairs caucus presented a summary of findings from the survey on merit review sent to department chairs and directors earlier in the year. Based on this, and the earlier survey of faculty, the Dornsife Faculty Council prepared a list of requested changes to the merit review process, which you can see here. This document was sent to Dean Amber Miller last week, and we are awaiting a response.

2. Last month, the DFC sent a letter to the administration objecting to the recent introduction of the Faculty Student Resolution (FSR) process, which moves some of the responsibility for handling academic integrity violations away from a central office towards individual faculty members. You can see the DFC’s letter here, and the response received from Andrew Stott (Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Dean of the Graduate School) here.

   After receiving this response, the Executive Board had a follow-up meeting with Dr. Stott and Jacques Zalma, Director of the Office of Academic Integrity. Our central concern in the original letter was that asking instructors to personally administer penalties for academic integrity violations will exacerbate inequities faced by instructors whose authority is less likely to be respected by students. We raised this issue again in the meeting, and the administration agreed to revisit this issue if they see a rise in cases of faculty harassment along these lines.

   We therefore wish to remind all Dornsife faculty members to report all incidents of harassment to the Office of Community Expectations by emailing communityexpectations@usc.edu. In the event of an imminent safety concern, DPS can be reached (at their 24-hour emergency line) at 213-740-4321. For more extended support related to these issues, faculty can contact the Office of Campus Wellbeing and Crisis Intervention at 213-740-0411.

3. The newly-formed Faculty Salary and Compensation Committee had its first meeting. A positive development is that California’s new Senate Bill 1162 requires “an employer, upon request, to provide to an employee the pay scale for the position in which the employee is currently employed.” This will be an asset in establishing the transparency necessary to rectify any potential salary inequities within Dornsife.

4. The DFC executive board met with the Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) to discuss support for faculty when accommodating our students with disabilities. The office has assured us that they are working to address concerns that have been raised and will be able to share concrete updates soon. The DFC remains committed to maintaining equity for our
students with disabilities. Starting in January, an OSAS Advisory Committee consisting of faculty and students will serve as an additional resource. Contact information and more details about the committee’s work will be forthcoming. In the meantime, faculty who have questions, or need additional support in accommodating their students with disabilities, can reach out to OSAS directly by emailing osasfrontdesk@usc.edu or calling 213-740-0776.

5. We have also approached USC’s benefits office to discuss expansion of the childcare benefit. Currently, permanent full-time daycare is only subsidized if children attend the USC-owned centers run by Bright Horizons at the UPC and HSC campuses. However, many faculty do not live near campus, or do not have to be on campus five days a week. We have therefore requested that USC begin to subsidize childcare at other Bright Horizons centers across Greater Los Angeles. We will provide updates in a forthcoming email.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns that you would like addressed by your Dornsife Faculty Council, please either contact your DFC representatives, or email facultycouncil@dornsife.usc.edu.

Yours,

The Dornsife Faculty Council
Jim Clements, President
Leslie Berntsen, Vice President
Anastassia Tzoytzoyrakos, Secretary