

Minutes of the Dornsife Faculty Council Meeting

Date: October 7, 2020

Location: Zoom meeting

Present (19): Douglas Becker, Jasmine Bryant, Julia Chamberlin, Monalisa Chatterjee, Marianna Chodorowska-Pilch, Jim Clements, David Crombeque, Jerry Davison, David Ginsburg, Tracie Mayfield, Sri Narayan, Andrea Parra, Stephanie Renee Payne, Gioia Polidori (*president*), Matthew Pratt, Alisa Sánchez (*secretary*), John Vidale, Emily Zeamer (*vice-president*)

Absent (1): Melissa Daniels-Rauterkus

Approval of minutes from previous meetings:

September 2020 18 of the DFC present vote to approve, zero oppose, and zero abstain

Discussion of Special Academic Senate Meeting

DFC Senators reported back on the Special Academic Senate meeting which occurred directly prior to the DFC meeting. The Senate meeting featured Provost Zukoski discussing the university budget.

Doug and **Jerry** raised the issue of the endowment as a potential funding source: what are the earnings from endowment and what percentage could the university draw on to address funding shortfalls? **Jerry** acknowledged the Provost's statement that endowment funds are mostly restricted but asked if the university has approached donors for approval to use some of the annual earnings from such funds in order to do better by faculty and staff. **Jerry** expressed concern that faculty would leave USC given the cuts to faculty benefits and compensation. **Doug** called for greater transparency to faculty councils about using the endowment, for example through a feasibility study.

Gioia proposed the DFC draft a resolution on these matters. **Emily** agreed; we are the voice of the faculty and can get through to the administration. **Emily** recommended the resolution state that faculty find unacceptable the lack of transparency concerning the budget and ask the administration to set out the principles for reinstating cut compensation and benefits. Regardless of how things have been done in the past, what is the right way to do things now? This is a matter of transparency and accountability. **Stephanie** asked what leverage the faculty have; **Gioia** responded that the DFC can share its resolution with other faculty councils to gain their signatures and input, for a stronger and louder faculty voice; **Emily** concurred that the faculty can demonstrate unity. **Doug** shared that his conversations with faculty have been consistent – asking the DFC to do what it can to try to save faculty benefits.

Sri observed how difficult it is to access the information which would enable faculty to suggest alternate funding possibilities or areas to cut expenses. At the same time, it is the job of the administration, not the faculty, to find alternative budget solutions.

DFC members discussed the prospect of unionization and the history of recent unionization efforts at USC. Several members noted that an AAUP (American Association of University Professors) chapter has formed at USC. Some members recalled President Folt's announcement of a 3% raise per year for 5 years with the service workers union. Several members recommended exploring interest in unionization among faculty in their home departments and programs.

Turning to discuss specific ideas for crafting the resolution, **Sri** recommended including tuition revenue – and noting this as revenue that faculty bring in for the University. **David C.** pointed out this is a university-wide effort. **Emily** advised communicating that faculty compensation and benefits are not on the table without serious consequences. **Jim** clarified that the resolution might not demand that retirement benefits not be cut, but rather that they would be cut only after an exhaustive search of other methods, which would go a long way towards alleviating faculty frustration; to treat this as a last option. **Gioia** noted that COFE (Committee On Finance and Enrollment) and Academic Senate Resolution 19208 set out that faculty should have a leading voice in budget matters affecting faculty. **Gioia** expected that the Senate will want to develop a resolution on this matter and the DFC will be open to working with the Senate resolution.

Updates (Gioia)

- *Hiring*
 - 4-5 hires are planned for the Writing Program, and 20 tenure-track hires focused on increasing representation of BIPOC faculty.
 - Divisional deans are drafting a document discussing impact of COVID on performance to include in Merit Review and promotional reviews for tenure track faculty. Dean Bradforth mentioned that this might be extended to RTPC faculty as well.
- *Teaching support and caregiving*
 - New TA program: Dean Miller used savings from canceled travel and catering to create a TA program for faculty needing assistance with teaching obligations. This program is one way of supporting faculty with caregiving responsibilities, as well as the wider faculty.
- *Spring 2021 term*
 - Spring semester will begin January 15. Spring break is canceled but faculty have latitude to cancel some days to make up for the loss of personal time. President Folt will make an official announcement next week, by mid-October.
- *Black Studies Center*
 - Academic Senate President Paul Adler recommended bringing the proposal for the Black Studies Center to REDI (President's and Provost's Task Force on Racial Equity, Diversity,

and Inclusion); Gioia spoke with John Rowe, who shared the proposal with Manuel Pastor, REDI co-chair.

- *Issues involving Professor Greg Patton*
 - DFC members did not express interest in discussing issues involving Professor Greg Patton. Before the meeting, DFC members had the chance to review documents related to Professor Greg Patton's case that had been shared with the Academic Senate.
- *Childcare*
 - The FEEC (Faculty Environment and Employment Committee) is preparing a faculty survey on childcare related needs. What are top 5 caregiving and productivity concerns that we are hearing in our school? The DFC will send input to help develop the survey. **Alisa** recommended including open-ended questions to capture experiences in qualitative form. **Emily** noted that the Dornsife deans have suggested that there are not additional funds for childcare, but we can identify creative solutions. **Gioia** invited volunteers for the FEEC, someone to serve as a Dornsife liaison.

Caucuses

- *Finance & Budget Caucus*
 - Maggie Switek will chair the Caucus. **Gioia** noted that there are fewer Dornsife-level budget concerns, since Dornsife cuts, at 4%, are not as significant as had been anticipated. **Gioia** suggested sharing the draft petition with the Caucus for input.
- *DEI/Fighting anti-Blackness Caucus*
 - **Stephanie** and **Tracie** will co-chair the Caucus. **Gioia** summarized potential actions for the Caucus: supporting the Black Studies Center; developing a proposal for faculty training other faculty in combatting anti-Blackness and promoting DEI; incorporating evaluation of how faculty practice inclusive pedagogy as part of evaluation and promotion processes.
 - On the matter of training, **Stephanie** affirmed that faculty are already doing this work and there is a need to formalize this assistance beyond committees rising to meet this need. **Stephanie** also inquired whether funds exist to support faculty trainers in participating in trainings. **Gioia** proposed DFC funds could be used for trainings. **Emily** recommended adding a funding request for trainings to a proposal for course releases: **Gioia** and **Emily** expressed optimism that a proposal for a course release for faculty training other faculty would be well-received in Dornsife.
 - On the matter of evaluating faculty in terms of inclusive pedagogy, **Gioia** noted **David C.** as a potential collaborator, given his membership on the Merit Review Committee.
 - **Alisa** proposed departments identify the various initiatives they have undertaken to address anti-Blackness and promote equity and inclusion; **Emily** suggested a central website for this information in order to communicate progress to students.

Stephanie noted that she and **Tracie** have discussed a digital library that could be accessible across Dornsife where something like this could be included.

- **Stephanie** noted this is ongoing work and we need to be sure that each department feels sufficiently funded and supported in educating on antiracism.

- *RTPC/Part-time Caucus*
 - Gayle Stuart Fiedler-Vierma and Jessica Parr have agreed to co-chair the caucus. John Holland has been consulting with **Gioia** to draft best mentoring practices for RTPC faculty. This proposal also includes the development of Faculty Development Directors for specifically RTPC faculty. Another goal for the caucus is to establish a summer stipend for teaching innovation.

- *Tenure Track & Research Caucus*
 - These two caucus groups are merged due to low volunteers for the Tenure Track Caucus with **Sri** as chair. An issue for this Caucus is to clarify and report on the re-tenure process for lateral hires. **Emily** explained that USC has a rigorous re-tenure process for full professors and it is worthwhile to investigate if USC is losing potential hires as a result. In terms of Research, **Gioia** reported that Dean Bradforth requested the DFC identify the top five current issues, since these might have changed since the report submitted by the Summer EWG (Emergency Working Group) on Research. **Sri** agreed that some issues may have cured themselves due to the passage of time. **Sri** suggested bringing forward the number of issues identified by the Caucus, rather than limiting to five issues. The Caucus will highlight issues that are still relevant and ask to meet with Deans Miller and Bradforth.

- *Teaching and Curriculum Caucus*
 - **Doug** and **Julia** are co-chairs. The Caucus will address needs of teaching faculty; **Doug** stated a priority task is to investigate the needs of hybrid teaching faculty for Spring.

The meeting is adjourned at 5:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Alisa Sánchez,
Secretary
The Dornsife Faculty Council