

Minutes of the Dornsife Faculty Council Meeting

Date: March 3, 2021

Location: Zoom meeting

Present (19): Douglas Becker, Jasmine Bryant, Julia Chamberlin, Monalisa Chatterjee, Marianna Chodorowska-Pilch, Jim Clements, David Crombeque, Melissa Daniels-Rauterkus, 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 (0)

Guests (2): Maggie Switek, Assistant Professor of the Practice of Economics
Paul Adler, Academic Senate President

Approval of minutes from previous meetings:

February 2021 16 of the DFC present vote to approve, zero oppose, and zero abstain

General updates

Gioia shared updates:

- Faculty Development Director (FDD) for RTPC faculty: **Gioia** has worked with John Holland this year to develop a second proposal for a FDD for RTPC faculty. The FDD provides mentoring on professional development and promotion. **Gioia and the DFC** have been working on this project for over three years and was happy to announce that Dean of Undergraduate Education Emily Anderson has approved the proposal. The first FDD will be Karen Sternheimer, Professor (Teaching) of Anthropology. While the proposal developed in 2018, and published on the DFC website, asked for 3 FDDs, the same number as TT/T faculty have; the latest version only asked for 2 FDD's, one for research and one for teaching faculty. The Deans have agreed to have only one FDD for RTPC faculty as a pilot, leaving the option open to expand this position to have either 2 FDD's, one for teaching and one for research or 2 FDD's, one for each division.
- Anti-Racism Learning Community (ARLC) Proposal: Dean Anderson provided feedback on the ARLC proposal. Dean Anderson felt the ARLC may be redundant with offerings from the Center for Teaching Excellence (CET) or Dean and Chief Diversity Officer Kimberly Freeman. Gioia brought up the fact that some departments in Dornsife, including HEB, have a DEI committee composed of faculty, staff and students, and wondered whether it could be feasible to ask all departments to appoint such a

committee. Dean Anderson was supportive of the idea. **Gioia** solicited feedback about this idea from the DFC. **David G** suggested the DFC could craft this idea as a recommendation to departments, rather than a resolution. **Gioia** added that her department is a smaller one, but they have found members with staff and students participating. **Alisa** emphasized that a departmental committee is a good venue for building community and normalizing discussion on DEI issues among colleagues. **Tracie** raised a concern about faculty providing free labor, especially since it is more likely that mostly women and people of color would volunteer. **Sri** wondered if these committees would serve as watchdog groups and whether the DFC or DEI Caucus might serve the intended function; **Emily** responded no, that faculty need private and supportive channels for conversations, and that this idea is about identifying resource people at the departmental level. **Emily** clarified that departmental-level work would be more curricular and programmatic, while DFC-level work would be more administrative. **Gioia** added that having discipline-specific space would be beneficial and that the DEI Caucus might consider this matter further. **Jerry** asked about including the new hire, Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer Christopher Manning, in discussing these questions. **Emily** shared that now would be a good time to bring specific ideas to Christopher Manning, since Dean Anderson said he would first focus on listening.

- Merit Raise: Dean of Administration and Finance Renee Perez shared that a 2% Merit Raise is probable this year.
- Review of Dean Amber Miller: **Gioia** is part of the committee participating in Dean Miller's review process. **Gioia** believed that the Provost and Senate Executive Board recently developed a new process for reviewing deans and shared two potential questions about the Dornsife dean review process. First, there is one person on the committee who reports directly to Dean Miller, and second, the committee's role is not to evaluate Dean Miller, but instead to collect general faculty sentiment. **Gioia** planned to learn more about the dean's review process from Paul when he later joined the meeting.

Caucus updates

Research and Tenure Track Caucus

Sri shared updates:

- In early June 2020, the DFC decided to have an Emergency Working Group on COVID impacts on research. The EWG on Research included members from various disciplines; Sri co-chaired with Lorraine Turcotte in Biology and both **John** and **Gioia** have been part of the group as it transformed into the Research and Tenure Track Caucus this academic year of 2020-2021. During June 2020, the EWG conducted a survey and received 250 responses. They categorized faculty concerns into 7 different areas and submitted a report to Dornsife administration on June 30. Dean Miller acknowledged receipt of the report almost immediately and asked to meet at the end of summer, which seemed reasonable.

However, the time passed without a meeting and the faculty in the Caucus became anxious about issues getting left behind. **Gioia** contacted Divisional Dean Bradforth and after further exchanges, the Caucus met with divisional deans on Feb 8. The Caucus learned that many concerns are being addressed at some level and two are not. Dean Bradforth and other deans offered assurance that any faculty with a problem should directly approach their chair and the chair should respond. The deans emphasized this approach since faculty research concerns are not a one-size-fits-all solution.

- **Gioia** sent the Research report to all the deans a few days ago, asking if they wanted to make any additions or edits before publishing it. Dean Bradforth offered additional information on travel and vaccines to incorporate into the report.
- **Marianna** hoped that teaching would resume on campus in the Fall but expressed concern that some colleagues have not been able to access critical technology, such as an iPad, for teaching on Zoom. **Marianna** noted that some people received an iPad without waiting for 5 years, while she received a loaner from DTS, and others did not receive an iPad at all. **Sri** conveyed his understanding from the deans, that if a faculty raises the issue it will be resolved. **Gioia** asked this question during the meeting with the Deans and Dean Mancall responded that faculty who want a better computer should go through DTS. **Jim** had raised the issue that TT faculty had access to Mac Book Pro as a computer option, but RTPC faculty did not, an issue that was fixed when **Gioia** brought it to the attention of Dean Miller and Dean Perez so that now all faculty, irrespective of track, are eligible for a Macbook Pro. **Jim** added that he used faculty development funds to buy an iPad this year and it did not reset the 5 years. **Marianna** concluded that there should be a uniform approach across Dornsife.

Finance Caucus

Maggie shared updates:

- **Maggie** shared she was leaving USC to pursue consulting and that **Emily** would chair the Caucus during the transition period.
- The Dornsife salary benchmarking study was a very restricted report, using an average of salaries. In addition to this metric, the Caucus asked for a standard deviation or range of salary amounts, but Dean Perez said such metrics would be too identifying. The Caucus suggested combining information from departments to address this issue, but Dean Perez considered it would still be too transparent. Dean Perez added that she would be happy to discuss this further in the future but right now they were slammed with the budget crisis.
- The Caucus is considering next steps: perhaps a survey inquiring about faculty's interest in sharing salary, asking faculty what level of pay transparency they would be willing to support, such as a midpoint, for example. If the survey finds there is faculty support for releasing additional descriptive statistics, the Caucus can bring that information to the deans.

- **Emily** described an additional project of developing a proposal for a salary review process that is more transparent and would apply to all faculty.
- **Emily** also noted that at the Dornsife All-Chairs meeting, administrators announced they would take a pay cut in order to give faculty raises this year. **Emily** wondered how the DFC might advocate for this at the university level
- **Jerry** called for a review of administrative staff and salaries. Former USC President Max Nikias began increasing taxation on units in order to create more money for central administration. Some money flows out, but Central ends up controlling more money, and every few months, a new high-level administrator has been announced. These positions earn extremely high salaries, major six figures, and are happening during a time of salary freezes. **Tracie** noted that the last few Senate meetings introducing new hires, no time has been left for questions. **Jerry** added that a 2% raise for faculty is very low. **Emily** remarked that Dean Miller reported Dornsife had received budget cuts and that hopefully DFC advocacy could build leverage for Dornsife in relation to budgeting.

Elections Caucus

- **Alisa** shared that DFC elections would open shortly, with ballots sent to each division.

Discussion with Paul Adler, Academic Senate President

Gioia asked **Paul** about a list of items previously generated by the DFC:

Pay Equity

- **Paul** reported that there is some openness to the idea of a pay equity report with a demographic breakdown that would be shared with faculty. While **Paul** doubts we will have full UC style transparency, he is more optimistic about a report with metrics such as interquartile ranges by track, dept, race, gender where numbers permit. This would be a step towards transparency, and thereby towards equity. The legal report on pay equity each year fails to capture many dimensions.
- **Emily** noted two sides to salary transparency. First, that there is a general impression among faculty that they not paid fairly, but that it is impossible to tell. This is also a morale issue. Second, the question of how faculty can get salary issues addressed fairly. It would be great to see a salary review process proposed by the Senate. For example, a set of principles for salary review. It would be useful to have a process in place that is supported by faculty and understood by them. **Paul** considered that the USC-prepared salary report includes comparisons to UC and access to that data may inform individual cases. **Emily** emphasized that the salary review process is opaque and considered that many faculty don't know they can advocate for a review. There may be pay inequity; there is definitely perceived inequity. **Gioia** suggested the DFC could initiate a proposal

to promote a more transparent salary review process. Dean Miller said she is open to consider it and it could also be brought to the Senate.

Endowment earnings

- **Gioia** acknowledged that the University has borrowed funds to cover deficit and has sold the former presidential mansion. At the same time, faculty would like to know if we will get a more open conversation about using endowment earnings. **Paul** responded that COFE (Committee on Finance and Enrollment) discussed arguments for and against increasing the endowment payout, which historically has fluctuated. Increasing endowment payout would be borrowing against the endowment, and then we all participate in paying it back. What the University has decided is to increase endowment payout to 3%, the same as last year. The prior year was 2%, and before that, 0%. **Paul** doubted we would get more discussion about the endowment from administrative financial leaders.
- **Emily** asked if “payout” was the same as “earnings.” **Paul** responded that you can reinvest earnings, or you can siphon them off into the university budget. This year will be 3%; there is a maximum of 6% according to law. **Paul** added that this a Board of Trustees decision.
- **Tracie** stated that faculty are the ones bringing in revenue and seem to be the ones most adversely affected. **Tracie** asked whether coaches are taking pay cuts if their sports teams are not playing. **Paul** responded affirmatively: there are cuts to the overall budget, and then 20% cuts at the senior level, and 10% at the next level. **Paul** added that he believes university leaders understand the costs to morale and to humans in making these cuts and he would be happy to bring them any recommendations.
- **Jerry** stated that growth in administration, especially at the highest levels, seems unabated. Senior Vice President of Human Resources Felicia Washington recently announced with great pride the hiring of two people. Even during the hiring freeze last year, there were announcements of new hires. **Paul** responded that central administration seems understaffed and that has been part of the reason the university has made mistakes. The University uses so many consultants because it does not have the capacity; there is a need to staff up. Recently, the focus has been on building Human Resources. **Tracie** asked why HR would be a focus, when HR departments serve to protect the interests of the university above all, rather than employees. **Paul** acknowledged hearing pushback from deans about moving from a more decentralized to more centralized system, but USC had many decentralized fiefdoms that were badly managed and many scandals, and the University’s response now is to centralize to address these problems and address them through HR, as the scandals were mostly people problems.

Board of Trustees

- **Gioia** noted that other universities have Boards of Trustees that work in more transparent ways – publishing minutes, including faculty representatives. Wouldn't it make sense to have more transparency at USC? **Paul** responded that fights to rejuvenate the Board and overcome its divisions are ongoing. He could bring a proposal to make public more expansive minutes. As for faculty representatives, **Paul** believed only a minority of private schools include faculty reps as voting members. This is a question being explored with the Board, including considering whether faculty would be voting or nonvoting, with arguments in favor of both (faculty may not want to be legally liable for board decisions). If there is a faculty rep on the Board, we may not learn much from them because they are bound by confidentiality constraints, so this would not be a panacea.
- **Gioia** asked what the BoT is responsible for, the extent of their power in running the university. **Paul** stated that the Board sets policy and doesn't meddle in day-to-day management, like any big board. The finances are the Board's; it has to approve the endowment payout, for example. The Board hired President Folt to run the university.
- **Gioia** considered that having a faculty rep on the BoT would allow faculty to have a seat at the table. **Emily** added that even having faculty on the Board would signal interest in faculty. However, **Emily** was wary of gaining a symbol and not gaining movement on more urgent matters.

Childcare subsidies

- **Gioia** shared that some faculty would like more subsidies for childcare. The average cost of preschool is \$900 a month in LA and at USC it is \$1100; the average cost of infant care in LA is \$1200 a month and at USC it is \$1339. **Paul** responded that the Senate EB has been discussing this matter and has forwarded the FEEC report to Felicia Washington, Provost Zukowski, and President Folt, to raise issues and come up with policy, such as a voucher system for childcare. There is concern about the cost to the university. **Paul** noted potential challenges on this issue, thinking in a broader context: many faculty have childcare responsibilities and many don't. **Paul** expressed uncertainty about how a vote might go about a tax on all to subsidize childcare. **Alisa** shared that she is paying hundreds of dollars more in childcare per month while contending with pay cuts. **Paul** concluded that the University is expecting LAUSD to open in the Fall, and it would be extremely challenging if not.

Dean's Review

- **Gioia** shared that the committee for the Dornsife dean's review has the function of compiling faculty input, not making recommendations, and wondered if this was in line with recent updates to the dean's review process by the Provost and Senate Executive Board. **Paul** stated that a committee on dean's review has the role more of providing assessment of strengths and weaknesses, rather than issuing a recommendation. **Gioia** clarified that the Dornsife dean's review committee received instructions that they are not supposed to make any evaluations, only to funnel information from faculty in a report to share with the Provost. **Paul** responded that this was not his understanding and would ask about this. **Jerry** and **Gioia** also requested clarification on whether staff members who

directly report to the dean are to be included on the committee and **Paul** stated he would look into this as well.

Implementing Anti-Racist Initiatives

- **Gioia** stated that the DFC is committed to promoting DEI themes. The DFC has a proposal on developing faculty learning and resources – for faculty, by faculty – that it has presented to Dean Anderson, who recommended discussing the proposal with Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer Christopher Manning. **Paul** agreed on finding a way to make sure that other schools are aware of the initiative.

The meeting is adjourned at 5:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Alisa Sánchez,
Secretary
The Dornsife Faculty Council