

Minutes of the Dornsife Faculty Council Meeting

Date: January 22, 2020

Room: Irani Hall, Room 321

Present (16): David Crombecque, Marianna Chodorowska-Pilch, Gerald “Jerry” Davison, Antonio Elefano, Bob Girandola, Devin Griffiths (*president*), David Ginsburg, Shannon Gibson, Yuka Kumagai, Jessica Parr, Andrea Parra, Michael Petitti, Gioia Polidori (*vice president*), Alisa Sánchez, An-Min Wu (*secretary*), Emily Zeamer.

Absent (3): Melissa Daniels-Rauterkus, Sri Narayan, Joe Palacios.

December meeting minutes approval

- 14 of the DFC present voted to approve the minutes, zero oppose, and one abstain.

Updates

- **Devin** summarized the update of USC Student Mental Health Services made by Dr. Steven Siegel (Chair, Psychiatry Dept., Keck School of Medicine) in the last University Senate Meeting:
 - *Management*: Student counseling/student health was previously not linked with Keck but has since 2017 become part of Keck.
 - *Student cases*: Two years ago the screening was conducted by phone interviews and 80% were being referred outside campus. As of today, about half (40%) being referred out of campus.
 - *Increased Hiring*: The goal is to reach 18 therapists by the end of this year. Also expand the hours and space. The ‘counselors’ referred to here are psychiatrists (MD), with the hope of stream coming from Keck school graduates. The Therapist:Student ratio is now down to 1:1000 and targeting for 1:500.
 - *Long-term strategies*: Also looking into problems such as insurance gap, which will required University underwriting to cover the out-of-pocket charge. Also more space expansion

Devin wondered whether the rapid changes would create more questions. **Jerry** also raised the concern about the likelihood of more drug use due to the lack of full-cycle therapy by psychiatrists. **Emily** asked the differences between counselors and psychiatrists. Discussion then went on about the experiences of the new and upcoming hire, particularly the new hire’s experiences working with adolescent patients

Devin emphasized that while Dr. Siegel’s presentation was data-driven, there was no justification about the approach being used. **Gioia** mentioned there was a question in the senate meeting about how the service improvement can be measured in terms of wellness outcomes, but the question was not directly answered.

Shannon brought up the mandate issue in Dornsife; some students needing help did not fall into the ‘emergency’ categories under the University’s verdict. Faculties need guidelines to follow so all faculty can handle situations consistently. Some training would help too. **Devin** concurred the importance of dealing with the issue in Dornsife as we have more undergraduate students. **Gioia** mentioned a related presentation ‘Ask Ari’ during the Senate meeting by Ilene Rosenstein (Campus Wellbeing and Intervention). ‘Ask Ari’ is available on the web but not yet in app. **Devin** said that the good takeaway for this AI program is its helpfulness for the students not meeting the thresholds, and to make people aware about the resources.

Emily brought up the mindfulness program during the discussion; more broadened approach can be provided to students; Moreover, some structure can be addressed by the university to holistically help students’ stress issues. Some survey or other information can be worked on to deal with issues of non-sensitiveness of faculty that President mentioned in the memo. We should take a step back and look at how students are doing. **Jerry** concurred that mindfulness is not panacea and cultural values should be inspected here in USC.

Alisa mentioned that USC KCLC (Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity) provides very useful but often overlooked resources on campus – KCLC offers on-demand workshops and individual coaching for various topics including stress management and time management. In responding to Shannon’s comment on teaching, **Alisa** agreed that more clarity should be provided to help faculty handle issues such as classroom attendance and student mental health. Maybe DFC can evaluate available programs and resources, and backtrack the actual vision of mental health. **Shannon** asked whether Student Health has any baseline study used to know student needs.

Jessica agreed on Jerry’s point earlier that students are not more stressed now, just less able deal with stress. Students are handed everything they need to fill out until high schools nowadays. No deadlines. So they are stressed when coming to university. Deadlines should not be a stressor. There are a lot of factors that are compounding.

Responding to Alisa’s comment on class attendance, **Devin** suggests instead of more faculty guidelines, we should talk about best practices from either mentoring or merit perspective e.g. how we observe teaching. We cannot grade on attendance. **Shannon** asked about the document. **An-Min** mentioned the potential issue of enrollment if students are required to participate every class. **David C.** emphasized the priority of mental health (over the coursework) should be discussed with student.

Gioia discussed that Siegal also showed that about half of students in Greek (fraternity and sorority) do some drugs (compared to up to 30% for non-Greek). **Jerry** raised the question on how things in USC are structure here. **Gioia** mentioned The Haven (out of campus), which is a program that helps students with addiction

issues, The Haven is present in different locations in the country, collaborates with many universities and students do not necessarily need to be actively enrolled in a college degree to get help from them. It can be a useful resource. **Marianna** added that there are already so many resources and support systems, so it may be the problems of how student process the information. **Jessica** mentioned Trojans Care 4 Trojan (TC4T) being a starting point for students to process the information. **Michael** talked about the understaff issue of TC4T – only one person responds and rest goes to voicemail; **Marianna** mentioned that DPS also understaffed but **Jessica** argued that DPS response time is still faster. Devin suggested that we continue the conversations in caucuses and revisit these issues later.

- Quick update on OCAP resolution

Devin updated that the OCAP resolution is still in debate, and was asked to not include the language of suspending the current system. **Devin** will send the updated resolution to other councils and will plan to get the resolution out in next few weeks.

- Update on RTPC mentoring

Gioia first described that the 2018 RTPC mentoring recommendation report, created by the RPD caucus in 2018, was reported to Dean Miller and Dean Stott in May 2018. The report recommends for a Faculty Developing Director (FDD) position for RTPC in each division as what TT has; at the time Gioia was advised to ask for 3 FDD's to oversee mentoring efforts for teaching and practice faculty only. This is because research faculty has very specific needs. Last week Gioia and Jessica met with John Holland who wanted to bring this back to the attention of Dean Stott and ask for the FDD. This time he'd like to ask for 1 FDD for all 3 divisions. Gioia added that we have yet to resolve the issue of mentoring for research faculty. After a conversation with Susan Luczak, it seems that the needs of research faculty can be similar to TT, an option can be to ask for the TT FDD's to oversee research faculty.

Gioia has emailed Kat Reynolds for update numbers of faculty in each rank; **An-Min** has the faculty list and will provide it to Gioia. **Devin** mentioned that tenured faculty members do not have mentors, only Assistant Professors (TT) do. (**Gioia**) So what if we pursue the assignment of a mentor for everyone who is not full professor? (**Devin**) the point of merit review system is faculty development **David G.** questioned that mentorship should be handled within each department **Devin** said it does not happen in every department, and Jessica added that not everyone has the knowledge or is comfortable for those voted for them. **Andrea** would like to know how Writing Program handles this and what happened for departments that have no full (RTPC) professors.

(**Gioia:**) Maybe a reasonable way for teaching faculty to identify mentors is to select their own mentors. **Shannon** concurred but also noted that same person would be chosen several times. Devin said that FDD should have the role to communicate these issues, to provide the mentoring guideline and check-in once a year. Emily asked

about potential course release if someone is a super mentor, but Gioia thinks that could have been the issue for the proposal of 3 FDD. **Gioia** will ask Dean Stott whether the mentees can be expanded more than current Assistant Professors (TT) next week.

New Business

- Teaching assistant related issues (**Jerry**): Quality of teaching is affected by the threshold of receiving TAs – it should be alleviated by qualified undergrads student to facilitate the mundane operations related to teaching. **Jessica** also mentioned some sudden changes in TA arrangement this semester; also some graduate students no longer need to TA when their fellowship structures change. We asked for undergrad students as TAs but was rejected.

Questions then raised by some members about what the policy is and who makes the decision, as some are basic academic decisions but faculty has no saying and are not being consulted. Additionally, readers/graders are available for some departments but not others. These readers/graders (Master's students) were assigned but no evaluation required. Little instructional experience can be involved. **Jessica** mentioned that Chemistry has an internal fellowship designed to be prestige with assigned course and a faculty member as a mentor; the requirement/training includes to teach 30% lecture, write exams, and host office hours. **Emily** said that Harvard also has such fellowship that help graduate students gain valuable teaching experiences. (**David C.**) Not all graduate students are interested in staying academia so teaching fellowship like this might be a good model (instead of having a formal requirement in the university). (**Devin**) English has a large class with multiple TAs – each gives 2 guest lectures so the 2-hour release can be the compensation to faculty.

Jerry asked whether we can request Jane Cody to provide more information on the TA policy (what) and justifications (why). **Andrea** suggested this to be a conversation between Cody and DFC. Given the model of Supplemental Instruction Program, those undergraduate students in the program are highly selective and can well-answer questions to others. **Devin** will bring this up to Dean Stott next week, and maybe invite Cody (and Mark Grimes) to talk about this. **Emily** suggested to also ask Dean Stott what constraints we have from ranking and how we fit the TA decision into this process.

- Dornsife Funding Opportunity panel: **Andrea** has circulated the flyer to DFC members; **An-Min** will request to distribute to all RTPC faculty. The session will be recorded; (**Gioia**) the recording can be posted on DFC website.

Discussion of Events and Budgeting

- Sustainability Conference (INCS)

Devin discussed sponsorship for 1) plenary session 2) faculty support – send the emails to Dornsife faculty for a number of free registration (undergraduate students already are getting free registrations) 3) maybe schedule an event for Dornsife faculty such as a meet-and-greet. **Alisa** like the enabling of faculty. Council members discussed the detail of the budget this year to find out the available fund for sponsorship. **An-Min** will get the number clarified. Members voted approval of \$1,500 to sponsor the INCS conference as Devin suggested (9 yes/1 no/1 abstain).

Discussion of Elections

(**An-Min**) Call for nomination typically goes out on Feb 15. We need to fill 4 seats for Humanity, 4 for Natural Sciences and 3 for Social Sciences. Please encourage colleagues to self-nominate (**Devin**) More details to be discussed in the next meeting. **Gioia** recommended to send the Call for Nomination and Service Awards announcement together in one email. **Jessica** will provide the draft to discuss the service awards in the next meeting (Feb. 05); basically the nomination list can be rolled out to next year to be reconsidered.

Updates from Caucuses and Task Forces

Due to the time constraint, only Devin reported Salary and Merit Taskforce update quickly on its breakthrough – The college has finally agreed to provide salary data next week. We do not know whether this will be used for salary advocate until we see the number, will likely link this salary information to merit.

Meeting adjourned at 4:32 pm.

Respectfully,

An-Min Wu