

Minutes of the Dornsife Faculty Council Meeting

Date: September 4, 2019

Room: Irani Hall, Room 321

Present (19): Marianna Chodorowska-Pilch, David Crombecque, Melissa Daniels-Rauterkus, Gerald Davison, Antonio Elefano, Shannon Gibson, David Ginsburg, Bob Girandola, Devin Griffiths (*president*), Yuka Kumagai, Sri Narayan, Joe Palacios, Jessica Parr, Andrea Parra, Michael Petitti, Gioia Polidori (*vice president*), Alisa Sánchez, An-Min Wu (*secretary*), Emily Zeamer.

Absent (0)

Guest (3): Susan Luczak, Professor (Research) of Psychology (*RTPC Caucus*)
Katherine A. Greenwood, University Ombuds, Office of the Ombuds
Raffaella Ghittoni Assistant Professor (Teaching) of Biological Sciences

Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting (5-08-19)

- 13 of the DFC present vote to approve them, zero oppose, and zero abstain

Devin talked about the new year's vision and meeting structure – will send discussions from other meetings (e.g. Senate) ahead of time to carve out more time for 'new businesses' discussion.

New Businesses

- **Concerns about Teaching Postdoc positions (Joe)**
 - About half of the representatives said their departments hire teaching postdocs.
 - The functions and utilities are different across Dornsife. In some department, this is a training position for new PhDs (e.g. Mathematics/**David C.**) who received mentoring (e.g. Chemistry/**Jessica**) and/or *ad hoc* hiring for gap use, but for others, it is used in replace of RTPC positions (e.g. Sociology) or TAs (e.g. language courses), or use of reducing the non-tenure track counts.
 - Concerns from members includes change of the FTE for faculty (**Andrea, Marianna**), threatening of RTPC positions (**Joe**), teaching quality.
 - **Devin**: We need to identify the level of this issue (since it is funded by Provost's office), raised to Dean's office about the intention and the healthy way in placing teaching postdoc.
- **Office of Conduct, Accountability and Professionalism (OCAP) (Gerry)**
 - Majority of the members are unaware of this office.
 - The process of how OCAP handling unprotected category of violation issues is vague; there is no guideline in Faculty Handbook (**Jessica**).
 - Faculty has raised concerns for the fairness in the investigation process – The

faculty accused is not informed of the investigation, does not have a chance to explain the context, mitigating factors or appeal until the penalty is posted, and then the person has only two weeks to respond. Also no representation is allowed during the investigation.

- **Devin** suggests this issue to be worked by the new Advocacy and Oversight Caucus.

Discussion with Katherine (Kathie) Greenwood, Office of Ombuds

- **Kathie** introduced her role as the University Ombuds for the UPC campus. Trained as conflict resolution specialist, her job is to help people to find solutions for any university-related issues.
- The USC Office of the Ombuds (ombuds.usc.edu) is funded by the university but paid to be a third-party neutral (impartial) for all kinds of issues on campus, from anything between faculty, staff and students, to any academic or non-academic issues. Anyone with USC-related issues can go to the Ombuds office as a confidential resource. Don't intervene and don't tell people what to do. No formal litigations are involved for cases in the office, but people can go when there is a formal procedure going on.
- Over 500 cases have been logged – only status (eg. Faculty, staff, alumni..) is recorded but no name/age/gender...etc. taken. The data is used for awareness of any trend or ongoing pattern.
- **Devin:** What can you tell us about Office of Professionalism and Ethics (OPE)?
 - **Kathie:** OPE deals with any discrimination and is the top of the umbrella that oversees 1) Title IX 2) Office of Equity or Diversity (OED) and 3) OCAP. OCAP was formed by former police force to conduct investigation/interrogation; this new office catches anything not under protection of Title IX or OED. Has not seen a comparable unit at any other university, in terms of size, use of criminal investigators, and rapidity of implementation.

Setting Priorities for 2019-20

- New Caucus structure
 - **Devin** reported two innovations in the caucus structure:
 - a new Advocacy and Oversight Caucus
 - a new Salary and Merit Taskforce
 - Emerged from Dean's letter about 2.1% salary increase from the merit pool
 - The budget issue in Dornsife might be due to disadvantages of several charges from central: 1) Systematically participation tax to provost (14-15% of total revenue in Dornsife, while 7-12% on average in other schools) 2) Central tax of 31% for the fiscal year (c.f. 10-20% in other schools) 3) Facility tax of 5% (c.f. 1-3% in other schools)
 - To clarify and explain budget issues to faculty and to advocate for change the way how central administration charges (**Devin**); transparency on the budget will be useful for Dornsife faculty at large (**Shannon**).
 - **David C.** asks what expected outcomes are for the new task force. **David G.** sees report is the way to provide information then we can decide how we advocate
 - **Devin** thinks each caucus should decide its own goal, but looks for a systematic

- change that has lasting improvement.
- Continuing Caucuses: Part Time, RTPC, TT, DEI
- **Devin** recommends that every caucus should review its reports from the previous year.
 - **Shannon** agrees on review as some erosion is occurring.
 - **Devin** thinks that both TT and RTPC Caucuses should focus on mentoring guidelines, and maybe have some shared guidelines. **David G.** said that several departments are now having mentor, mentee and chair sit together to talk about merit results.
 - **Devin** believes that some recommendations from **DEI** caucus' report last year have been incorporated in the dean and provost DEI plan. **Alisa** said that diversity liaison should be on search committee and the diversity statement should be incorporated in the faculty hiring.
- **Devin** also requests DFC members to at least serve on one caucus if not sitting on Senate. The ideal situation for each caucus is to have one co-chair from DFC, and the other from outside DFC.
- Proposed Town Halls
 - **Shannon** will organize a faculty forum/open town hall for faculty to voice the issues.
 - RTPC Promotion Guidelines Workshop
 - Workshop on Dornsife and University Budgeting (See related discussion under the Budgeting section below)
- **Salary, Merit Review and Budgeting**
 - **Jessica** expressed a more clear, transparent process on budget can be a good goal for this year.
 - **Gioia** wonders if we can advocate each ranks' salary floors to tackle the compression problem. Some faculty report that not only we have compression issues, but also salary inversions in Dornsife.
 - **Emily** thinks how we get inspired to do well is important and should be clear in the merit review. It would be useful to receive constructive feedback. Faculty would welcome the opportunity to know what they need to do in order to get a better score in the future.
 - **Gioia** explains how the salary appeal process happens: 1. the faculty submits an appeal to the Dean. 2. The Dean compiles information in a dossier listing the salary of other faculty with the same qualifications/rank and submits it to the provost's office. 3. The provost determines whether a salary raise is suitable. This past year most salary appeals were successful. In the past faculty had a 10-day window to appeal their salary, this year the deadline was not enforced because salary letters come out in the summer when faculty may be abroad and may not be able to access the letter. **Devin** suggests to ask for a longer time window to submit a salary appeal.
 - **Gerry** said the budget may have been hurt by continuous creation of new central offices and schools are not getting the money.
 - **Alisa** agrees about the importance of transparency on budget, and also thinks a town hall on budget would be beneficial. The merit pool is not priority to the

- university and thus no long-term investment on it.
- Members discussed about writing a letter to the central level in communicating about the budget or just about the merit pool concern; faculty sign-on would be important to push the agenda forward. **David C.** thinks it will help if we can have chairs to sign-on as well. **Devin** will raise this when attending chairs meeting.
 - Discussion then went on about surveying faculty salary with their ranks (for understanding the level of the compression issues). **Jessica** said the survey needs to be divisional. **Emily/Devin** thought that we can ask the college for the salary information first; at least for the ‘percentage increase’ on salary over time n. **Susan** said that research faculty is already given and will give all funding information
 - **Devin** concluded that he will summarize the issues and send the email out (to Dornsife faculty) first. Sergio has volunteered to be co-chair with Devin in the Salary and Merit Task Force.
- **October 2 meeting with Dean Miller is confirmed; President Folt has not confirmed whether to join or not.**

Devin reminds everyone that our work at DFC really matters; we have big goals and work to achieve this year. All members should advocate, identify faculty issues, and then DFC can help to decide the levels of the issues (i.e. departmental, college, or university) and where to work on.

The meeting is adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
An-Min Wu,
Secretary
The Dornsife Faculty Council