

## Minutes of the Dornsife Faculty Council Meeting (Jan 9, 2019)

Date: January 9, 2019

Room: Irani Hall, Rm. 321

Present (18): Brian Bernards; Iva Bozovic; Jessica Cantiello; Marianna Chodorowska-Pilch; David Crombecque; Gerald Davison; Shannon Gibson; Bob Girandola; Devin Griffiths (*vice-president*); Assal Habibi; Yuka Kumagai; P.T. McNiff (*secretary*); Joe Palacios; Jessica Parr; Dan Pecchenino (*president*); Michael Petitti; Sergio Sanudo-Wilhelmy; An-Min Wu

Absent (1): Sri Narayan

Guest (1): Andrew Stott (College Dean of Undergraduate Education)

### **Approval of Minutes from Previous Meetings**

**P.T.** submits the minutes of the December 12 DFC meeting for discussion and approval. **Jessica C.** motions to approve; **Iva** seconds. 12 of the members present vote to approve them, zero vote nay, and four members abstain.

### **Discussion of Upcoming DFC Election**

**Dan** reminds of the election happening in the coming months. **P.T.** discusses the timeline, with nominations happening in February and the election in March. After that, he distributes a breakdown of information related to the election, including how many seats will be open in each division, which departments and programs have departing members, and the composition of the council along TT and RTPC lines. He emphasizes the hope for diversity across the board, from race and gender to faculty tracks and departments. **P.T.** and **Dan** touch upon outreach efforts done last year and how they will be tweaked for this coming year. **Sergio, Joe, Brian,** and **Devin** discuss how service is valued in the college, especially among TT faculty; why people need to see this work as mattering; and the need to encourage quality service from faculty. The shift from the council being a majority TT body to one that heavily leans RTPC is discussed, with reasons for why that may have occurred shared.

Each DFC member is asked to reach out within their departments and personal networks to encourage good potential candidates to run.

### **Dialogue with Dean Andrew Stott**

**Andrew** arrives to the meeting. He begins by giving a presentation on the development of the Dornsife Signature Undergraduate Experience. He notes this is

## Minutes of the Dornsife Faculty Council Meeting (Jan 9, 2019)

one of the four pillars of Dornsife strategic plan, along with the Ph.D. Academy, Diversity & Inclusion efforts, and the Academic Plan. He presents a timeline of the development of the concept from his arrival in Fall 2017 through the current Spring 2019 semester. This includes having reorganized the offices of Undergraduate Education, conducting self-studies and faculty retreats, and site visits to other schools. Going forward, the plan calls for forming steering committees and subcommittees as well as conducting surveys and town halls of different constituencies. The goal is to have some of the new programs, resources, and curriculum online by fall 2020.

**Sergio** asks if there will be an expansion of faculty to help with the implementation of this plan. **Andrew** replies that Dean Miller is focused on raising money for chairs to grow the faculty. He also notes that the college is not aiming to increase the student population, though there is a goal to increase retention within Dornsife, noting that retaining students helps increase the annual budget of the school.

The key question behind this initiative is “what should a Dornsife education represent?” **Andrew** reports that the feedback from various focus groups who have worked on this led to four themes: crossing the threshold (looking at the first-year experience and perhaps admitting students to Dornsife instead of to a major), inculcating Dornsife habits of mind (emphasizing critical thinking and intellectual curiosity), revising the curriculum (updating introductory courses, expanding experiential learning, and developing more capstone projects), and enhancing student services (simplifying and centralizing student advising as well as internship and career support).

**Gerald** shares that he particularly likes the idea of admitting to the school instead of the major, as well as the idea of Dean Miller raising money for more endowed chairs. He expresses concern about centralizing the advising system with a college as diverse as Dornsife, suggesting that options for including faculty in the advising picture should be explored. **Andrew** says that model can work in some departments, and agrees that a universal central system will not work best; but he wants to replace the hybridized ad hoc model with something that makes more sense. He notes that they will do a national search for an executive director of advising. Council members ask whether that is the best way to spend resources, wondering whether utilizing people already present will be better than further growing the administration.

**Andrew** returns to his presentation, giving a breakdown of the student population, where they go instead of USC, and how frequently students migrate within Dornsife during their undergraduate years. Noting that most students do not stay in the majors they have applied to, he questions the practice of having students apply to majors. A big issue is that Dornsife is frequently a stopping point to other schools at USC; a motivator for this whole project is a desire to create a bigger picture to make it clear why students should stay in Dornsife. Members of the council inquire about

## Minutes of the Dornsife Faculty Council Meeting (Jan 9, 2019)

when students shift majors and what students hear about Dornsife when applying, before discussing how not declaring majors may allow students the freedom to explore different departments and fields.

After a presentation of more numbers related to the size of majors, minors, and post-graduate careers, the council discusses issues related to implementing the plan. This includes the roles of undergraduate education directors within departments and issues related to classroom space, learning environments, and needed resources. **Andrew** says that administration does not control classroom space, but can try to exert pressure on that issue. He also mentions that fundraising could be done to source money for updates and renovations.

Further topics discussed include: the possibility of developing endowed chairs in teaching (which is not currently part of the plan); issues of class size as part of the undergraduate experience and how that can hinder the push for more active and experiential learning; the history of overhauling the approach curriculum and the impact that can have on faculty buy-in; issues of poor classroom space and new buildings that do not have learning spaces Dornsife faculty can use; the difference that some departments face in the number of majors and the number of students who take GE classes they offer; the continuity of the advising office; questions over whether we are looking to define who we are or market ourselves to desirable students; bringing some technology-based required classes (such as in programming) that can be brought in-house within Dornsife without taking over the turf of other schools.

After Dean Stott leaves, **Dan** reiterates that he will be on the steering committee for the DSUE effort. He asks for feedback and any ideas to be sent to him so he can bring them to the committee. **Brian** notes that there seem to be disincentives against team-teaching and cluster courses within departments, across departments within Dornsife, and across different schools. He suggests that finding models where faculty can work in conjunction instead of competition would help build not only a Dornsife identity, but a more cohesive USC one that is not so divided. This leads to a discussion of how benefits for cross-disciplinary courses are decided. It is noted that there is a lot of wasted talent and resources at USC because it is not clear how things are made to work. The presentation made it seem like there is a goal to actively addressing those issues.

### **Proposed DFC Resolution on Support Program Funding**

**Dan** presents the proposed language for an official council resolution on the issue of consultation regarding changes to the structure and funding of programs designed to support teaching, research, and service within Dornsife. The council discusses appropriate word changes, whether to add a phrase about the unintended consequences of such changes, and whether it should specifically mention the

Minutes of the Dornsife Faculty Council Meeting (Jan 9, 2019)

programs that have been recently altered. The final text will be voted on at the next DFC meeting.

The meeting is adjourned at 5:00pm

Respectfully submitted,

P.T. McNiff, Secretary

The Dornsife Faculty Council