

Minutes of the Dornsife Faculty Council Meeting

Date: August 18th, 2021

Location: Zoom meeting

Present (17) Emily Zeamer (*president*), Jim Clements (*vice-president*), Julia Chamberlin, Sylvain Barbot, Douglas Becker, Tracie Mayfield, Leilei Duan, Bob Girandola, Vahe Perroomian, John Vidale, Matthew Pratt, Sri Narayan, Monalisa Chatterjee, Leslie Berntsen, Anastasia Tzoytzoyrakos, Dana Milstein, Goretti Prieto Botana.

Absent (1): Stephanie Payne (*secretary*).

Guests (1) Liana Stepanyan.

Approval of minutes from previous meetings:

May 5th 2021 17 of the DFC present vote to approve, and zero oppose

Before the meeting began properly, the council talked about technology integration in classes, and shared links and suggestions. We also talked about how best to share this information with the rest of our faculty.

Introduction to new members.

Emily introduced the format and purpose of the faculty council to new members,, and spoke towards its increasing influence and importance. She also introduced the executive board, and looked ahead to the formation of caucuses. Each member of the council then introduced themselves.

Discussion of Senate Retreat

Douglas Becker presented on the [Faculty Environment and Employment Committee \(FEEC\) Faculty Survey](#) results, and mentioned that the reaction to the COVID pandemic became the center of this conversation during the Senate Retreat. He mentioned that the senators had talked about issues of work-life balance and the particular burden placed on faculty with children and other caregiving responsibilities. **Emily** then mentioned the discussions of work flexibility and compensation that came up at the retreat. She said that a major conclusion of those surveyed was that we need to look closely at promotion, merit and workload. She suggested that maybe the DFC create a proposal for the revision of merit review.

Emily then summarized the conversation on the role of faculty governance at USC, as it occurred during the senate retreat.. She mentioned that some saw faculty governance as having

little actual power, but she suggested that she understood the role differently, particularly if we take the lead on making the role more formalized.

Douglas mentioned that many senate members expressed their understanding that USC's faculty governance is weaker at USC than at similar institutions. He also mentioned that the various councils at USC have differing strengths from school to school. He suggested that, in the latter case, the strength of each school's council depends upon the attitude and availability of the dean. **Douglas** echoed **Emily's** point that we could increase our influence by formalizing aspects of the council, such as access to budgets. **Emily** shared the Responsibility Matrix from the senate retreat, and suggested that we can draw upon this when establishing these new formalities.

Douglas stated that the faculty councils are less of a shared governance model, than a shared *advisory* model, as the former implies decision-making power.. He referred to the union situation in Dornsife, which was rejected by the administration on the grounds that we don't need a union because we have shared governance. He suggested that, if the university administration sees the faculty councils as real governing bodies, as they indeed seem to, we can pushcan to push harder to be received as such.

Tracie shared her experience working with unions, and suggested that the issues and conversations that came up at the senate retreat are managed by the union at similar institutions. She suggested that faculty councils have greater breadth in their responsibilities than is often understood. She suggested that this is because the role of the faculty councils is discussed in a reductive way by those outside of the council.

Senator Selection for 2021-2022

Emily stated that we would take senate selection off today's agenda and instead discuss it through email, to free up more time for discussion.

USC Restart

To start the conversation about the impending restart, **Emily** created breakout rooms, in which councilors would discuss faculty concerns about the restart, and create a list of action items.

Before entering these groups, **Tracie** asked a question about getting clear masks; **Emily** mentioned that this was discussed in an earlier email from Emily Anderson, in which it stated that language faculty have access to clear masks.

After the breakout rooms were closed, **Douglas** started the conversation about the restart. His group discussed restoring the retirement benefits, and concerns about classroom management, including mask enforcement. His group also wanted to know whether faculty testing would be mandatory. **Andrea** mentioned her personal own experiences with COVID contact tracing.

Douglas mentioned the need for microphones for volume in classes, and asked that they are all regularly sanitized.

The role of faculty council.

Emily then invited us again to join breakout rooms, this time to discuss more effective communication between DFC and the faculty they represent. She also asked us to discuss the one or two big things we should focus on this year, and when and how we should approach them.

There was not time to discuss the conversation from these breakout rooms after they were closed.

Emily said we would refer back to these conversations when we create our agenda for the next year in the following meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Clements
Vice President
The Dornsife Faculty Council