

ACADEMIC SENATE
Minutes

Meeting of April 16, 2003

Faculty Center, Banquet Room
UPC
2:45 - 4:30 p.m.

Present: M. Apostolos, T. Banerjee, M. Bolger, H. Bozler, N. Bradley, D. Dale-Johnson, F. Feldman, J. Gates, N. Hanel, E. Heikkila, M. Jorgensen, P. Levine, D. Mayer, E. McCann, A. Mircheff, J. Moore, R. Mosteller, M. Nichol, J. Nicoloff, P. Nosco, J. Nyquist, D. O’Leary, P. Pattengale, M. Safonov, G. Schierle, M. Schuetze-Coburn, P. Starr, M. Stoner, M. Sullivan, M. Weinstein, W. Wolf

Absent: E. Cray, E. Forrester, W. Handley, H. Hansen, E. Hollins D. Larsen, E. McCaffery, W. Mack, S. Montgomery, J. Morrison, M. Omar, P. Shrivastava, J. Walsh, L. Weber

Guests: L. Armstrong, Jr., B. Kosko, M. Levine, F. Settles, C. Zachary

- Actions:
1. The March meeting minutes were adopted.
 2. The Report of the Committee on Faculty Housing and Affordability was accepted and the Committee commended

The meeting was called to order at 2:50 p.m.

1. Approval of March Senate Meeting Minutes

It was noted that the website for “oneusc” should be revised (the correct URL is: <http://www.usc.edu/oneusc>). The minutes were approved with none opposed, and one abstention.

2. Announcements

a) Forum. The Faculty Forum is published and was distributed earlier this week.

b) It was noted that the Senate mini-retreat will be held on May 7, from 1-5 p.m. There will be a difference from the previous Senate retreat as there will be some issues where voting will occur. It will be held at the Faculty Center Banquet Room.

c) Senators were reminded to vote for the slate of proposed candidates for next year’s Executive Board and Senate Officers. Ballots are due at 5 p.m. on April 29 in the Senate offices.

d) The housing exchange went live at the beginning of last week. It has been a success with 21 listings, and a number of positive emails.

e) Contracts may be used this year rather than memoranda, but this will be determined within the next few weeks.

Provost's Report

The administration is in the midst of budget discussions for the upcoming year. It appears that all of the units are in good shape. There is a substantial amount of additional resources that will be made available to ISD in response to the planning recommendations over the last year.

The one thing that can't be resolved at this point in the planning process is the number of entering students that will actually attend in August. Attendance at the student receptions from around the U.S. has been quite high, so there are no indications that there will be anything unusual with enrollments with this year's entering class. There are some concerns with the graduate student entering class, if only because of the SARS issue.

Q: How has the Patriot Act affected entering students from Middle East? A: This group hasn't represented a large population of entering students for the University in recent years. The AAU did have Tom Ridge at their last meeting, and he acknowledged the importance of foreign students to American universities. In conclusion, there haven't been large shifts in applications or matriculation.

Q: Faculty Excellence program is exciting, and how can the Senate impact the process? A: That is a College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences initiative. Senator Bozler indicated that the faculty of the College had raised a number of issues and the Dean had dealt with them well. The Departments are proposing positions, and there is then a College-wide process for determining the strategic response. Positions are not allocated to the Departments, in contrast to the conventional approach that has been used. It was noted that the Senate has not had an influence in this process. Provost Armstrong indicated that the positions will be focusing on areas identified in the strategic plan.

Q: How will the search for the Marshall School Dean progress? A: While there were very qualified candidates, it was decided not to offer the position to any of the most recent candidates. The search firm and committee will re-evaluate and move forward with the search before Commencement.

Q: How has the internal review of programs provided information for administration? A: UCAR is the principal guide of the process, and that committee includes approximately 30 faculty. The process has evolved over the last three years, and the reports from the committee have been very useful for Administration. Fully 90 percent of the reviews have identified issues that were new and important to address. As a result, a number of departments and schools have developed new strategies for the future. The process has been very valuable because it has unearthed some unknown jewels in the University community and it has identified programs needing modification.

Q: The composition of the review committees seem slanted toward internal reviewers. A: This process was developed to have two groups: an external and an internal

committee. It was thought that the use of internal representatives encouraged faculty from the University to understand better the processes and capabilities of the unit. There have been situations in which the evaluations of the external and internal committees had dramatically different conclusions, but these have provided opportunities to explore the differences.

Q: Engineering School now has a smaller proportion of international students, but there are problems with Patriot Act compliance and the delays associated with batch processing of applications. A: The administration is working to resolve these issues, but there are limitations associated with the review process. This is a key concern for the Administration, and they are well aware of the impact for specific Schools.

3. Report on Conflict of Interest Policy

Professor J. Nicoloff was introduced to address some of the key issues associated with the draft conflict of interest policies. The committee will be meeting on the 24 April to consider the issues in more detail. The committee has extensive experience in policy implementation and will provide a more comprehensive revision in the near future. Some of the issues raised include:

- (a) How did the issuance of COI policies by administration alter the committees charge?
Response: It had no influence as administration representatives on the committee demonstrated their willingness to alter the present documents to achieve better faculty understanding and acceptance.
- (b) Why do we need two separate COI documents?
Response: A consensus was reached by the committee members that the first document should be focused on “COI and Ethical Standards” would set out very broad principles while the second would address the subjects of “Research and Scholarly Activities” which would focus on financial COI issues.
- (c) The text of both documents appears to be too lengthy, too legalistic and contain redundant elements.
Response: The text is undergoing some substantial changes designed to address these problems.
- (d) There are a lot of activities listed that could invoke an inquiry into possible COI without reference as to what is permissible.
Response: In order to provide balance, a list of activities which generally do not represent an issue of COI will be included in the text.

It was noted that it might be best to devolve this issue to the local unit, as the policies might be more sensitive to the particular need of these units. These types of policies may negatively affect the ability of faculty to engage in critical research because the reporting may be considered burdensome.

4. Report on Housing

Professor D. Dale-Johnson reported on the Report of the Committee on Faculty Housing and Affordability. Senators were encouraged to review the report at the following URL:

<http://www.usc.edu/academe/acsen/issues/senatehousing.041303.pdf>

The report is intended to provide both recommendations and information.

Several recommendations of the report were highlighted. First, the mortgage rate for University funded seconds should be indexed to current rates. Second, the qualification ratio (the monthly housing payment should not exceed 35% of the lendeer's gross income) should be relaxed. Three, the University should consider package offers to recruited faculty that includes home ownership incentives. It was noted that this was controversial within the committee. Four, the neighborhood home ownership program should be revised. In the last several years, there have been few homes available for sale within the boundaries of the original geographic areas. Fifth, the neighborhood home ownership stipend should be indexed. Sixth, the University should consider ways to increase the quality of local schooling to make the neighborhood more attractive to faculty and staff.

The Senate expressed its thanks for an outstanding report. It was noted that it would be shortsighted to fail to acknowledge the importance of the schooling element of the relocation decision. It was argued that one of the assumptions of the report (a continued decline in the mortgage interest rate) was questionable, and could negatively affect the recommendations of the report. In response, it was noted that this assumption only affected the indexing component of the recommendations.

It was moved to accept the draft report and commend the committee for an outstanding report. The Senate adopted the motion unanimously.

5. Distinguished Lecture Series events faculty tickets

Professor Hanel introduced the topic of the number of tickets available to the faculty through the Senate offices. The events office is recommending that the number of tickets available to the Senate be reduced from 50 to 20. If there is a high demand event, this number could be expanded. There were no objections expressed to this recommendation.

6. New Business

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Mike Nichol, Ph.D.
Secretary General of the Academic Senate*