

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA FACULTY SENATE

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

This session was held entirely online.

PRESIDING Chair Audrey Korsgaard

Meeting of the Faculty Senate

CHAIR AUDREY KORSGAARD called the meeting to order at 3:03pm EST.

CHAIR KORSGAARD welcomed members to the Faculty Senate.

Corrections and Approval of the Minutes

There were no corrections to the minutes; they were moved and accepted.

As a reminder, all senators need to log into the Blackboard page to be able to vote.

Invited Guests

KIM HODGES, Director of Digital Accessibility, discussed resources available at the university. UofSC has two websites: 1) digital accessibility website through the university and 2) the website through the Center for Teaching Excellence. Both websites have designations specifically for faculty. There are guides to assist faculty regarding making teaching content accessible. An example of a guide is “how to make videos accessible”. Additional resources are being made. As faculty are making content, they are encouraged to contact Kim Hodges for assistance and instruction. The Division of Digital Accessibility is focusing on new course content as opposed to archived and old teaching materials.

AUGIE GRANT, Director of CTE, stressed that the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) has a variety of tools that address accessibility. CTE also has personnel to assist faculty in working on the materials.

The Division of Digital Accessibility is working on making content across the university accessible. This means all content, not only teaching materials. The unit is working with a variety of units including CTE and INDEV. Kim Hodges also created a think tank. The purpose of the think tank is to help faculty members 1) consider universal design, 2) increase accessibility within each unit, and 3) examine how these functions impact user satisfaction.

CHAIR KORSGAARD asked about the nature of areas that teaching faculty need to be compliant with accessibility.

KIM HODGES stated that the accessibility areas currently under consideration include 1) external facing and 2) student facing. Examples include course documents, Power Point documents, and videos. UofSC has a blackboard team that are experts in accessibility. Susan Quinn in Blackboard (part of UofSC) is an expert.

CHAIR KORSGAARD stated that another priority in compliance with accessibility will be in courses that are being approved through the system. This will be particularly important for online courses.

KIM HODGES affirmed this statement. New content is extremely important to be accessible. Chair Korsgaard invited Mr. Hodges to the Courses & Curricula Committee and INDEV to discuss implications when placing courses online.

KIM HODGES stated that it is important to make new content accessible before working on old content. It would be too easy to “get stuck in the weeds” if faculty focused on old material. Mr. Hodges confirmed that “old content” was classified as material taught in courses year after year.

AUGIE GRANT, CTE Director, provided Faculty Senate with information regarding the 2022 Social Justice Awards. The Social Justice Committee has opened the nomination period for the 2022 Social Justice Awards. These awards will be given during the Martin Luther King Day Celebration (January 14, 2022). There are three award categories: faculty, staff, student. The award is based on the spirit of Dr. King. The three areas the judges look at include social justice, racial reconciliation, or community service. Persons (members of the UofSC community or member of the general community) may nominate a faculty member, staff, or student whose actions exemplifies social justice, racial reconciliation, or community service. This is a chance to celebrate the good work done throughout the university. The deadline for the nomination is October 1, 2021.

Report of the President

PRESIDENT PASTIDES thanked Augie Grant for his presentation and his service to the university.

PRESIDENT PASTIDES stated that the number of active cases COVID cases is rising. The number of positive cases, however, is not changing significantly. Regular testing is encouraged. The university is not allowed to ask individuals if he or she is vaccinated. The university is allowed to report the vaccination rate. UofSC’s vaccination rate is approximately 64% of faculty and students.

PRESIDENT PASTIDES stated that faculty members’ concerns regarding 1) face masks and 2) buildings are being addressed by the administration. Health and safety are continued to be a high priority for the university. Free vaccinations were provided before the football game. A protest was held before the game in front of the President’s house. The protest was regarding the face mask mandate. President Pastides is willing to face these protestors. He stands by the university’s decision to require face masks.

PRESIDENT PASTIDES updated Faculty Senate on the presidential search. The presidential search is under way. There have been 28 listening sessions and town halls. The search committee reached out to stakeholders and the public asking for feedback regarding needs and wants in the next university president. Nearly 6,000 replies have been gathered. President Pastides stated that the search process must include a diverse slate of candidates and finalists.

PRESIDENT PASTIDES discussed the issue of federal funding. A special legislative session will be held soon regarding federal funds being made available to the State of SC to mitigate the impact of COVID. The state of SC is expected to receive \$22 billion of federal funding. UofSC is developing a proposal to secure some of the funding. The proposals must be related to covid. These are one-time funds.

PRESIDENT PASTIDES stated that enrollment has been positive. The university welcomed the freshman class of 2025. There are 6133 freshman students, making it the second largest freshman class. The Columbia UofSC campus, including graduate students, consist of 34,700 students. System-wide, UofSC enrolled 50,000 students for fall 2021. The work accomplished at UofSC is important to the state and university. There are 596 freshmen in the South Honors college. An estimated 1,400 participating in the Capstone Scholars Program. The freshmen class has the following characteristics:

- 53% are from South Carolina;
- nearly every state in the nation is represented;
- 25 countries are represented;
- 60% of freshmen are female;
- 75 members were valedictorians of their high school class;
- the average high school GPA was 4.4; and
- on average, they bring 15 college credits. This is why the university promotes graduating “On Your Time”.

PRESIDENT PASTIDES is grateful for the faculty for enduring the beginning of this year. The future is unclear. COVID is persistent. SC is a hot spot. It is important to be vigilant.

SENATOR SCHWOEBEL asked when will UofSC faculty need to stop reporting to the Governor regarding working on campus.

PROVOST CUTLER stated that he thinks the census has been closed but he will check and get back with the chair of the Faculty Senate.

Report of the Provost

INTERIM PROVOST CUTLER stated his excitement for the new year. He is glad to be back on campus. He expressed appreciation for faculty coming back on campus. At the beginning of the semester, he asked students for feedback regarding faculty. He received many responses regarding the mentorship they are receiving. Students can sense that faculty care about them.

Messages went out from Provost Cutler’s office and Interim Dean Samuels (Arts & Sciences) regarding Humanities building. The HVAC system went out. A decision was made to close the

building and place the courses online for a brief period (e.g., several weeks). More than 100 students and some parents responded saying they wanted to stay in the classroom, no matter how uncomfortable the physical environment. Students expressed how excited they were to be in the classroom and the importance of being in the classroom. This situation reminded Provost Cutler of the importance of delivering on the classroom experience. Provost Cutler, President Pastides, Facilities, Dean Samuels, and the Registrar's Office worked together to find solutions at keeping the students in the classroom. This illustrates how the administration cares. The administration is paying attention. The administration promises to keep you healthy and safe.

PROVOST CUTLER provided an update regarding keeping our community safe, the following is a summary of what the university is doing to keep our community safe including:

- mandatory face coverings;
- purchasing and installing hundreds of HEPA air filters;
- 25% of UofSC community members are tested weekly; and
- continue to adapt in accordance with CDC guidelines.

PROVOST CUTLER asked Faculty Senate members to 1) continue talking with administration, 2) continue asking questions, and 3) continue giving feedback. These types of communication are ways in which the administration and everyone will ensure UofSC can deliver its promises to students.

DR. CHERYL ADDY is attending all Faculty Welfare meetings. Dr. Addy will act as a conduit. Please refer to the provost's website for questions on changing modality. Deans are requested to be as flexible as possible if a child or loved one in your family becomes ill.

SENATOR HARRISON stated appreciation for the emails from DR. JASON STACY regarding COVID. A question was raised about contract tracing. Does the system rely on student memory of people seated around them? How can faculty help to make the process more effective?

DR. JASON STACY explained the contract tracing protocol.

- First the student is contacted.
- The student is asked about the people he or she has been around.
- Any unvaccinated people are contacted. They need to quarantine.
- Vaccinated people need to monitor for 3-5 days. They are encouraged to get tested.
- Faculty are contacted if a student in a class tests positive and does not know who the student was sitting near.
- If Dr. Stacy's office has a seating chart, they might not contact the instructor.

Regarding how faculty can help; DR. STACY'S office is trying to make sure faculty are not burdened. The office also doesn't want to get faculty ill.

SENATOR THORNE thanked the university for the HEPA filters. He asked about the illegality of vaccine mandates. Are there any long-term prospects of getting vaccine mandates? How can Faculty Senate help?

PRESIDENT PASTIDES responded that the General Assembly is our overseer. Faculty Senate members can write letters to the General Assembly, although they are not in session right now. The General Assembly return in January. UofSC will continue to make requests. In the short-term the university is making efforts to keeping its population safe. Eastern Illinois (who played against the UofSC football team) has a vaccine a mandate, and approximately 30% were exempted due to religious or health reasons.

SENATOR KENISON thanked President Pastides for the HEPA filters. It is a very visible sign of support. She asked if testing for COVID can be available after 4:00pm because graduate students work during the day.

DR. STACY stated that last year we had over 1,700 positive cases during the 1st five weeks. This year we only have 500 cases. In the last two weeks, the positivity rate was 4.4%. These are positive efforts. Regarding the question, Dr. Stacy's office will investigate the request. In the meantime, there are a variety of areas throughout town to get tested (e.g., Walgreens) for free.

SENATOR RHULE (English) asked if the administration will reconsider the 5% rule.

PROVOST CUTLER responded that the university has already responded to this question. That number has "been out the window" for several weeks now. The university is trying to be as flexible as possible. Provost Cutler asks that deans work with faculty. Spring semester will be like fall semester.

CHAIR KORSGAARD also responded that the fall schedule was made when the university (and schedulers) believed everything would be back to normal. The university now understands that we are still in a pandemic and can plan accordingly. The Steering Committee has extended the deadline for approval of online courses. It is the individual deans' responsibility to decide which and how many courses are online.

SENATOR OWENS asked what option a faculty member has regarding his or her course if the faculty member's child has a school closure.

PROVOST CUTLER stated that this situation is completely different than that discussed earlier. If local K-12 close, UofSC need to make some adjustments. Contingency plans will be made. If a faculty member's child is quarantined, the faculty member may (a) go temporarily online, or (b) have another instructor temporarily teach the course.

SENATOR MINETT asked about the migration of masks below the nose. Can the administration help support the importance of masks above the nose?

PRESIDENT PASTIDES agreed that proper messages in a positive manner is needed. For example, "it is Halloween everyday wearing a mask." Faculty can help make the mask wearing fun.

SENATOR MINETT asked a question about contract tracing. Faculty are skeptical about students knowing who is seated in a proximity. A checklist is encouraged. DR. STACY responded that contract tracing is not a perfect science. He will forward this request.

SENATOR CORLEY is an instructor in the humanities building. His concern is space. Students are shoulder to shoulder (20x20). In the long-term, is the university looking at adding space in the humanities building?

PRESIDENT PASTIDES stated that there is a Space Committee that reviews space usage throughout the entire campus. This committee examines the best usage of space based on needs and class size. That is why deans are not allowed to control classrooms within their respective buildings. Contract tracing is very specific and from the CDC. Classrooms are set up based on the guidelines. For example, in Higher Education the guideline is within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more. Mask wearing is also important.

PROVOST CUTLER stated that on the provost's website there is information on wearing masks in the classroom. Faculty can lecture without a mask if he or she is 10 feet away from students. If a student doesn't have a mask, ask the student to put on a mask. If the student doesn't want to put on a mask, ask the student to socially distance. If the student disagrees and becomes unruly, call the police.

SENATOR MACAUDA mentioned a concern for contingent faculty. There is no job security. The assumption is that governance trickles down. Senator Macaуда doesn't believe this is always the case. What happens if a dean is not flexible, and a contingent faculty member wants to raise an issue without being in jeopardy of his or her position.

PRESIDENT PASTIDES stated that units do not need to "live and die" by the 5% rule. The President stated that he is sensitive to a non-tenure track professor having less security.

PROVOST CUTLER stated that there are two issues at hand: 1) professional track and 2) modality. Both are very important but separate questions. Provost Cutler stated that all instructors are important and deserve to be treated fairly.

VICE-PROVOST ADDY is not concerned about deans treating faculty unfairly. The deans have already made tremendous efforts to make all faculty needs met. The reality is 1) if a dean dismisses an adjunct, that position must be filled, and 2) deans are being accommodating to requests regardless of a faculty member's position within the college. Dr. Addy hopes the concern is misplaced. The Ombudsman office is one course of action if the concern is currently a reality. Also contact Dr. Addy's office if there is a concern. The entire administration supports faculty at all ranks.

SENATOR MACAUDA thanked everyone for the conversation.

SENATOR BROWN (bio statistics) spoke on behalf of biostatistics. There was a request that all COVID information be available in one location.

PRESIDENT PASTIDES affirmed that the request is excellent and a good idea. The university is currently working on this task.

Report from Committees

SECRETARY BICKLE (Faculty Senate Secretary) stated that there are availabilities on three committees: 1) 2 members are needed for the Budget Committee; 2) volunteers for the Professional Conduct Committee, and 3) Senator Minette is on the slate for INDEV. Please let us know if anyone would like to be on these committees.

STACY WINCHESTER from Courses & Curricula: 98 proposals for consideration

- 45 Arts & Sciences
- 17 Business
- 5 Education
- 9 Engineering & Computing
- 2 Honor
- 6 Hospitality, Retail, and Sport Management
- 9 Information Communication
- 1 Music
- 4 University Studies

The motion carries.

Three proposals for Experiential Learning Opportunities (ELO).

- RETL 295
- BIOL 303L
- BIOL 302L

The motion carries.

SENATOR BICKLE began the voting for INDEV with Senator Mark Minett on the slate. The motion carried. For the Budget Committee, Senator Colleen Clark and Senator Katherine Lindeman self-nominated. Dr. Clark and Dr. Lindeman were voted into the positions.

Chair Korsgaard' s Report

CHAIR KORSGAARD thanked former Faculty Senate Chair Mark Cooper, Courses & Curricula, and the INDEV Committee for their work during the prior year. Current challenges now include the continued COVID issues and administration searches. Thanks go out to all faculty. This has been a time of high risk that no faculty member signed up for when we went into higher education. It is worth acknowledging that the senators are working toward shared governance to make the entire university safer. Chair Korsgaard is grateful for making it through the first portion of the semester.

There are ad hoc committees on professional conduct, freedom of expression, and sustainability. These committees will result in lively discussion and perhaps some changes to the faculty manual. The committee on instructional development will be very busy this year. Expect to hear

a plan on the revisions to the Carolina Core. The presidential search is ongoing. The provost search is also beginning.

Looking ahead, continue the good work on local governance. Chair Korsgaard encouraged all Faculty Senators to verify that each College has sound bylaws within your unit. The bylaws need to be consistent with the UofSC Faculty Manual and best practices. Be well organized as a body of senators within your college. Chair Korsgaard encouraged the faculty Senators to hurry and “get it done” (i.e., revise the bylaws).

Chair Korsgaard encouraged enhanced communication and coordination within each unit. This is essential for shared governance. Chair Korsgaard will meet with each unit to get to know and hear the needs of senators and units. A communication that is helpful is located on the faculty webpage. Under the toolbox is a tracking system. It tracks the progress of all the committees. It promotes transparency.

CHAIR KORSGAARD encouraged Faculty Senators to think about ways to foster goals across levels. It is important to find common grounds between faculty and administration. This is how we achieve shared governance.

New Business

SENATOR YANKEE presented a resolution.

Be is resolved that the UofSC Faculty Senate expresses its appreciation to Professor Creswick for his direct contribution for the legal implementation of a mask requirement during the COVID-19 pandemic and for his commitment to a safer learning environment for the entire Gamecock community.

The resolution passed.

CHAIR KORSGAARD presented former Faculty Senate Chair Mark Cooper an honorary gavel for his outstanding service during an extraordinary time.

For the Good of the Order

SENATOR FRANKLIN invited all faculty to the Belser Arboretum October 17th for an open house between 1-4pm (4080 Bloomwood Road, Columbia, SC 29205).

The meeting was adjourned at 3:03pm EST.