

University of Southern California
Staff Assembly
General Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 12, 2013
TCC Room # 227 – University Park Campus

Present: Eliza Aceves, Lali Acuna, Jennifer Alvarado, Tammy Anderson, Wendy Arima, Linda Bakabak, Roxana Bellia, Paul Biddlecomb, Susan Biddlecomb, Halina Biel-Milunovic, Cynthia Brass, Delfina Candelaria, Carolina Castillo, Ellen Castillo, Ricky Craddock, Sarah Cusimano, David Donovan, Josie Drury, Frances Fitzgerald, Lisa Gallegos, Jennifer Gerson, Teresita Jamanila, Tracy Kerr, Markisha Lea, Lou Nieto, Bryan Ortiz, Ingrid Popper, Luis Ramirez, Lillian Rivera, Irene Rodriguez, Rick Scott, Wade Thompson-Harper, Mary Trujillo, Lydia Vazquez, Sarah Watari, Jeanne Weiss, Amy Yung

Absent: Gary Allen, Julia Andaya, Carmen Atkins, Catherine Ballard, Laura Estrada, Monique Franklin, Dawn Kita, Doris Lee, Rachel Levy, Graciela Medina, Yolanda Mora, Kathleen Neal, Aida Preciado, Diana Sabogal, Elizabeth Stewart, Rosie Tellez, Victoria Young

Call to Order:

President Jennifer Gerson called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. A quorum was present.

Jennifer asked the new members of Staff Assembly to introduce themselves. Members introduced themselves and represent a variety of departments, including Talent Management, Rossier School of Education, Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, ITS, and Contracts and Grants.

Further, Jennifer Gerson announced that the recipient of the September 2013 Staff Monthly Recognition Award was not able to attend but will instead receive the award at the next General Meeting on UPC in November.

Associate Senior Vice President for Administration Report: Janis McEldowney

Janis McEldowney was not present; no report was given.

Personnel Council Report: Awilda Bregand

Awilda reported that General Counsel discussed the University Village redevelopment for either Spring 2014 or Spring 2015. The New Trojan Networking sessions for new hires are working very well. In addition, the first phase of Trojan Learning is going well. Furthermore, Talent Management is now working on customizing training as requested by specific departments to work on their business needs. The department is now working on the performance management system. The university has in place a standard performance system that all managers and supervisors must use to prepare job performance evaluations, set employee goals and expectations, and to evaluate employees' salary increases. Human Resources will provide training in this system by Spring 2014. Beginning September 16 through October 21, the system is going to start doing parallel testing which means that all information gathered in WorkDay must match with the AIS payroll system.

This year's benefits open enrollment will be done on paper. E-trac access will not be used to enter any information into the system due to the WorkDay transition. Awilda also reported that beginning October 1, 2013, there will be communications sent to employees about the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. The Benefits Office will notify all university employees about this program and provide information about how the health care exchanges work and who is eligible. Lastly, the Disability Office is now under the Benefits umbrella.

President's Report: Jennifer Gerson

Jennifer reported that the football ticket raffle was successful: Over 2,700 staff applied for 250 tickets. Next week, Jennifer will e-mail the winners and will let staff know that even if they didn't win, they can still buy a ticket for the Staff Appreciation game at a reduced cost.

Vice President of Staff Assembly, David Donovan, announced that beginning in August 2013, the Staff Monthly Recognition Award winner will receive one month of free parking. Furthermore, Jennifer asked that staff check out the Employee Gateway website and provide feedback on anything that needs to be improved.

Guest Speaker: Todd Dickey, Senior Vice President of Administration

David Donovan introduced Todd Dickey to the Staff Assembly members. David mentioned that Mr. Dickey is one of the most accomplished employees at the university. He reports directly to USC President C.L. Max Nikias and oversees many functions such as the Legal Counsel Office, Public Safety, Human Resources, Radisson Hotel, Child Care, Real Estate, Athletics Compliance and also the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.

Mr. Dickey stated that he would be happy to invite questions from the staff members.

The first concern that Mr. Dickey addressed was about the recent layoffs and reorganizations at USC. Mr. Dickey stated that after the recession hit, the university was expected to trim 6.5% across all departments. However, since 2001 there has been an overall increase in staff by 83%. In fiscal year 2013, there were 279 layoffs, which is 1.63% of the total staff at USC. Of those laid off, 46% were re-hired. Mr. Dickey said that department reviews will continue to ensure that all units are operating according to the strategic vision of the university. However, he emphasized that USC is in a growth mode at this time.

Mr. Dickey apologized for the lack of communication on the vanpool issues. Due to budget constraints, the university could not keep the van pool program running at the same rate as before. There are other private vanpools running with more affordable rates; unfortunately, the university cannot compete with these low prices.

Question:

What kinds of procedures are used for layoffs, and is USC targeting older and senior staff for layoffs?

Answer:

First of all, it is illegal to target senior populations. Prior to reorganizations, the department must submit documents to Human Resources so that the proposed reorganization can be thoroughly analyzed. Mr. Dickey asked Awilda to report the issue of targeting senior staff to Janis McEldowney to investigate.

Question:

Is there any way that the university can work on a proposal for staff early retirement?

Answer:

The answer is no, we love our staff and we do not want our people to leave especially now that the university has been increasing jobs after buying the Verdugo Hills Hospital. Furthermore, it is difficult to let people go because the university has to retrain new staff and bring in more people from the outside which can cause a lot of problems, including higher labor costs.

Question:

What does the Coliseum purchase mean?

Answer:

Mr. Dickey has been working on the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum project for many years. Finally, the 99-year lease agreement was signed last week. The agreement stipulated that the university has to make improvements to the Coliseum, but the money from this will not come from the university's budget. Instead, the funds will come from fundraising. USC has 10 years to make the requested improvements. Along with the coliseum came 36 new employees, some of whom have been switched to fixed terms of employment. All of these employees will be evaluated based on their job performance.

Furthermore, improvements are also being made at HSC; the idea is to build a hotel with a capacity of 450 rooms. In addition, the university is doing a lot of landscaping improvements along Childs Way. Lastly, Mr. Dickey is working on the master plan for the University Village; two to three years are needed to complete this project. The university is working with many retailers to have businesses in the new University Village.

Committee Reports

Communications: Eliza Aceves, Co-Chair

Eliza reported the committee is working on the Assembled Voice and that the committee is planning to publish no later than November 1, 2013. No post cards will be mailed this time. Eliza also noted that Laura just went on maternity leave. Furthermore, anyone who has pictures from events this year is asked to send the pictures to the Communications Committee in order to include the photos in the montage at the end of the year.

Compensation and Benefits: Jennifer Gerson, Interim Chair

Jennifer reported that her committee was working on the retirement stipend. Currently, retirees receive \$60 per month as retirement stipend, payable every 3 months. This year, a committee was formed to look into this expense from the perspective of USC's balance sheet. Year after year, this stipend is decided by the USC Board of Trustees to continue

or not. There were some years in the past that this stipend was eliminated, then later reinstated. The future of this stipend is being looked into by a committee. If you have any concerns, please let Jennifer know. Be sure to include why you think this stipend should continue, if it is a good way to honor retirees, and if there is another option such as a lifetime parking permit or lifetime membership to University Club.

Environment: Lisa Gallegos, Chair

Lisa reported that the Campus Safety Emergency Preparedness Fair scheduled on September 25 was cancelled. She and her committee are working on arranging the 2014 Environment Fair.

Rights and Responsibilities: Jeanne Weiss, Chair

Jeanne reported that she met with Barbara Sladeck, Director, and Sonia Perez, Associate Director of Human Resources, Auxiliary Services to discuss some issues about employees who were terminated in their department. Ms. Sladeck explained that they have used proper procedures prior to terminating employees. She mentioned that the USC turnover rate is 5% compared to the national rate of between 10-15%.

Rules and Elections: Irene Rodriguez, Committee Member

Irene reported that the committee is getting ready for Staff Assembly elections and is developing a timeline. The goal is for elections to be completed by the end of November. In addition, the committee was able to fill 10 empty seats.

Transportation: Wade Thompson-Harper, Vice Chair

Wade reported there is still a big problem at Gate 4 on UPC; irresponsible people are driving in the wrong way. Please be aware if any of you see any incidents to report them to the Transportation Department. Wade reported that one of the Campus Cruisers was driving the wrong way in the Biggy Structure on HSC. If you see this type of incident, please report it to Michelle Garcia in the Transportation Department. Wade reported that Otto Khera, a staff member from ITS, created a biking website/community and wants to present the program to Staff Assembly to raise awareness in hopes that more people working at USC will bike to work.

New Business:

Next Meeting:

Thursday, October 3, 2013 from 9:00-10:30 a.m. in McKibbon Hall (MCH) Room 156 on the Health Sciences Campus (HSC).

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn was made by Ingrid Popper and was seconded by David Donovan. The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Minutes submitted by: Bryan Ortiz.

Staff Assembly Website: <http://www.usc.edu/org/staffassembly/>

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Staff Assembly Twitter: [@USC_SA](https://twitter.com/USC_SA)

Staff Assembly facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/USC-Staff-Assembly/113366988699692?ref=ts&fref=ts>