University of Southern California Staff Assembly
General Assembly Meeting
Thursday, January 11, 2018
Michelson Center for Convergent Bioscience (MCB) Room 101 (UPC)

Present: Lali Acuna, Tiffany Andalon, Gabe Badillo, Anthony Bailey, Kathleen Boeck, Aaron Brown, JaBari Brown, Delfina Candelaria, Jorge Castilla, Jeffrey De Caen, Andy Chen, Sabrina Feeley, Jennifer Hong, Sarah House, Teresita Jamanila, Erin Jebavy, James Johnston, Sarah Luna, Naomi Martinez, Leilani Mendez, John Ng, Lois Nishimoto, Leslie Ann Picazo, Rosemarie Tellez, Mary Trujillo, Angela Walker, Jeanne Weiss, Sue Wiedem, Debbie Williams, Shelly Wong, Amy Yung, Peter Zamar, Randy Zuniga


Call to Order:
President Jeffrey De Caen called the meeting to order at 9:15 am.

Announcing New Secretary:
Jeff announced that David Donovan had to step down as Secretary and that Kathleen (Katie) Boeck has volunteer to step into the role. He asked that people please state their first and last names when making motions and seconding so Katie and Jeff learn everyone’s names.

January Staff Recognition Award:
Jeff introduced January awardee Laura Yoneda, Associate Dean, Information and Technology, The Graduate School, and Sally Pratt, Vice Provost for Graduate Programs & Professor, The Graduate School, who shared some of the kind things Laura’s nominators said about her. Jeff presented Laura with a certificate signed by the Presidents of the Staff Assembly, Staff Club, and University. Jeff then presented Laura with an award letter for one free month of parking, courtesy of USC Transportation, and introduced Wade Thompson Harper, who presented Laura with a check in the amount of $100 on behalf of the USC Staff Club.

Approval of Minutes:
Jeff coordinated the approval of December’s General Assembly meeting minutes, which had been distributed to Assembly members in advance of the meeting. A change was made in the minutes to show that the next meeting was on January 11, 2018 and not January 4, 2018. On a motion by Angela Walker (seconded by James Johnson), the meeting minutes of December 7, 2017 were unanimously approved as corrected.

Associate Senior Vice President for Administration Report – Janis McEldowney
Janis reported that she did not have any statistics from open enrollment and that Awilda will report on them next month. Benefits is glad that open enrollment is over and that the new health plans were a lot of work and there are still some issues that are being reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Benefits will be looking at the benefit plans and there may be some tweaks that need to be made to close loop holes or deal with any issues that were found during open enrollment.
Janis reported that loop holes needed to be closed with tuition assistance. They discovered that if an employee was taking a class for themselves and if they went out on medical leave they would still continue to take classes. This change is consistent with other Universities. If the person goes on medical leave just before the semester ends, then it would be evaluated and they would be allowed to finish the course. But if someone is unable to come to work, then they should be unable to attend classes. Another loop hole that was discovered was that employees would sign up for classes, get tuition assistance, and then drop the class. One example was someone doing this for 9 semesters. Going forward, if people drop after the deadline, then they are personally responsible for the fee. This would not be the case if someone had to drop for a medical reason.

The Human Resource Center sent out an email survey to find out how employees would like to engage with the service center. They are looking at adding a Chat feature.

They are looking at an update to the case tracking system which would allow employees to pose a question and give them greater access to information then and they could then move forward to asking the right questions to the right people.

A question was asked of Janis regarding the time off for employees who are adopting children. The question was to see if the age of the children could be increased from 6 to older ages since there is a significant adjustment for older children in schools and it would be nice to have some time off even if it was a shorter amount of time than was currently given. Janis said she would take the suggestion back.

**Personnel Council Report – Awilda Bregand**
Awilda was out and unable to attend: report was given by Janis McEldowney

**Staff Retirement Association (SRA)/Emeriti Center Report – Bill Givens**
Bill was out and unable to attend: Jeff emailed the report that Janette Brown had submitted.

**Committee Reports**

**Communications – Lali Acuna, Chair**
Lali reported Fall/Winter Assembled Voice is available on the web site. The committee is looking for feedback on the Assembled Voice. Communications will also be working with Rules and Elections regarding the upcoming elections.

**Environment & Safety – Naomi Martinez, Chair**
Naomi reported that there has been an update to the traffic plan. The CRC guards are back. There were also more bollards installed on Trousdale Parkway (these are the metal barriers) to create more obstacles for the bicyclists to help slow down their speed. They are not sure yet what impact this has created in other areas of traffic. Signage will be added to Trousdale to remind people to slow down. The Committee will be meeting with Transportation Committee. If anyone hears of any comments from co-workers, they are encouraged to share them with Naomi and Ted.

**Rules & Elections – Rosemarie Tellez, Chair**
Rosie reported they are working on the 2018/2019 elections. The election process will be March 26-April 13, 2018. By March 12, 2018 they are hoping to get the background information of people who are being elected. More information to follow. Jeff has some ideas to offer for elections and will send an email.
President’s Report – Jeffrey De Caen

President De Caen reported on a change to the date of the March meeting. It is currently schedule for March 1, 2018, but the President’s office is moving the President’s State of the University address to March 1. Jeff is proposing that the General Assembly Meeting be pushed to March 8 and the Executive Committee meeting would be March 15. He will send an email out to the Assembly.

Jeff brought up the Topics for the Spring Meetings. On February 1, Doug Shook from ITS will come and talk about the 8 Steps of Transformation. Todd Dickey is willing to come talk to us about Project Renewal and we will also have someone come and talk about Diversity and Inclusion. Jeff would like to move the format of these topics to be conversations with the people who come and the General Assembly. The Assembly is in a unique position that we interact with the Academic Senate and the Student Governance bodies. The Faculty are a part of the bylaw and the bylaw and governance but sometimes they are removed from the nuts and bolts of running the University. Jeff would like to establish a tenor of conversations with the senior leadership. Would like to provide critique and a dialog with them.

Task Force on Workplace Standards and Employee Wellness. Jeff recognized two members of the Assembly that are on the task force with him: Mary Trujillo AND Victoria Young. The task force met 18 times during the Fall Semester. The committee members were nominated by Todd Dickey personally. Jeff thanked people for comments that were emailed to him and he encouraged people to continue sending comments and suggestions to him. Some of most poignant comments have come to the committee anonymously which is interesting considering one of the points in the report is about the fear of retaliation. Jeff reiterated that this is a work in progress. The report captures conversations that have been had up to this point. The report also sheds light on the direction that the committee will need to take this spring. Not all of the problems have been solved by the report and the 24 people on the committee who have other full time jobs cannot solve all of the issues. The hope is that a council will be create to continue the conversation.

Jeff then opened the floor and decided to walk through the document in hopes of starting conversation. The Task Force was appointed by the President and then Michael Quick and Todd Dickey had the job researching and discovering what happened and what the culture was that assisted in it. They appointed the President of the Faculty Senate and the President of the Staff Assembly to head the Task Force. They started with a set of questions that were specifically related to the instances surrounding the former Dean of Keck, Carmen Puliafito. To address these questions they had to step back and look at the bigger picture. They came up with the themes of Culture and Wellness. They kept hitting on four themes.

(1) The need for not allowing institutional contributions to be weighed against toxic behavior and abuses of power in key decisions.
   a. Plenty of concerns were raised by Faculty and Staff about the Dean and his abuse of power
   b. Those people in the know covered up the negative aspects of the decision
   c. Those people not in the know felt ignored and unheard
   d. They looked at how feedback can be a slippery slope due to legal issues, Human Resources and Liability

(2) The need for well-being on the part of individuals and units
   a. Toxic behavior, sexual harassment, abuse of power creates an uncomfortable environment and people are less productive
   b. Drug Use, Alcohol abuse
      i. The need for identifying it and having the resources to aid people
c. It can also include lack of sleep, depression, negative emotions

(3) The need for improved transparency, accountability, shared governance, and a shared sense of ownership
   a. This is needed everywhere

(4) The need to be able to express concerns with the assurance they will be heard, appropriate action will be taken, and that no retaliation will occur.
   a. This is a big piece of the concerns

Within the group conversations a set of principles came forth. The group felt that the culture on campus needs to be revisited.

The Task Force came up with these recommendations
1. Develop a new set of core values for the university while establishing a culture of the responsible community member who adheres to these values
   a. Have core values and code of ethics
   b. There is no consistent or global way of holding people accountable
   c. It is tricky to enforce the culture because everyone’s definition is different and everyone has opinions of what the culture should be
   d. Want to make it USC wide and include the voices of students, staff and faculty
   e. This is not something that is handed down, it is a more self-identified bar
   f. A great example of how this was handled was the University of Miami

2. Perform an inventory and audit of all current Wellness services
   a. USC offers a lot but most people don’t know it exits
   b. There are some redundancies- may be able to get some to merge so there is more efficiency

3. Investigate the establishment of an “impairment testing” protocol
   a. Drug testing
      i. There is evidence that there isn’t a lot of impact on hiring when doing drug testing
      ii. There are also ways of getting around it
   b. Doesn’t show impairment such as falling asleep on the job, not showing up, not caring for themselves etc
      i. We do have versions of this testing at USC
      ii. Example is tram drivers have to be awake, sober etc to drive the tram. If not then people can report it
   c. There are some existing testing, but looking into it more thoroughly
   d. Emotions testing is harder and that person may need help of an entirely different kind

4. Develop a coherent system for receiving and handling all types of concerns about members of the USC community, based on a trusted one-stop shop for receiving concerns, an adaptation of the Vanderbilt Co-worker Observation Reporting System (CORS) or its equivalent for handling concerns, and improved feedback on the results
   a. There isn’t a one stop shop
   b. Can contact HR, Office of Compliance, OED
   c. If someone calls the hotline, it goes to the Office of Compliance
   d. There are also a lot of portals that if it is this problem you go here and if a different problem you go there- it is very daunting
   e. People may also be discouraged from saying anything for fear of ramifications
   f. People don’t feel that their anonymity is protected
   g. Trying to make it easier for people to report concerns
h. Katie brought up that only Senior Staff is required to watch videos on sexual harassment and other types of harassment and yet as a lower staff member, the expectation is there that they will know everything Senior Staff does. It would be nice to have the same training or exposure to the training

i. There are also concerns about reporting

j. Many Faculty haven’t had traditional supervising roles until they become a chair
   i. Don’t have knowledge or USC workings or what it is like to be a supervisor
   ii. There needs to be more transparency

k. Most people don’t have an idea about the governance of USC
   i. They don’t understand that things don’t stop with the Deans and that they are accountable to the Provost and the President
   ii. President also gets pressure from the Board of Trustees and also other top ranking Administrative Staff

l. Looking at training and see if it can be done on the computer

m. CORS- they like it but are not married to it
   i. Things would go to a jury of peers
   ii. A pyramid approach
      1. More welcoming at a lower level
      2. Peers are coached to go and talk to other peers as more of a head’s up and would not show up in an evaluation. Would be tracked in case it is contiguous
   iii. Already similar to checks in the Medical area
      1. Did they wash their hands, clean the tools etc
   iv. Our baseline- new set of core values. More conversations are needed

5. Adapt our current approaches to leadership and shared governance by expanding the reporting done by unit leaders back to their units, increasing the expectations concerning leadership consultation with their units on critical decisions
   a. Improve Feedback
   b. How reporting is done
      i. Deans sharing is not consistent across the board
         1. Would require having Deans be more consistent with each other
         2. Would be more of state of the unit or division and include more people
         3. Deans would need help and mentorship
      ii. President changed the title of his speech to the State of the University
         1. Talks about what we want, where we are at and where we are going
   c. Some of this is happening but it is not consistent across the board

6. More fully involving faculty committees with access to full dossiers in (re)appointments of academic leaders, enhancing pre-hire background checks for these leaders and their teams, and introducing 360° Evaluations
   a. This is time consuming
   b. Talking about nuts and bolts
   c. This can get complicated but like the idea

7. Provide appropriate leadership and Wellness training; define metrics and accountability mechanisms for leadership, core values and Wellness
   a. Everyone would get the same training for leadership
   b. Leaders would get more training but also to let those being led to know what is going on
   c. More accountability

8. Create a standing Campus Culture and Wellness Council (CCWC) to continue to monitor and adjust our environment.
The Task Force will continue to work during the spring semester to come up with more suggestions and ideas.

Comments
1. Ombudsman
   a. Katie Boeck asked about the Ombudsman and whether or not there would be someone at each campus. Someone who is more familiar with the culture of that campus and what is going on. People in Virginia can’t come to UPC and people in Marina del Rey may not come to UPC and talk to someone who doesn’t understand what is going on there.

2. Impairment testing
   a. It was suggesting that the language be changed to assessment rather than testing

3. Sexual Harassment training
   a. Toxic behavior and toxicity have different meanings but people tend to use them interchangeably
   b. Poor management isn’t always toxic
   c. Toxic is a strong word and it illicits a response.
   d. HSC feels the toxicity. UPC is shielded by how hurt, scared and frightened people are at HSC about what happened. It wasn’t just one Dean, but two.
   e. The Task Force has weighted more of it towards HSC since that is where the incident was that triggered this
   f. Tone of harsher side is due more to the people of HSC want to see something done now

4. Interim Dean of Keck
   a. Has been wonderful
   b. The Task Force has had discussions of what worked well with this new Dean and what are the positive affects she is having
   c. Comments have come in that the tone and acceptance has been wonderful at HSC under the new Dean

5. Peter Zamar asked: what can we do in Staff Assembly to help bring this to fruition?
   a. Jeff said that we are not there yet and that this is a good start
   b. It is a delicate balance
   c. The Task Force has been a good advisory group, but we need to dig deeper
   d. The Task Force closes on June 30, 2018. The goal is to send an Executive Summary or the entire document to the University to help spearhead conversations
   e. This is just progress report and hopes that in the Spring they will come up with suggestions
   f. Jeff will continue sending things to the group and is asking us to read it and give suggestions
   g. Jeff said the Academic Senate and the Staff Assembly are extensions of the Task Force for information.
   h. Jeff is asking that we be ambassadors with our colleagues and help get feedback from them once this document is released.
   i. We have the opportunity of speaking up and no longer being tolerant of past behaviors
   j. We couldn’t have talked about this five years ago so they need help encouraging momentum and encouraging campus wide dialog
   k. Let people know when they speak up that something will be done
   l. Michael Quick and Todd Dickey are fully engaged in topics and details
   m. Take advantage of providing input and how this might affect daily life

6. James Johnson said that we’ve heard this for years but it is different this time. USC seems to be coming to terms with what happened and seeing so many positive changes.
The vast majority of us are compliant and treating each other well. There really is the Trojan Family. This is a good opportunity to look at those who don’t feel that way and find out why.

Janis said that the training that is available to supervisory staff is available to other staff as well. She said Benefits will communicate better that it is available and where it is.

Next Meeting:
Thursday, February 1, 2018 from 9:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m. Location: (TBD), University Park Campus

Adjournment:
A motion to adjourn was made by James Johnson and was seconded by Jennifer Hong. The meeting adjourned at 10:38 am.

Minutes submitted by Secretary Katie Boeck.