

USC Staff Assembly

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
General Assembly Meeting – Friday, September 25, 2020
Zoom Meeting

Present:

Abrahamyan, Ann
Acevedo-Lam, Tanya
Acosta, Dulce
Akulov, Anton
Alarcon, Patricia
Almassizadeh, Renee
Arce, Bertha
Boeck, Kathleen
Bonagofsky, Kathleen
Brown, Amber
Castaneda, Agustin
Chesley, Erika
De Vera Mata, Nicole
Estrada, Laura
Gorse, Michael
Halfacre, Gloria
Hinojosa, Shannon
Hoang, Queena
Jacobs, Anette Jeltsje
Jebavy, Erin
Kidder, Eric
Kirchner, Jake
Lee, Paul
Lewis, Kierra

Low, Theodore
Luna, Sarah
Malan, Mark
Martinez, Naomi
Mico, Brian
Mizushima, Linda
Ochoa-Springer, Liliana
Olivos Romero, Deborah
Ortiz, Bryan
Ramirez, Sergio
Reano, Cory
Reyes, Natasha
Rivera, Lillian
Sandhu, Juggy
Schroth, Richard
Sinclair, Sandry
Turner, Philip
Vazquez, Lydia
Wang, Jonathan
Welch, Ryan
Welch, Zelinda
Williams, Evan
Yu, Jenny

Absent:

Adcook, Steve
Aguilar, Carmen
Andalon, Tiffany
Ault, Vannesa
Boyd, Robert
Culpepper, Kristi
De la Rosa, April

Gallegos, Lisa
Jones, Michelle
Lynn, Crystal
Morataya, Claudia
Nieto, Lou
Williams, Debbie

1 Erika Chesley, Staff Assembly President, called the meeting to order at 9:03AM.

2
3 Words of welcome were extended to all assembled by President Chesley.

4
5 **October Staff Monthly Recognition Award**

6 Chesley introduced Jeffrey de Caen, Associate Dean for Operations at the Thornton
7 School of Music who introduced and shared very kind words and sentiments on the
8 October awardee, Michelle Maestas Simonsen. Maestas Simonsen said a few words.

9
10 **Staff Assembly Scholarship Award Recipients**

11 Chesley introduced the six recipients of the Staff Assembly Scholarship: Sonia De
12 Mesa, Budget/Business Technician in Occupational Therapy; Jane Gollayan, Sales
13 Manager at the USC Hotel; Maria Mempin, Associate Director, Payroll and
14 Organizational Operations USC Auxiliary Services; Jose Perez- Guerrero,
15 Undergraduate Studies Coordinator, English Department; Holly Nielson, Budget/
16 Business Analyst, Wrigley Marine Science Center - Catalina; and Grace Shin, Business
17 Data Analyst, Office of Legal Affairs and Professionalism.

18
19 **Approval of August 28, 2020 General Assembly Meeting draft minutes**

20 Chesley referenced the minutes that were distributed to the members in advance of the
21 meeting for discussion and approval.

22
23 The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

24
25 **Guest Speaker: Beong-Soo Kim, General Counsel**

26 Beong-Soo Kim thanked the assembly members for their contributions. After providing
27 insight on his background, he shared his vision for the office:

- 28 - Remain centralized.
- 29 - Encourage people to speak up and hold people accountable.
- 30 - Supports culture initiatives
- 31 - Would like the office to step back and think about topics that have legal
32 ramifications and then present it to groups.

33
34 *Questions from Chat*

35 Question: Focus seems to be taken up with ongoing litigation. Will there be a point
36 where putting out fires will turn toward policies that are compliant and help
37 protect/support faculty and staff?

38 Answer: It is important for the leadership team and the President to think about long
39 term goals and not just how to put out the fires and get through the pandemic. There is
40 a lot of long term strategic-goals for the University being talked about.

41
42 Question: Can you tell us what the technology stipend will look like post-COVID?

43 Answer: The stipend was created to support employees working from home during
44 COVID. DUO has the token or being able to call the home or office phone so there will
45 not be any reimbursement for that.

46 Question: You mentioned PAC-12 sports. The New York Times has reported that there
47 has already been a death in college football from COVID-19. Reports are that Stanford
48 did not want the PAC-12 to restart sports. Are we having the players sign a liability
49 waiver and if not, are we exposing the University to huge liability at a time when we are
50 already very worried about financial matters.

51 Questions not answered due to time constraints:

52 In the past, USC has chosen not to pursue those who commit embezzlement from us
53 because we want to avoid the "bad press." Will that stance continue under your tenure
54 or have you been given the power to pursue those individuals?

55 **Guest Speakers: Felicia Washington, Senior Vice President, Human Resources,**
56 **Marisol Marks, Associate Vice President, Strategic Communications, Kelly Moy,**
57 **Associate Vice President, Strategy and Programs and Timothy Bessolo,**
58 **Associate Vice President for Strategy and Special Projects**

59 Felicia Washington has been engaging with colleagues at other Universities around the
60 future of Higher Education. Washington provided a high-level review and updates on
61 HR's focus areas:

- 62 - Quarterly reviews that will allow employees and their supervisors to engage in more
63 communication around performance and relationship
- 64 - HR Academy and Leadership Academy are under developed to provide employees
65 with additional tools and resources
- 66 - The Trustees will review and respond to the Staff Assembly Resolution during their
67 next meeting in October.
- 68 - Culture Journey and DEI
 - 69 o REDI committee has three Staff Assembly Members (Chesley, Michael Gorse
70 and Jonathan Wang)
 - 71 o CDIO Search - held listening groups and will engage an outside search firm to
72 conduct a nation-wide search effort
- 73 - Unconscious Bias Training
 - 74 o For Faculty, Staff and Students
 - 75 o It will be launched through TrojanLearn and is a part of a more
76 comprehensive plan.

77

78 *Questions from Chat*

79 Question: Why does USC not have its own Affirmative Action policy?

80

81 Answer: Proposition 209 does not apply to USC as a Private University.

82

83 Question: Is there any conversation about making our annual staff evaluation this year
84 optional? Not sure if this a university decision or a school-level decision.

85 Answer: Washington is not aware of any discussions around this topic.

86 Question: The Academic Senate asked the question about merit increases and what
87 rate of pay would be used to determine increases? (What would have been given if
88 there hadn't been a pause due to COVID or what the current salary is?)

89 Answer: Communication went out hoping it would be implemented next year but at the
90 time we didn't know we would be working from home this long.

91 Kelly Moy - Remote Work Guidelines and Survey

- 92 - HR will issue a survey to assess needs/support for employees who are working from
93 home. For example:
 - 94 ○ Do employees need to return campus to get equipment, supplies, etc. need
95 their offices?
 - 96 ○ What are people purchasing for themselves at home?
- 97 - Work From Home (WFH) Agreement and Checklist
 - 98 ○ Making some changes to the language so employees do not misinterpret it.
 - 99 ○ Clarified that "Not" signing the agreement is not the same as resigning.
 - 100 ○ Employees are not required to purchase a fire extinguisher. The safety items
101 were provided to build awareness.
 - 102 ○ The goal is to help drive an understanding between manager and employee
103 about schedules and WFH expectations. HR hopes that flexibility is being
104 extended to care givers who are balancing work, childcare, homeschooling,
105 etc.
 - 106 ○ Documents are not a condition of employment. Managing expectations.
 - 107 ○ Information collected will not be used and just hoping to open a conversation
108

109 Tim Bessolo - Supplemental Leave

- 110 - The COVID-19 sick time is for onsite employees who meet certain guidelines.
- 111 - If a health care provider suggests staying at home or if the employee is exposed at
112 work, there are 80 hours of sick time that are available to the employee.
- 113 - This will be for all employees who work onsite - staff, faculty, post docs etc.
- 114 - Employees will clock their time in Workday and choose the COVID-19 sick.
- 115 - There is a cap due to federal regulations.

116
117 *Questions from chat:*

118 Question: Is this COVID-19 sick time retroactive for people who had to use personal
119 sick days earlier this summer?

120
121 Answer: It is not retroactive unless the federal guidelines specify.

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123

124 Marisol Marks - Flu Vaccinations

- 125 - This year, the flu vaccination will be for all on-site faculty and staff.
- 126 - Vaccines are available at CVS, Walgreens or the USC Pharmacy.
- 127 - If done through the USC Pharmacy, then information will automatically be sent to
128 HR.

129 - Planning mobile clinics for areas that have 25 or more employees.

130

131 *Questions from chat:*

132 Question: Do the requirements for coming onto campus include coming for the flu shot?

133

134 Answer: The flu shot is free if you have USC insurance even at CVS. They are looking
135 at making it a requirement for people coming onsite now as well as in the spring. Marks
136 suggested making an appointment at the pharmacy so there aren't too many people at
137 one time.

138

139 Question: Since the flu shot will be required, can units refuse to pay staff for the time it
140 takes to come to campus and get the shot? Do they need to use their personal time?

141

142 Answer: Not sure and will look into it.

143

144 **President's Report**

145 Chesley gave an update

146 - In the interest of time, Committee Reports will be provided separately and
147 incorporated into the meeting minutes as an addendum.

148 - Election

149 ○ October 19 – 28, 2020 is the nomination period

150 ■ Communication will be going out soon.

151 ■ Staff members can nominate themselves as well as peers.

152 ○ November 9 – 18, 2020 is the voting period

153 ○ November 19th the Rules and Elections Committee will start tallying the votes

154 ○ November 23rd the results will be announced.

155 ○ Turnover meeting will be in December.

156 - Staff Appreciation Week

157 ○ Staff Assembly will host engagement activities during the nomination or voting
158 period to build awareness

159 ○ Will be branded as engagement, not to be confused with signature SAW

160 - DEI Committee

161 ○ Will transition from ad hoc to a full committee to support Staff Assembly and
162 University initiatives

163 ○ The plan is sitting with the Rules and Elections committee now and will be
164 presented to the Executive Committee.

165 ○ If approved, it will be sent to the body for remote voting

166 ○ If it is approved, it will be a full committee starting January 2021.

167 ○ Staff Assembly member are currently serving on the following committees:

168 ■ CDIO Search Committee

169 ■ Community Advisory Board (DPS)

170 ■ Racial Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (REDI) Taskforce

171 - Watercooler Wednesdays

172 ○ A collaboration between the Communications and Staff Appreciation
173 Committees.

174 ○ Launch on September 30th from 9 AM – 10 AM.

- 175 ○ September 30th topic - Child care and elder care and how it is impacting the
176 staff.
177 ○ Opportunity for staff to engage.
178 ○ If you have topic ideas or would like to host, please let them know.
179 - October 15th is Earthquake Preparedness Training: 12noon – 1 PM
180 ○ The virtual event is a collaboration between Staff Assembly and USC Fire
181 Safety and Emergency Planning.
182 - Special Meetings
183 ○ We will schedule a separate meeting with Greg Condell for an update on
184 health plans
185 ○ We are also requesting a financial update from the University.
186

187 **Adjournment**

188 Renee Almassizadeh moved to close the meeting. Bryan Ortiz seconded. Vote was
189 unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 10:48 AM.
190

191 **Next Meeting**

192 General Assembly: October 30, 2020 9-10:30 AM on Zoom.
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194 Respectfully submitted,
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196 Katie Boeck
197 USC Staff Assembly Secretary
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Addendum – Committee Reports

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Communication – Erin Jebavy, Interim Chair

- Created Watercooler Wednesdays to help raise awareness of Staff Assembly and provide a place to staff to come together and connect.
 - o The series will run from 9:00am to 10:00am every Wednesday from September 30 to November 18.
 - o Based on suggestions from the Assembly, each event will have its own dedicated topic to get the conversation started and will be co-hosted by various committee members.
- Will help promote the upcoming elections
- Will help promote the Good Neighbors Campaign

Compensation and Benefits – Richard Schroth, Shannon Hinojosa, Co-Chairs

- Cell Phone Policy Review- on hold due to COVID
- Alternate Work Schedule- on hold due to COVID
- Staff Retirement Association (SRA) – has suggested an update on their behalf to Workday that when someone retires it is “retired” and not “terminated”. Waiting for list from SRA of concerns for the senior health care.

Environment and Safety- Naomi Martinez, Chair

- Goals and engagement being offered that will be offered in part of the Staff Appreciation week from the E&S Committee:
 1. Mental Wellness: some of you from other schools/units may also be receiving messaging similar to this that can also help bring more ideas on what to include in the presentation (fitness, healthy eating etc). We can also look into having Linda Snouffer (CWFL) or other relevant shareholders as a presenter.
 2. Working from home: The most important focus of this is ergonomics, and we can invite the presenter we had back in April from the Staff Appreciation events, Marissa Marchioni (USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy). The presentation can also cover the different focus areas for improving the environment you are working in such as sustainability, safety, boosting morale, and improving efficiency.
- The Great ShakeOut will occur on October 15th at 10:15 AM virtually and in addition as part of the education of the ShakeOut there will be an Earthquake Preparedness Training 12 PM – 1PM.
- The Sustainability Steering Committee met in September, here are the Sustainability Steering Committee [notes](#) and meeting [recording](#). The Office of Sustainability is now on social media on Instagram @green.usc or Facebook USC Sustainability. A newsletter was also launched this week and you can [subscribe here](#).

Rights and Responsibilities- Michael Gorse, Chair

- Concerns of Remote Working
 - o At our August 2020 planning meeting, we identified many concerns among staff regarding remote work: inequities in technology, the remote work guidelines and policy, changing in roles/responsibilities of staff in working

244 remotely, lack of central HR communication, and more. We would like to
245 advocate for a central communication and protection of staff this year in terms
246 of evaluations and retaliation based on technological and performance
247 inequities.

248 - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

- 249 ○ We have a barrier in not having the “teeth” behind what we say, particularly in
250 regards to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion and specifically racial
251 equity and injustice at USC. We’d like to challenge our Staff Assembly to do
252 an internal review of policies, practices, representation, etc. in regards to
253 equity and inclusion. We need to better understand ourselves before we can
254 engage in work to improve our campus climate and work environment for
255 marginalized populations. Additionally, DEI efforts should be implemented
256 through each committee; we can have an official DEI committee but it’s not
257 that committee’s sole responsibility to implement the efforts. Externally, we
258 would like to get a demographic breakdown of staff at USC

259

260 **Rules and Elections- Philip Turner, Chair**

261 - Roster Maintenance- Comprehensive review of data left by previous chair

262 - 2020 General Election –

- 263 ○ Worked with ITS to get data cleaned and ready for upload.
- 264 ○ USC Staff Nominations- Monday 10/19/2020 through Wednesday
265 10/28/2020.
- 266 ○ Tally Nominations/Confirmations – Thursday 10/29/2020 through Friday
267 Sunday 11/8/2020
- 268 ○ USC Staff Vote – Monday 11/9/2020 through Wednesday 11/18/2020
- 269 ○ Tally of votes – Thursday 11/19/20 through Sunday 11/22/2020
- 270 ○ Notification and Confirmations of intent to serve – Monday 11/23/2020
271 through Sunday 12/6/2020
- 272 ○ General Assembly Transition meeting - tentatively scheduled for Friday
273 December 11, 2020.

274 - Future Tasks

- 275 ○ Testing of nomination portal (Pending ITS upload) – scheduled for 10/13/20
- 276 ○ Launch the 2020-2021 Off-Cycle election

277 **Scholarships and Awards- Gloria Halfacre, Chair**

278 - Monthly Staff Awards

- 279 ○ To help increase award nominations, we propose to have quarterly due dates
280 that correspond with the academic calendar.
- 281 ○ We feel that there are missed opportunities to engage with staff at USC Keck,
282 Verdugo, Norris, etc.

283 - Scholarships

- 284 ○ Scholarship applications were received, reviewed, and awarded. Minor
285 adjustments need to be made to the application to add degree information.

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287 **Staff Appreciation- Paul Lee, Chair**

288 - Engagement through virtual programming

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- April's Virtual-Staff Appreciation Week
 - Provided us the foundational framework to have high impact without exhausting resources
 - USC Staff Assembly Government Engagement Week
 - To raise awareness about the organization and its nomination/election process.
 - Watercooler Wednesdays
 - Creates community and ability to network
 - Allows Staff Assembly to get in front of staff to know that we are advocating
 - Highlights staff members who lead DIY workshops (e.g. painting, building your own desk, etc.)

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303 **Transportation- Erin Jebavy, Chair**

- 304 - With the widespread implementation of remote work being established in the wake
- 305 of COVID19, we will continue to work with the Benefits and Compensation
- 306 Committee to debrief with HR about ways in which some remote work can be
- 307 maintained going forward for positions in which it is feasible and it is so desired.

308