

USC Staff Assembly

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
General Assembly Meeting – July 30, 2021
9:30 AM – 11:00 AM
Zoom Meeting

Culture Value Spotlight:
ACCOUNTABILITY | WE TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Present 2021-2022 Body (50):

Acuna, Lali	Jester, Tonisha
Adams, Teri	Mardirossian, Jackie
Amescua, Josie	Martinez, George
Azarraga, Arlene	Martinez, Naomi
Bartlett, Amber	Mitchell-Huizar, Nichelle
Bodiwala, Sonali	Mizushima, Linda
Brown, Amber	Ochoa-Springer, Liliana
Brown, JaBari	Ortiz, Bryan
Caballero, Marc	Padilla-Casillas, Sara
Chesley, Erika	Portero, Yanara
Coles, Richard	Preciado, Aida
Culpepper, Kristi	Rivera, Lillian
DeFrank, Ginny	Salazar, Nelida
DeMartini, John	Sanabria, Pilar
Estrada, Laura	Sandhu, Juggy
Ferrer, Brian	Schroth, Richard
Fried-Gintis, Sarah	Smith, Corinne
Gallegos, Lisa	Smith, Shamae
Gallegos, Robert	Sommer, Russ
Gratz, Thomas	Stender, Cynthia
Halfacre, Gloria	Taylor, Bernice
Hansen, Jenny	Thompson-Harper, Wade
Hernandez, Irma	Turner, Philip
Hinojosa, Shannon	Villanueva Padilla, Jeanette
Jebavy, Erin	Zuniga, Randolph

Absent 2021-2022 Body (10):

Alarcon, Patricia	Moe, Kristine
Alexander, Sarah	Nieto, Lou
Black, Jennifer	Vazquez, Lydia
De la Rosa, April	Wills, Olivia
Jones, Michelle	Zamora, Grace

Guest (50)

1 Kristi Culpepper, Staff Assembly President, called the meeting to order at 9:33 AM.

2
3 President Culpepper extended words of welcome and noted an adjustment in the agenda
4 which will include Felicia Washington and her team to discuss "Return to Campus."
5

6 **Approval of June 2021, General Assembly Meeting Minutes**

7 Linda Mizushima referenced the minutes that were distributed to the members in advance
8 of the meeting for discussion and approval.
9

10 The floor was opened for discussion – none.

11
12 Erika Chesley moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Bernice Taylor seconded.
13 Motion passed by majority voice consent. 49 members present. (Oppose – 0; Abstain - 0).
14

15 **Approval of the updated and revised Staff Assembly Standard Operating** 16 **Procedures (SOP)**

17 Phil Turner referenced the document that was distributed to the members in advance of
18 the meeting for discussion and approval.
19

20 The floor was opened for discussion.

21
22 A member asked if attendance is monitored by Rules and Elections, how does that work
23 when members are reporting attendance to the chair of the committee they are part of?
24 Phil responded that Rules and Elections records attendance for the General Assembly
25 meeting, but are not aware if members are actively participating in their committee. This
26 will be a coordinated effort between Rules and Elections and the Committee Chairs.
27

28 A member asked about statement #4E on the SOP. If the committee selection process is
29 not occurring at the meeting, the SOP should reflect the current process. This year's body
30 used a Qualtrics Survey to submit their committee selection preferences.
31

32 The updated SOP will be posted on the website within the next couple of weeks.
33

34 Wade Thompson-Harper moved to accept the SOP as submitted. Linda Mizushima
35 seconded. The motion was passed by majority voice consent. 49 members present.
36 (Oppose – 0, Abstain – 0).
37

38 **Guest Speaker**

39 Patrick Cates, Director of Organizational Change in Ethics and Culture
40

41 Patrick is taking over Sabrina Pasztor's role in the USC Culture Journey. He started his
42 career at the University of London and joined the USC Marshall School of Business in
43 2008. He just completed the Doctor of Education – EdD, Organizational Change and
44 Leadership. His dissertation focused on "Reducing Workplace Incivility in Higher
45 Education."
46

47 The USC Culture Journey task force started in 2017 to focus on the workforce and
48 employee wellness. It assessed the values of the USC Community. What do we have
49 now and what we would like to have at the University and School levels. This resulted in
50 creating the 6 unifying values: Integrity, Excellence, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI),
51 Well-being, Open Communication, and Accountability. Speaker series, lunch and learns,
52 community panels, and workshops were launched to bring this information to the USC

53 Community.

54

55 What's next?

- 56 • We need to continue pushing values, development, Well-being, DEI, and how to
57 raise concerns to the appropriate levels to be discussed.
- 58
- 59 • We need to amplify these values by evangelizing, integrating, and truly
60 collaborating. Each value ties into each other and each focus area has a focus
61 leader and sponsor such as Christopher Manning for DEI or Ilene Rosenstein for
62 Well-being.
- 63
- 64 • Each of the schools and/or business units has different micro-cultures that can be
65 improved. The Culture task force will not be able to solve all but will listen to find the
66 challenges and bring resources to help resolve them.
- 67
- 68 • The recent accreditation report praised USC's culture effort. It provided a list of
69 recommendations such as measuring improvement and how to show the
70 community there is progress. This can be done by creating a culture dashboard.
- 71
- 72 • There is a need to see more participation from marginalized faculty and staff and to
73 include their voices in the conversation. Some always participate, but we must find
74 ways to include everyone.
- 75

76 Culture Network Role Overview

- 77 • The Culture Network Members are nominated by the School/Unit Leaders to
78 represent their School/Unit.
- 79
- 80 • The Culture Journey Partners are members of the USC Community who are self-
81 selected to stay up-to-date with the Culture Journey and answer to the call to action
82 to share information and move culture change forward.
- 83

84 If you wish to be a Culture Network Member or Culture Journey Partner or just to vent,
85 send an email to Patrick Cates at pcates@usc.edu

86

87 For this program to work and be self-sustaining, there must be a willingness to participate.
88 This information is available to all schools and units at no cost unless a consultant is
89 required.

90

91 The floor was opened for questions.

92

93 A member asked, "What is the most challenging culture value/impact?"

94 The biggest issue is accountability. It floats to the top because without accountability it is
95 hard to change behavior. Accountability is the hardest behavior to change because of
96 leadership and tenured faculty.

97

98 **Return to Campus**

99 Felicia Washington, Senior Vice President, Human Resources, along with members of the
100 Central HR team and Deona Willes, Executive Director, Safety addressed concerns on
101 "Return to Campus".

102

103 Felicia Washington greeted and informed the body, the University is planning for in-person
104 classes in the Fall, 2021. There will be 44,000 students with approximately 10,000

105 students that have never been on campus. The goal is to have a good portion of the USC
106 community available to enhance their experience. The students will begin moving in on
107 the week of August 16 and the first day of classes beginning on Monday, August 23rd.
108 Other Universities and local school districts are moving forward with their scheduled
109 timeline for in-person classes. The University is still following CDC and Los Angeles
110 County Department of Health guidelines. The University will adjust campus density as
111 needed and as directed by the CDC or Los Angeles County.

112
113 Deona Willes informed the body that the department of Environmental Health and Safety
114 (EHS) are working hard to provide the safest return. EHS has partnered with Student
115 Health and Institutes of Higher Education to follow best practices. They are also following
116 guidance from the CDC, state authorities, etc. The building air exchange rates have been
117 adjusted, ventilation has been increased in buildings to include outside air, filters have
118 been replaced with recommended quality or better, and water systems have been flushed.
119 There is a building readiness dashboard at: [https://ehs.usc.edu/building-readiness-](https://ehs.usc.edu/building-readiness-dashboard/)
120 [dashboard/](https://ehs.usc.edu/building-readiness-dashboard/)

121
122 Felicia noted that the California State University and University of California systems are
123 requiring students to be vaccinated. USC is also requiring students to be vaccinated and
124 cannot move into the dorms or take classes without doing so. The University is currently
125 exploring the need to put back the perimeter controls that were taken down.

126
127 President Culpepper asked about the policy for those choosing not to vaccinate other than
128 religious or medical reasons. Could the employee lose their job? Non-vaccinated will be
129 required to test weekly and complete Trojan Check to enter the campus. There will be
130 further discussion and a decision has not been made on how to handle these cases yet. If
131 there is a medical concern about vaccination contact Christine Street, Office of Institutional
132 Accessibility and for religious reasons contact Varun Soni, Office of religious life.

133
134 The floor was opened for questions.

135
136 A member asked why it took so long to decide on the return to campus date and what
137 considerations are being taken for the non-vaccinated? Felicia responded that there were
138 complex considerations that were not yet figured out. It was necessary to create a policy
139 for the non-vaccinated, establish safe ways to communicate, and more. A COVID-19
140 hotline: (213) 740-6291 and Email address: covid19@usc.edu has been created for
141 communications that you may not feel comfortable discussing with your supervisor,
142 general questions, or even reporting questionable activities. Your HR partner is another
143 resource that you can reach out to for questions.

144
145 A member questioned all the work to create a return to work plan and then to be denied
146 and asked to return five days a week on August 16th. Felicia responded that everyone has
147 worked hard at home since March 2020. It was like living at work. All worked above and
148 beyond and continued engagement with colleagues. The plans were reviewed in
149 aggregate. To provide the best possible experience to the students, it was necessary to
150 have all faculty and staff to be on deck. Unfortunately, the Provost is not here to speak to
151 this. We have to be mindful of the impact on the 44,000 students that will be here for the
152 first month and need most people back to ensure a good experience.

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154 A member asked if there will be a possibility of going back to a hybrid plan after the first
155 month. Felicia indicated the leadership will need to review and interpret the experience of
156 the first month.

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President Culpepper asked about the mask policy in public spaces, indoors, offices, or at workstations. Deona noted the state of California re-opened on June 15 and lifted many restrictions. The new delta variant which is now the most prevalent in the country required re-implementing masking indoors regardless of vaccination status. The exception is if you are in your own office and alone. At the moment masks are not required outdoors, but if this changes, you will be notified.

Committee Reports

Communications (Jenny Hansen)

The committee has scheduled the first meeting to discuss the goals for this year. We want to ensure timely communications internally and externally, posting to social media, and more.

Compensation and Benefits (Richard Schroth)

The committee has submitted the list of changes for the fitness benefit based on the feedback received from the survey completed by the body.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Erika Chesley)

The committee is looking forward to pushing equity for staff at the university.

Environment and Safety (Nichelle Mitchell-Huizer)

The committee will continue working with the University on safety programs, disaster preparedness, and adding return to work safety.

Rights and Responsibilities (Lisa Marie Gallegos)

The committee is happy to receive new ideas to add to its goals and is making progress with Central HR and Organizational Change.

Rules and Elections (Sonali Bodiwala)

The committee will continue where Phil left off on improving the election process.

Scholarships and Awards (Liliana Ochoa-Springer)

The committee is reviewing the scholarship awards submitted and due July 31st.

Staff Appreciation and Engagement (Shamae Smith)

The committee is working to provide greater awareness of Staff Assembly to the USC Community and to show more appreciation to staff for their contributions.

Transportation (JaBari Brown)

The committee will continue to focus on issues related to transportation, parking, subsidies, parking lots, and more.

President Report

All committee chairs have been established and members assigned. President Culpepper expressed appreciation to all the committee chairs for accepting and being a leader.

Announcements

Next Meeting

General Assembly: August 27, 2021, 9:30 AM -11:00 AM on Zoom.

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Future in-person or virtual is still to be determined.

Adjournment

Richard Schroth moved to close the meeting. Jackie Mardirossian seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice consent. The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Mizushima
USC Staff Assembly Secretary

APPROVED