

1 **THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA FACULTY SENATE**

2 Wednesday, December 4, 2024

3 This session was held in person at the Russell House Theater

4 PRESIDING CHAIR FRANKLIN WAYNE OUTTEN

5 Chair Franklin Wayne Outten called the meeting to order at 1500 EST.

6

7 **Called Meeting of the Faculty Senate**

8 FACULTY SENATE CHAIR FRANKLIN WAYNE OUTTEN (hence: CHAIR OUTTEN)

9 welcomed the audience to the Faculty Senate meeting.

10 *Approval of the November 6, 2024, Faculty Senate meeting minutes:* Minutes were approved.

11 ***President's Report***

12 There was no report. CHAIR OUTTEN noted that President AMIRIDIS (hence: AMIRIDIS) also
13 did not attend the November meeting and expressed his wish for AMIRIDIS to attend the January
14 15 meeting of the Faculty Senate.

15 CHAIR OUTTEN called Provost DONNA ARNETT (hence: ARNETT) to deliver her report.

16 ***Provost's Report***

17 ARNETT thanked the faculty for the work done for our students during the fall semester. She
18 reminded the faculty of the importance of attending commencement on December 16 and of the
19 December 10 deadline for commencement tickets.

20 ARNETT reported on a briefing from the university's state lobbyist, Derek McGee, about what
21 could be expected after the election. At this point, not many changes are expected. Since there
22 was a lot of turnover in both House and Senate, some (re-)education for members were planned.
23 There will be a Provost Retreat on January 31; the First-Generation initiative will be presented
24 there; ARNETT stated that she had been working with Faculty Senate leadership to set up the
25 agenda for the meeting.

26 ARNETT stated that she informed the deans that there should be no phone calls, texts, or emails
27 during the holiday break, so that all can have a "real break." She also asked deans to avoid
28 scheduling required meetings during the week from January 2 to the following Tuesday.

29 ***There were no questions for ARNETT.***

30 CHAIR OUTTEN thanked ARNETT,

31 CHAIR OUTTEN added an item to the agenda and invited Executive Associate Athletic Director
32 MARIA HICKMAN (hence: HICKMAN) to address recent changes to faculty access to athletic
33 events.

34 HICKMAN reported that faculty will still have the option to attend women basketball games for
35 free using their Carolina Card this season. However, this will no longer be the case starting in the
36 2025 season. For baseball games, Carolina Card will not be honored any longer starting

37 immediately. The faculty will need to purchase single game tickets using a system called Gov X
38 (www.govx.com).

39 In answer to questions, HICKMAN explained that free faculty access to women's basketball games
40 cost the university between \$45,000 and \$50,000 per year.

41 ***Report of Faculty Standing Committees***

42 ***Committee on Curricula and Courses***

43 MICHAEL DICKSON (Department of Philosophy; Chair of C&C; hence: DICKSON) asked for
44 approval of the report published as an attachment to the agenda, in the online faculty senate
45 website. There were approximately 239 proposals for new and modified courses and curricula,
46 divided as follows:

47 **Total Proposals:**

- 48 119 – College of Arts and Sciences
- 49 22 – College of Hospitality, Retail, and Sport Management
- 50 10 – School of Music
- 51 14 – Darla Moore School of Business
- 52 4 – Interdisciplinary Programs
- 53 6 – College of Education
- 54 32 – Molinaroli College of Engineering and Computing
- 55 29 – College of Information and Communications
- 56 1 – College of Social Work
- 57 2 – NJ Arnold School of Public Health

58 There was no discussion. CHAIR OUTTEN asked for discussion on the motion from committee
59 to accept the report. There was none.

60 ***The report was accepted; the motion passed.***

61 ***Instructional Development (InDev) Committee***

62 KUNIO HARA (Department of Music History; Co-Chair of InDev; hence: HARA) and
63 STEPHANIE ARMSTRONG (College of Nursing, Co-Chair of InDev; hence ARMSTRONG)
64 provided an update on the Explorance Blue pilot program underway at USC. Explorance Blue
65 (EB) will be the new course survey tool to replace Class Climate (CC) by July 1 of 2025. This is
66 due to the USC contract with CC expiring and with CC sunseting as a system. In addition, InDev
67 has been working with the Provost and other standing committees to revamp teaching evaluations
68 as “student course experience surveys” and to provide best practices for evaluation of teaching. In
69 the spring of 2023, Faculty Senate charged InDev to conduct a review of teaching assessment,
70 which started in earnest in the fall of 2023 under previous InDev Chair, Mark Minett. This led to
71 the generation of several reports, such as a teaching assessment report and a set of
72 recommendations for increasing student survey response rates. During this process, InDev was
73 also asked to assist the Provost's Office with selecting a new survey tool (Explorance Blue) and in
74 developing a set of common questions for use in course experience surveys. The ten core questions

75 were developed by InDev using guidance from the most recent scholarship on teaching and
76 learning. Following InDev's development of the questions, they were vetted by an external survey
77 scholar. The revised questions were used in a pilot program in the summer of 2024 that involved
78 both graduate and undergraduate students in both online hybrid and in-person courses. Based on
79 feedback from the pilot, the questions were further modified by InDev. The recently modified
80 questions went through a second, larger-scale pilot in fall of 2024. The results of that pilot and
81 feedback from the Provost Quality Teaching Committee will be used to further refine the questions.
82 A final pilot will be conducted in spring 2025 in preparation for campus-wide adoption of the
83 questions by summer 2025. Faculty who participated in any of the pilot studies will have the
84 option to include or omit student course experience surveys during that period for annual
85 performance reviews, tenure and promotion, or post-tenure review. It was noted that EB provides
86 a better mobile experience for students and more flexible tailoring of questions for units that
87 require them. As part of the spring pilot, InDev plans to offer town hall meetings for faculty and
88 staff to explain the changes mentioned and gather further feedback from a wider swath of faculty.
89 InDev also mentioned they have subcommittees working on faculty peer assessment, how to
90 conduct holistic teaching assessment beyond just student surveys, and how different software tools
91 can be used for active and engaged learning. InDev is working with UCTP and FAC to determine
92 how to integrate best practices for quality teaching and teaching evaluation into tenure and
93 promotion guidelines.

94 ABBAS TAVAKOLI (College of Nursing) asked about using EB for surveys for multiple
95 instructors for each class, about extracting specific data from the EB reports, and clarified the
96 timeline for implementation in summer 2025. He was referred to MICHAEL PHILIPP (IT
97 Enterprise Applications; hence PHILIPP) for technical questions. JONAH STEINBERG (CAS,
98 Anthropology) asked about bias in teaching evaluations and how EB and new questions will deal
99 with this problem. ARMSTRONG reviewed the framework used for development of core
100 questions, which is designed to minimize bias by careful design of questions. HARA also
101 emphasized the shift to student experience rather than teacher evaluation for the surveys. SUDHA
102 XIRASAGAR (ASPH, Health Services Policy and Management; hence XIRASAGAR) asked
103 about a wider distribution of the pilot study to all faculty. COLIN WILDER (CAS, History) asked
104 if switching to EB would increase student survey completion rates. ARMSTRONG emphasized
105 that EB is mobile friendly and has more robust student notification protocols than CC, which might
106 increase response rates. LAURA K. SMITH (School of Journalism and Mass Communication)
107 asked what questions the students requested be added during the pilot study. ARMSTRONG
108 indicated the students wanted several new questions. Two existing questions were modified to
109 address the student requests and students requested an open-ended free response question. LIAM
110 HEIN (College of Nursing, Faculty Senate Chair-Elect; hence HEIN) mentioned that the Provost
111 website does list all of the current questions and optional questions units can use. MARK MINETT
112 (CAS, English; hence MINETT) reminded Senators that InDev had released a teaching assessment
113 report in December, 2023 that was available on the Senate website under the meeting materials for
114 that date. The report dealt with survey bias and offers guidelines for avoiding it. He also asked
115 about whether EB has a data dashboard yet due to his concern about how evaluation data is
116 analyzed and displayed (for example, using means). HARA indicated this was still in progress.
117 MINETT also asked what will be the shared governance oversight over the use of EB moving

118 forward, in terms of what data it can provide, what sort of analyses can be done, etc.? HARA
119 indicated there was not yet a plan for this but it will be part of the discussion as the pilots are
120 completed. ALEX REYNOLDS (CAS, Psychology) asked about the two core questions rating the
121 instructor and the course and why those rankings were not in sync with the Faculty Manual
122 rankings for T&P. HARA indicated they would take that suggestion back to the committee.
123 PHILIPP introduced himself as the main contact person for EB questions in IT Enterprise
124 Applications. Currently his group is working with 49 business units across the USC system for
125 pilot studies. He said they were looking to create a governance group that would include the Senate
126 and/or InDev as things go forward. He indicated that EB should unify student notifications for
127 course surveys, minimizing the number of email reminders they get and providing an overview of
128 surveys for all courses in one place (Blackboard). LAURA BRASHEARS (CAS, Sociology) asked
129 about questions that ask students to self-reflect on their effort and performance in the course.
130 ARMSTRONG said there was currently one question asking how much time students invested in
131 the course, both inside and outside of class.

132 ***Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC)***

133 MINETT moved to create a Committee on the Carolina Core in the Faculty Manual as originally
134 presented at the November Faculty Senate meeting. However, FAC offered two minor
135 amendments to the original language. One was a typo correction and the other was the correction
136 of the “Director for Academic Programs” title to the new title, “Executive Director of Academic
137 Program Planning and Decision Support”.

138 ***The amendment passed with no discussion.***

139 ***The amended version of the motion was then passed with no discussion.***

140 **AMENDED MOTION:**

141 “The Committee on the Carolina Core (CCC) will work with relevant faculty, student, and
142 administrative stakeholders to ensure the Carolina Core provides every student with the basic skills
143 necessary to pursue a fulfilling career, participate responsibly in a democratic society, function
144 well in a diverse global community, and develop a rich and meaningful life. At the start of each
145 academic year, the CCC will meet with the Office of the Provost to collaboratively set the year’s
146 agenda in relation to the Core. The CCC will collaborate on regular reviews of the Core and will
147 consider stakeholder recommendations and develop original proposals for improvements to the
148 Core’s curricular content, implementation, assessment, and administration. The Carolina Core
149 Approval Committee (CCAC) reviews proposed Core courses and recommends modifications to
150 the approved slate of Core courses. The CCC chair or their designee will serve on the CCAC. The
151 CCC will collaborate with the CCAC in reviewing assessments results and will provide feedback
152 on any proposed revisions to Core teaching and assessment rubrics made by the CCAC. The CCC
153 may also suggest additional or alternative revisions. The CCC will assist in circulating any
154 recommended revisions to relevant stakeholders and will present them to the Faculty Senate for
155 feedback and approval. The CCC will present to the Faculty Senate, for its feedback and approval,
156 any recommended revisions to the Core, including but not limited to the Core’s overall curricular
157 content and policies regulating the Core’s integration into programs of study. The CCC will

158 present to the Faculty Senate and other relevant stakeholders, for their feedback, any recommended
159 changes to the administration of the Core and will consult with the Office of the Provost on their
160 implementation. The CCC will review academic affairs policy proposals related to the Core. The
161 CCC will collaborate with the Office of the Provost to develop language and processes for clearly
162 communicating the substance and value of the Core. The CCC will assist in the development and
163 circulation of best practices to ensure the Carolina Core fulfills its mission.

164 The committee will consist of eleven faculty members elected for staggered three-year terms. No
165 more than one elected member may be from any single dean-led Unit, with the exception of the
166 College of Arts and Sciences, which will have a minimum of three and may have up to five elected
167 members. One of the eleven elected faculty members will be drawn from the Palmetto Colleges.
168 Each year, the president of the student body with the confirmation of the Student Senate will
169 appoint one undergraduate student to a one-year term as a non-voting member. Non-voting ex
170 officio members will include the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Director of
171 Institutional Assessment in the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics, a
172 representative from the University Advising Center, the Executive Director of Academic Program
173 Planning and Decision Support, and a representative from the Assistant Associate Deans Council.
174 Additional non-voting ex officio members may include a designee of the Carolina Core Approval
175 Committee and a designee of the Center for Teaching Excellence.”

176 MINETT and SUDDUTH then presented notice of two new motions for changes to the Faculty
177 Manual that will be taken up in January of 2025.

178 The first notice was to strike the phrase “general education requirements” from the charge of the
179 Committee on Instructional Development in the FM. With the approval of the CCC, the
180 responsibility for creating policies to govern general education requirements moves from InDev
181 to CCC. There was no discussion about this notice.

182 The second notice was concerning the creation of a Committee on Research in the FM. Currently,
183 a faculty committee to provide shared governance in the area of research does not exist. The
184 proposed language is:

185 “The faculty Committee on Research is broadly tasked to evaluate the current state of the research
186 enterprise at the University of South Carolina-Columbia, and to inform the faculty and the
187 administration regarding existing strengths and emerging opportunities for the advancement and
188 support of research across all fields and disciplines. The committee’s focus shall include, but is
189 not limited to, strategic planning and resource allocation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the
190 integration of research and student experiential learning. The Faculty Committee on Research
191 will partner with the university’s administration to advance the university’s capacity to secure
192 external funding, to develop and recommend policies on research ethics and integrity, to encourage
193 the faculty’s participation in the university’s research enterprise, and to promote faculty and
194 student research successes to the broader community. The Faculty Committee on Research will
195 periodically evaluate and update its strategic priorities and form and dissolve subcommittees
196 accordingly. To foster the implementation of its recommendations, the committee will devise and
197 document measurable goals and action plans. The committee will prepare an annual report

198 summarizing the committee’s activities, accomplishments, and recommendations, and it will
199 disseminate the report to the broader university community.

200 The committee will consist of nine members elected for staggered terms of three years. The
201 composition of the committee shall include one representative from each of the following six (6)
202 areas: arts and humanities; social sciences; life sciences; physical sciences/mathematics;
203 business/communication/law; and education/nursing/social work. The committee shall also
204 include one member from the faculty of the University Libraries and the chair of the Palmetto
205 College Campuses Research and Productive Scholarship Committee or their designee. The ninth
206 member will be an at-large member nominated by the Senate Steering Committee to ensure broad
207 representation. Ex-officio members will include but are not limited to representatives from the
208 Office of the Provost and the Office of the VP for Research.”

209 FIONNA HOLLIS (School of Medicine) asked how will we avoid having a single college or school
210 be overrepresented on this new committee, especially given that representation will be based on
211 research areas, loosely defined by the faculty themselves? SUDDUTH said the intent was to avoid
212 pigeonholing faculty based on School/College rather than looking at their research expertise. He
213 said much of this must be done by the Steering Committee when they create the initial slate of
214 nominees. CHAIR OUTTEN also reminded Senators that they can nominate committee members
215 during the voting process on the Senate floor if they feel the slate from Steering is not adequate.
216 HEIN asked if the new committee would have authority or be advisory in terms of their interaction
217 with the VPR. SUDDUTH indicated these would be conversations between the committee and
218 VPR, indicating a more advisory role. XIRASAGAR emphasized that Medicine, Nursing, and
219 Public Health combine research and practice in a way that may not be typical for other units, and
220 their viewpoint should be represented on the committee. ALEX CARRICO (School of Music)
221 asked how the committee will go about its charge to “evaluate the current state of the research
222 enterprise” at USC. SUDDUTH emphasized this would be a process the committee would have
223 to work through in its first few years.

224 These two motions will be formally presented at the January 15th, 2025 meeting.

225 *Scholastic Standards and Petitions*

226 BILL KNAPP (HRSM, Chair SS&P; hence KNAPP) and AMIE FREEMAN (University Libraries;
227 hence FREEMAN) presented a report on the course marking initiative to allow faculty to mark
228 their courses in banner as “Low Cost/No Cost” if the total cost of materials (textbooks, online
229 learning tools, homework management system, etc.) is less than \$40. This is part of a broader push
230 to increase course cost transparency. The program is opt-in for faculty. They have to request to
231 have this designation added to the course. Course clickers, scientific calculators, etc. are not
232 included in cost calculation. MINDY FINSKE (CAS, English; hence FINSKE) asked if there
233 would be a broader discussion on the plan, including the exact dollar limit of the designation, at
234 the Senate. FREEMAN indicated that this was initiated by the graduation and retention network.
235 FINSKE indicated that this issue should be at least discussed and perhaps voted on at Senate.
236 AARON DICKER (CAS, English) asked specifically how the \$40 limit would be calculated for
237 each course given that costs for materials vary a lot depending on where the student obtains them.

238 FREEMAN indicated this number would be determined using the lowest cost of materials
239 available at the USC Bookstore. SARAH ROGERS (CAS, Criminology and Criminal Justice)
240 asked if anyone had looked at how this would impact course enrollments and if the Libraries would
241 be offering more workshops for faculty on how to use low cost or open access materials in courses?
242 FREEMAN said feedback from other institutions indicated that this program has not had a
243 substantial impact on course enrollments on their campuses, but that it would be monitored at USC
244 if initiated. CHAIR OUTTEN asked if we knew how many courses at USC would currently meet
245 the \$40 threshold, but FREEMAN was not sure. MINETT expressed concern that this initiative
246 would reinforce the consumerist interpretation of higher education and create a class of “discount
247 courses” that would hurt certain courses and majors. He asked for more information to be brought
248 to the Senate to allow for the body to assess the concerns expressed by Senators. XIRASAGAR
249 suggested that data on student selection of low-cost courses be used to raise funds from alumni or
250 other sources to help subsidize course costs.

251 ***Report of the Chair***

252 CHAIR OUTTEN had no special report.

253 ***Unfinished Business***

254 No unfinished business.

255 ***For the Good of the Order***

256 CHAIR OUTTEN reminded the senators that the next meeting would be on the first Wednesday
257 of classes in January (January 15) in the Russell House theater. This is the first year the Senate
258 has had a January meeting since the new calendar was implemented. There were no other items
259 brought to the attention of the senate for the good of the order.

260 ***The meeting was adjourned at 16:58.***

261 [Minutes prepared by Marco Valtorta, Secretary and F. Wayne Outten, Chair]