

USC Faculty Senate

Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2025

Russell House Theater

F. Wayne Outten, Chair, presiding

The meeting was called to order at 15:00 EST.

Minutes from December 4, 2024, were approved.

President's Report:

President Michael Amiridis began the Faculty Senate meeting by discussing the university's impressive growth in student applications, expecting to reach 60,000 applications this year, which represents a 12-13% increase from the previous year. The university continues to attract primarily out-of-state students and has already received 1,200 student deposits. The institution has also released one hundred new full-time tenure-track faculty positions, the largest increase in over a decade.

The president outlined the university's legislative priorities for the upcoming year, focusing on tuition mitigation and maintaining affordability. He highlighted that in-state tuition has remained constant for six years, effectively decreasing by 25% when accounting for inflation. The university is also requesting state funding for several key infrastructure projects, including a new USC Neurological and Rehab Hospital, an \$80 million research and innovation building, and anticipating potential changes in federal research funding and priorities.

Significant campus infrastructure developments were discussed, including breaking ground on a new School of Medicine, renovating the East Tower of the Science and Technology Building, developing a Brain Health Center, completing renovations to the Jones Building, and improving dining capacity at the Russell House. Additional student housing projects include renovating Thornwell as a dormitory and planning new housing near Honors College and McBride.

Faculty Committee Reports:

Curricula and Courses Committee: Michael Dickson (,CAS report included the approval of two new courses. The committee is still addressing challenges related to course approvals, aiming for more comprehensive solutions in the future. The report was accepted by the Senate based on a voice vote.

Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC): The FAC Co-Chairs Mark Minett (English, CAS) and Bill Sudduth (University Libraries) presented a motion to modify the charge of the Instructional Development (InDev) committee in the Faculty Manual to remove reference to general education requirements. General education requirements will now be handled by the recently created Committee on the Carolina Core. The original notice for this motion was provided at the December 4, 2024 Faculty Senate meeting. The current committee charge is on page 10 of the Faculty Manual (June 19, 2024 approval date) and the text of the motion was:

“This committee will initiate studies and make recommendations to the faculty and administration to enhance the practice and status of teaching. It will review and initiate as necessary policies governing: the approval of new courses and curricula; ~~general education requirements~~; cocurricular activities; as well as student evaluation and faculty assessment of instruction.”

The motion was from committee and did not require a second. There was no discussion of the motion and it PASSED with a voice vote.

Next, FAC Co-Chair Bill Sudduth presented the motion to create a standing Faculty Committee on Research. This committee will enhance faculty involvement in research initiatives. The committee will consist of members representing various academic disciplines. This initiative is expected to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and advocate for the interests of faculty in research contexts. The original notice for this motion was provided at the December 4, 2024 Faculty Senate meeting. The text of the motion was:

“Faculty Committee on Research

The faculty Committee on Research is broadly tasked to evaluate the current state of the research enterprise at the University of South Carolina-Columbia, and to inform the faculty and the administration regarding existing strengths and emerging opportunities for the advancement and support of research across all fields and disciplines.

The committee's focus shall include, but is not limited to, strategic planning and resource allocation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the integration of research and student experiential learning. The Faculty Committee on Research will partner with the university's administration to advance the university's capacity to secure external funding, to develop and recommend policies on research ethics and integrity, to encourage the faculty's participation in the university's research enterprise, and to promote faculty and student research successes to the broader community.

The Faculty Committee on Research will periodically evaluate and update its strategic priorities and form and dissolve subcommittees accordingly. To foster the implementation of its recommendations, the committee will devise and document measurable goals and action plans. The committee will prepare an annual report summarizing the committee's activities, accomplishments, and recommendations, and it will disseminate the report to the broader university community.

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

After discussion was opened, an amendment was offered by Alex Carrico (School of Music) to change the text of the following paragraph:

“The committee will consist of ~~nine~~ **ten** members elected for staggered terms of three years. The composition of the committee shall include one representative from each of the following ~~six (6)~~ **seven (7)** areas: ~~arts and performing and creative arts~~; humanities; social sciences; life sciences; physical sciences/mathematics; business/communication/law; and education/nursing/social work.”

The justification for the amendment was that research conducted within the performing and creative arts (music, theatre, dance, media, visual arts, creative writing) is substantially different from that of many other disciplines represented on the proposed committee. Thus, it would benefit the committee to have a representative who could help expand understandings of research trends and opportunities in the performing arts, facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration between the arts and other fields, and advocate for the interests of the performing arts within a research context. The amendment was seconded. There was no discussion of the amendment and it PASSED with a voice vote.

There was no further discussion of the amended motion. The amended motion PASSED in this form:

“Faculty Committee on Research

The faculty Committee on Research is broadly tasked to evaluate the current state of the research enterprise at the University of South Carolina-Columbia, and to inform the faculty and the administration regarding existing strengths and emerging opportunities for the advancement and support of research across all fields and disciplines.

The committee’s focus shall include, but is not limited to, strategic planning and resource allocation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the integration of research and student experiential learning. The Faculty Committee on Research will partner with the university’s administration to advance the university’s capacity to secure external funding, to develop and recommend policies on research ethics and integrity, to encourage the faculty’s

participation in the university's research enterprise, and to promote faculty and student research successes to the broader community.

The Faculty Committee on Research will periodically evaluate and update its strategic priorities and form and dissolve subcommittees accordingly. To foster the implementation of its recommendations, the committee will devise and document measurable goals and action plans. The committee will prepare an annual report summarizing the committee's activities, accomplishments, and recommendations, and it will disseminate the report to the broader university community.

The committee will consist of ten members elected for staggered terms of three years. The composition of the committee shall include one representative from each of the following seven (7) areas: performing and creative arts; humanities; social sciences; life sciences; physical sciences/mathematics; business/communication/law; and education/nursing/social work. The committee shall also include one member from the faculty of the University Libraries and the chair of the Palmetto College Campuses Research and Productive Scholarship Committee or their designee. The ninth member will be an at-large member nominated by the Senate Steering Committee to ensure broad representation. Ex-officio members will include but are not limited to representatives from the Office of the Provost and the Office of the VP for Research.”

Report of the Chair:

The chair Wayne Outten (Chemistry and Biochemistry, CAS) emphasized the importance of faculty involvement in standing committees and encouraged Senators to participate in and publicize the upcoming committee interest survey. The committee interest survey will be distributed to gauge faculty interest in serving on standing committees. Newly created committees for the Carolina Core and Research will not be included in the initial survey. The chair mentioned the new link for Senate meeting recordings available on the website. The meetings are viewable in Panopto. Finally, the chair emphasized that best practice is to ensure syllabi are posted on Blackboard and provided to students by the first day of class for transparency and accessibility. Incorporate a graded assignment within the first month to provide students with timely feedback on their performance and study habits. Utilize resources from the Center for Teaching Excellence for syllabus development and best

practices to enhance course structure and student engagement. InDev will be holding town hall meetings starting in February to gather broad feedback on changes to course experience surveys and implementation of Explorance Blue.

Unfinished Business / New Business:

There was no unfinished business or new business brought before the Senate.

Good of the Order:

Stephanie Ackerson (Biological Sciences, CAS) mentioned that the within the syllabus database there was some problem designating syllabi from Honors sections versus regular course sections. Mark Minett, President of the USC AAUP, also announced their upcoming meeting to discuss legislative issues affecting higher education in South Carolina. The AAUP meeting is scheduled for January 31st at 1pm in Travelstead, room 125 in Wardlaw. Discussion will focus on local legislation affecting higher education and advocacy for faculty interests.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 15:40 EST.

Submitted by:

Kionna Walker, Faculty Senate Administrative Coordinator

F. Wayne Outten, Chair, Faculty Senate