

# UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA STAFF SENATE MEETING

Tuesday, December 10, 2024

3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

PRESIDING: Chris Burkett, Vice President

## ***Call to Order – Chris Burkett, Vice President***

Vice President Burkett officially called the meeting to order at 3:01 PM. Vice President Burkett welcomed staff senators and visitors to the staff senate meeting.

## ***Roll Call/Attendance Report – Julia Hodge, Secretary***

Secretary Hodge checked the roll after taking attendance. According to the attendance report, 38 senators were in attendance, 13 senators were absent or online, and no senators gave proxies.

## ***Establish Quorum – Julia Hodge, Secretary***

Based on the attendance report, Secretary Hodge declared a quorum was established and declared business could be conducted.

## ***Approval of Minutes – Chris Burkett, Vice President***

There were no changes to the November 12, 2024, staff senate meeting minutes. Senator Boland made a motion to accept the general body staff senate minutes as written. Senator Benson seconded the motion to accept the minutes as written. All senators were in favor. The motion was adopted and carried, and the minutes were accepted as written.

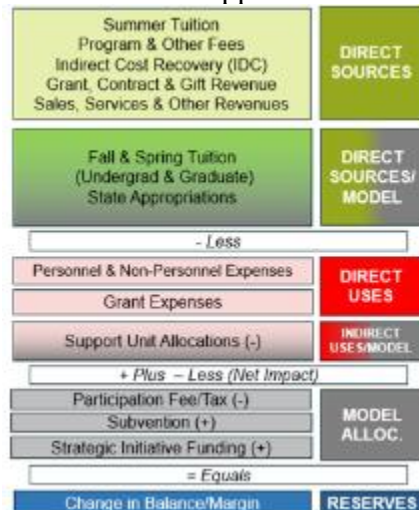
## ***President's Update – Chris Burkett, Vice President***

- Celebrate
  - Keep the Midlands Beautiful street clean-up
    - 32lbs of trash
    - Thank you to all volunteers!
  - Rivalry Week Recap
    - Beat Clemson!
    - 6,228 pints of blood donated (18,684 lives saved)
    - Over 6,500 Gamecocks attended Tiger Burn (record!)
- Collaborate
  - First ever SC statewide Staff Senate/Council meeting
  - School Supplies Drive Donation
    - Staff Senate partnered with COE's CarolinaTIP
- Innovate
  - USC awarded \$35 million federal grant (College of Education)
    - Improve college and career readiness among disadvantaged students in South Carolina (called Gear Up SC)
    - One of 18 schools selected!
    - Largest award ever for COE and one of the largest in university history!
- Reminders
  - Staff Senate Attendance
    - 7 absences max between general body meetings & committee meetings
  - Communication Expectations

- You should be giving regular updates to all constituents you represent
- You should be connecting with your leadership (Vice Presidents, AVPs, Directors, etc.) consistently

**Guest Speaker** – Kelly Epting, Associate Vice President for Finance and Budget

- Cost Pressures in Higher Education
  - Inflation is measured by the HEPI
  - Salaries and fringe are 81% of all USC system expenditures (\$969M)
  - Utilities (\$37M) cost almost as much as scholarships and fellowships (\$44M)
- Growth during Tuition Mitigation
  - USC has kept SC tuition at same rate for a record 5 consecutive years.
  - Even with resident tuition rate flat, tuition revenue exceeded budget expectations by 5% in FY2024 and is expected to grow another 5% in FY2025. Increases in total dollars received are attributed to
    - Increased enrollments from larger freshmen classes, improved retention
    - 3% and 3.9% increases in non-resident tuition for FY2024 and FY2025.
- Lost Purchasing Power
  - USC has managed with
    - state appropriations for tuition mitigation and direction allocations
    - cost-saving measures such as forced efficiencies and reprioritization.
  - From 2017 to 2023, USC internally cut and reallocated \$48M to support grown and high need areas. This is the equivalent of a 16% tuition increase.
- Budget Model Key Information
  - FY2021: USC began Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) budget model
  - The model endeavors to provide the Columbia Academic Units with the ability to participate more directly in revenue and expenditure changes.
  - FY2021 Budget Model is more transparent than the previous Incremental Model.
  - FY2026 Budget Model pending Board of Trustee approval will build from the current model with some improvements.
  - Budget Model Unit Structure
    - Academic Units
    - Support Units
    - Auxiliary Units – primarily self-supporting through ticket sales/fees. Pay central support units for central services used.



- Questions
  - Why did we change to this model?
    - RCM was implemented in 2021. The Board wanted more information on which colleges were bringing in dollars vs. not, and they wanted to incentivize the colleges to have skin in the game.
  - Development funding goes toward certain activities, but not the operating budget.
  - Headcount depends on the specific pool of funds. Some use total headcount, while others use undergraduate headcount, for instance.
  - They're doing what they can to help reduce duplication across campus, but they cannot enforce how practices are implemented.
  - Does the budget model only apply to operating budgets? Or to personnel budgets as well? Who oversees those allocations?
    - RCM budget model applies to operating budgets, but personnel is included in that. Ultimately, the President, Provost, CFO and Board must sign off on changes.
  - In terms of state increases, it depends on the appetite of the legislature.

### ***Reports of Committees:***

#### **Membership:** Kathryn Kenard/Andrea Avant

- Discussed "Who do I represent?" document and provided handout to senators. They will also share in Teams.
- Upcoming Officer Elections
  - January: hold info session on Teams and after general body meeting
  - February: during general body meeting, interested candidates will speak to senators. Then voting will open after the meeting.
- Also touched on apportionment and how they are on pause right now. After a discussion with the Executive Committee, they're hoping to have a larger discussion about it with the general body in the spring.

#### **Communications:** Michaela Taylor/Lori Carey

- Presented the new, updated website!
  - Over 15 hours of work
- Simplify
  - Simplified navigation
  - Added new pages
    - Staff Senators
    - Staff Appreciation Day
  - New minutes archive
  - More photos!
- What's Next
  - Check your links to the Staff Senate website (some links may have changed with new navigation)
  - Help us update the current projects section
- Edits and feedback are welcome!

### **Staff Policy and Well-Being: Jason Cone/Cami Reid**

- Connected with Robynn Pease about RGP staff concerns; will review them and HR policies to see if we can assist
- Advocated for all campus ombuds(staff, faculty, and students) to be classified as a confidential resource (aligning with IOA standards)
- Parking & transportation updates
  - USC wasn't compliant when issuing handicap permits before; updated to be compliant in August
  - Considered temporary handicap spaces; not feasible; pivoted to paratransit
  - Helped clarify this info for Faculty Senate
- From Caroline Agardy:
  - Clemson will be taking lead on sponsoring dependent tuition remission policy with the state house in the spring to \*hopefully\* be introduced
  - Craig Parks is attending the HEEPA meetings to help with moving initiatives forward to state legislation, such as clarity of election day procedures for employees
  - The university is not implementing the FLSA threshold due to the new court ruling. Departments will now be responsible for looking at the threshold and transitioning to exempt/non-exempt.
  - Received buy-in for **engagement survey** in the Spring with Modern Think – late February.
  - **HR Transformation Project**: design phase completed. Getting ready to transition to implementation planning phase with 7 different planning teams.
- Travis and Jessica will be reaching out to Continuing Education & Conferences to see if tuition assistance for employees can be expanded to their certifications/programs. Currently dictated by HR Policy 1.61.
- Amanda Minnet Colie continues to work on mental health spaces for staff and faculty on campus. She presented design and location options at our committee meeting and is clarifying next steps.
- Other staff spaces on campus:
  - Lactation spaces: list was removed from website, but you can see them if you go to the campus map > services > lactation rooms.  
Employee Well-Being is going to work on having someone audit the current list and make sure spaces are still functioning as they should and get that list added back onto the Employee Well-Being website.
  - Meditation/prayer spaces are open to faculty and staff, in addition to students. We hope to have this clarified and promoted on an updated Employee Resources page.
  - Employee Resources page - project is underway, led by Amanda Castles and HR; will go on HR page, under a Benefits and Well-Being section. Goal is to launch by July 1. Our committee will be asked to view test pages and offer feedback.

### **Professional Development: Khristina DeLorenzo/Simone Keller**

- No report at this time.

**Community Projects:** Chakira Hogan/Alexis Watts

- A full cart of supplies was delivered to Ms. Leydi West at Irmo Middle School where she teaches Spanish to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Ms. West is a College of Education grad and is originally from Columbia. She was very grateful for the supplies!
- We filled up the donation bin with donated clothing and shoes for Carolina Closet!
- Around 32lbs of trash picked up in just one hour at our first clean-up on Saturday, Nov. 16! Planning our next clean up in February- Date TBD
- Continuing to collect pull tabs for RMHC and we will plan a time in March or April to donate those.
- MLK Day of Service held on January 18<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) opportunities via the USC Leadership & Service Center:
  - Office of Sustainability: Garden tasks, weeding, planting, harvesting produce and litter pick-up.
  - Wheeler Hill: Clean up at Pocket Park, the entrance to the Historic Wheeler Hill neighborhood.
  - Game Changers: Cleaning Property, painting, cleaning gutters, cutting grass, picking up trash, organizing classrooms, vacuuming, and more.
  - Share ONE Love- Sport based activities with youth. Activities like dodgeball, other group style sport games.

**Bylaws:** Marissa Buck/Manda Fontenot-Tuk

- No report at this time.

**Staff Senate Awards and Recognition Committee:** Ashley Dantzler

- Save the Date for Staff Appreciation Day: May 22 (11 AM – 2 PM)
  - Location: Russell House Davis Field
- Called for volunteers for sub-committees for appreciation day planning. Deadline to sign up is January 14 (by the next Staff Senate meeting)
  - Protocol Sub-Committee
    - Purpose: To identify all special guests such as President, Board of Trustees, and Legislatures
  - Logistics Sub-Committee
    - Purpose: With the venue being Davis Field and the back-up location being the Russell House in the event of inclement weather, develop two plans
  - Decorations Sub-Committee
    - Purpose: To determine with the guidance of the approved budget, any decorations needed
  - Entertainment Sub-Committee
    - Purpose: To develop criteria for a DJ proposal and selection, an entertainment plan (games, dancing, etc.), and etc.
  - Communications/Publicity Sub-Committee
    - Note: Staff Senate Communications Committee will handle this sub-committee.

**Staff Senate Scholarship/Fundraising Committee:** Michelle Knight

- Looking to have a golf tournament for a fundraiser in the spring

- Save the Date: Thursday, May 15, 2025
- Encourage donations to the Staff Senate Fund
  - [www.donate.sc.edu/staffsenate](http://www.donate.sc.edu/staffsenate)

***Order of Business*** – *Julia Bellon, Parliamentarian*

- No new business

***Additional Announcements***

- MLK Commemorative Breakfast
  - January 17, 2025
  - 7:30-9:00 AM
  - RHUU Ballroom
  - Keynote: Clint Smith
- Paws for the Holidays
  - Dec 18, 9-11 AM in Russell Underground
- Reinstated WBB tickets for fac/staff for this year (you+3 with Carolina Card). The website will be updated to reflect the reinstatement.

***Adjourn***

Senator Carey made a motion to adjourn. Senator Lee seconded the motion to adjourn. All senators were in favor. The formal meeting adjourned at 4:27 PM.

**Next meeting: Tuesday, January 14 at 3:00 p.m. in the Lumpkin Auditorium, Close-Hipp Building, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Julia Hodge  
Secretary  
Staff Senate