

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
STAFF SENATE MEETING**

Tuesday, October 14 2025  
3:00 – 4:30 p.m.  
PRESIDING: Chris Burkett, President

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

**Roll Call/Attendance Report** – *Michaela Taylor, Secretary*

Secretary Taylor checked the roll after taking attendance. The meeting started at 3:00 PM. According to the attendance report, 45 senators were in attendance, 9 senators were absent or online, and no senators gave proxies.

**Establish Quorum** – *Jessica McCormick, Parliamentarian*

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

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

There were no changes to the September 9, 2025, staff senate meeting minutes. Senator Annan made a motion to accept the general body staff senate minutes as written. Senator Cox 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, President*

President Burkett welcomed the new senators to the general body meeting.

**Information**

- Parking mobility master plan consultant group hired. Stakeholder engagement planned for the week of November 3.
- New leadership announced | Sara Kirby hired as Associate Vice President for Clinical Affairs, Tiffany Foxworth serving as interim VP of Marketing, Julian Williams named Vice President for System Affairs and Community Engagement
- USC Staff Fireflies night went well in September but we are not seeking to add it to the appreciation week lineup at this time.
- USC HR is reviewing SC Executive Order Number 2025-31 on telecommuting policies. More information to come.
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**Upcoming Staff Senate speakers include the following:**

November: Director of Parking, Brian Favela and the Executive Director of Community Engagement, Dr. Theresa Harrison

December: University Architect, Derek Gruner and the USC Alumni Chief Experience Officer, Jared Evans

February 2026: USC President, Dr. Michael Amiridis

Parking Questions for Director Favela Requested. Email to come with link to form. Submit questions through your senator.

### **Opportunities**

- USC Employee Survey town halls are happening October 20. Links to join virtually were shared across campus via email.
- McCausland ConnectED – November 6 - [Register here](#)
- Nominate someone for the MLK Social Justice Award – [Nominate someone here](#)

### **Celebrations**

- Staff Senate was mentioned and appreciated in the 2025 State of the University address for the work on Staff Appreciation Day and Staff Excellence Awards
- **Save the date!** Staff Appreciation Day is Thursday, May 14 and Staff Excellence Awards are Friday, May 15.
- Thanks to all Senators who represented us at the Wellness Expo!
- David and Nicole Tepper named the HRSM Sport and Entertainment Management Department
- New Staff Senate “Garnet and Great” cards are available for senators to send to great staff across campus

### **Connect. Empower. Lead**

- A reminder to continue to connect with your constituents and meet with leadership.

### **Guest Speakers –**

*Brice Bible, Vice President for Information Technology*

#### **Shared updates on artificial intelligence across campus.**

- Launched enterprise ChatGPT across campus – 16,000 current sign ups
- Positioned as national leader with OpenAI
- USC is collaborating with other SC research universities and state government on statewide AI data center opportunities
- Units across campus have created many CustomGPTs. Example: Student Success Center’s Cocky Scholar, University 101 modules, etc.
- Anything you need for AI should be on the [Garnet Foundry website](#).
- AI Governance Plan is in the works for purchasing, development and purchasing. The Board of Trustees has endorsed the adoption of artificial intelligence at USC.

*Robynn Pease, USC Staff Ombuds*

#### **Shared updates from the annual report.**

- 162 visitors from Jan. 2024 to June 2025.
- Ombuds office continues to serve individual constituents, facilitate mediations and offer presentations and trainings

- Classification and compensation, conflicting HR liaison roles and the return to campus mandate were systemic patterns of concerns in the last year
- Goals for 2025-2026 include updating the website with more resources, establishing university ombuds charter and continuing to develop trainings.
- Read the Staff Ombuds [annual report HERE](#)

## **Reports of Committees:**

### **Membership** – Katie Annan

- The Staff Senate past presidents joined for the September committee meeting. Learned about how bylaws were written regarding the representation for each area.
- Gathering data from the survey and looking to see how we can use that information to inform decisions moving forward.
- University of Kentucky’s Staff Senate Chair, Vice Chair and Program Coordinator are joining their November 18<sup>th</sup> committee meeting.

### **Communications** – Emily Miles & Thom Harman

- Reminder that all general body meetings are uploaded to YouTube and accessible from the Staff Senate website.
- Developing digital display graphics for use across campus noting upcoming meetings, how to watch, etc.
- Working with Staff Appreciation and Recognition Committee to discuss comms efforts around the day.
- If you are still missing a headshot on the Staff Senate website, please contact Senator Harman.

### **Staff Policy and Well-being** – Kelsey Chambers & Caroline Hulett

- Met with Melissa Arnold to discuss the changing telecommuting guidelines. Central HR is working to distribute changing information
- Reaching out to Bright Horizons to learn more about university involvement
- If anyone is interested in a safety and awareness course for their units, reach out to Sgt. Mark Tevepaugh at [tevepaum@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:tevepaum@mailbox.sc.edu). These training sessions last about 15 minutes.

### **Professional Development** – Jalen Fuller & Brett Williams

- Attending ModernThink town halls to learn about the direction the university is taking and how we can help fill in the gaps.
- Hope to work with the Staff Policy & Well-Being committee on an idea they proposed to us; will pursue this further as soon as our more pressing goals and workflows are clarified.

### **Community Projects** – Amanda Minnet Colie & Alexis Watts

#### Food Fight success:

- Even though LSU took the win on the football field, South Carolina came out on top in the SEC Food Fight, earning 592 gifts to LSU’s 177!

- Both schools scored big for their campus food pantries, USC raised \$29,438 and collected 23,168 items to help stock the shelves.
- Keep the pantry in mind for future donations as the need keeps rising. Student visits have increased 300%.

We have several October and November opportunities to volunteer with Cocky's Reading Express in Columbia elementary schools: <https://linktr.ee/USCVolunteer>

- Collecting school supplies for the Student Success Center- You can bring those to the next meeting, and we will follow up with a flyer!
- Working on a survey for staff senators to complete to help us determine when and how senators would like to be involved.

### **By-Laws – Stephanie Richards**

- The Bylaws Committee convened on September 11, 2025, to discuss the development, review, and execution of the Staff Senate bylaws. Key topics included the origins of the bylaws, attendance policy rationale, attendance tracking methods, and benchmarking with other universities to ensure effective governance and transparency. Special guests included founders Angela Wright and Leena Holt.
- Bylaws origin and development: The bylaws were initially created under a tight deadline, relying on research and comparisons with other universities' bylaws due to limited guidance, emphasizing adaptation based on lived experience and feedback from senators.
- Benchmarking and future tasks: The committee plans to benchmark attendance bylaws with other universities, analyze five years of attendance data to inform amendments if necessary, and develop operational procedures to support bylaw enforcement and clarity.
- Requesting co-chairs complete the form that was sent out today by November 1 to help our committee ensure accuracy of existing committee descriptions in the bylaws.
- Encouraging everyone to review Article VII on Committees as we are doing a deep dive on committee descriptions and ensures a baseline knowledge of senators being able to communicate all the work we are doing.

### **Staff Appreciation and Recognition Committee – Adrienne White & Brian Shelton**

- Save the date for Staff Appreciation Day on May 14, 2026!

### **Scholarship and Fundraising Committee – Savannah Britz & Terrence Gilmore**

- Save the date for a cornhole tournament on November 20, 2025 at 4 PM on the Wellness and Fitness fields! More information to register coming soon.
- If you have a connection to a local bar, brewery or restaurant that would host Staff Senate for a precent night, please reach out to the committee!

### **Order of Business**

None

### **Announcements / Good of the Order**

None

### ***Adjourn***

Senator Brown made a motion to adjourn. Senator Elliot seconded the motion to adjourn. All senators were in favor. The formal meeting adjourned at 4:14 PM.

**Next meeting of the new Staff Senate term: Tuesday, November 11 at 3:00 p.m. in the Lumpkin Auditorium, Close-Hipp Building, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor.**

Respectfully Submitted,

**Michaela Taylor**

Secretary

Staff Senate