

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING**

Wednesday, October 6, 2021

This session was held entirely online.

PRESIDING Chair Audrey Korsgaard

**Call to Order**

CHAIR AUDREY KORSGAARD called the meeting to order at 3:00pm EST.

**Corrections to and Approval of Minutes**

SENATOR VALTORTA provided corrections to the minutes for the September 8, 2021 Faculty Senate Meeting. The minutes were approved based on the corrections.

**Invited Guest**

CHAIR KORSGAARD stated that Mr. Terry Parham is not available for this meeting. He was scheduled to be on the agenda.

**Report of the Officers**

INTERIM PROVOST CUTLER brought greetings from Interim President Pastides. Interim President Pastides is traveling and unable to attend today's meeting.

Interim Provost Cutler was pleased at how the semester is progressing. It is going better than anticipated. Appreciation is given to faculty and staff. Dr. Melissa Nolan's (Arnold School of Public Health) modelling of how the semester would be progressing in relation to COVID-19 is accurate. Faculty, students, and staff have stated how appreciative they are to be back on campus. Things are going in a positive direction. People are supporting one another.

Interim Provost Cutler provided updates on COVID-19 and the dashboard. COVID-19 positivity rate has been less than 1%. The sewer rate is showing very low COVID-19 rate. Despite the low positivity rates, it is important to remain vigilant yet optimistic. Much of the success is given to faculty and shared governance. Shared governance is the reason why and how the university has been able to remain open. Provost Cutler requested faculty and staff to continue communicating needs with his office. Vice Provost Addy is attending Faculty Welfare meetings. This is another avenue faculty can communicate concerns and information with the provost's office. UofSC will continue to work toward a safe environment.

Interim Provost Cutler addressed the money available from the state budget. The State of SC has money left over from the Cares Act and money from additional sources. The university will ask for funding for the following areas:

- Tuition mitigation funding.
  - This will make UofSC more affordable for instate students. It would allow us to be one of the most affordable R1 institutions in the US.
  - It will hold tuition rates stable for the third year in a row.
- Funds to help with recruitment and retention of educators.
  - South Carolina loses many educators. UofSC wants to stem the tide.
- Health science initiative.
  - UofSC recognizes the role of developing health care professionals that will serve the state of SC including rural areas.
- Infrastructure initiative.
  - Maintenance for 12-14 buildings throughout campus.
- IT infrastructure.

The General Assembly will be meeting in January and February. During this time, the General Assembly will finalize the use of federal funds. If UofSC obtains even 50% of what we ask, the next few years will be exciting.

SENATOR KORNAGAY asked for clarification regarding the ceiling on offering online courses (i.e., how many courses are allowed).

INTERIM PROVOST CUTLER stated that the most important aspect is to offer a safe and healthy environment. The Provost's Office is working with the Deans. The Provost's Office wants to expand online education in general. COVID shouldn't drive online learning. The top priority is your safety.

SENATOR KORNAGAY asked about the status of Carolina Online.

INTERIM PROVOST CUTLER stated that 73 persons applied to Carolina Online. From this pool of applicants, 24 enrolled throughout the system; another 24 enrolled in Carolina Online. UofSC has not opened Carolina Online because the price point is too difficult for the deans to accept. In particular, the MLS (Major League Soccer) price point is too low. MLS has a different price point per credit hour than other students. He hopes to renegotiate the price point. Interim Provost Cutler encourages deans and departments to develop online programs and not worry right now about Carolina Online. Move forward with online programs.

SENATOR MINETT thanked the provost for all the work associated with stemming the impact of COVID-19 and the continued work. He asked if there are any updates regarding students not wearing masks over their noses (i.e., how can we fix the issue)?

INTERIM PROVOST CUTLER stated that 1) we need to remind students of the importance to wear the mask but also 2) understand of the mental health of people. Interim Provost Cutler is supportive of continued use of face coverings.

SENATOR HENDERSON appreciated the low numbers on the COVID-19 dashboard and the use of masks. Colleagues also are appreciative of the HEPA filters. Colleagues are wondering when filters will be changed.

INTERIM PROVOST CUTLER stated that he will confirm with facilities when the filters will be changed and report back to Faculty Senate.

SENATOR TAVAKALI asked for an update on the requirement for reporting to the Governor's Office.

INTERIM PROVOST CUTLER stated that the university still needs to complete this form. The state government is responsible for this requirement.

SENATOR BUCKHAULTS asked advice for students and faculty regarding how low the numbers go before we go back to normal? It might help with compliance to set expectations about when life might be go back to normal.

INTERIM PROVOST CUTLER stated that the decision will be based on science. The surrounding communities need to settle down before we "go back to normal".

CHAIR KORSGAARD stated the resolution the senate passed basically staying in compliance with CDC guidelines. Will this continue to be used as a guideline?

INTERIM PROVOST CUTLER agreed that CDC will be used in the discussion.

SENATOR PURDAY thanked Interim Provost Cutler for all that is being done. She stated some faculty members have expressed concerns of students' mental health wellbeing. There currently is a log jam for appointments at University Health Services. Students are having difficulty in obtaining appointments. What is being done to remedy this issue? Is the University exploring ways to obtain resources to help students who are having mental health issues, particularly around COVID-19 issues?

INTERIM PROVOST CUTLER responded that this (i.e., mental health and the ability to obtain help) is an important issue. He has been having conversations with Dr. Jason Stacy, who is overseeing this issue. This is a very serious issue and one that is very important to Provost Cutler. There have been multiple suicides this year; one is too many. A conversation with Dr. Stacy has been made regarding having more personnel in this area. Another topic of conversation is providing 24/7 telehealth/telemedicine services. The university is receiving bids from companies.

INTERIM PROVOST CUTLER reminded Faculty Senate that the University Health system will not turn away a student. If a student can't wait for an appointment and needs to be seen immediately, the student will be seen.

CHAIR KORSGAARD echoed the concerns for students' ability to obtain appointments.

SENATOR HARRISON asked about Carolina Online and asked for clarification of the renegotiation of contracts. Is renegotiation of contracts possible? What would the new contracts entail regarding tuition rates?

INTERIM PROVOST CUTLER stated that MLS has driven Carolina Online. Carolina Online tuition rate for MLS is \$208/credit hour. Carolina Online tuition for everyone else is \$333/credit hour.

SENATOR HARRISON asked if Interim Provost Cutler is optimistic of being able to renegotiate the contract.

INTERIM PROVOST CUTLER is optimistic. He didn't want to discuss the plan at this moment but hopes at the next Faculty Senate meeting he can provide an update.

### **Reports from Faculty Committees**

#### **Committee on Curricula & Courses Report, Stacy Winchester, Chair**

CHAIR WINCHESTER: Nineteen proposals were presented to Faculty Senate. The proposals were from:

- The College of Arts and Sciences (11)
- Honors College (1)
- The College of Hospitality, Retail, and Sport Management (1)
- The School of Music (5)
- The Arnold School of Public Health (1)

The proposals were approved.

#### **Committee on Instructional Development (InDev), Professor Ramy Harik, Chair**

CHAIR HARIK: The Committee has a new charge. The Committee will initiate studies and make recommendations to 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; co-curricular activities; as well as student evaluation and faculty assessment of instruction. In addition, the committee will coordinate instructional innovation efforts with such bodies as may be established administratively or by

faculty for such purposes, to include innovation efforts with respect to learning spaces and instructional technology.

The committee consists of seven elected members, six appointed members, four ex-officio members and guests. Guests include the Faculty Senate Chair, C&C chair, C&C representative, and a member of OIRAA.

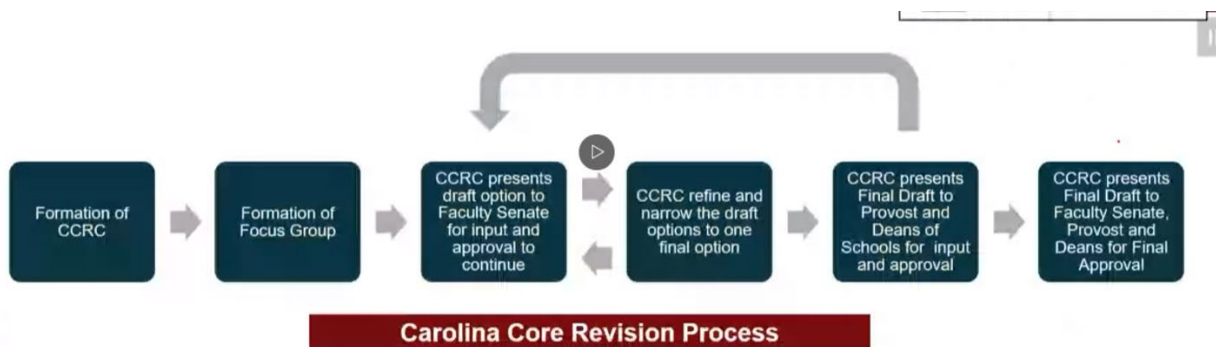
InDev has two sub-committees: Carolina Core subcommittee and Caroline Online subcommittee.

### Report on the Carolina Core Subcommittee

Carolina Core subcommittee charge is to create a process and timeline to revise the Carolina Core as recommended by InDev in 2020-2021. Dr. Leslie Lovelace (College of Arts & Sciences) is the Chair for this subcommittee. The timeline for this subcommittee is as follows:

- Spring 2022: formation of Carolina Core Review Committee (CCRC).
- Summer 2022: data are collected, and research is synthesized.
- Fall 2022: CCRC begins stakeholder engagement.
- Spring 2023: The revised draft plan will be presented to the Provost, Deans, InDev, and other key administrators for review.
- Fall 2021: If a no-vote occurs, the ad hoc committee will repeat stakeholder engagement process. If a yes-vote occurs, the ad hoc committee’s work will end.
- Summer 2023 (Fall 2023-Summer 2024): New Core implementation process is carried out.
- Fall 2024: New Core is in effect for the 2024-2025 Bulletin.

The Carolina Core Revision Process includes:



The Committee will be representative. People will be heard. Faculty Senate will provide input. Shared governance provides the opportunity for drafting options. This is a process.

Regarding next steps, the subcommittee will look at reviewing general education requirements of peer institutions, reviewing how peer institutions addressed revising their general education core, and revisiting how UofSC handled the revision that started in 2007 and resulted in the current Carolina Core.

### **Report on Carolina Online Subcommittee**

The Charge of this committee is to create a C&C process flow for conversion of existing programs to online. Dr. Rebecca Stern (College of Arts & Sciences) is chairing the subcommittee.

The approval process for adding online modality to existing degree programs is as follows:

1. Pre-authorization: Provost's office with notification to Senate
2. Academic Unit Head
3. College/School Representative
4. C&C review
5. Faculty Senate
6. Board of Trustees (BOT AESEC and Full BOT)
7. CHE notification (Submitted by the Office of Academic Programs)
8. SACSCOC Notification (Submitted by the Office of Academic Programs/OIRAA)

The essence of the review is at stage 4 (i.e., C&C review), however, the subcommittee is looking at a holistic review.

Progress of the InDev Carolina Online subcommittee is as follows:

- Reviewed literature on best practices for successful online degree programs;
- Collated information about online degrees at peer and peer-aspirant institutions;
- Studied methodologies for evaluating Online Bachelor's Degree Programs for US News & World Report and the Online Learning Consortium; and
- Drafted process and approval documents for units wishing to add online modality to their existing Bachelor's degree programs.
- The subcommittee has produced an early draft of a recommended approval process for units seeking to add online modality to existing degree programs. Included is a suggested Pre-Authorization form, to be issued by the provost's office, and a checklist for Courses and Curricula [sic Curricula & Courses], with the expectation that recommendations for the APPS forms will emerge from the C&C document.
- The subcommittee is also working to organize information for potential proponents, including models of highly rated programs, considerations regarding accreditation and assessment, recommendations for intellectual property statements, and guidance for negotiating duplication across the UofSC system.
- The expectation is to vote on the subcommittee's output (C&C review process) during the November 2021 Faculty Senate meeting.

## **Report of the Secretary**

Secretary had nothing to report

## **Report of Chair**

CHAIR KORSGAARD stated that there is not much to report regarding the COVID-19 Advisory Team. As evident from the dashboard, the numbers are low and steady. Currently the COVID-19 Advisory Team is not planning anything for the Spring 2022 semester. Much of what will occur for next semester is already in place. The university is holding “steady” for the time being. If a faculty member needs to go into quarantine, coordinate with your department chair.

There are a few initiatives in progress including the Ad Hoc Committee on Professional Conduct and the Committee on Freedom of Expression. The Professional Conduct Committee is on track for a report by the end of fall 2021 semester. The search for a provost is beginning. The committee is nearly finalized. The same search firm is being used that hired Provost Tate. The hiring timeline is dependent on the presidential search.

Looking into a post COVID-19 era, Chair Korsgaard encouraged faculty to understand that university requirements for teaching online courses will go back to normal. That is, new courses will be required to go through the approval process for online delivery. Chair Korsgaard encouraged faculty to begin preparing courses that will be offered for online delivery to go through C&C.

We are approaching an inflection point. The university learned a lot from the pandemic. Students learning preferences and habits have changed. Higher education has changed and the COVID pandemic has accelerated changes. Some of these changes are scary and threatening. Other changes are incredible and exciting. Higher education is facing demographic shifts. COVID-19 has made it clear how valuable the residential experience is, that classroom experiences and out of classroom experiences are extremely valuable for students.

Our nation also has a renewed appreciation for health care which is good for our colleagues in the health sciences.

CHAIR KORSGAARD asked faculty to think about topics for the agenda regarding positive change:

- 1) What will push UofSC forward toward excellence?
- 2) What programs do we want to develop?
- 3) How can we develop interdisciplinary research?
- 4) How we evaluate teaching in a new way?

**Old business:** none

**Good of the order:** none

The meeting concluded at 4:07pm EST