

# University of South Carolina Upstate

General Faculty Meeting – Virtual Format – September 3, 2021 at 2:45 p.m.

## MINUTES

**Call to Order** – Dr. Carmen Harris called the meeting to order at 2:49 p.m.

- Special note – Dr. Lisa Johnson, Faculty Chair, won't be able to make it due to family emergency therefore our Chair-Elect, Dr. Carmen Harris, will be running the meeting

### Administrative Updates

- **Dr. David Schecter, Provost**
  - Please see e-mails regarding 9/11 events next week
  - Administration has responded via email to Senate resolution from August 20 – sent an hour prior to this meeting. Further updates will come in the next week or so on the air filter piece. If faculty have questions, please write Dr. Schecter directly.
- **Mary Bucher**, special assistant to the Chancellor for public Health and COVID-19
  - Community vs. Campus Indicators
    - We have mitigation factors that most don't – masks at all indoor locations, contact tracing, seating charts, etc.
    - We've had no instance of a student sitting right next to a positive student bring infected
    - Plenty of PPE
    - Actively hiring new staff in Health Services
    - Saliva testing available through USC Pharmacy
    - Two numbers we report weekly: Active cases & on-campus number

### Meeting Business

- Check in handled to establish quorum
- Adopted the agenda by unanimous consent
- Approval of Minutes from August 27, 2021 – motion by Dr. George Williams, second by Dr. Lizabeth Zack – minutes were approved
- Referred to instructions from e-mail on how to use chat and Robert's Rules of Order

## Unfinished Business

### • Pandemic Teaching Policies

- Faculty Welfare submitted report to faculty regarding the motion on the table.
  - Dr. Tine Herzberg (Chair, Faculty Welfare Committee) spoke to their discussion. The committee supports the validity of the motion. The committee would encourage the University to explain why remaining in-person is so important, and preference should be to retain live lectures via Blackboard Collaborate Ultra.
- Motion automatically became pending at the end of their report
- Motion on the table: **A motion to permit instructors of record to modify teaching modality, effective immediately and throughout fall semester, based on the conditions of their classrooms and the demands of their courses, if distance education certification has been achieved.**
  - **Official wording: Motion to Modify Methods of Instruction Delivery for the Remainder of Fall Semester, 2021 by Dr. Monika Shehi Herr, seconded by Dr. David Coberly**

*Whereas USC Upstate does not mandate the fully approved vaccine against COVID-19;*

*Whereas the Delta variant is spreading rapidly in our community, endangering the lives of children who cannot be vaccinated and straining all Upstate hospital systems;*

*Whereas the current pandemic is causing widespread and unpredictable disruptions in childcare services impacting students and faculty;*

*Whereas many classrooms do not allow for safe distancing between class participants or provide other safety measures like HEPA filters;*

*Therefore, be it resolved that Faculty ask that effective immediately instructors of record are allowed to modify methods of instruction delivery for the rest of the Fall 2021 semester based on the physical conditions of their classrooms and the demands of their courses, provided the requirements for Distance Education are met.*

- Mary Bucher stated that the data supports that no increases in cases have occurred due to classroom spread. Last week – 24 total case reports, 25 this week.
  - Some concern that there are too many things we don't know – total numbers of those not tested, classroom environment and size, etc.
- Dr. Brock Adams – anecdotal story – he's positive. He believes he got it from the classroom and a student while in a small classroom with all wearing masks.
- Question called by Dr. Elizabeth Cole and seconded by Dr. Monika Shehi Herr
- Motion voted on by poll: passed 85% in favor, 7% opposed, 8% abstained
- Dr. Carmen Harris noted that just because we passed the motion, it doesn't mean that the university administration is required to implement the will of the Faculty.

- Questions surrounding if the faculty body has any power in governance any longer – we need to discuss.

### Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn by Dr. Griffin Woodworth, seconded by Dr. David Coberly. Meeting adjourned at 4:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kim Land, Faculty Recording Secretary