

Faculty Welfare Annual Report to Faculty Senate 2025-2026

Committee Members (with academic affiliation and end of term):

Elected

Ed Madden, College Of Arts And Sciences, English (2028)

Dan Brackmann, School Of Law, Law Library (2026)

Sabra Custer, College Of Nursing, Professional Nursing Practice (2028)

Marcia Purday, College Of Information And Communications, Sch Of Journ & Mass Comun (2028)

Claire Bryant, School Of Music, School Of Music (2027)

Kiesha Wilson, Chair, School of Medicine Columbia, Mdc Path-micro-immunology (2027), co-chair

Gale Ashmore, Palmetto College, Un Palmetto College (2028)

Appointed

Silke Henrich, Chair, College Of Engineering And Computing, MCEC Biomedical Engineering (2027), co-chair

Sarah Waheed, College Of Arts And Sciences, History (2027)

Ex Officio: Provost Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, Vice Provost Jennifer Ng; Senate Chair Liam Hein

Committee membership and description

This committee will consider university policies and the enforcement of policies regarding the welfare of the faculty, such as faculty salaries, other compensation and benefits, and any matters affecting the workplace environment. The committee may recommend appropriate changes or the enforcement of existing policy, propose new policies, or comment upon proposed university action affecting faculty welfare. Major changes in academic affairs policy should be forwarded to the Faculty Advisory Committee for its consideration. In addition to the six elected faculty members, there will be one faculty member from the regional Palmetto Colleges elected by the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate and two members appointed by the provost. A representative of the Office of the Provost will serve ex officio.

2025-2026 Meetings and Actions

The Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) met virtually during the 2025-2026 academic year using the Microsoft Teams platform. FWC met once a month on the last Monday of the month. The Committee met on the following dates:

August 25, 2025
September 22, 2025
October 20, 2025
November 17, 2025
December 8, 2025
February 23, 2026
March 23, 2026
April 27, 2026

Note: The meeting scheduled for January 26, 2026, and the rescheduled meeting on February 2, 2026, were canceled because of campus closures resulting from inclement weather.

Major initiatives and accomplishments

- Reviewed the 2025 Faculty Climate and Employee Insights survey results.
Outcome: While areas such as mission, institutional pride, and department leadership received relatively strong ratings, survey responses related to resources, balance among research, teaching, and service, compensation and benefits, performance management, confidence in senior leadership, and shared governance received comparatively lower scores.
- Expanded faculty outreach by establishing Faculty Welfare Committee liaisons across colleges and encouraging faculty feedback through improved communication channels and the exploration of anonymous reporting mechanisms.
Outcome: Eleven FWC liaisons were identified across ten USC colleges. Liaisons are invited to Committee meetings and serve as points of contact between the FWC and the broader faculty community.
- Successfully advocated for adjustments to dependent tuition scholarships with university leadership and the Educational Foundation.
Outcome: Dependent tuition scholarships will increase beginning in Fall 2026.
- Addressed ongoing campus parking and transportation concerns, including School of Music parking access during Colonial Life Arena events, faculty parking shortages, shuttle reliability, and participation in discussions related to the University Master Mobility Plan.

Outcome: Dr. Wilson, Co-Chair, was invited to participate in Master Mobility Plan meetings and will continue to raise previously identified parking concerns. The Committee successfully advocated for School of Music faculty to be permitted to park in the faculty parking lot behind the Discovery Building during Colonial Life Arena events.

- Raised concerns regarding faculty access to campus recreational facilities, including communication about closures, accessibility, parking, and pricing structures.

Outcome: Dr. Henrich (co-chair) reached out to campus recreation management to discuss faculty concerns regarding communication about facility closures.

- Worked with Information Technology leadership to improve classroom technology support for faculty, including advocacy for loaner dongles, standardized classroom technology, and pilot technology support distribution stations.

Outcome: USC is in the process of updating classroom technology across campus, with completion anticipated by the end of the summer. In the interim, IT agreed to supplement under-equipped classrooms with additional HDMI and USB-C dongles, provide necessary hardware and software updates, and make loaner dongles available through IT support. The Committee also discussed faculty concerns regarding classroom recording and filming without consent and reviewed university and state policies related to privacy, intellectual property, and student conduct.

- Investigated onboarding and offboarding concerns affecting faculty, including delays in Blackboard access, benefits enrollment issues, retirement counseling, and communication gaps related to HR and PeopleSoft processes.

Outcome: The FWC communicated faculty concerns to the HR Benefits Office regarding responsiveness, onboarding, retirement counseling, and delays in insurance enrollment. Committee members met directly with HR Benefits representatives to discuss response-time expectations, staffing shortages, escalation procedures, and planned improvements, including a centralized intake process and chatbot support. Helen Mack and Belinda Ogorek from the HR Benefits Office provided informational materials for distribution to faculty regarding available benefits, procedures, resources, monthly workshops, and appeals processes.

- Discussed implementation concerns surrounding South Carolina's new bathroom access legislation and explored ways to provide faculty and students with information about available single-user restroom facilities.

Outcome: The Center of Student Engagement, supported by university administration, is working on an updated campus map to help individuals locate designated bathrooms, including single-user bathrooms.

- Hosted presentations from the Office of Employee Well-Being regarding employee wellness screenings, coaching services, workshops, Wellness Champions, and access to wellness resources for regional campuses.

Outcome: Employee Well-Being resources were presented to the Committee, and information was shared with members and liaisons for broader distribution to faculty.

Ongoing Work:

- Continued monitoring and follow-up regarding HR Benefits Office responsiveness and staffing concerns.
- Continued engagement with campus parking, mobility, and transportation planning. The Committee raised concerns regarding pedestrian safety, including the increased use of scooters, hoverboards, and other motorized devices on sidewalks and crosswalks, and initiated follow-up discussions with Campus Police. Campus Police are working to provide the Committee with incident statistics and an overview of enforcement strategies.
- Continued monitoring of faculty welfare issues related to compensation, benefits, academic freedom, technology support, accessibility, and workplace climate.

Report prepared by Silke Henrich and Kiesha Wilson, Co-Chairs