

September 3, 2020

Dear Provost Zukoski and President Folt,

On behalf of the Keck School of Medicine (KSOM) Faculty, and as elected representatives of this body, we are writing to express our deep, unified concern regarding the process and timing of the decision that resulted in the disruptive transition of Dean Laura Mosqueda, and how this was communicated to KSOM Faculty.

Many KSOM faculty are still reeling and recovering from numerous events and leadership transitions that have occurred over the past 5 years which have disproportionately affected KSOM within the USC community. The lack of a cohesive and transparent leadership strategy from the University to assuage these concerns or openly communicate has left many of us feeling persistently underrepresented and disenfranchised from USC. This has been coupled with recent workplace concerns relating to COVID-19 and other diversity issues that have unfolded this year, which many faculty felt were being effectively navigated by Dean Mosqueda. An abrupt transition raises concerns about the potential interruption of critical Dean-led initiatives that many faculty and KSOM leaders were hoping would guide KSOM into the next decade, such as the Center for Gender Equity in Medicine and Science (GEMS), which may now be left with a lack of direction or guarantee of support. It is also not clear how this disruption will affect Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) and Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) accreditations, both for our school, residency and fellowship programs.

At a time when KSOM faculty were beginning to heal and thrive under the aegis of a dedicated and stable leader, the abrupt and unexplained announcement of another Dean transition and replacement with another (Interim) Dean from the Department of Ophthalmology reverberated strongly in the KSOM community. Many of our faculty feel blindsided and disappointed by these decisions.

Although we understand KSOM Faculty are not privy to some of the information that is exchanged between the Board of Trustees and USC leadership, we are extremely concerned about the opaque process underlying this transition. This move, at a time when Keck faculty felt historically unheard, in addition to the lack of discussion with Keck leadership in the form of Clinical Chairs, Center/Institute Directors, or the KSOM Faculty Council to discuss the Dean's performance or effectiveness, discounts our recently reaffirmed core values of Shared Governance, Accountability, Interconnectedness and Transparency.

We adamantly request: 1) An open explanation of the process that guided this decision, 2) Formal representation from the KSOM Faculty Council in the selection process of the new KSOM Dean, 3) KSOM Faculty Council representation to the newly formed Board of Overseers of the Keck School of Medicine of USC, and 4) KSOM Faculty Council representation in the strategic plan for KSOM and the Keck Healthcare System.

Sincerely,

KSOM Faculty Council
On behalf of the KSOM Faculty