

A Resolution to Ensure Academic Excellence in Carolina Online and Prevent Financial and Reputational Harm to the University

WHEREAS the Faculty Manual states that the Committee on Curricula and Courses will “consider, and recommend to the faculty, action on all requests for the institution, modification, or deletion of courses and of any prescribed programs of study that do not fall within the purview of the graduate faculty” (8-9), and

WHEREAS University policy governing academic program changes states, “Following initial program approval, subsequent curriculum changes and revisions such as changes in program delivery method or delivery location, or changes to the program name or program designator require additional review and approval” (ACAF 2.00), and

WHEREAS University policy states, "Program actions related to baccalaureate majors, undergraduate certificate programs, minors, concentrations and undergraduate research tracks offered on the Columbia campus must be reviewed and approved by the Faculty Senate" (ACAF 2.00 I.B.2.a.i), and

WHEREAS the Provost’s webpage states, "If there is a discrepancy between a division version of a policy and the USC policies and procedures manual, the version in the electronic Policies and Procedures Manual is considered the official policy" (https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/provost/policiesandprocedures/universitypolicies/), and

WHEREAS none of the fully-online degree programs offered by Carolina Online have received requisite approvals for online delivery from the Faculty Senate; and

WHEREAS the Report of the Committee of Nine, in recommending the development of online degree programs, underscored that the endeavor would “investment in faculty expertise . . . instructional technologies, and, equally importantly, governance mechanisms,” and stated that, “the implementation of a world-class online education cannot be accomplished at current faculty levels without undermining strategic goals in research and teaching,” and

WHEREAS the Faculty Senate approved at its meeting of June 2, 2021, a resolution asking for Carolina Online to cease and desist advertising and enrollment in any and all online degree programs that have not been approved by the Senate for delivery and further asking that all requests for online delivery approval be submitted to appropriate committee(s) and the full senate, in accordance with University policies and the Faculty Manual, and

WHEREAS the Interim President expressed at the same meeting of the Faculty Senate his commitment to abide by Faculty Senate deliberations on the matter of Carolina Online continued advertising and enrollment, and

WHEREAS the Interim President appointed a committee, led by the Interim Provost Designate to review Carolina Online, with a charge that includes the identification of institutional control

points, including authorization by the Faculty Instructional Development Committee and, presumably, other committees and the Faculty Senate, and

WHEREAS the University entered into contractual agreements that make the University potentially subject to large fines if Carolina Online is terminated unilaterally;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate

1. temporarily authorizes the continuation of advertising for and enrollment into Carolina Online for the following programs: [to be named here], to the extent needed to avoid direct financial and reputational damage to the University, for a term of one year, to be renewed thereafter by vote of the Faculty Senate each year or by a process developed by the Instructional Development and Curricula and Courses Committees requiring the approval of the Faculty Senate as a whole; AND
2. calls upon the Instructional Development Committee and the Committee on Curricula and Courses to develop a careful, deliberative, and evidence-based approval process for changes in program modality. This approval process must be affirmed by a vote of the Faculty Senate prior to implementation and should consider the following:
 - impacts on other institutional units, including the need for concurrences from all units responsible for delivering courses required for degree completion, particularly Carolina Core courses
 - anticipated impacts of modality change on face-to-face instruction
 - resources and plans for meeting the novel challenges of student success in the online environment, including but not limited to resources allocated to student advisement, instructional technologies, sequencing and availability of program courses, faculty training, and staffing considerations
3. calls upon the Faculty Welfare Committee to study and report to the Faculty Senate on issues of faculty workload, compensation, and contingency in relation to Carolina Online
4. calls upon the Admissions Committee to track and report to the Senate on possible effects of Carolina Online on University admissions overall