



**THE 2018 USC STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**ANSWERING THE CALL**

Adopted by the USC Board of Trustees  
February 7, 2018

# THE 2018 USC STRATEGIC PLAN – ANSWERING THE CALL

*The University of Southern California’s ascent as one of the world’s premier research universities is unparalleled. Accelerating our rise will require a more expansive view of the role of higher education within and beyond the academy. To be the great 21<sup>st</sup> century research university, we must lead through values – reaffirming our commitment to our core academic principles, to our code of ethics, and to each other, while adding new voices and exploring new, equitable ways of acting in the world. We must lead through people – nurturing a cadre of faculty, students, and staff who embrace not just the entrepreneurial spirit, but the inclusive spirit and the convergent spirit as well. We must lead through impact – seizing opportunities and solving the intractable problems of our city and the world, supporting the underserved who wish to improve their lives and the lives of others, and reinventing medicine and caregiving to improve health and wellness for all. And we must lead through transformation – asking how we might reimagine higher education, elevate the value of a university degree, expand access and opportunity for those of immense talent who will make us the most prosperous society in the world, and reimagine the college experience to prepare graduates to face world challenges with optimism and purpose. The 21<sup>st</sup> century calls us to action. The University of Southern California will answer that call.*

## **Leading Through Values**

For more than 150 years, the American research university has served the dual mission of providing education in the liberal arts and creating new knowledge to benefit society. The land-grant universities of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the emergence of the modern research university in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were born in response to the social and industrial revolutions transforming the United States and the world. In every era, the greatest of these research universities has emerged by recognizing the urgency of the moment, by marshalling intellectual capital, and by deploying this precious resource in unique ways to not only transform society, but to transform higher education as well.

Since its founding in 1880, the University of Southern California has embraced the two-fold mission of the American research university and has continuously evolved to meet its calling – to create informed and prepared citizens of the world, to advance new knowledge, and to serve the public good. When Los Angeles needed a professional class to meet the needs of a burgeoning city, USC created schools of engineering, business, medicine, education, law, public administration, and dentistry, among others. As the city became the creative capital of the world, USC, almost unique among research universities, answered the call by creating world-class conservatory-quality arts schools in music, the fine arts and design, architecture, cinema, theatre, and, most recently, dance. When it hosted Olympic games in 1932 and 1984, USC helped Los Angeles welcome the world to Southern California and, as it has in every modern Olympiad, showcased its world-class international athletes and its exceptional athletic programs. When veterans of the Second World War returned home with the promise of new opportunities and the GI Bill, USC expanded to meet the need. As multiple needs emerged in our surrounding communities, USC increased its support for local schools, health facilities, community service, and neighborhood and civic engagement. And throughout its history, as the world needed scholarly research and innovation to respond to crisis or to make the lives of people around the world just a bit better, USC responded, whether it was by creating one of the first mobile health clinics, helping to invent the internet, launching a groundbreaking hydrocarbon research center, creating digital media centers and institutes, ushering in the era of computational biology, or inventing a retinal implant that allows the blind to see.

And now, the 21<sup>st</sup> century calls, with its myriad unique challenges, but also with opportunities to be seized and acted upon. Compared to just a few years ago, the world has become smaller and more interconnected. Migration from rural environments into large, diverse urban “megacities” is accelerating. Populations are

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aging. Silicon-based intelligences are interfacing with biologically-based intelligences. Social media is changing how we communicate – how quickly and how accurately. The arts and humanities are more salient than ever as we strive for greater cross-cultural awareness and mutual understanding. Security, sustainability, and health care are not esoteric concepts, but daily urgencies. And, universities themselves and the roles they play are being questioned. Are liberal arts values still relevant in today’s world? Is higher education still a vehicle for upward mobility and the most secure route to prosperity? Are universities concerned with providing access and opportunity or is higher education only for those who can afford it?

What is required of a leading institution of higher learning is to rise to the challenges facing society and higher education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. USC is that institution – in the right place, at the right time, with the right outlook, and with the intellectual capital and academic values necessary to change the course of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Over the past two decades, USC has been on an unmatched trajectory to become a leading voice in what universities can and should be. The recruitment and nurturing of transformative scholars and creative artists, high-achieving students, and innovative and hard-working staff have created a pool of talent required for this mission. USC’s location along the Pacific Rim during the Age of the Pacific, and more importantly its location in one of the world’s great megacities properly positions USC for the task ahead. The tremendous support of alumni, parents, trustees, and other members of the Trojan Family, resulting in a successful and unprecedented \$6 billion fundraising campaign over the past seven years, has provided the fuel for this mission. And, finally, the values of informed risk-taking, entrepreneurial spirit, thirst for impact, and the unfettered search for truth have prepared USC for the task ahead: to be the leading voice in higher education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century by transforming the world and higher education.

The modern university traces its roots back almost a millennium. Its longevity is in no small part due to core academic values that each institution interprets in its own way. At USC, we abide by four pillars: free inquiry, an institutional commitment to the search for truth to be defended against any external or internal threat; the values of the Trojan Family, including caring and respect for one another as individuals, appreciation of diversity, team spirit, strong alumni networks, and a commitment to service; a commitment to informed risk taking within a culture of targeted experimentation that helps USC prepare for an uncertain future; and, a commitment to ethical conduct as spelled out in USC’s Code of Ethics. Our core values represent our legacy and destiny. While those values are enduring, the contexts in which they apply are dynamic. Every age presents new challenges that test our commitment. But those challenges also present fresh opportunities to renew our values and to meet the needs and desires of a new generation. Whatever challenges we face, our actions must be in harmony, *always*, with our values.

Our mission – to serve our students, our patients, and our communities – must be judged not just on impact but on integrity, and not just on endpoints but on ethics. In the coming years, we will engage in university-wide discussions of our current values and those new values we need to embrace. We will identify ways to communicate our core values to our constituencies. We will prioritize ethical behavior as we recruit and retain university leaders. We will seek ways to identify and reward those faculty, staff, and students who exhibit and promote our core values. And we will seek ways to promote those values throughout our curricula. For USC to be a leading voice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we must be known not just for *what* we do, but *how* we do it.

## **Leading Through People**

Throughout history, great research universities have been great because of the richness of their intellectual capital – the quality of their faculty, students, postdoctoral scholars, and staff who uncover truths, question, produce new knowledge, invent, create, relentlessly push against the boundaries of the impossible, and endeavor to change the world. But, as times change, so do the dispositions required to transform society. The world today is more diverse, mobile, technologically demanding, and interconnected economically and culturally than ever before.

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The university must adapt to these changing conditions even as we steadfastly recommit to our core mission: the relentless pursuit of new knowledge and primary commitment to creative expression and free inquiry. This constant striving for truth and academic excellence is never ending because the world is ever changing. In answering this call, we must aspire to greater rigor and relevance, to vigorous intellectual deliberation and openness to new voices and differing perspectives, to the ceaseless desire for discovery, to an unyielding commitment to following evidence wherever it leads, and to higher standards of quality, accuracy, and accountability. Never has the university been more important and never has society asked more of it.

To strengthen our unique mission and lead in this changing landscape, we must mirror the world in how we teach and mentor, conduct research, develop the professions, practice the arts, learn, and serve others. In order to lead, we must continue to invest heavily in intellectual capital – to recruit and retain it, to build and diversify it, and to nurture and empower it.

***Cultivating the Entrepreneurial Spirit.*** Innovation is spurred not simply by necessity, but by an individual’s adventurous and optimistic mindset – a mindset that undergirds notions of the American Dream, and animates those of the California Dream. Indeed, it is the sense that anything is possible which led visionaries to create Hollywood, the aerospace industry, Silicon Valley, and, most recently, Silicon Beach. Nurturing that mindset within American research universities made the United States the most innovative country in the world. For USC to lead, it must harness that same sense of innovation to cultivate the entrepreneurial spirit.

Such efforts are not new to USC. In fact, being fearless in the face of possible failure was present in our founder, Judge Robert Maclay Widney, as he sought to create a major university in a small pueblo town almost 140 years ago, and it has been present ever since. We count among our faculty risk-taking Nobel Prize winners, MacArthur “Genius” Award winners, Pulitzer Prize winners, National Academy members, and National Medal recipients. We continue our innovation in the arts with the recent creation of the Gloria Kaufman School of Dance and the game-changing Jimmy Iovine and Andre Young Academy for Art, Technology and the Business of Innovation. We have created unique testbeds for innovation, like the Institute for Creative Technologies, and have supported commercialization efforts through USC Stevens Center for Innovation, the Alfred Mann Institute, and a recent National Science Foundation-funded Innovation Hub program. In an area in which USC has been a pioneer, we extended the promise of education to aspiring and practicing professionals, offering over 90 online graduate degree programs to spur innovation and serve social needs. And more recently, we created programs that harness the entrepreneurial spirit of our students, including courses of study in social entrepreneurship, the Health, Technology and Engineering certificate program, and exploring innovation across the arts, technology, and business through forward-looking academic programs and incubator opportunities.

To tackle the problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, universities must do more than simply recruit innovative people and help commercialize their ideas. To lead in this area is to fashion and support a culture of creativity, engagement, impact, and entrepreneurship (CEIE) across our campuses. In the coming years, we will put into place policies and reward systems that encourage CEIE by our scholars, researchers, and creative artists. We will invest in institutes and centers where success will be evaluated not just on standard academic measures, but on their success in translating ideas into impact, and in fostering CEIE in trainees. We will work with individual philanthropists, corporations, and foundations to create venture funds that will fuel the growth of new ideas. We will streamline our commercialization procedures so that they are as nimble and fearless as our entrepreneurs. We will be purposeful about making CEIE a formal part of our students’ education, both in the curriculum and through co-curricular activities. We will remind ourselves that informed risk-taking is a Trojan core value.

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***Embracing the Inclusive Spirit.*** Globalization and modern technology have made the world both smaller and larger: smaller in the sense that the world has become our neighbor; larger in the sense that our neighbors share unique life experiences and perspectives, some vastly different than our own, that can help expand our understanding, our embrace, and our worldview. For college graduates to navigate the 21<sup>st</sup> century and benefit from this diversity of thought, universities must model the 21<sup>st</sup> century for its community, and it must show students the value of diversity, equity, inclusivity, cultural sensitivity, and intercultural competence. This is even more true for research universities because diversity and inclusion spark unique, valuable perspectives and novel innovations to our research, scholarship, and creative work. Just as diversification in nature makes ecosystems stronger, generative, and more resilient, so it does for culture, society, and university communities. For USC to lead, it must embrace this inclusive spirit.

Creating a community of diverse viewpoints – economic, cultural, intellectual – in order to build a generation of innovators, leaders, visionaries, and creators remains one of the highest priorities of USC. From its humble beginnings, USC welcomed students from around the world and, in this century, has enrolled more international students than any other college in the nation. More recently, we have established a student body that ranks among the highest in the country among private research universities in the number of underrepresented groups, Pell Grant recipients, first-generation college goers, transfer students, military veterans, and religious orientations practiced, among others. We have created a number of programs to support further diversification of our student and faculty bodies, created pipeline programs to expand diversity at all levels, and, led by the Academic Senate, made significant progress in creating an inclusive campus climate with regard to age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, national origin, race, religious affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, and veteran status.

We will continue to prioritize diversity and inclusion. We will ask every school to create and execute a strategic plan for diversity and inclusion. We will invest in research programs that encourage evidence-based approaches to this work. We will create faculty leadership training programs so diverse voices have unfettered access to the mantle of university leadership here at USC and beyond. We will create programs for first-generation students – at all levels – that allow them to better navigate their campus experience and their chosen life and career paths. We will train faculty on how to foster a more inclusive classroom environment, and provide curricular opportunities for students to raise their cultural literacy. In sum, we will increase the opportunity for distinct voices to be heard on our campuses and we will instill the value of listening to those voices.

***Fostering the Convergent Spirit.*** For decades, the overwhelming amount of information coming from major disciplines has led to a multiplication of ever-narrowing fields of discovery. Scholars have become experts in increasingly more restricted domains. Narrow expertise is still of immense importance, however, the problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century do not fall into neatly and narrowly defined academic disciplines. For USC to lead, we must identify, recruit, train, support, and reward talent that sees problems and solutions, from multiple viewpoints, moves fluidly across disciplines, and works comfortably in large, disparate teams. And we must continue our commitment to curiosity-based research and inquiry which so often inspires the mindset we hope to instill. USC must foster the convergent spirit.

USC has long been building convergence. It is quite common for faculty to have multiple appointments across schools. Over the past decade, USC has recruited a cadre of “Provost” professors, world-renowned scholars whose research and creative work has impact in multiple disciplines. Dauterive Hall is a leading center for interdisciplinary social science research, and the Michelson Center for Convergent Bioscience brings together scientists and engineers in large-team settings to tackle increasingly complex problems, like cancer. Programs in Visual Studies, Gender Studies, Media Studies, and Thematic Option strengthen the convergent mindset across the humanities and humanistic social sciences. The Neuroscience Graduate Program, a university-wide Ph.D. training program launched in 1982, was one of the first of its kind. And

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top undergraduates completing degrees in multiple disciplines have long been recognized as Renaissance Scholars. Indeed, this is only a small sampling of work USC has done in the area of convergence.

Still, much more needs to be done. Over the next several years, we will invest in faculty whose work brings together divergent fields to solve intractable problems. We will invest in research in which the methodologies of one discipline are deployed in the context of one or more other disciplines to understand and attack from multiple directions the challenges of our time. We will create training programs for graduate and professional students, for postdoctoral fellows, and for junior faculty so that they become more fluent in multidisciplinary work. We will leverage USC's immense strength in the arts, digital media, information technologies, and computer science to develop new learning and teaching paradigms. We will put into place policies and reward systems that encourage team research, creative team endeavors, and team teaching. We will create more opportunities for students to engage in group-based projects, we will create new ways students can show proficiency across disciplines, and we will make them adept at harnessing the wealth of information that currently exists across all domains of inquiry. We will change the conversation so that students speak less about their major and more about what great problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century they hope to solve.

## **Leading Through Impact**

The University of Southern California grew up with Los Angeles and with the Southern California region. From its founding in 1880, USC consciously declared itself not a pastoral college removed from the world of human affairs, but a city university committed to advancing society and elevating humanity. USC's passion, to be the great private research university that serves the public good, was in no small part related to its symbiotic relationship with the city – each nurturing the other, each succeeding because of the other. Over the past century-and-a-half, each, in its own way, has grown into a global powerhouse. And now, the defining city of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the defining university of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are looking to realize their full potential.

With the privilege of having a community of entrepreneurial-, inclusive-, and convergent-spirited scholars, teachers, practitioners, staff, trainees, and students comes the responsibility of using this community's talents to transform the world and to develop leaders dedicated to serving society through public and private initiative. And perhaps there is no greater impact that USC could have in the world than by contributing to solutions in its own backyard. Many of the challenges confronting the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century *are* the challenges facing Los Angeles, and they are the challenges USC must commit itself to overcoming. The opportunities to reimagine the future of the globe *are* the opportunities that abound in Los Angeles. And, we should consider that the hopes and dreams of the people of Los Angeles *are* the hopes and dreams of people throughout the world. We can only be the most impactful 21<sup>st</sup> century university by being both a great global institution *and* a great local friend and neighbor.

***Solving.*** The intractable challenges of our age are large and complex. Solutions will be hard won and rarely perfect. In practice, this means recognizing that solutions to Alzheimer's disease require neuroscience and cultural awareness, that a full grasp of cybersecurity demands grounding in humanist notions of privacy, and that innovation and creativity, once the sole domain of human intelligence, will soon include alternatives provided by artificial intelligence and machine learning. Such are the "wicked problems" of our time. USC will deploy its intellectual capital to tackle these wicked problems. Indeed, the breadth of our disciplinary expertise, and our long history of community service and community-led problem solving, coupled with entrepreneurial, inclusive, and convergent approaches make us uniquely suited to this task.

In the coming years, we will partner with governmental and non-governmental organizations, community partners, philanthropic and private foundations, and all interested parties to address some of the most crucial issues of our time: homelessness, immigration, global pandemics, security, and sustainability, to name just

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a few. We will invest in interdisciplinary and interschool research centers and institutes that address wicked problems using evidence-based, convergent approaches. We will recruit faculty, postdoctoral fellows, clinical fellows and residents, volunteers, and graduate and professional students whose current and future talents will impact these areas. We will provide seed funds for research and service projects that carry high risk but also potential high rewards. We will reimagine our curricula at both the undergraduate and graduate levels so that students are taught to understand the complexity of these problems, how to work in teams to craft innovative solutions, and how to implement those solutions, and we will provide resources to faculty teaching General Education courses so that they can introduce undergraduates firsthand to the challenges facing Los Angeles.

***Seizing.*** Just as California in prior centuries was seen as the land of opportunity, now megacities play that role. Los Angeles is an engine of economic development, an arena for political and cultural pluralism, a stage for individual expression and collective action, a fount of artistic creativity, a laboratory to test notions of sustainability and security, and the seedbed of innovation. USC has much to contribute, and to gain, by seizing the inherent opportunities in Los Angeles.

In the coming years, we will forge more and deeper partnerships with the creative industries of Los Angeles, such as in the media industries, Silicon Beach, and the Arts District, by creating joint research programs and internship opportunities for students. We will create an interschool arts program that fosters arts experiences and civic engagement across the city. We will leverage our two university museums as touchpoints for community engagement with the university. And we will use Los Angeles to enrich curricula at all levels.

***Supporting.*** Universities leading in the 21<sup>st</sup> century cannot be silos. Nor can they believe they are not a silo simply because they are producing research with impact. Universities are part of the social fabric, especially in the geographic vicinity of their campuses, and as such, they must be caring and committed community partners. As Trojans, we should be immensely proud of our partnership with communities throughout Los Angeles and around the world. Whether it is through our Good Neighbors Campaign, or workforce training and employment, or the Joint Educational Project which provides community service-learning opportunities to thousands of students every year, or the community clinics run by health professionals and students, or the Trojan Day of Service that enlists alums throughout the world in community improvement projects, civic engagement is part of USC's DNA. And we must not forget USC's long history of athletic excellence, arguably the most celebrated athletics program in American collegiate history – with more Olympic gold and combined medals won by its athletes than any other university, more gold medals won than all but 14 nations in the world, and more NCAA championships than any university save two. Beyond these noteworthy milestones, Trojan athletics boosts civic pride, promotes civic engagement through sports camps for kids, and contributes to Los Angeles' success in hosting past and future Summer Olympics, Paralympics, and Special Olympics.

Over the next few years, USC will set a goal that every member of the Trojan Family contributes to making some small part of the world better. We will create community advisory boards to counsel us on our partnering possibilities. We will create programs that help our students connect with community partners and support student groups that wish to make a difference in the community. We will increase the number of programs that bring our neighbors to our campuses. We will continue to broaden and deepen our support for children, especially through programs focused on early life health and wellness, education, and access to the arts. We will encourage our schools to create and support community clinics across a wide spectrum of support services. And we will not forget that we are a community unto ourselves, and so we must continue to invest in programs that support physical health, mental health, and wellness for faculty, staff, and students.

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***Synthesizing.*** The 21<sup>st</sup> century, the century of medicine and biology, presents opportunities for creating innovations that will revolutionize health care treatments and delivery. But it is also a time that presents serious challenges, such as rising costs and access to quality health care, especially for the underprivileged. Working with our academic partners at Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles (CHLA) and LAC+USC Medical Center, with our neighborhoods, and with the City and County of Los Angeles, USC has the potential to be a leading voice in the area of lifespan health and wellness here and around the world. It also highlights USC’s collective and more integrated approach to caregiving, drawing on the participation of scholars and practitioners not just in medicine but across many disciplines. By doing so, we will weave together all threads of our impact: solving problems, seizing opportunities, and supporting our community.

In the coming years, USC will embark on building a new, state-of-the-art hospital in East Los Angeles in order to provide world class medical service and patient care for the people of Los Angeles. We will expand our clinical footprint throughout Southern California. We will continue to recruit the world’s leading health care professionals that treat the most complex clinical cases. We will invest in research institutes that investigate the early antecedents of good long-term health; the major health problems of Los Angeles, such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, and cancer; diseases related to environmental impacts such as pollution, health policy and health care delivery, and dementia and other health problems associated with an aging population. We will expand our efforts to translate research quickly from bench to bedside to serve people across the globe. We will take advantage of the diversity of Los Angeles by engaging our friends and neighbors as partners in clinical research, and provide more opportunities for health professional trainees to engage in biomedical and health care research. And we will launch the first major biotech community in Los Angeles, creating the infrastructure to support start-up companies and accelerators while also spurring economic development and high-tech job training for our local communities. As we continue building our clinical, scholarly, and research capacity and form new partnerships, a guiding principle will be to integrate patients’ health, behavioral health, and social service needs in ways that improve coordination of care within and across those systems.

## **Leading Through Transformation**

Audacity has been a defining characteristic of USC, and one of the many reasons for our rapid ascent. But equally important has been daring to transform our university – to honor, embrace, and learn from our past, but not let the past constrain or restrain us. If we are to lead in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we must apply the same combination of creativity and commitment embodied by our students, scholars, artists, and athletes. As we invent the future, we must simultaneously reinvent ourselves.

***Reimagining a University Education.*** Our rapidly changing world demands new mindsets and new complements of skills and talents. To meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, university graduates across all disciplines, and all degree types, will need to work in teams with those who are differently trained and differently situated. They will need to be equipped with literacies and the competencies necessary for a high-tech, digital, and connected world. They will need to judge the validity, relevance, and reliability of the massive amounts of information to which they have access, as well as how to organize and deploy those data effectively. They will need to develop the fluency to communicate with many audiences using multiple means, and to be translators across disciplines, cultures, and languages. And they must be eager to lead in both public and private spheres – through elected office, military and community service, nonprofit work, and private philanthropy. They will need to understand that values are as important as vocation, and that the path to a meaningful life is less about the *what* and the *how* provided by science and technology, and more about the *why* provided by an embrace of the arts and the humanities.

USC has long directed its entrepreneurial spirit to revolutionize pedagogy, whether it was creating the first schools of International Relations or Gerontology, or establishing the first distance learning programs. The university has continued this up to the present day with innovative programs such as the Viterbi iPodia



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program, the Marshall World Bachelor of Business, the Sidney Harman Academy for Polymathic Study, and many others.

In the coming years, USC will lead the national discussion on the value of the liberal arts and how best to connect them to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We will infuse crucial literacies – informational, numerical, visual, and digital, among others – across our curriculum. We will establish programs in the arts and the humanities that bring together scholars and practitioners in ways that embrace the mindsets of inclusion, convergence, and entrepreneurship, engage Los Angeles, and broaden the career opportunities traditional to those disciplines, and we will continue to evolve our General Education program to incorporate concepts of entrepreneurship, inclusion, convergence, and impact. We will launch interschool, inter-professional programs. We will continue to invent and deploy new technologies in the classroom and online. We will reaffirm the importance of teaching and mentorship in the context of a research university and we will put into place the systems necessary to train, assess, and reward exceptional teaching.

***Reimagining Access and Opportunity.*** All global universities are committed to principles of diversity and recognize the importance of cultural engagement. However, that is not enough. Nor is it enough for universities to open their doors and welcome a range of students with diverse backgrounds. Leading universities will be those that commit to fully embracing access and opportunity; that is, actively seeking out different voices, building a rich cadre of diverse students, and providing all learners with the resources, financial and otherwise, to succeed.

Among research universities, USC has long been a leader in providing educational access and opportunity to distinct voices, both at USC and elsewhere. USC students created the Topping Scholars Program, begun in the 1970s and continuing to this day, by voting to have a portion of their yearly fees fund scholarships to diversify USC’s student body. Every year, USC welcomes more than 800 community college transfer students to USC. More recently, USC has created the Bovard Scholars College Preparatory Summer Program, the USC Pre-College Summer Scholarship for Military High School Students, and has been the only California outpost for the Warrior Scholar Project. In addition, we are proud that Foshay Learning Center, located less than one mile from our University Park Campus but a world apart from what many associate with elite private education, is USC’s top feeder school for freshman for the second year in a row. In addition, over 3,000 underserved local schoolchildren participate annually in USC TRiO college access programs and in preschool Head Start programs. And, for creating one of the most high-impact college access programs in the country, USC has been rightly hailed for its Neighborhood Academic Initiative (NAI), a seven-year college preparatory program for students from South and East Los Angeles. Since its first graduating class in 1997, nearly 1,000 students have completed the program with nearly 100 percent college enrollment and 83 percent enrollment at four-year universities, including 35 percent enrollment at USC.

In the coming years, we will leverage our expertise in supporting diversity and undergraduate college access to ease the path to postgraduate studies, and to postdoctoral, residency, and fellowship programs. We will invest in programs that recruit and sustain senior underrepresented faculty leaders and cohorts of underrepresented junior faculty, and invest in current underrepresented senior faculty. We will prioritize identifying resources that will allow us to expand our NAI program, increase the number of scholarships to attract distinct voices to USC, and help us provide experiential parity for all USC students, so that financial considerations never limit a student’s ability to enjoy a rich college experience. We will create training programs and boot camps that help diversify the student body in particular areas, especially the STEM fields. And we will use online technologies to reach unique populations of postgraduate learners, enrich lifelong learning for our Trojan Family and others, and respond to urgent workforce needs.

***Reimagining Value.*** Higher education has been one of the most reliable paths to a prosperous life. The economic advantages of obtaining a bachelor’s or advanced degree are well documented. Most recently,

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there has been much discussion of whether this is still true, and whether the higher education path is worth the investment. Much of this discussion centers around the cost of higher education, but the cost of getting a degree must be balanced with the value that the degree provides to individuals and to society.

USC has been a leader among private research universities in attending to both affordability and value. Nearly two-thirds of USC's undergraduates receive significant support made possible by a financial aid budget that includes more than \$300 million in USC's own contribution, the vast majority need-based. Programs like Mork Family Scholars, Martens Scholars, and the George Lucas Foundation Endowed Student Support Fund for Diversity strengthen support for our students and diversify our student body. In terms of providing value, at the most fundamental level, we have ensured that our undergraduates get their degrees, with a six-year graduation rate of 92 percent. We have also created a high-touch experience for students through low student-to-faculty ratios, senior faculty engagement in undergraduate education, including in our General Education program, robust internships and externships, and opportunities for students to work side-by-side with faculty in producing new knowledge and creative works.

In the coming years, we will redouble our efforts to secure scholarships for students at all levels: undergraduate, graduate, and professional. We will expand efforts to increase the four-year undergraduate graduation rate. We will undertake comprehensive and recurring evaluation of our operations, in order to find efficiencies that improve performance and reduce costs. We will establish curricular options for undergraduate students that will broaden their postbaccalaureate educational choices. We will implement new internship programs and expand career services support. We will invest in programs to improve student health and wellness, and to support disability services. And, we will better leverage our Trojan networks to support current and future students.

***Reimagining the Undergraduate Experience.*** Universities and colleges have both the privilege and responsibility of transforming young people, just six years out of sixth grade, into engaged adults who leave enriched and eager to lead meaningful lives. Creating an institution that can do this well is challenging. Large research universities are the innovation engines that will transform society, but they often fail to focus on undergraduate students; liberal arts colleges are tremendous in their focus on undergraduates, but often lack the vast resources and expertise to allow students to engage fully in knowledge production, innovation, and creative expression.

USC has not shied away from this challenge. Indeed, our central mission has long been “the development of human beings and society as a whole through the cultivation and enrichment of the human mind and spirit.” As members of a highly international student body and through our programs, USC students begin to appreciate the breadth and variety of the universe around them, and the many issues confronting us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Through traditional study abroad programs and unique experiences such as “Maymester” and “Problems Without Passports,” our students have multiple opportunities to expand their worldview. Through Visions and Voices, the Fisher Museum of Art, and the Pacific Asia Museum, our students draw upon arts and humanities programming to put their lives into context. Through participation in physical education programs and intramural sports, and through our highly popular USC Mindfulness program, our students learn to care for their bodies and their minds. And through programs like the Joint Educational Project and other outreach programs, our students learn the value of giving back.

And now, with the completion of the \$700 million USC Village project, we are presented with a historic opportunity to transform the undergraduate experience. The opening of USC Village allows USC to commit fully to a residential college experience for undergraduates. Spearheaded by the founding of our new Kathleen L. McCarthy Honors College, our residential colleges will be the nest from which our students fledge, spread their wings, and launch into the world. Led by residential faculty, a cadre of faculty fellows, and Student Affairs, we will pursue four objectives: cultivating the life of the mind, the life of the body, and a life of service, and fostering a sense of belonging. We will provide countless opportunities for

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screenings, recitals, speakers, performances, symposia, new courses, exhibitions, panels, and more. We will serve as gateways to explore the cultural and arts landscape of Los Angeles, not as tourists, but as young citizens eager to learn, contribute to, and serve society. And, most importantly, we will use the residential colleges as the training ground for the ideals put forth in this strategic plan: developing ethical human beings imbued with entrepreneurial, inclusive, and convergent spirits, ready to impact the world, and fully prepared to engage the challenges and opportunities life brings through their USC experience.

## Conclusion

USC and Los Angeles are forged of the same Promethean fire. As USC evolved, it served as a vital public stage upon which many of the city’s historic events and cultural trends would play out, often in dramatic fashion: the combination of Mexican roots with European and Asian influences; the interplay of science, entrepreneurship, and the public good; the movements of progressive politics challenging established centers of power; the realities of industrialization; episodes of racial tension and civil unrest; the flux of the arts and new technologies drawing alternate visions of society; migrations of peoples from the eastern United States, the Pacific Rim, and beyond; and the pressures of a city growing in size, diversity, complexity, and texture. Throughout their histories, USC and Los Angeles found ways to turn moments of crisis and contradiction into new pathways to human happiness: to turn paradox into progress.

USC was born at one of the many crossroads where the original streets of Los Angeles’ Old Pueblo, tracking at an angle, intersect those formed by U.S. surveyors, running north and south. Today those intersections are visible markers of a past inviting cultural curiosity and exchange, new experiences, and reflection. Our opportunity, in this brief hiatus between past and future, is to contribute a verse – our best, most unselfish, and harmonious.

Those verses become part of the intergenerational Trojan Family. A family committed to serving the public good, and every member of the communities it touches. A family with many houses: students of every circumstance and their families, alumni, neighbors, faculty, and staff. Medical workers and patients. Invaluable donors and benefactors who believe in the promise of the future. The thousands of local schoolchildren and their families who participate in USC outreach programs and the talented staff, faculty, and volunteers who serve them; and a collection of extraordinary collegiate athletes and Olympians who bring great renown to USC.

The Trojan Family represents a way of being and acting in the world – through contributions to serving the common good, to giving back, to helping others, and to making the world a better place. A family that extends across the U.S. and the globe, and reaches back generations. A family unmatched by any other university.

The Ancient Greeks said of its citizens, “wherever you go, you will be a polis,” emphasizing the constancy and durability of their values and civic ethos no matter the uncertainties of their journey. Likewise, wherever members of the Trojan Family go, their commitment to serving the public good attends.

In that spirit and in all that we do and will do, USC is transforming itself into tomorrow’s research university – today. Our mission is urgent, our energy boundless, our vision sweeping, and our Trojan spirit indefatigable. The 21<sup>st</sup> century calls us to action, to lead now and long into the future. The University of Southern California is answering that call.