May 2, 2013

Dear USC community,

I am pleased to announce that General David Petraeus will join USC’s faculty as a Judge Widney Professor. This position is one of the university’s most prestigious, and bears the name of USC’s chief founder, Judge Robert Maclay Widney. General Petraeus’ appointment is university-wide.

The attached press release contains additional details.

Yours truly,

C. L. Max Nikias
President
General David Petraeus Named Judge Widney Professor at USC

Retired Gen. David H. Petraeus, architect and namesake of the counterinsurgency doctrine that stabilized Iraq under U.S. and allied forces and former director of the CIA, will join the faculty of the University of Southern California.

Petraeus will be a Judge Widney Professor, a title reserved for eminent individuals from the arts, sciences, professions, business and community and national leadership. Judge Robert Maclay Widney was USC’s founder.

“USC is thrilled to have General Petraeus join our faculty as a Judge Widney Professor,” said President C. L. Max Nikias. “He embodies all the noble qualities of our founder along with a fearless commitment to excellence. His presence will have a profound impact on our students across many disciplines.”

Petraeus will spend time at USC each academic semester starting this fall teaching classes, participating in seminars and panels, participating in working sessions with students and faculty, and mentoring student veterans and ROTC members.

His varied research interests include the leadership of the United States in revolutionizing energy, information technology, life sciences and manufacturing. He is interested in exploring whether such leadership heralds the start of what he calls the “North American Decades.”

He holds a PhD in international relations from Princeton University and has taught economics and international relations at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

“The appointment of General Petraeus as a Judge Widney Professor at USC will add transformative energy to our teaching and research in international relations, government, economics,
management, defense studies and military science — fields mastered by this clear-thinking jargon-free polymath,” said University Professor and noted California historian Kevin Starr.

“I am very grateful to have an opportunity to be part of a great university that prizes academic excellence, that is doing cutting-edge research in areas of enormous importance to our country, and that is known for steadfast support of its veterans and ROTC programs,” Petraeus said.

In addition to its impact on the university as a whole, Petraeus’ appointment is expected to strengthen that steadfast support.

“For the past 37 years, General Petraeus has served our country as a dedicated public servant and remarkable leader,” said Jack H. Knott, dean of the USC Price School of Public Policy. “Given our school’s focus on government and public policy, as well as the academic administrative home for the ROTC program at USC, it is a particular honor for us to have General Petraeus join the USC faculty.”

Petraeus’ appointment includes affiliations with the USC School of Social Work, including the program in military social work; USC Price; the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, including the program in public diplomacy; the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, including the Department of International Relations; the USC Viterbi School of Engineering, including the Information Sciences Institute; the USC Institute for Creative Technologies; and the USC Libraries, including the Sidney Harman Academy of Polymathic Study.

About Gen. David H. Petraeus

David Howell Petraeus is a retired American military officer and public official. In June 2011, the U.S. Senate unanimously confirmed him as director of the CIA, a role he held from September 2011 until November 2012. Prior to assuming the directorship of the CIA, he was a highly decorated four-star general, serving more than 37 years in the U.S. Army before retiring in August 2011.

A lauded combat leader and strategist, Petraeus was highly instrumental in reshaping American military tactics through his focus on the concepts of a comprehensive civil-military counterinsurgency campaign. In his remarks made at Petraeus’ retirement ceremony from the Army, Adm. Michael Mullen, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, compared him to Ulysses S. Grant, John J. Pershing, George Marshall and Dwight D. Eisenhower as one of the great battle captains of American history.

Petraeus’ final assignment in the military was as commander of the NATO International Security Assistance Force and U.S. forces in Afghanistan. Other four-star assignments included his service as the 10th commander of the U.S. Central Command, where he was responsible for military operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Central Asia, the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, the Levant and Egypt — and his service as commanding general of the Multi-National Force — Iraq for more than 19 months.

In the latter position, he commanded all coalition forces in Iraq throughout the surge in 2007 and 2008 when violence in that country was reduced by nearly 90 percent. During that tour in Iraq, he oversaw the implementation of the concepts in the Army/Marine Corps counterinsurgency manual that was drafted under his direction during his assignment as commander of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, between his second and third tours in Iraq.

Previously, Petraeus was the first commander of the Multi-National Security Transition Command — Iraq and the NATO Training Mission — Iraq. Prior to those assignments, he was commanding general of the U.S. Army’s 101st Airborne Division (air assault), leading the 101st into Iraq in 2003 during the fight to Baghdad and the first year in Iraq when his division distinguished itself in the
conducted a comprehensive counterinsurgency campaign.

Following Petraeus’ extensive service in the Middle East, former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates praised him for the critical and historic role he played in stabilizing Iraq, writing that he had “changed the course of two wars, an unprecedented accomplishment.” Earlier in his career, he also served in Bosnia, Europe, Haiti, Kuwait and the United States.

Petraeus earned a bachelor’s degree from the United States Military Academy, from which he graduated in 1974 as a distinguished cadet, finishing in the top 5 percent of his class. He later received the General George C. Marshall Award as the top graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College class of 1983. He subsequently earned an MPA and a PhD in international relations from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. He served as assistant professor of international relations at the U.S. Military Academy and also completed a fellowship at Georgetown University.

About the University of Southern California

The University of Southern California is one of the world’s leading private research universities. An anchor institution in Los Angeles, a global center for arts, technology and international trade, USC enrolls more international students than any other U.S. university and offers extensive opportunities for internships and study abroad. With a strong tradition of integrating liberal and professional education, USC fosters a vibrant culture of public service and encourages students to cross academic, as well as geographic boundaries, in their pursuit of knowledge.