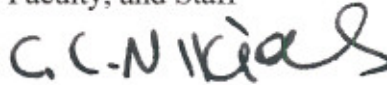


MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Deans, Faculty, and Staff

Office of the Provost

From: C. L. Max Nikias



C. L. Max Nikias
Provost and
Senior Vice
President for
Academic Affairs

Date: October 4, 2007

Subject: Discovery and Global Scholars Programs

On behalf of President Sample, I am delighted to announce the creation of two scholarship programs that will recognize excellence among USC's undergraduate students: **Discovery Scholars** and **Global Scholars**. These two programs will be analogous to the highly-successful Renaissance Scholars program that President Sample established in 2000. As such, they will complement its chief aim: to bolster academic achievement among our talented students, while nurturing the intellectual breadth and flexibility our students will need in this rapidly-changing century.

Our students already achieve remarkable heights in their scholarship, service, and extracurricular activities. These new programs will help them reach even higher, while focusing on the important areas of innovation and internationalization. The ability to think innovatively—to create, rather than to imitate—and an understanding of international issues remain two of the most vital skills we can foster in our students. These skills will surely define the most successful scholars in the coming decades, and these programs reflect the university's awareness of—and commitment to—developing these abilities in our students.

I would like to briefly summarize each program's structure, and offer some details regarding the criteria and application process.

Discovery Scholars

The Discovery Scholars program will recognize the increasing centrality of original scholarship and creativity among USC's undergraduate students. Each year, hundreds of our undergraduates perform significant original research in the humanities, the physical and life sciences, the social sciences, and the professions. Others create outstanding original works of art, architectural designs, and musical compositions, or achieve exceptional standards in artistic performance. This program will honor these successes.

Specifically, the Discovery Scholars program will recognize undergraduates who have produced exceptional original scholarship or creative work at USC while compiling a distinguished overall academic record. Students from every major will be eligible to earn the designation of Discovery Scholar at the time of graduation. In addition, students will be eligible to compete for a select number of annual Discovery Scholar Prizes of \$10,000, awarded at graduation for the purpose of post-baccalaureate study.

The Discovery Scholars program will be administered centrally by the Office of Undergraduate Programs. In terms of criteria, an overall USC GPA of 3.5 at the time of graduation will be required for the Discovery Scholar designation. To ensure equitable expectations for students working in diverse fields, the Office of Undergraduate Programs will work with representatives from each USC school to formulate a set of discipline-specific eligibility criteria. These criteria will be established by October 15, and the first group of students eligible for the new designation will be those graduating in May 2008. In general, it is expected that scholars who have pursued original research will submit a senior thesis or comparable self-authored report of their work, and that scholars who have engaged in the creative arts will submit a representative portfolio.

The initial Discovery Scholar Prize competition will take place in spring 2008. Faculty panels from each school will nominate a short list of prize finalists from the list of all prospective Discovery Scholars in their schools. A selection panel drawn from across the university will then recommend prize recipients to the provost. The students selected for this prize—as well as all students earning this distinction—will be recognized at Commencement.

Global Scholars

In addition to the Discovery Scholars Prize, we will also establish the Global Scholars Prize. This program is designed to encourage our students to become outstanding world citizens, while preparing them to navigate our increasingly-interdependent global community.

We have already taken tremendous strides in this regard. Today, USC stands as arguably *the* international university. We welcome students from 115 other nations and have the highest number of international students at any major university in the country—bar none. We have more than 20,000 international alumni, living and working all over the world. And on this point, we stand on a long history: at our founding in 1880, two of the university's 53 students were from Japan.

The Global Scholars program will specifically recognize undergraduates who have excelled in their studies both at home and abroad. As with Renaissance and Discovery Scholars, the university will recognize all undergraduates who meet the program's criteria. Among these students, a select number will receive a \$10,000 prize to be applied toward graduate study. This means USC will graduate an esteemed group of undergraduates each year: those earning the distinction of Renaissance, Discovery, or Global Scholar, honors they can proudly count among their various academic achievements.

The Global Scholars program will be administered by the Globalization Office in the Office of the Provost. Similar to Renaissance and Discovery Scholars, students must have an overall USC GPA of 3.5 to be considered for this distinction. Applicants must have participated in an

international program officially administered by USC or an outside institution. However, in the case of purely student-run international programs, the quality of the program would need to be verified by the student's school.

Applicants must have spent a minimum of ten weeks abroad as part of their undergraduate experience. These ten weeks can be a combination of one or more programs, whether academic, work experience, or service learning. For our international students, their foreign stay would need to be outside their home country, preferably in a different region altogether.

Global Scholars will be expected to complete a capstone paper, project, or research paper in which they reflect on their international experience. This capstone project will validate the depth and quality of the student's experience. However, since programs vary greatly, each school will define what the capstone project criteria will be for its students, thus allowing our students some flexibility and room for creativity. For example, a student at our Thornton School of Music might produce a musical composition that is influenced by the sounds of indigenous instruments, while a student at our College of Letters, Arts and Sciences might prepare a research report that documents the implementation of an irrigation system in a rural village. Each year, Global Scholars will present their capstone projects at the Undergraduate Symposium, at which they may also participate in a poster session. In this way, they will share what they learned with their peers—and hopefully inspire others to pursue their own projects.

Students who qualify for this award should submit their applications to the Globalization Office, which will then distribute them to their respective schools for an initial review of merit and substance. Each school will select its finalists for consideration by a USC-wide faculty committee. This committee, in conjunction with the provost, will then determine the Global Scholar prize winners. The university will recognize these prize winners at Commencement, along with those students earning the designation of Global Scholar. I understand that many of our top students may qualify for more than one scholar award. However, while the university might designate a student as a Renaissance, Discovery, and Global Scholar, a student can receive only one \$10,000 prize.

Conclusion

With the creation of the Discovery Scholars and Global Scholars programs, USC's framework for recognizing stellar achievement at the undergraduate level becomes one of the most comprehensive and diverse in the nation. These two programs join the already-flourishing Renaissance Scholars program to form a triad, one that recognizes three key components of USC's strategic plan:

- a dedication to excellence in scholarly research and creative endeavors that advance the human condition;
- a will to embrace both the opportunities and the challenges that accompany increasing globalization;
- and a belief in the value of a broadly based undergraduate curriculum that meets the learning needs of our students—not only in the short term, but also throughout the course of a lifetime.

We all look forward to awarding these first prizes—and to honoring the superb accomplishments of the remarkable undergraduates who will leave our university as Discovery or Global Scholars. We are also eager to build on the success of the Renaissance Scholar program, and President Sample's far-reaching vision for this university and its students. Just as importantly, we look forward to the many contributions these gifted scholars will make to our society for generations to come.

cc: Steven B. Sample
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