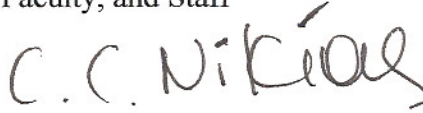


MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Deans, Faculty, and Staff

From: C. L. Max Nikias



Date: October 25, 2007

Subject: Search for a New Dean of Religious Life

Office of the Provost

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

On behalf of President Sample, I am writing to announce a national search for a new dean of Religious Life. Rabbi **Susan Laemmle** has decided to retire from USC, having served in this role with great distinction since 1996. Her compassion, warmth, and dedication to USC have touched so many in our community, and her accomplishments during this time have significantly improved the experience and education we offer our students. Rabbi Laemmle has agreed to remain in her position until a new dean is appointed.

As you know, the dean of Religious Life plays a vital role in the life of this university, particularly as USC strives to become increasingly residential. This dean works to bring spiritual and ethical concerns into the interchange of ideas on our campuses, while exploring new ways in which religion broadly construed can enhance university life. In every way, the work of this dean reflects USC's unwavering dedication to "the development of human beings and society as a whole, through the cultivation and enrichment of the human mind and spirit."

Given the importance of this position, a search advisory committee has already been appointed and will move quickly to identify and recruit appropriate candidates. Dean **Marilyn Flynn** of the School of Social Work will chair the search advisory committee, and **Denzil Suite**, associate vice president for student affairs, will serve as associate chair. The search advisory committee will also include Professor **Ronald Garet** of the Gould School of Law; Professor **Iraj Ershaghi** of the Viterbi School of Engineering; Professor **Donald Miller** of the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences; Professor **Harry Pachon** of the School of Policy, Planning, and Development; Professor **Viktor Prasanna** of the Viterbi School of Engineering; Professor **Erin Quinn** of the Keck School of Medicine; and Professor **Michael Renov** of the School of Cinematic Arts.

As the search advisory committee moves forward, four rules of engagement will guide its work. (1) The final choice of the dean is made by the president. (2) During the entire process, there will be no votes by any group or constituency. (3) All faculty, staff, and student organizations will be invited to send their comments

regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the final candidates to the provost directly and confidentially. (4) All nominations will come before the search advisory committee without filtering. We will provide opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to meet the finalists as we near the final stages of our search.

Before closing, I want to emphasize once again the university's gratitude to Rabbi Laemmle for her exceptional service to our community. She first came to USC as an undergraduate, graduating *summa cum laude* and having been elected to Phi Beta Kappa. After earning a Ph.D. in English and her rabbinic ordination, she returned to the university as director of the Hillel Jewish Center, and was later appointed as USC's first dean of Religious Life. In this role, she has successfully fostered a broad and ecumenical range of student religious organizations, including Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, and those "in quest." Thanks to her leadership, USC now has a beautiful interfaith calendar of holy days. She has been particularly committed to multi-faith learning and to helping members of our community search for meaning and purpose in life, as exemplified by the highly-successful series *What Matters to Me and Why* and her own undergraduate class *Literature and the Choosing Self*. In times of crisis, she has brought the campus community together through projects such as "One USC." We applaud Rabbi Laemmle's many achievements, and look forward to building on her successes in the future.

cc: Steven B. Sample
Todd R. Dickey
Dennis F. Dougherty
Martha Harris
Alan Kreditor
Elizabeth Garrett
Michael Jackson
Barry Glassner