

MEMORANDUM

To: Faculty
From: Randolph W. Hall
Date: January 24, 2011
Regarding: SETI Institute



Office of the Provost

Randolph W. Hall, Ph.D.
Vice President, Research

I am pleased to announce that USC has entered into an exciting new partnership with the SETI Institute, located in Mountain View, California. As USC's newest academic affiliate, USC will initiate a broad range of research and outreach programs aimed at studying the living universe.

With funding from NASA and other sources, the SETI Institute maintains a large program in astrobiology that ranges from an ongoing search for signs of intelligent life in space, to the study of how life evolves in strange and harsh environments on Earth. USC researchers and students will gain access to the institute under the affiliation, which will enable joint research projects by USC and SETI Institute scientists, and student internships by USC undergraduates.

The institute is best known for its ongoing search for life outside the solar system, using radio telescopes to listen for possible intentional transmissions. The institute also conducts data analysis for NASA's Kepler project, which seeks to identify planets similar to Earth, and runs education and public outreach programs for other NASA projects.

Another integral part of SETI Institute's mission is the exploration of life in extreme environments on Earth. Similar work goes on at USC, which hosts one of the country's top geobiology programs, including a major research center funded by the National Science Foundation and focused on life in the dark biosphere under the oceans.

This new partnership will help USC establish a major research presence in the Silicon Valley, as well as expand our ability to compete for research funding from NASA. We look forward to building close ties with SETI Institute scientists through adjunct and research faculty appointments, and providing opportunities for our students to work under the mentorship of SETI Institute scientists.

For more information on this new relationship, please do not hesitate to contact me at vpres@usc.edu.