



October 22, 2008

## AN OPEN LETTER TO THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY

Many thanks to the students, parents, staff, and faculty who have contacted us in recent weeks about campus security and our students' wellbeing at USC. Maintaining a safe, vibrant campus environment is our top priority and we appreciate your emails and calls to share your concerns and thoughts.

### Student Affairs

**Michael L. Jackson**  
Vice President

Many of you have provided suggestions regarding how the university can continue to improve safety on campus and in our surrounding neighborhoods. We sincerely appreciate your shared commitment to this effort. We recognize that campus safety requires a partnership between the university and its students. You have our commitment that the University will do its part in developing safety programs that are effective and easy-to-access. Please help us communicate to all university community members that they must do their part by not putting themselves in vulnerable positions. For students, some examples of high-risk behaviors include walking alone at night, engaging excessive drinking of alcohol, and engaging in behaviors that cause disturbances in the neighborhood.

These recommendations have been discussed among senior leaders of the university, as well as with the departments of Public Safety (DPS), Auxiliary Services, and Transportation, the latter of which operates the Campus Cruisers and Tram Service.

As you know, the Undergraduate Student Government organized an open forum several weeks ago that was attended by students, staff, faculty, and members of the local community. During the forum, the University's campus safety programs were discussed and critiqued. Representatives from the Los Angeles Police Department, Student Affairs, Public Safety, and Transportation discussed their roles and responsibilities in promoting a safe university environment. These talks were open and direct. Panel and audience members engaged in thoughtful dialogue, marked by a sense of mutual commitment to make USC as safe as possible—while supporting our desire for an open campus that welcomes all visitors and members of our Trojan Family alike and reflecting our interest in maintaining important connections with our neighbors in the University Park community and the City of Los Angeles.

The University reviews its safety programs on an ongoing basis and was already in the process of augmenting various campus safety resources when the forum took place. I would like to share the steps that we have taken or are implementing in the following areas: Public Safety staffing and assignments, student transportation options, and partnerships with public agencies to improve lighting in North University Park:

### **Public Safety**

The USC Board of Trustees and administration have authorized hiring 14 new officers to provide additional patrols and security capabilities in areas with the largest concentration of students. This move will allow for enhanced patrols in the North University Park area from 5:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays.

Meanwhile, in the past two years, 15 officers have been added to the DPS staff and LAPD has dedicated a Senior Lead Officer and a Detective in our community to support our DPS efforts. In addition, LAPD now provides a night-time patrol vehicle, which provides a more coordinated and efficient approach to crime suppression. USC has one of the nation's largest university-based public safety offices, with more than 230 security officers and staff members. DPS patrols the University Park campus and the surrounding area constantly, and works very closely with LAPD to pay special attention to emerging threats and situations in the community.

### **Transportation**

In order to extend our student transportation offerings, we have significantly increased our Campus Cruiser service (with more cars and drivers), added Tram route schedules, and implemented a new Yellow Cab program.

### **Campus Cruiser**

We have increased the budget for Campus Cruiser personnel to include an additional 34 student drivers, 5 vehicles, and 2 dispatchers. These resources will aid us in reaching our goal of 15-minute wait times during operating hours. To increase dispatching and driving efficiency, we have installed a GPS tracking system in all Campus Cruiser vehicles, allowing students to track their cruiser via desktop or mobile device.

### **Trams**

Our tram operation is a vital support network to the Campus Cruiser program. To this end, we have created a new "D" route which, by mid-November, will include service to local late-night hangouts near campus and to Greek Row. In addition, beginning next semester, we will no longer operate a combined A/B Route in the evening hours. Instead, we will extend A Route and B Route operation hours to 24 hours Monday through Friday.

### **Yellow Cab Program**

Through a partnership with Yellow Cab taxi service, we have expanded the option for students to pay for cabs with discretionary funds on their USCard. Students have responded favorably to this new program and many have already begun to use the Yellow Cab services. Please visit [www.usc.edu/uscard/yellowcab](http://www.usc.edu/uscard/yellowcab) for more information. Students may call 800-USC-TAXI to use this service.

### **Community Lighting Enhancements**

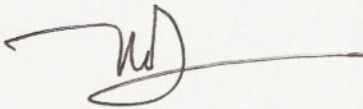
Over the last two years, we have worked to increase physical and electronic monitoring in many high-traffic areas both on and off campus. Lighting has been improved throughout the University Park area and 17 cameras have been added to provide video patrol capability. Footage from these cameras is viewed on a regular basis and is used to inform our safety efforts. Additionally, the University has an agreement with the Los Angeles Department of Urban Forestry that allows us to trim trees which block street lights intended to illuminate the North University Park area. USC will pay for additional light fixtures in the area and is stepping up inspections to speed the replacement of burnt-out streetlights. Finally, the University is working with the Department of Water and Power to install flood lights on many of the department's utility poles in the area.

**We Need Your Help**

We care deeply about the individual and collective safety of the members of our community and we share a responsibility to ensure that our campus and its surrounding neighborhoods are secure and inviting. We seek out various channels to remind students that each member of our campus community is an important link in maintaining a safe campus environment. As just one example, we have launched a new Trojans Care for Trojans (TC4T) campaign designed to reinforce our value of safeguarding and supporting each member of our USC family. To learn more about TC4T, visit [www.usc.edu/tc4t](http://www.usc.edu/tc4t).

We remind everyone to avail themselves of the many USC safety resources available and to encourage their use by all members of the Trojan Family. Each of us plays an important role in keeping our campus, and our surrounding community, a safe, lively place to work, study, and play. We look forward to continuing to work together in this effort—and to ensuring that the strategies we employ are successful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MJ', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael L. Jackson  
Vice President for Student Affairs