

MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Deans and Faculty

From: Elizabeth Garrett *EG*
Vice President for Academic Planning and Budget

Gene Bickers *GB*
Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs

Date: March 19, 2007

Subject: Welcome Week Micro-Seminars 2007

Office of the Provost

Elizabeth Garrett
Vice President for
Academic Planning
and Budget

Sydney M. Irmas
Professor of
Public Interest
Law, Legal Ethics,
Political Science,
and Policy, Planning
and Development

We invite you to apply to participate in USC's **Welcome Week Micro-Seminars Program**, which takes place this year on August 23 and 24. Faculty presenters will receive a stipend of \$500 as compensation for their work. **The due date for receipt of applications is Monday, April 16.**

The Micro-Seminars Program is a component of USC's First Contact Initiative, whose purpose is to enhance interactions between our faculty and undergraduate students. A particularly important time for promoting interactions and fostering a sense of academic engagement is the first week of campus life for our newly arrived freshmen. Over 700 students participated in 31 different micro-seminars during the inaugural program in 2006, and the response from faculty and students was overwhelmingly positive.

The program is described in detail below, and a one-page application form is included as an attachment.

Description of the Program

As part of their introduction to academic life at USC, incoming freshmen are encouraged to enroll in a two-session Welcome Week Micro-Seminar. The micro-seminars are not graded and do not carry course credit. This year the sessions are scheduled to take place from 10 - 11:30 AM on **Thursday, August 23**, and **Friday, August 24**.

The purpose of the micro-seminars is two-fold:

- To introduce students to new subject matter in a field of interest to both them and the participating faculty member; and
- To promote discussions between students and faculty in an informal, small-group setting before the official start of classes.

The enrollment in each micro-seminar is limited to **twenty students**. Students enroll on-line, and participant lists are forwarded to faculty in advance. In 2006 many faculty welcomed their students by e-mail before they arrived on campus.

Micro-seminar topics may be proposed from the full range of humanities, social and natural sciences, arts, and professions, as well as pop culture. In 2006 micro-seminar titles included “US Intervention in the Middle East: Historical Precedents, Present Realities”; “Artificial Intelligence and Science Fiction”; “Opera and the Exotic”; and “Virtual Buildings/Digital City.”

We particularly welcome proposals that focus on some aspect of ethics. Micro-seminars in this area will be offered in collaboration with the USC Levan Institute on Ethics and the Humanities, and they will receive a special designation.

All full-time faculty are invited to participate, including both those who routinely teach undergraduates and those who teach in graduate and professional programs across all of our eighteen schools on the University Park and Health Sciences Campuses. This is a unique opportunity for faculty in our graduate programs to interact with our first-year undergraduates.

To submit a micro-seminar topic for consideration, please complete the attached form, which requires a title and short topic description. Keep in mind that the scheduled contact time is three hours spread out over two sessions. It is necessary to commit to teaching on both Thursday, August 23, and Friday, August 24. Forms may be submitted by e-mail to Gene Bickers (bickers@usc.edu) or as a hardcopy to the Office of Undergraduate Programs, GFS 227, MC 1695. The due date for receipt of submissions is **Monday, April 16**. Notifications of approval and additional information will be provided by early May.

WELCOME WEEK 2007 MICRO-SEMINARS APPLICATION

Submission of an application indicates availability to conduct a two-session micro-seminar on **Thursday, August 23**, and **Friday, August 24**. Notifications of approval and additional information will be provided by early May. Participating faculty will receive a stipend of \$500. Any full-time faculty member is eligible to participate.

This application may be submitted by e-mail to Gene Bickers (bickers@usc.edu) or as a hardcopy to the Office of Undergraduate Programs, GFS 227, MC 1695.

The deadline for receipt of applications is **Monday, April 16**.

Contact Information

Name of Faculty:

School/Department:

USC Employee Number (for processing stipends):

E-mail:

Phone:

Proposed Micro-Seminar Title:

Brief Description/Syllabus: