



MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Deans, Department Chairs and Faculty

From: C. L. Max Nikias

Date: February 5, 2007

Office of the Provost Subject: The Role of Ph.D. Fellowships in USC's Ascent as a Research University

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

USC's role and mission statement declares that "our first priority as faculty and staff is the education of our students, from freshmen to postdoctorals." Within this extensive spectrum, we must pay particular attention to the recruitment and scholarly development of the nation's best Ph.D. students, especially if USC is to fulfill its goal of creating a superior model for the research university of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Doctoral students represent a pivotal aspect of both the educational and research enterprises of elite universities. Of the United States' 4,000 colleges and universities, USC and its 61 peers within the American Association of Universities alone provide most of the nation's federally funded research; Ph.D. students conduct a generous portion of that research, in addition to making a range of other scholarly and creative contributions to society. And, of course, they represent the pool from which the next generation of the academic professoriate will emerge. In short, they represent a significant aspect of the human infrastructure of premier research universities.

As President Sample has challenged us to accelerate USC's academic momentum, a key step is for us to strengthen the diversity, quality and stature of our Ph.D. students and programs.

**Accordingly, I am pleased to announce that we are nearly tripling the funding for USC's Ph.D. Fellowship Program. This infusion of new funds raises our total university funding for Ph.D. fellowships to more than \$11 million per year.**

This increase in funding will enable us to compete for the most talented and promising Ph.D. students. It will allow us to identify potential world leaders in scholarship and team them with top faculty across the spectrum of disciplines.

USC's Ph.D. Fellowship Program is administered by the USC Graduate School and involves a university-level competition. Jean Morrison, vice provost for Graduate Programs, will shortly make available to your schools more information on the program.

I thank you in advance for working with us to make this expanded Ph.D. fellowship program a major success in the life of our university.

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