



MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Deans and Directors, Faculty and Staff

From: C. L. Max Nikias *C. L. Nikias*

Date: September 30, 2005

Subject: Provost's Arts and Humanities Initiative

Office of the Provost

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

I am delighted to announce the creation of a university-wide Arts and Humanities Initiative. This initiative will play a vital role in the education we offer at USC by encouraging our students to thoughtfully examine the university's core values and explore their meaning through critical reflection.

Our strategic plan emphasizes the importance of maintaining USC's core values, especially as the university rapidly evolves and grows. It identifies four sets of values as particularly essential in this context: (1) academic freedom and an institutional commitment to the search for truth; (2) the Trojan family values, which include caring and respect, an appreciation of diversity, team spirit, and a commitment to service; (3) informed risk-taking; and (4) ethical conduct.

These core values represent USC at its very best. They form its foundation and drive every aspect of President Sample's creative vision for our future. And so we must pointedly ask: how can the university incorporate the rigorous exploration of these values into each student's experience at USC, regardless of discipline?

I believe we should turn to the arts and humanities. These disciplines fully capture the values of the university and provide students with an outstanding opportunity to examine their own relationship to these values on a truly personal level. The arts and humanities bring these values to life, illuminating their complexities and nuances.

To this end, I am appointing Executive Vice Provost **Barry Glassner** to oversee this initiative. He will work closely with deans, faculty, students, and staff to arrange events such as film screenings, humanities lectures, art exhibitions, and musical performances that will inspire and challenge our students.

A faculty committee, chaired by Professor **Tara McPherson** of the School of Cinema-Television, will take a leading role in planning and presenting the events. This interdisciplinary committee will also include undergraduate and graduate students, as well as ex-officio staff.

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A deans' council, chaired by Dean **Madeline Puzo** of the School of Theatre, will also provide leadership and programming for this initiative. The complete rosters for this group and the faculty committee appear as attachments to this memorandum.

This initiative will fully embrace USC's thriving cultural life. With this in mind, USC faculty are encouraged to submit proposals for events to include in a 2006-07 series. A formal **Request for Proposals** is attached and provides additional details. This spring we will also organize pilot events as a prelude to next year's full series.

As you are all aware, USC is extremely fortunate to be in one of the world's most vibrant cultural centers. Therefore, in addition to a rich array of arts and humanities events on campus, we will provide special opportunities for our students to take advantage of the city's numerous outstanding theaters, museums, and performing arts centers. Although these events will be off-campus, they will be accompanied by discussions and lectures that explore their relationship to our core values and allow our students opportunities for analytical reflection.

Let me close by saying that I am excited to see this initiative become a reality, and I am convinced it will be a major step forward in the education of our students. We intend for all USC students, regardless of their field of study, to develop an engagement with the arts and humanities.

And here is how we will know that we have succeeded: our students will ask for more. When they come to us to "demand an encore" from our campus arts community, we will know that we have succeeded in helping them become richer and wiser world citizens.

#### Attachments

cc: Steven B. Sample  
Todd R. Dickey  
Dennis F. Dougherty  
Martha Harris  
Alan Kreditor

## **Provost's Arts and Humanities Initiative Faculty Committee**

### **Tara McPherson, Chair (School of Cinema-Television)**

Margo Apostolos, School of Theatre  
Leo Braudy, College of Letters, Arts and Sciences  
Elaine Chew, Viterbi School of Engineering  
Joanna Demers, Thornton School of Music  
Ronald Garet, Gould School of Law  
Felix Gutierrez, Annenberg School for Communication  
Anthony Lazzaro, Vice President Emeritus  
Deborah MacInnis, Marshall School of Business  
Amy Murphy, School of Architecture  
Hilary Schor, College of Letters, Arts and Sciences and Gould School of Law  
Jean Shih, School of Pharmacy and Keck School of Medicine

#### Student Members:

Gustavo Castro, Music Performance, Graduate  
Wyatt Fenner, Theatre/Acting, Undergraduate

#### Ex-officio Members:

Eugene Bickers, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs  
Dennis Cornell, Associate Vice President, University Events  
Barry Glassner, Executive Vice Provost  
Ken Taylor, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs

## **Provost's Arts and Humanities Deans' Council**

### **Madeline Puzo, Chair (School of Theatre)**

Geoffrey Cowan, Annenberg School for Communication  
Robert Cutietta, Thornton School of Music  
Elizabeth Daley, School of Cinema-Television  
Selma Holo, Fisher Gallery  
Peter Starr, College of Letters, Arts and Sciences  
Ruth Weisberg, School of Fine Arts  
Yannis Yortsos, Viterbi School of Engineering

**Announcement of Faculty Grants  
for 2006-2007 Event Series  
of the Arts and Humanities Initiative**

**Focus:**

The Arts and Humanities Initiative is requesting proposals from USC faculty for a 2006-07 Event Series. The Series will broaden the engagement of USC students with the arts and humanities and confirm the University's commitment to the central role these disciplines play in public life.

Events can span a broad array of formats, including performances, lectures, screenings, exhibitions, and panel conversations, but each event should facilitate discussion of USC's core values through a meaningful encounter with the arts and/or humanities. All events should address a broad audience with a primary focus on USC undergraduates.

The Provost's Office will provide substantial funding for high-profile events during academic year 2006-07. Support will be arranged for all major services for the Series and to plan and promote each event.

**Letters of Intent:**

Faculty or teams of faculty who are interested in applying for these funds should send a brief letter of intent (250-500 words) and a one-page c.v. for each team member by November 1, 2005 to the contact person below. In the letter, please describe the event, why it would be of interest to USC students, how it will contribute to their exploration of core values, and how it facilitates meaningful faculty-student interaction. Events that dovetail with curricular initiatives are particularly encouraged. Following an initial review of the letters of intent, the faculty advisory committee will provide applicants with information about the full application and review process.

**Deadline:**

Thursday, November 1, 2005, 4 p.m.: Letters of intent due

**Contact Person:**

Contact Professor Tara McPherson, Faculty Committee Chair, at [tmcphers@usc.edu](mailto:tmcphers@usc.edu) or (213) 740-3330 with questions. Letters of intent should be emailed as a Word document to her by 4 p.m. on Thursday, November 1, 2005.