

# Appendix 1.2

## USC 2004 Strategic Plan

### USC's Plan for Increasing Academic Excellence:

#### *Building Strategic Capabilities for the University of the 21st Century*

The central mission of the University of Southern California is the development of human beings and society as a whole through the cultivation and enrichment of the human mind and spirit.

#### **I. Introduction**

USC's academic excellence, status, and reputation have increased greatly over the past decade as the university has implemented its 1994 and 1998 strategic plans. These successes continue to be built on a strong financial base, greatly bolstered by the largest fundraising campaign in the history of higher education. Students from over 100 nations now compete for the opportunity to study with our distinguished faculty, research activity is at an all-time high, visual and performing arts are flourishing, and our endowment has nearly quintupled in the past 13 years.

As we proceed to make even greater contributions to the cultivation and enrichment of the human mind and spirit, we will continue to implement the strategies from our 1994 and 1998 plans, both of which have served us well. USC remains committed to continually improving the world-class, innovative education we provide to our undergraduate, graduate and professional students. Our focus on increasing academic excellence, on hiring the best and most creative faculty, and on encouraging pathbreaking research, must continue to underpin all of our future activities. Similarly, our traditional core values and shared ethical principles must always guide our actions. At the same time we must acknowledge the fact that conditions in the world are changing ever more rapidly. Thus, more flexible strategies must be developed which will enable USC to accelerate its progress under evolving external circumstances.

Like all universities, USC actively shapes its own future, and as well is shaped by external conditions over which the university has little or no control. As the 21st century opens, the external environment for higher education is quickly changing in significant ways. We anticipate: intensified competition among higher education providers worldwide; increasing demands for greater regulation and accountability; and extensive realignments in federal support. After five decades of relative stability, national science policies are shifting toward a greater emphasis on research that directly addresses practical issues in the national interest.

No one can foresee how these trends will unfold in the coming years. Furthermore, circumstances outside higher education, such as changing international conditions and unexpected economic and technological developments, may undermine the long-term feasibility of specific strategies that make sense today. As we engage in a planning process that looks ahead over the next 10 to 20 years, we have been mindful of such uncertainties and have made no attempt to provide a detailed road map. Rather, we have identified a set of strategic capabilities that will help position USC to meet challenges that are unknowable today. Such capabilities will give USC the expertise and flexibility to adapt to change while taking a pro-active stance toward setting and achieving its vision. Ultimately, developing such capabilities will enable USC to better secure its place among the world's greatest universities.

This strategic plan begins by describing a vision for USC's future, and then proposes the strategic capabilities that will help USC realize that vision. It also puts in place a system whereby implementation of the plan will be reviewed and adjusted by a permanent Planning Committee on a regular basis.

## **II. A Vision for USC's Future**

USC intends to become one of the most influential and productive research universities in the world. Three core approaches will underlie our efforts:

1. We will conduct a range of research and scholarship that advances knowledge and at the same time addresses issues critical to our community, the nation, and the world.
2. We will create a significant global presence that will increase international visibility, reach, and impact of our research, scholarship, art, education, and service.
3. We will focus our educational programs on meeting the needs of qualified students worldwide, from undergraduates through continuing professional development. This commitment will guide our choices regarding pedagogy, instructional technology, curriculum, admissions, and support services.

Our ethical principles and core values regarding free inquiry, community, and informed risk-taking underpin each of these commitments.

### **A. Meeting Societal Needs**

Historic but increasingly archaic divisions between basic and applied research and scholarship often blind both faculty and society at large to the real societal significance of much of university research. By rejecting the false dichotomy between fundamental and applied research, and by creating structures which enable and encourage synergistic interactions among different kinds of research, USC will secure its status as a university of major societal importance.

The vision for USC's future emphasizes becoming a major force in addressing critical issues facing society and creating new societal opportunities. Along with excellence in the traditional basic research domain, we will be recognized as the university with the greatest social impact—the place where rigorous fundamental and applied research can be brought together to create solutions to the pressing concerns of society.

USC is greatly expanding its research mission in a wide variety of fields from medicine to history and from engineering to musicology. One part of this effort entails developing a research park adjacent to the Health Sciences Campus, which will benefit the city, county and society as a whole as it deepens the connections between basic and applied research and channels new knowledge toward meeting society's needs.

Focusing on societal problems positions USC for competitive success in a changing environment. As we move further into the 21st century, society will increasingly value universities actively engaged in addressing issues of practical societal importance. The research we pursue and the alumni we graduate will be judged on the basis of such contributions. We already see this happening with regard to trends in extramural funding, higher education policy, and student goals.

### ***Leveraging USC's Strengths***

This element of the vision recognizes some of the distinguishing features of our university, including our urban location, student diversity, breadth of disciplines and fields of study, strong reputation for interdisciplinary research and scholarship, close ties to the local community and the Pacific Rim, and outstanding community service and patient care capabilities. The problems that our university can productively address span an extraordinarily broad range, from those that are technological or social to those that touch directly the human spirit and its aspirations.

USC's long-standing efforts to link fundamental and applied research already contribute important new knowledge to society, and these efforts will grow in the future. Existing efforts combining basic research and its applied uses include the Institute for Creative Technology, the Southern California Earthquake Center, the USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and Hospital, the Andrus Center for Research on Aging, and the USC Center on Public Diplomacy.

### **B. Expanding Global Presence**

The convergence of globalism, technology, and education will require leading educational institutions to become truly international in presence, focus, and scope in order to create global visibility and brand equity.

Great universities have international visibility and reach, and if USC is to cement her status as a great university she must expand her global presence. Most of society's major concerns are global in scope (e.g., sustainability, disease prevention and treatment, economic development, security, environmental quality). Thus, research, scholarship and art that focus on society's important problems will of necessity become increasingly global, and our faculty will require greater access to foreign researchers, governments, businesses, and communities. This global perspective and presence will help to ensure that the work of our faculty is read and applied worldwide.

The histories of USC and the region it serves are closely linked, and both evolve together. Los Angeles and Southern California increasingly form the economic, political and cultural capital of the Pacific Rim. At USC we must recognize the deeply international character of our home in order to continue to meet the changing needs of our city and region. Political and business decisions made far away, in both the United States and abroad, have direct effects on Los Angeles; similarly, the influences of Los Angeles businesses, universities, and demographic trends extend well beyond the borders of our nation. To best serve the interests of Los Angeles and Southern California, our faculty need to understand the region in its global context. Ultimately, one of the most important contributions we can make to our region is to be a great research university, understanding and influencing all aspects of our lives.

Additionally, a global presence will attract the most talented students in the world to USC. The demand for education is increasing worldwide, and the best students will view higher education as an international market, heightening competition and creating a truly global student body. We seek to become the university of choice for future leaders in all parts of the world.

### ***Leveraging USC's Strengths***

Beginning in its earliest days under President Marion M. Bovard, USC looked to the Pacific Rim as a topic of study and a source of students. Similarly, when the university celebrated its 50th anniversary, President Rufus B. von KleinSmid emphasized the role of Los Angeles as a "world

center” and the international backgrounds of the university’s faculty and students. More recently, USC’s 1994 strategic plan made internationalization one of its four central themes. The present vision of expanding the university’s global presence builds on these traditions.

USC’s reputation and network across the Pacific Rim provide a strong base on which to build. Our role as the founder of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities gives us access to high-quality partners. Our international offices are successfully strengthening USC’s recruitment efforts, developing alumni networks, and providing support for faculty research in a lean but effective infrastructure. Moreover, thousands of international students continue to seek a USC education and serve as global goodwill ambassadors for us. While on campus, international students enrich campus life, and serve as invaluable resources in the peer-learning experiences of our domestic students. Our School of International Relations, other internationally focused programs in the College, and numerous international projects and collaboratives in virtually every professional school, also speak to our growing global presence.

The international nature of Los Angeles itself is another advantage. Our local community comprises large numbers of individuals, businesses, and cultural institutions with international linkages. As a result, we do not have to choose between focusing on local versus international issues and interests; in most cases, they are one and the same.

### **C. Promoting Learner-Centered Education**

The learner-centered university of the 21st century will focus on the educational needs of the student rather than the structure and needs of the teaching institution.

The third pillar of our new vision is nothing less than a new concept of education within research universities, which we are calling a “learner-centered” orientation. Essentially, learner-centered education gives primacy to the needs of students. This means thinking expansively about who our students are, how their backgrounds and needs may change in the future, and how best to engage them in learning. Because students learn in different ways and bring different goals and aspirations to the university, this new approach translates into greater flexibility and individual responsiveness in the way we structure and deliver education and student services.

New technology enables and facilitates new ways of teaching students. Historically, the respect and credibility accorded to professors derived in large part from their disciplinary knowledge, which was unmatched outside the academy. Their principal role as teachers and mentors was to transmit that knowledge to future generations. Today, technology makes information broadly accessible, and knowledge accumulates so quickly that information rapidly becomes outdated. Thus, we need a new approach to teaching that moves beyond transmitting information. Instead, faculty must play a more active role in helping students learn to locate, assess, apply, and create information.

A learner-centered approach will attract prospective students. By becoming more innovative and responsive, we will be better able to recruit the next generation of leaders and will advance USC’s overall mission and reputation. Our recent experience has demonstrated how critical high-quality students are to the reputation and visibility of the university. As our undergraduate program became more popular and selective, the entire institution derived great benefits. Increasingly, however, we believe that top students will consider the worldwide higher education market and seek out those programs that match their interests, goals, needs, and learning styles. In addition,

the age, educational goals, and needs of learners continue to change—requiring us to rethink prior assumptions about whom we teach, as well as where and how our educational programs are delivered.

### ***Leveraging USC's Strengths***

Over the past decade, USC has established not only one of the best undergraduate programs in the world, but also one of the most responsive to students' interests. A good example is our policy of allowing students to integrate the core disciplines within the College with more applied fields of study in our professional schools. The Renaissance Scholars program encourages undergraduate students to pursue studies in fields that are widely separated intellectually in order to create "breadth with depth." More recently, we have taken steps to renew and strengthen graduate education by advancing curriculum, building cross-school cooperation, and improving student support. Also helpful are several successful interdisciplinary programs, including the Thematic Option program for undergraduates, and the Neural, Informational and Behavioral Sciences (NIBS) doctoral program, a unique interdisciplinary melding of neuroscience, cognitive science, and engineering disciplines. In addition, we have been learning how USC can best use technology to enhance education, particularly on the University Park and Health Science campuses and through distance learning programs.

## **III. Developing Strategic Capabilities**

The vision of USC we have described will require fundamental changes over the long term. To facilitate such evolution, we believe that USC should focus on developing four strategic capabilities as described below. Although the process of nurturing change will extend well into the future, we can begin the process immediately by launching a number of initiatives to lay the groundwork for developing capacity in each of these areas. Our deans, vice presidents, and faculty leaders will serve as champions of particular initiatives and will work closely with faculty, students, and staff in design, implementation, and assessment. The hard work and dedication of the university's faculty, staff, students, and alumni will ensure the success of these efforts.

### **A. Span Disciplinary and School Boundaries to Focus on Problems of Societal Significance**

Since societal problems rarely fall within the domain of a single discipline or school, collaboration that brings together different perspectives and skills may be the best means of addressing such problems. Existing disciplinary and school boundaries, however, often impede effective collaboration. We must create mechanisms that remove structural disincentives to such collective efforts on problems of major significance. We have made significant strides in building this capability as a result of our two previous strategic plans, but we must now move forward even more aggressively.

If we succeed in easing movement across academic boundaries, we must also ensure that our administrative and student support units are equally flexible and responsive. This will require a high level of coordination among administrative departments as well as between administrative and academic units.

## **First Year Initiatives to Develop this Strategic Capability:**

### **1. Graduate seminar series.**

To ensure that academic masters and Ph.D. students have a better understanding of how their research can contribute to the study of important social problems, we will develop a series of graduate Social Impact Seminars that provide interdisciplinary perspectives on important social problems. The goal is that such seminars become a distinguishing feature of doctoral study at USC.

### **2. Collaborations across academic units.**

Academic program reviews have identified several areas in which the quality of research and education could be improved by forging collaborations across schools, thereby enhancing our capacity for examining key societal problems. A new Provost's Advisory Group on Interdisciplinary and University-wide Programs will identify and assess areas of existing strength in interdisciplinary fields and in disciplines that cut across existing academic units, bring together the principal players, and then recommend to the Provost where to focus resources. This group will also identify institutional obstacles to collaboration across academic units, and make recommendations for ways to remove those obstacles.

## **B. Link Fundamental to Applied Research**

In developing USC as the university with the greatest societal impact and global presence, we will have to overcome longstanding divisions between fundamental versus practical/applied research and scholarship and build closer relationships between the core arts and science disciplines of the College and our professional schools. Only in this way can research universities of the future retain their critical role as provider of most of the truly fundamental research in our society, while at the same time responding effectively to society's needs.

This does not mean that a single individual must be engaged in both the fundamental and applied aspects of research, but rather that the university must stimulate dialogue and understanding among researchers across the spectrum from fundamental to applied. As we build capacity in this area, we will face challenging questions about the domains and boundaries of the disciplines, the relations among and between the disciplines, the academic organization of the university, and the goals and structure of our educational and research programs. This challenge may not be as daunting as it seems, however, because the longstanding dichotomy between basic and applied research is becoming less rigid, with applications suggesting directions of fundamental research and the results of fundamental research leading to applications.

## **First Year Initiatives to Develop this Strategic Capability:**

### **1. Research agenda.**

Activities emerging from the 1998 critical pathways that promote USC's mission and vision for the future will continue to receive support from the Provost's Office. In particular, support will be directed toward research teams that (a) involve faculty and graduate students from three or more schools, (b) show a unity of basic and applied

research, and (c) address important societal issues. The Center for Interdisciplinary Research will continue its work of forging connections between scholars and across disciplinary boundaries, and will examine ways of engaging more faculty in this process. In particular, the Center will seek additional involvement from faculty in the humanities and the social sciences as it expands the scope of its work.

## **2. Service-learning.**

A growing body of research indicates that service-learning courses, when designed and delivered in accordance with good practices, have measurable benefits, including the opportunities to (a) explore the applied implications of theory and scholarship in a range of disciplines and (b) derive fundamental hypotheses and insights from applied experience. We will ask that every school and department incorporate one or more appropriately designed service-learning courses into its undergraduate curriculum. The goal is to expand the opportunities for every undergraduate student to enroll in service-learning courses preferably related to her major or her minor(s), before graduation.

## **C. Build Networks and Partnerships**

Because USC will not encompass all the skills and knowledge required to address major societal needs and questions, many of which having global implications, we will have to develop new partnerships and joint-ventures with various kinds of entities. These include other universities; nonprofits such as libraries, museums, think tanks, and non-governmental organizations; businesses and corporations; and domestic and multi-national policymakers. And since important social problems do not stop at the borders of our nation, we will need to enter into international networks, engage in international projects, and assist our faculty in gaining access to foreign researchers, governments, and businesses.

Whether our partnerships be with organizations across the street or across the globe, they should significantly benefit the university by (1) enhancing research and scholarship by providing skills, viewpoints, and resources unavailable at USC; (2) advancing the arts by providing new audiences, venues, collaborators, and inspiration; and/or (3) enabling us to provide new educational opportunities without creating expensive infrastructure or expanding the faculty. As with any effective partnership, these efforts must also prove beneficial to our collaborators.

Our relations with policymakers are also becoming increasingly important, and we need to expand our efforts to build capacity in this area. The university's ability to have an impact on society requires strong ties to multinational, national, state and local policymakers who both establish public policies and allocate funds for research and postsecondary education. USC has long had strong relations with California's leaders; in recent years we have also increased the university's visibility nationally and garnered support from Congress and a variety of federal agencies. As we move forward, however, it is essential that we work systematically to build alliances at all levels of government.

## **First Year Initiatives to Develop this Strategic Capability:**

### **1. Global presence.**

Extending USC's global reach will require expanding our international offices and exploring partnerships with local institutions to offer graduate and professional programs throughout the world, with a continued emphasis on Asia and Latin America. The local institutions will provide the social infrastructure appropriate to the local society, while we will provide some aspect of the educational experience (probably in subjects where local expertise is not high). We will open one additional international office this year, and will set up a committee to define the conditions under which partnerships are appropriate.

### **2. Federal government relations.**

We have already begun to build stronger ties to the federal government. This year USC opened its federal relations office in Washington, and we will extend and intensify our efforts, in conjunction with University Relations, to ensure that the work of our faculty and students relevant to societal issues is visible to key policymakers.

## **D. Increase Responsiveness to Learners**

To become learner-centered, USC must develop three related capabilities: (1) create educational structures and methods that better fulfill student needs, (2) harness technology for more responsiveness and flexibility in education, and (3) offer learning opportunities beyond graduation and across the world.

Creating more student-oriented structures and methods means shifting priorities from what the faculty now know and how the university is presently structured, toward what students need to learn and how they can best access that learning. Traditional lecture courses will decline, giving way to a variety of more flexible and interactive approaches to learning. The structure of the curriculum will also become more flexible, emphasizing demonstrations of mastery and providing more opportunities to integrate learning across degree levels, schools, and disciplines. We will need to develop alternatives to the 15-week semester, to various course requirements, and even to classroom-based learning. Increasing responsiveness to learners will also require creating a culture that values teaching as well as research. Some educators today perceive a learning-centered approach to higher education as incompatible with a research emphasis. We disagree, and it will be important to create the incentives, skills, support, and rewards for our faculty that will change these perceptions over time.

New technologies will continue to expand the learning opportunities available to students and enable learning to take place at the time and place of a student's choosing. Technology also allows support services to become more integrated and more responsive to students. USC has the potential to play a lead role in the evolution of learner-centered education because many centers on our campuses are already engaged in creating new forms of technology-assisted learning, such as the Institute for Creative Technologies, the Integrated Media Systems Center, the Distance Education Network, the Information Sciences Institute, and the Institute of Multimedia Literacy. The Rossier School and relevant work in public policy, psychology, neuroscience, communications, and others are also valuable resources.

Finally, increased responsiveness to learners means providing more education to adults at various stages of their development, from early career through retirement. In this way USC can serve a broader base of students, including working professionals seeking continuing education and professional development, retirees, and others interested in lifelong learning. This is also an area which will enhance USC's global reach by providing professional education at sites around the world. There are many areas of the world that need excellent professional programs that can serve the needs of students worldwide and at the same time expand global visibility and provide new sources of revenue.

### **First Year Initiatives to Develop this Strategic Capability:**

#### **1. Distance learning.**

Every school will be asked to create and offer at least one distance- or distributed-learning course within the next three years. The goal is for every academic department or interdisciplinary program to eventually offer sufficient distance-learning curricula for every undergraduate to take a minimum of one such course while at USC.

#### **2. Life-long learning.**

Each dean will be asked to develop a plan for continuing professional education or lifelong learning. The full range of pedagogical options for new courses and programs should be considered in creating these plans. The most promising of these plans will, in subsequent years, receive priority consideration for bridge funding to begin implementation.

#### **3. Initiative on pedagogical technology.**

A virtual Center on Pedagogical Technology will be created by coordinating the many programs at USC that are currently engaged in creating new technologies to enhance learning.

#### **4. Center for Learning:**

A Center for Learning will be created by coordinating and reorganizing the several existing organizations within USC that help faculty and graduate students increase their effectiveness as teachers. The new Center will broaden the types of services offered to faculty and graduate students, and ensure that research on the effectiveness of different pedagogies is fully incorporated into our programs.

#### **5. The administrative imperative.**

Responsive and flexible support services are the foundation of a learning-centered institution. During the 2004-05 academic year USC will review its academic support capabilities to ensure the efficacy of these centers, programs and offices. Also, as USC moves toward more extensive educational programming beyond its two primary campuses we must "invent the future" of student support. A task force will be asked to create and eventually implement the next generation of student services, both here and for students at remote sites.

## **IV. Maintain Core Values**

Developing these strategic capabilities will require far-reaching changes in university structure and culture. It is important, therefore, to ensure that the evolution of the university remains grounded in USC's core values.

Four sets of core values are particularly critical in this context. First is free inquiry, an institutional commitment to the search for truth that must be defended against any external or internal threats.

The second set of core values is usually described as the values of the Trojan Family, standards which have long defined USC's interactions with its stakeholders and which will continue to guide us in the future. These standards include: caring and respect for one another as individuals; appreciation of diversity; team spirit; strong alumni networks; and a commitment to service.

The third set of core values involves a commitment to informed risk-taking within a culture of targeted experimentation that can help USC prepare for an uncertain future. By crafting experiments related to our vision and strategic capabilities, we will learn what works in a changing world. Such experiments will be most beneficial if we can learn to appreciate the fact that not all attempts at innovation will succeed, and that much can be learned from so-called "useful failures."

The fourth and final set of core values comprises our commitment to ethical conduct as spelled out in our recently-adopted Code of Ethics.

These values define our community, sustain a sense of cohesiveness, and connect us to our past and to our future. They will guide us in making difficult and sometimes risky decisions, and will help us make choices that preserve USC's integrity, community, and quality.

## **V. Evolution and Evaluation**

Attaining this vision for USC will require ongoing oversight and continuous extending of the approaches described here. Existing initiatives must be evaluated, reshaped, and sharpened, while at the same time new initiatives must be created which will further develop the strategic capabilities of the university. Innovative approaches must be developed which will move USC further on its journey to becoming one of the most influential and productive research universities in the world.

A standing Planning Committee will be created under the leadership of the provost to provide continuing monitoring and extension of this Plan for Increasing Academic Excellence. The faculty and staff who were members of the Strategic Planning Committee that initially led the creation of this Plan will serve as the core of this new committee. In subsequent years, one-fifth of the members will rotate off and be replaced each year. Data portfolios relating to the strategic capabilities will be created to help the Planning Committee evaluate the success of each initiative on an annual basis. This evaluation will lead to recommendations for improving the initiative, or to terminating it if it is not working or if the objectives have been reached. In addition, each year the Planning Committee will propose new initiatives to support and extend the Plan. These recommendations will be made at the end of each Spring semester, so that they can be discussed in detail at the last meeting of the academic year of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees. The modified and the newly developed initiatives then will be shared with deans so that schools can incorporate them into their Fall planning cycles the following academic year.