TO: All Faculty, College of Arts and Sciences
FROM: Marcelo Camperi, Dean
DATE: August 25, 2015
SUBJECT: Students with Disabilities

I write to remind you of certain rights under the law applicable to students with disabilities (those with learning, physical, psychiatric, health, hearing, or vision impairments), and to solicit your assistance in following proper procedures in cases where these rights are invoked.

First, the determination that a student is disabled, and the characterization of that disability, is a highly confidential matter, disclosed only to those who need to know. Should you be informed that one of your students has a documented disability, you may discuss the matter only with that student or with others charged with providing assistance to that student. Under no circumstances should you discuss the student’s disability with other students, in or out of class.

Federal and state laws require that the University provide reasonable accommodations to all students with documented disabilities. Students wishing to obtain reasonable accommodations must first be determined eligible for reasonable accommodations. Eligibility for reasonable accommodations is determined and documentation of this is prepared and retained by USF’s Student Disability Services Offices (SDS). Students with Learning Disabilities, Attention Deficit Disorder, and Asperger’s Syndrome and other disabilities may be referred to SDS—Gleeson Library, Lower Level, Room 20 (x2613). Staff in the Center for Academic and Student Achievement (CASA) Office (Laleh Shahideh, Associate Vice Provost and Dean of Academic Student Services, x6113) are often knowledgeable of individual student circumstances as well; however, determination of reasonable accommodations is the responsibility of SDS, in collaboration with the student and you as the faculty member.

Confidentiality rights maintain that students with disabilities are not required to provide medical documentation or results of a psycho-educational assessment directly to you. However, they are required to provide this information to SDS prior to receiving reasonable accommodations from the University. Therefore, you may request that your student provide you with accommodation verification from SDS before accommodating the student.

Reasonable accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis, and accommodations provided cannot result in any academic penalty to a disabled student. For example, should a student with a documented disability miss an academic exercise—i.e., an examination, quiz, homework or other assignment—because of a disability, faculty must, by law, enable the student to compensate for lost work if the University recommends this as a reasonable accommodation provision for the student. Furthermore, a disabled student who misses an examination because of a documented effect of his or her disability cannot receive a lower-than-earned grade simply for missing that exam. Faculty at other institutions who have failed to provide such reasonable accommodations have been found by the courts to be personally liable for these discriminatory acts.

Should you have questions regarding the reasonable accommodation process at the University, or wish to discuss accommodation recommendations made for your course by Student Disability Services, I
strongly encourage you to contact the appropriate office listed above for advice as soon as the matter is drawn to your attention. Additional resources for you may be found here:

https://web.usfca.edu/sds

It is essential—both for concerns of student welfare and of following the law—that you are especially careful to meet your responsibilities related to students with disabilities, and I know I can count on your full cooperation in doing so.

Cc:  Donna J. Davis, General Counsel  
     Tom Merrell, Assistant Dean and Director of Student Disability Services  
     Pamela Balls Organista, Associate Dean for Social Sciences  
     Eileen Fung, Associate Dean for Arts and Humanities  
     June Madsen Clausen, Associate Dean for Academic Effectiveness  
     Christina Tzagarakis-Foster, Associate Dean for Sciences  
     Laleh Shahideh, Associate Vice Provost and Dean of Student Academic Services