

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for participating in last week's town hall hosted by Fr. Paul and me and in the Provost's Conversation on "Reimagining the Arts at USF." In the weeks since the announcement of a pending partnership with the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI), it has been electrifying to see more than 300 USF community members participate in our discussions about a possible integration. I am inspired by the initial sketches offered by our arts faculty, and I have gleaned insights from the many colleagues across campus who have engaged with the possibilities and challenges of SFAI@USF. All are helping us frame the questions we need to ask during this period of discernment.

I invite you to review this **jamboard**, with its multi-colored patchwork of ideas and questions, that the provost's team has returned to regularly as we contemplate the possibilities and realities of the road ahead. We are in the process of forming working groups that will bring together USF and SFAI campus expertise to address issues of academic programming, accreditation, enrollment management, budget, operations, and more. A USF and SFAI faculty meet-and-greet is being scheduled for next week and our faculty are already starting to collaborate, making plans to lecture in each other's classes and sharing ideas. A broader tour of SFAI facilities for USF faculty and staff is being planned for March. We will keep you posted about that and about additional opportunities to engage.

Even as we digest the announcement about SFAI and organize ourselves for an intensive due diligence period, a very busy semester continues to unfold. I am grateful to our full- and part-time faculty and librarians for centering the education of our students, to all our staff members across the university who support our students and our operations, to our deans and associate deans who are balancing complex priorities, and to all of our employees whose continued dedication enables us to deliver on the promise of a Jesuit education.

Updates on Searches

One of my key goals for the coming months is to ensure we have the resources and staffing needed to implement our exciting and ambitious strategic plan. This means continuing to identify and develop internal talent as well as attract leaders with fresh perspectives, knowledge, and expertise. To that end, I want to provide an update on the searches we have underway in Academic Affairs, inform the community about additional transitions in the provost's office, and take a moment to thank the chairs and the committee members involved in current searches. This work requires intensive effort and collaboration and these committees are critical to bringing the leadership to USF that will help us achieve our vision.

- I am grateful to Shawn Calhoun and the **committee members** of the search for the dean of the School of Management, who recently submitted their thoughtful and thorough recommendations for my consideration.
- I am also thankful to Shabnam Koirala-Azad and the **search committee members** for the dean of the School of Nursing and Health Professions for the progress they are making. I look forward to meeting with the finalists in the next few weeks.
- I would also like to thank Shirley McGuire, who has agreed to chair the search for our vice provost for budget, planning, and strategic analysis. We have formed a diverse committee, drawing from nominations across campus, to help us identify candidates for this critical leadership position. Thank you to all of the **committee members** who have agreed to serve. In coming weeks, the committee will hold listening sessions on the qualifications and qualities the university seeks in the candidates for this new position. The search committee's work will begin immediately with a goal of having our chosen candidate in place by early fall 2022.

Recognizing Pamela Balls Organista

In the coming weeks, the provost's office will also be launching a search for the vice provost of equity, inclusion, and faculty excellence. Senior Vice Provost Pamela Balls Organista will serve in her current role until the end of this academic year, take a much-earned sabbatical year, and then return to the College of Arts and Sciences, where her expertise and advocacy will continue to play a critical role in our anti-racism and diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. I invite your ideas and suggestions as we re-envision a vice provost role that oversees and coordinates the vital intersections between anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI), holistic faculty success and job satisfaction, and faculty professional development. Please submit comments for consideration by the search committee as they develop the leadership profile **here**. Please also submit nominations and self-nominations to the search committee **here**.

I want to take this space and time to recognize Pamela's accomplishments and the generous and mission-driven spirit she has brought to the work of the provost's office.

In her role as interim vice provost and special adviser to the provost and, more recently, as senior vice provost, Pamela has championed a deeply participatory approach to strategic planning, brought a thoughtful and caring presence to academic bargaining, and spearheaded initiatives central to the provost's office commitment to equity, inclusive excellence, and anti-racism. In addition to co-leading the development and successful completion of the university's strategic plan, Pamela has been instrumental in revitalizing the Gerardo Marin Diversity Fellowship program, and has worked tirelessly and collaboratively to redesign DECO and envision a new Office of Antiracism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Pamela has also shown unwavering commitment to supporting the Black Achievement, Success, and Engagement Initiative, the McCarthy Center, the Institute for Nonviolence and Social Justice, the university's living-learning communities, Star Route Farms, the Tracy Seeley Center for Teaching Excellence, and the Center for Research, Artistic, and Scholarly Excellence.

Through her decades of service since joining USF in 1992, including nine years as associate dean for social sciences in the College of Arts and Sciences, Pamela has been known for her commitment to equity, her mentorship, and her support of faculty and students. She has brought this same passion for equity and inclusion, dedication to faculty mentorship, commitment to the learning and development of her students, scholarly distinction in psychology and ethnic studies, and emphasis on collaboration and nurturing relationships to every aspect of her work in the provost's office. I am very grateful to Pamela for her service, equanimity, and thoughtful leadership through the challenges of the pandemic and the transitions in the provost's office.

Upcoming Events

Finally, please join me as we continue to celebrate **Black History Month** with a line-up of powerful events, including one of our culminating events: a panel discussion with Cornel West on reparations for the Black descendants of enslaved Africans. The panel, moderated by USF student Natalya Bomani, will be held on Feb. 23 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in McLaren 250. **Please register »**

I look forward to seeing you at one of the upcoming events, in opportunities for co-design gatherings, during my regular **office hours**, or on one of my walks around campus. Most recently, I have been finding in **USF's community garden** not only a living laboratory for students, faculty, and staff, but also a much-needed space for reflection in the midst of our intense and busy days.

Warmly,



Chinyere Oparah
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

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