

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you have had the opportunity to read **Fr. Paul's announcement** about the possible acquisition and renovation of the Blood Centers of the Pacific building at Masonic Avenue and Turk Boulevard. This has the potential to be an exciting step in implementing the priorities in our strategic plan. I write to provide additional information about this opportunity and to invite USF stakeholders to learn more and help shape the vision of what could be a significant investment in the sciences and health sciences.

Alignment with the Strategic Plan

The USF Strategic Plan calls for us to "reimagine Jesuit education to accelerate the achievement of a more just and sustainable world" through potentially transformative investments in the arts and sciences. The potential acquisition of the property at Masonic and Turk provides us with a compelling and tangible opportunity to reimagine the spaces in which students and faculty learn, teach, create, conduct research, and engage the community. It would significantly expand USF'S footprint and enable the university to grow and create spaces in support of collaborative, innovative, and interdisciplinary work in the sciences, health sciences, and beyond. It would also provide access to much-needed spaces for scientific research, specialized laboratories, classrooms, and general purpose space. This could alleviate pressures on other parts of campus and allow us to better support faculty, students, and staff in the sciences and health sciences. The acquisition would also create new opportunities for USF to attract research funding, collaborate with strategic partners, and engage in community outreach and research that advances health equity and science innovation for the greater good.

Timeframe and Considerations

The university is embarking on a process of due diligence, assessing what renovations are needed, exploring what permitting is required to use the space for educational purposes, and securing financing. Assuming successful completion of the due diligence, we anticipate being able to begin basic renovations later this spring, and refining plans for further renovations as we gather feedback from campus stakeholders in the coming months. The target date for full occupancy of the labs and other spaces on the property is summer or fall 2023. The university will conduct a holistic review of campus needs under the aegis of the USF Space Committee, chaired by Fr. Paul. In keeping with the Strategic Plan's call for implementing a "transparent and inclusive process and structure for decision-making around space and establishing open, frequent, transparent lines of communication between stakeholders," I am committed to offering opportunities for stakeholders across our campuses to participate in this process.

Opportunities for Co-Design

In addition to tomorrow's community town hall with Fr. Paul, faculty and staff design and visioning efforts will kick off with a Provost's Conversation on March 23, followed by working groups within CAS and SONHP. You can register via the links below:

- **Community Town Hall with Fr. Fitzgerald:** Learn more about USF's acquisition and renovation of the blood bank on Masonic Avenue, March 11, 12–1 p.m. [Register here.](#)
- **Provost's Conversation:** Reimagining teaching and research spaces in the sciences and health sciences, March 23, 12–1 p.m. [Register here.](#)
- More information about participating in the working groups and ways that faculty and staff can engage in the planning process will be forthcoming from the relevant deans' offices.

Thank you in advance to all those who will participate in these efforts, and in particular to Dean Eileen Fung and her team, Dean Patricia Pearce and her team, and all the faculty in the sciences and health sciences.

I recognize this announcement raises many questions: How will we balance these significant investments in our future with the realities of our present, budgetary and otherwise? How will we determine the priorities for use of the new spaces? How will existing spaces such as Harney and the Hilltop campus be affected? I hope that you will participate in one or more of the upcoming opportunities to learn more, contribute your feedback, and be part of co-designing the future of teaching and learning spaces in the sciences and health sciences at USF.

Seeking Your Feedback

On another topic, I look forward to the feedback from the recently distributed OMC survey about how best to communicate with our community. I know my emails have been both lengthy and frequent, particularly given recent developments. I am committed to communicating in a transparent and timely way and offering stakeholders opportunities to provide feedback and participate in co-design. I am also acutely aware of how much is on everyone's plate. I look forward to learning from the OMC survey and adjusting accordingly. I would be grateful if you can take a moment to provide your feedback.

[Take the Survey »](#)

As always, I also look forward to hearing from faculty, librarians, staff, and students directly during my **office hours**.

In celebration of Women's History Month, I am looking forward to participating in the **Women in Leadership and Philanthropy Symposium** today. I will be joining award-winning author and public policy advocate Sister Simone Campbell in exploring how adhering to an inner calling can help us understand our purpose, advance justice, and live a life of deep meaning and service. I see evidence of this life of purpose, meaning, and service everywhere I look at USF. As we head toward Spring Break for our students next week (and this week for the School of Law), I hope that each of you has the opportunity to take a moment to connect with something that nourishes your sense of purpose and commitment to advancing justice.

Warmly,



Chinyere Oparah
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

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 UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO
Office of the Provost

(415) 422-6136
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