

## Message from the Provost

Dear Colleagues,

I hope that the fall semester has started smoothly and you're enjoying the laughter and chatter in the hallways. Thank you for your enthusiasm, support, and patience in my first 90 days as interim provost. I am launching this monthly newsletter as a way to share information and announcements and celebrate accomplishments. I hope you will find it a useful forum, and I encourage you to send items and announcements, as well as any feedback or suggestions for improvement, to [provost@usfca.edu](mailto:provost@usfca.edu).



USF is facing challenges in **recruitment and retention** and must **increase alternative revenue streams** to support our fiscal thriving. I touch briefly on each of these topics below and invite you to join **Provost's "Chat n' Chai"** discussions to learn more and allow me to hear from you directly.

I'm excited to see our community working collaboratively and creatively, partnering across units, to address the challenges we face. My priorities this year are to focus on the imperatives of enrollment, retention and revenue generation; support our deans and Core Redesign Task Force in strengthening and evolving our Jesuit liberal arts education; and cultivate stable leadership that strengthens our academic community and allows multi-year initiatives to flourish.

I look forward to partnering with you on the work ahead and seeing you at my **office hours** or one of the Chat-n-Chai gatherings below.

Eileen Chia-Ching Fung  
Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

### Chat-n-Chai

Come enjoy a cup of chai, or tea of your choice, and a chat with the provost on strategic priorities such as recruiting, retention, core curriculum redesign, and professional certificates. There are limited spaces. RSVP required.

**Monday, Oct. 9, 4–5 p.m.**  
Location: Terrace Room, Zief Law Library  
Topic: Retention and Student Success  
**RSVP »**

**Thursday, Oct. 19, 12–1 p.m.**  
Location: Terrace Room, Zief Law Library  
Topic: Undergraduate Recruitment/Enrollment  
**RSVP »**

**Wednesday, Nov. 8, 4–5 p.m.**  
Location: UC 222 - Faculty/Staff Dining Room  
Topic: Core Curriculum Redesign  
**RSVP »**

**Thursday, Nov. 9, 12–1 p.m.**  
Location: Lone Mountain 100 - Handlery Dining Room  
Topic: Graduate Recruitment/Enrollment  
**RSVP »**

### Enrollment and Retention

Our recruitment efforts this year focus on expanding our reach, strengthening our market position to increase selectivity, communicating the ROI of a USF education, and optimizing recruitment and marketing strategies. We are using an integrated, comprehensive approach that focuses on enhancing lead generation, recruiting first-year, transfer and international students, and enrollment initiatives for graduate programs.

As you may have read in **the census email** earlier this month, our undergraduate first-year retention, second-year retention, and graduation rates have decreased. Our institutional and survey data suggest that the main factors influencing retention rates were financial issues, academic performance, homesickness, and feelings of lack of connectedness and belonging.

The **Student Success, Retention and Equity Task Force (SSRE)** is implementing a multipronged approach to improve retention and four- and six-year graduation rates, combining enrollment strategies, academic projects, and belonging, wellness and equity initiatives. Examples of retention and persistence initiatives include examining high-risk populations to determine whether they require additional support, leveraging summer sessions to support students in staying on track toward graduation, expanding first-year introductory USF courses that help students connect to the university, developing a targeted retention and belonging initiative for Latinx students, adding an internship course for international students, and providing additional support for internship and practicum opportunities for all students to strengthen college-to-career connections and outcomes.

### Strategic Planning

I am working closely with the **Strategic Plan Advisory Council**, to create a dashboard of key implementation priorities, ensuring we include key stakeholders and KPIs (or relevant ways to gauge our progress). We look forward to implementing as many of the working group recommendations as possible this year and posting the dashboard to the **strategic plan web page** shortly.



USF students in the Nurse Health Equity Scholars Program.  
Photo courtesy of Alameda Health Systems.

### Nurse Health Equity Scholars Program

Dean **Eileen K. Fry-Bowers** and the School of Nursing and Health Professions have launched the first Nurse Health Equity Scholars Program in an academic partnership with clinical safety net partner Alameda Health System. The **Nurse Health Equity Scholars Program** is a unique, evidence-based approach to providing longitudinal clinical learning experiences in the public health sector — the first of its kind in California!

### Entrepreneurship and Innovation Initiative

With leadership from the Gleeson Library and School of Management, USF continues to build momentum for a new **Entrepreneurship and Innovation Initiative**. This initiative will develop USF student entrepreneurs from every academic discipline. These leaders will develop the skills and entrepreneurial acumen needed to build viable new ventures that aim to address important business and social problems to lead transformational change toward a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous world.

For more about this exciting new initiative, please contact Library Dean **Shawn Calhoun**.



David Holler

Keith Hunter

### McCarthy Center Faculty Scholars

We are pleased to celebrate the continuation of the **Leo T. McCarthy Center Faculty Scholars** program with two of USF's most experienced and dedicated community-engaged faculty. We welcome **David Holler**, professor of rhetoric and language and director of the Martin-Baró Scholars Program, and **Keith Hunter**, associate professor in the School of Management, as our 2023-2025 scholars. The goals of this program are to build faculty capacity for community-engaged teaching and research, strengthen the culture of community engagement across USF, and ensure that the exemplary work of USF faculty shapes the broader field of higher education community engagement.

### Awards and Accomplishments

Our recent **U.S. News & World Report rankings** reflect our mission to deliver an excellent education that serves as an engine of social mobility, provides value, and draws global talent as diverse as any institution in the nation.

The restructured **Office of Sponsored Programs** (formerly Office of Contracts and Grants) is facilitating both faculty-driven and institutional grant activity, with more than \$5M in institutional grants awarded since June.

In partnership with librarians and administrators from Loyola Marymount University, Santa Clara University, and Saint Mary's College of California, **Gleeson Library** and our partners were collectively awarded over \$1.5 million for a U.S. Department of Education Open Textbooks Pilot Program Grant to empower faculty to create Open Educational Resources over the next three years.

USF has received its first Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) grant, *Building Institutional Capacity through an Integrated AAPI Center for Educational Success*, from the Department of Education. The total award is \$1,412,561 from 2023-2027. An information session to learn more will be held Oct. 10 from 4 to 5 p.m. in UC 222. **RSVP »**

**Amrita Bhattacharyya**, assistant professor of chemistry, received a \$910,000, three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Energy. Amrita is the lead PI working with a team of researchers from Cal State East Bay and SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory.

**Lara Bazon**, professor of law and Barnett Chair in Trial Advocacy, is the co-host of a new season of the podcast **Suspect**, which highlights the Racial Justice Clinic's exoneration of **Leon Benson**.

**Xiaosheng Huang**, associate professor of physics, received a \$42,000 grant for USF students to participate in his project "Enhancing the Roman Cosmology Program with Strongly Lensed Supernovae," along with his co-PIs at the Space Telescope Science Institute. The project is for NASA's next major space telescope, the Roman Space Telescope, scheduled to be launched in 2027.

**Levi Kottut '25**, an engineering major, has been named a Foreign Affairs Information Technology (FAIT) Fellow, one of only 15 students chosen from applicants all over the country by the U.S. Department of State. He receives up to \$87,000 in academic funding over two years.

**Thomas Onda**, adjunct professor in the School of Law and USF alum, was awarded the In-House Counsel Lifetime Achievement Award by the San Francisco Bar Association.

The **Office of Financial Aid** achieved 57 compliance credentials with the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. **Jenny Garcia**, associate director of compliance and training, was appointed vice president of state issues, and **Angelika Williams**, assistant vice provost for student financial services, was appointed vice president of federal issues for the California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

If you have a recent success to share, please **let us know**.

### Additional Resources

For recent publications or creative work, or if you are interested in a Faculty Spotlight, please contact the **Center for Research, Artistic, and Scholarly Excellent (CRASE)**.

For teaching-related news and resources, please visit the **Tracy Seeley Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE)**.

Join the conversation **#USFCA**

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
Office of the Provost

(415) 422-6136  
USFCA.EDU  
DIRECTIONS  
CONTACT US

CHANGE THE WORLD FROM HERE