

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to introduce Jeff Lefkoff as our new vice provost of budget, planning, and strategic analysis. Jeff comes to USF with an impressive record of mission-driven leadership and financial acumen in both the public and private sectors. Over his 19 years with the University of California campuses in Irvine and Davis, he established himself as a valued colleague who leads with both the head and the heart, ensures budget decisions are firmly rooted in strategic priorities, and fosters equitable access to information and participatory decision-making. These traits will be vital as we begin implementation of our strategic plan this year.



I am grateful to Shirley McGuire, who served as chair, and the members of the **search committee** for identifying such talented finalists. As they noted in their recommendations, Jeff's candidacy was distinguished by his extensive knowledge of budgeting processes and models, experience co-creating revenue-generating programs and diversifying revenue, commitment to shared governance and collaborative decision-making, and a creative and practical mindset focused on leveraging institutional strengths to achieve strategic priorities.

In his most recent position as associate provost and executive vice chancellor at UC Irvine, Jeff coordinated the annual planning process for a \$3 billion budget and oversaw financial management for 14 schools and colleges, enrollment management, strategic planning, the physical plant, and business auxiliaries. The success of that work and of the initiatives he led centered on the partnerships he built within the campus community as well as with local elected officials and regional business leaders.

Similarly, when he served as executive assistant dean at UC Davis managing the administrative and financial functions for the College of Engineering, Jeff developed an innovative budget model for allocating funds to the academic departments that grew out of his consultations with department chairs and business managers. In that collaboration, as in his earlier project-planning work at Davis, he noted, "we were building community as much as we were developing budget models. I learned that the budget planning process itself is a community-building exercise, if inclusion and open dialogue are practiced as priority values."

Jeff's financial leadership has underpinned major strategic initiatives at both campuses. At Irvine, he developed the financial plans for investments in new schools of pharmacy and public health, a new hospital and outpatient clinic, an interdisciplinary lab building, and an art museum. At Davis, he worked with students on a donor-funded center to enhance the retention, diversity, and inclusion of engineering students. He also led planning and program development on the Strategic Energy Partnership, a UC-wide program to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions by investing in building utility retrofits.

Jeff's interest in sustainability preceded his work in higher education: After earning a bachelor's degree in political philosophy at Northwestern, he earned a master's in forest hydrology at the University of Georgia and a doctorate in water resources at Stanford, as well as an MBA in finance and organizational behavior at UC Davis. He served as managing vice president and CFO of a professional services firm, and co-founded the California Water & Environmental Modeling Forum, a nonprofit science organization that built relationships between the states' scientific and resource management communities.

In all of these experiences, though, Jeff will tell you that what has been especially rewarding to him were the opportunities to mentor and develop staff members and to help build high-performing teams that embody inclusiveness and lifelong learning. I look forward to working closely with Jeff in this essential leadership role. Please join me in welcoming him to our community.

Warmly,

Chinyere Oparah
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

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