Dear Colleagues,

It has been a pleasure these last few weeks to gather in community, to nurture in person, or to meet each other via Zoom for the very first time. Whether celebrating our Ph.D. and promoted faculty, reaching our strategic plan implementation, or thanking faculty, students, and staff for the work you have done to help us all, the joy of being together and the sense of community at these gatherings are palpable.

Investing in Growth

In this message, I explore both the difficulty and the potential of the moment we are in and share some of my thoughts about how we can advance our vision of transformative education about the world while preparing to address the pandemic's impact. To acknowledge the painful reality of another year of fiscal tightening required to balance the budget for FY 2023, I am very grateful for the tireless work of our colleagues, processes, and budget managers who are working to undertake the very difficult exercise of identifying necessary savings. It is essential for our ongoing fiscal health that we balance our budget. At the same time, we know that we cannot cut our way to a healthy future. It is time for us to invest in the academic innovation that is central to a thriving academic enterprise. We need to grow our enrollments, strengthen our existing academic programs, and invest in new academic programs that meet the demands of today's and tomorrow's students. We also need to extend and diversify our sources of revenue. I look forward to sharing more about each of these below.

Growing Our Enrollments

Congratulations to Amy Citrinello and members of the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) team who have led us through a recruiting season that results in the highest levels of undergraduate deposits USF has had in the past five years. We will need to surpass this momentum in September and incorporate graduate enrollment figures to better understand the full fall picture, but these initial results bode well for meeting our enrollment targets.

The positive trajectory, particularly in relation to undergraduate students, is critical for our growth over the next few years, as we finalize and implement the Integrated Strategic Enrollment Plan (ISEP). The ISEP will act as a roadmap for growing our enrollments back to 11,000. This roadmap depends on our ability to reimagine Jesuit education provides impetus to pursue a thorough and integrated review of the core and graduation requirements. And as we engage in this work, we must keep in mind the unique traditions, cultures, and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Academic Innovation Fund

One of my top priorities is to catalyze a future-ready institute by investing in academic innovation, building new academic programs, and updating existing programs. Academic program growth is critical to our ability to attract and expand enrollment in our current and future curricula and to better prepare our students for a rapidly changing world. The initial focus of the fund will be on innovation that drives enrollment growth and/or enhances the student experience. Three examples of programming more closely with our values of ADEI, global engagement, interdisciplinary collaboration, and environmental sustainability as outlined in the USF strategic plan. Funds will be available to support design thinking in developing proposals, curricula, assessment plans, and to engage more learning programs. Support could take the form of small travel grants, mentored funding, consultant fees, research assistantships, master's research, or development of marketing materials. Academic deans will be invited to apply for the first round of funding this summer, with a timeline for proposals to be finalized in early fall.

One of the projects that will be funded next year by the IAF is the revisioning of the core curriculum. The core and graduation requirements were adopted almost 20 years ago. While areas of the core were assessed just prior to the pandemic, which led to the revisioning Committee Engaging (CCCE), the requirement, the strategic plan is to reimagining Jesuit education provides impetus to pursue a thorough and integrated review of the core and graduation requirements. The request and the Core Advisory Committee, the Joint University-Wide Curriculum Committee (JUCC) has recommended to the University-wide Committee for the revision of the USF undergraduate core curriculum. A call for nominations to serve on the university-wide exploratory committee will go out early in the fall. A call for nominations to serve on the USF undergraduate core curriculum. A call for nominations to serve on the university-wide exploratory committee will go out early in the fall.

Reimagining Office of Contracts and Grants (OCG)

I am pleased to announce a second investment that also aims to enhance our revenue generation opportunities. Senior Vice Provost Shirley McClenahan has reorganized OCG to enhance the ability to win successful and large federal grants, serve as an infrastructure for the development of grants, and provide grants writing services. The newly envisioned OCG will be headed by Candice Coley, who is joining USF as our first executive vice provost for sponsored programs and external partnerships. Candice will be responsible for creating and promoting a grant-seeking culture in Academic Affairs, securing funding for strategic priorities across and within school and colleges, and helping the provost's office diversify revenue streams. Candice has over 20 years of research administration experience. She previously served as a vice president for institutional advancement at the American Institute of Natural History in New York City, where she oversaw over $144 million and grew the research portfolio three-fold. She frequently collaborates with the research development office and seeks new funding opportunities. Candice will be the associate vice provost for research at Florida Atlantic University (FAU), where she restructured the office and raised and oversaw $70 million in grants specifically designed to attract extramural research funding. She will work closely with the university's Office of Research and Development to enhance our ability to write successful large federal grants, and to develop grant-writing teams. The newly envisioned OCG will also seek to serve on the university-wide exploratory committee for the revision of the USF undergraduate core curriculum, a call for nominations to serve on the university-wide exploratory committee will go out early in the fall.

Investing for Growth

As we enter the final month of the spring term, we also look off again American Indians and Pinky and Pacific Islanders. This year, in a world that continues to confront and broaden and international invisibility, it is more critical than ever that we come together to celebrate the unique experiences, cultures, and contributions of Asian American and Pacific Islanders. Please register and join members of our AAPI community on Monday, May 9 at 3:30 p.m. outside Gleeson Library for an hour of healing and reflection titled "Movement for Asian Americans and Islanders.

Chinyere Oparah

Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

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