

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the start of the fall semester. I hope that summer was both a restful and productive time for you. I would like to express my gratitude to our entire community, including those who have been preparing for the arrival of our students, teaching summer courses, leading immersion programs, and readying our facilities. As we celebrate the excitement of welcoming students back to campus, reconnecting with colleagues, and embracing a new group of faculty, librarians, and staff joining USF, our thoughts and prayers are with the families and communities impacted by the devastating fires in Maui. **We stand with and support the members of our Hawai'i USF Community.**

I am honored to serve as your interim provost, and I am committed to working together to support our students and collaborating across divisions to ensure we thrive as a community in the coming year. I would like to offer some updates about the year ahead.

Strategic Plan

I am grateful to the **Strategic Planning Advisory Council (SPAC)**, our working group co-chairs, and the nearly 150 deans, faculty, librarians, and staff across the university who worked collaboratively on the Strategic Plan, the Integrated Strategic Enrollment Plan and the Student Success, Retention, and Equity Task Force.

The Strategic Plan provides an effective roadmap for addressing five themes that have emerged as critical to our thriving:

- **Rebuild** our enrollments
• **Evolve** our education so it's future ready
• **Diversify** our revenue streams
• **Strengthen** our community
• **Tell** our story

The detailed reports of the working groups are posted to the **strategic plan website**. SPAC will post a dashboard with action items related to each theme in the coming weeks and will update these pages regularly, so we can chart our progress.

Enrollment and Retention

It is critical that we stabilize and rebuild our enrollments and more effectively support our students. We are currently projected to miss our enrollment targets for undergraduate enrollments by approximately 15 percent and graduate enrollments by more than 10 percent. The retention rate at this time for first-year students who entered in fall 2022 is 80 percent, lower than our goal of 82 percent. This may require us to reevaluate and make adjustments. The leadership team is working to determine the budgetary implications of the shortfall and will update the community after the census date in September.

Although enrollment and retention numbers are lower than expected, there are important things to celebrate.

- Our incoming undergraduate class is the most diverse and global group in USF history, coming from 51 states and territories and 61 countries. Over 34 percent of our students are the first in their families to attend college and more than 28 percent are joining us with the support of a Pell grant.
• The School of Nursing and Health Professions will welcome the first cohort of 27 students in its new Bachelor of Science in Public Health program.
• The School of Education's Marriage and Family Therapy program saw a 38 percent increase in applications, receiving the largest number of applications in its 43-year history.
• Many of our graduate programs saw increased enrollment including the Masters of Science in Marketing Intelligence and the full-time MBA program in the School of Management, as well as Biotechnology, Data Science, MFA in Creative Writing, Public Leadership, Energy Systems Management, and Museum Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences.
• This fall we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of our Orange County Campus.
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We will continue to take steps to grow our application pool and improve our yield and market position, including:

- Enhancing social engagement with prospective students
• Investing in a digital marketing campaign to reach students on new platforms
• Forging new recruiting partnerships in key international markets
• Strengthening how we articulate the value of our education through enhancements to our website
• Launching the Double Dons scholarship and offering more competitive scholarships

I am grateful to the deans, associate deans, **Student Success, Retention, and Equity Task Force**, CASA advisers, and to everyone in the schools and the college working to make immediate, concrete interventions to address the retention challenges, including:

- Creating a more integrated initial year experience
• Enhancing experiential learning opportunities, such as **global immersions**, exchanges, internships, undergraduate research, and hands-on learning in the Bay Area and beyond
• Enhancing academic advising and training of advisers for specific groups of students
• Implementing key recommendations of the Latinx Excellence and Belonging and Transfer Pathway initiatives
• Developing an internship course to support our international students in gaining professional experiences

Curriculum Redesign

We are working together to evolve our curricula and enhance the student experience. Critical to this work will be the redesign of the core curriculum for fall 2025 to equip undergraduate students with the skills and knowledge to succeed in their careers and make meaningful change in their communities. I am thankful to the **Core Curriculum Redesign Task Force** for spearheading this work. In addition, we are working to reinvigorate existing undergraduate and graduate programs while creating innovative, high-demand academic programs and strengthening cross school-college collaborations to bolster market position.

Revenue Diversification

We need to diversify our revenue portfolio beyond tuition dollars and expand our pool of learners. This means continuing to invest in research capacity and grant-seeking activities; expanding our summer programs; incubating high-demand professional education, non-degree and certificate programs; and increasing external partnerships and intergenerational participation in our educational opportunities. I will be communicating more about my priorities in this area, including:

- Increasing support for the **Office of Sponsored Programs**
• Working closely with the schools and the college to support certification, micro-credential programs, and innovative non-degree programs
• Expanding USF's reach via key partnerships such as School of Law and School of Management's partnership with Andersen, School of Nursing and Health Profession's collaboration with Kaiser Permanente and Alameda Health System, and School of Education's partnership with the Healthcare Foundation of Northern Sonoma County

Educational Spaces

We are working closely with the institutional master planners and architects to create innovative educational spaces that support experiential learning, allow for large-scale collaborative grants, celebrate creative expression, and facilitate community-oriented activities. We are moving forward with an interdisciplinary academic vision for Masonic East that will make USF a leading destination for students seeking a premier education in life science and health science in the Jesuit tradition. This year we will also establish the Ann Getty Institute to elevate the arts at USF.

Communications

To continue transparent and consistent communications about our strategic planning progress, enrollment and retention efforts, and other key initiatives, I will launch a monthly provost's newsletter. I also welcome your thoughts and ideas on what we could be doing better or differently. Please schedule time to come to my **office hours**, or write to me at [provost@usfca.edu](mailto:provost@usfca.edu).

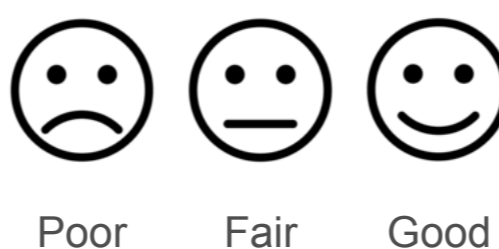
The beginning of a new academic year always brings excitement, renewed energy, and new opportunities. I thank each of you for the work you do in our classrooms, our labs, our library, or our offices. I know that what makes USF special is our people, our mission, our commitment to our students and the communities we are a part of. I look forward to seeing many of you at convocation next week and to meeting the opportunities and challenges of the year ahead together.

Warm regards,

Eileen Chia-Ching Fung

Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

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