



MEMORANDUM

To: USC Faculty

From: Michael W. Quick 
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Elizabeth Graddy 
Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs

Date: March 27, 2018

Subject: Excellence in Teaching

USC's first priority is the education of our students. As we continue our momentous ascent and assume the responsibilities of the most influential private research university of the 21st century serving the public good, we must reaffirm our commitment to our core academic principles, equipping our students to face contemporary global challenges, helping them acquire wisdom, insight, and a love of truth and constructive skepticism. We must renew our focus on the importance of teaching and mentorship, putting into place the systems necessary to train, assess, and reward exceptional teaching. In short, let's make USC the great research university that expects, supports, and truly values teaching and mentoring.

To this end, we created the Task Force on Teaching Excellence two years ago, charged with deriving ways to enhance our intellectual environment through teaching, to ensure that teaching excellence is reflected in the review and promotion processes, to ensure that all students benefit from the expertise of our faculty members, and to foster a culture of teaching excellence. In addition, we convened a faculty working group this year charged with identifying and addressing impediments to cross-school teaching and academic programs. These committees complement the work of three major faculty committees over the past five years who have made recommendations to improve teaching effectiveness and how we measure it. We want to thank all these committee members for their devoted efforts to create opportunities for both students and faculty members alike to engage in the learning process and to develop new approaches to our current teaching pedagogy, while maintaining the highest standards of excellence. A list of these committee members is attached.

In the coming weeks, we will send you a series of memos outlining the initiatives we will be spearheading in pursuit of teaching excellence. We will soon apprise you of a new USC model in support of teaching excellence that includes peer review in evaluating teaching, a revised student course evaluation process, and resources to support teaching effectiveness; a cross-school academic initiative; and a first-year teaching experience initiative.

Cc: C. L. Max Nikias
Academic Senate
Academic Deans
President's Cabinet
Provost's Cabinet

Academic Senate Task Force on Teaching Evaluations

Sandeep Gupta (Viterbi; Chair), Kathleen Besinque (Pharmacy), Lucinda Carver (Thornton), Jucheng Chen (Ostrow), Ginger Clark (Rossier), Chuck Gomer (Keck), Jim Gosline (Marshall), Jeremy Kagan (Cinematic Arts), Martin Levine (Vice Provost), Win May (Keck), Edwin McCann (Dornsife), Kevin Murphy (Marshall), Mihailo Trifunac (Viterbi), and Doni Whitsett (Social Work)

Provost's Task Force on Teaching Effectiveness

Elizabeth Graddy (Vice Provost; Co-Chair), Edward Finegan (Former Director of CET; Law; Co-Chair), Tatiana Akishina (Dornsife), Dan Bayer (Dornsife), Steven Bucher (Viterbi), Sandra Chrystal (Marshall), Ruth Chung (Rossier), Dorine Lawrence-Hughes (Annenberg), John Holland (Dornsife), Steven Lamy (Dornsife), Chi Mak (Dornsife), Doe Mayer (Cinematic Arts), Amy Murphy (Architecture), Wilson Lin (Viterbi), and Kari Storla (Graduate Student, Annenberg)

Provost/Senate Committee on Teaching and Academic Programs

Ruth Chung (Rossier; Chair), Robert Adler (Dramatic Arts), Jeb Barnes (Dornsife), Devon Brooks (Social Work), Frank Corsetti (Dornsife), Kim Hirabayashi (Rossier), Marion Philadelphia (Marshall), Gale Sinatra (Rossier), Michaela Ullmann (Libraries), and Ginger Clark (Vice Provost's Office; Ex officio)

Working Group on Cross-School Academic Initiatives

Elizabeth Graddy (Vice Provost; Chair), Michael Cousineau (Keck, Price), Joanna Demers (Thornton), Judy Garner (Keck), Richard Green (Price, Marshall), Erik Johnson (Viterbi), Andrew Lakoff (Dornsife), Pat Levitt (Keck, Dornsife), Akira Lippit (Cinematic Arts, Dornsife), Cheryl Wakslak (Marshall), and David Warshofsky (Dramatic Arts)

Task Force on Teaching Excellence

Elizabeth Graddy (Vice Provost; Chair), Aimee Bender (Dornsife), Ginger Clark (Vice Provost's Office), Matthew Kahn (Dornsife), C.-C. Jay Kuo (Viterbi), Andrew McMahon (Keck), Donal Manahan (Dornsife), and Amy Murphy (Architecture)