

Dear Fellow Faculty and Staff:

It has been several months since you have received an update from the Task Force on Workplace Standards and Employee Wellness. In the meantime, the continuing revelations about inappropriate behavior on the part of individual administrators at USC, and the concomitant concerns about how these situations are handled, has understandably led to a range of responses among the members of our community, from positive ones for when quick and appropriate action is taken, to negative ones – of anger, disappointment, discouragement and cynicism – that are engendered by the whole confluence of circumstances. These revelations have also increased the pressure for major change, and sooner rather than later.

In this context, we applaud the initial steps recently announced by Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Quick and Senior Vice President for Administration Todd Dickey. But, the Task Force has also been continuing with its work, having just completed a month of subgroup meetings on *Wellness* and *Organizational Culture*. The former concerns the tools and environment needed to help our faculty and staff be well on a daily basis and to overcome those personal challenges that still do arise. The latter concerns the type of organization and community to which, in partnership with the students and patients we serve, we all aspire to belong. Our ultimate goal is to provide both an aspirational view and a path towards it for the future of USC as a model 21<sup>st</sup> Century University.

The subgroup on Wellness has explored the community's "awareness" in terms of appreciation for, and understanding of, the philosophy promoting the proactive pursuit of a healthy body, mind, and spirit. The group has also identified the need to expand knowledge of, and streamline accessibility to, a menu of available USC resources. It is clear that individuals, supervisors, and the university must increase support to associated efforts and training. The ability to self-help, provide help when concerned for others, and report crises must also be improved. Lastly, discussions have validated that Wellness for the USC community can only exist inside a healthy organization infused with fairness, equity, transparency, respect, and integrity.

The subgroup on Organizational Culture has explored what kind of an environment we want to work towards overall at USC – both in terms of healthy traits to be encouraged and problematic ones to be reduced – and what this implies in terms of expectations for our leaders, our community of faculty and staff, and our institutional processes. The group also has explored what modifications to our current practices could enable meeting these expectations. As with the subgroup on Wellness, a big part of this has focused on what the process should be for handling concerns about self and others, but it also has focused on how to work towards a new culture and leadership model.

Over the next few months we will meld the results from the two subgroups, develop an initial set of tentative recommendations, and consult broadly before reporting out a first set of official recommendations.

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