

Reaffirmation of USC Faculty Shared Values

In these turbulent times it is important that we reaffirm our shared values as faculty of the University of Southern California (USC). The USC Academic Senate, as the elected representative of the faculty, therefore reaffirms the following:¹

The core mission of higher education is the advancement of knowledge, people, and society. As faculty at USC, we are committed to upholding free inquiry and education at our university, and to providing the opportunity for all our students to pursue their learning and life goals. Ultimately, our values define us as a university community, and we will remain steadfast in our belief that everyone should have access to higher education and that we have a critical role to play as a preeminent private university focused on the public good.

USC is a multicultural community of people from diverse racial, ethnic, gender, and class backgrounds, national origins, faith backgrounds, political beliefs, abilities, and sexual orientations. This diversity is a significant strength. We endorse the values of open, respectful discourse and exchange of ideas from the widest variety of intellectual, religious, class, cultural, and political perspectives. We unconditionally reject every form of bigotry, discrimination, hateful rhetoric, and hateful action, whether directed towards one's race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, disability, citizenship, political views, socioeconomic status, veteran status, or immigration status. We will support and defend anyone in our community who is oppressed based on these characteristics.

We uphold the principles of fact- and reason-based objective inquiry. Rigorous academic scholarship – prominently including, but not exclusively comprising, scientific research – is central to understanding ourselves and the world of which we are a part. It is not a special interest; it is not optional. It is a foundational ingredient in how we as a society analyze, understand, and solve the most difficult challenges that we face. There is nothing more dangerous to the future of humankind than ignoring or suppressing our understanding of reality. Although academic research and scholarship can raise political questions, such scholarship and the acknowledgement of the findings so revealed must be above politics.

We will educate ourselves, our community and future generations according to these principles and values.

¹ Material for this statement was inspired by and adapted from “A message from MIT faculty reaffirming our shared values,” the “Statement in Support of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program and our Undocumented Immigrant Students,” a November 30, 2016 letter from USC Provost Michael Quick to the USC Community, and “USC Principles of Community.”