

July 24, 2020

Dear fellow Trojans,

We hope this message finds you safe and your families healthy. As co-chairs of the USC Working Group on University Culture and members of the Culture Commission, we continue to hear many stories of the care and dedication being shown across our community during these challenging times.

Recent events have forced all of us to look at ourselves through new filters and it is therefore more important than ever that we focus on our unifying values in charting our future. President Folt has asked us to ensure our culture efforts support USC's plans to confront racism. In addition, once selected, the Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer (CDEIO) will join the Culture Commission that will lead the future steps in our culture work.

Today, with the support of President Folt and her senior leadership team, we are reporting on the progress of USC's efforts to define our university's culture. In the fall of 2019, we deployed a USC-wide poll to capture your input regarding the current values and the desired values of the USC community. Nearly 20,000 Trojans responded to the [Values Poll](#). This spring, we asked for your interpretation of these poll results in 46 Town Halls and 126 Discussion Sessions and had over 4,000 Trojans share their ideas. This was made possible by the 120 members of our USC community who acted as culture facilitators and advocates guiding these conversations. We are grateful for the commitment and participation from leaders, faculty, staff and students across USC.

The overview we share with you today summarizes our high-level findings and next steps. At the most general level, we found wide consensus on several key themes:

- We must be a university where we all belong – where we are committed to respect, equity and the inclusion of diverse identities, voices and experiences at the personal, team and institutional level.
- Leaders at every level must be accountable for their decisions and the resulting outcomes.
- We need a clear vision tied to our mission and aligned with individual and institutional ethical principles and behaviors.
- Our values must be reflected in the way we assess performance, and in our systems governing recognition, rewards and incentives.
- We must ensure open and coordinated communications, inclusive decision-making processes, and clear pathways for escalating and addressing concerns without fear of retaliation.
- We must invest in developing the professional skillsets of our managers and leaders tied to clearly defined career paths, mentorship, and feedback.

More specifically, our Discussion Sessions yielded considerably more insight into both the values people want to see characterize USC in the future as well as the systems and processes that will need to change to support those values. Information on the university-wide and school-level analysis is now available at <https://change.usc.edu/usc-cultural-values-poll>. This report characterizes the eight values most frequently identified by our community as high priority and the changes needed in six key systems and processes.

We thank the Academic Senate, Staff Assembly, Undergraduate Student Government and Graduate Student Government for their help in reaching these conclusions.

Future culture work will focus on these areas:

- Supporting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) efforts. *Diversity* was identified as one of our key values through the Values Poll and subsequent Discussion Sessions. The Culture Commission will support key initiatives identified by the President and Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer (CDEIO).
- Partnering across the university and directly with our schools and units to prioritize the work ahead on our systems and processes including development, well-being, and addressing concerns.
- Planning for USC-wide and school/unit-specific activities that engage our community in the effort to align our behavior with our espoused values. Faculty, staff and students will be invited to participate in a university-wide speaker series, panel discussions, and learning opportunities, to understand and support living our values.

In early fall 2020, we will update President Folt and her senior leadership team on this planning. We expect targeted activities will be developed and implemented during fall and spring.

We look forward to our continued collaboration in addressing these challenges and seizing the exciting opportunities ahead of us.

Fight On!



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Working Group on University Culture: <https://change.usc.edu/presidents-culture-commission-members/working-group-on-university-culture/>

Email [partnerforculturechange@usc.edu](mailto:partnerforculturechange@usc.edu) to receive in-depth updates throughout the Culture Journey.