THE STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Adopted by the USC Board of Trustees, June 8, 1994

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

I am pleased to present the Strategic Plan for the University of Southern California, which was unanimously and enthusiastically adopted by the Board of Trustees on June 8, 1994.

This document is the work of many, many people. The person who deserves the most credit is undoubtedly our provost, Lloyd Armstrong, whose wisdom, sensitivity and persistence were essential in bringing the planning process to a successful conclusion. We all owe a great debt of gratitude to the members of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, several of whom worked on this project for more than two years. In addition, hundreds of faculty and staff reviewed and commented on various drafts of the plan. Finally our entire Board of Trustees invested nearly three days reviewing every line of the plan and recommending changes to the provost and the steering committee.

Our plan is very different from most such documents. For example, the situation audit on page 12 is one of the most realistic I have ever seen in American higher education. We have a plan that is specifically focused and yet supported by a broad consensus. It is concise enough to be summarized in four principal initiatives, but the initiatives have implications for every part of the university. It looks to USC's future and future environment without making absolute predictions, thereby preserving the high degree of flexibility that will almost certainly be required of us.

What happens to the plan now? First, the provost and I will use the plan, and will ask all faculty and administrators who work with us to use the plan, as an essential guide to decisions that we will make in the years ahead – decisions about new program development, program rescissions, budget allocations, fund-raising and capital construction.

Second, the strategic plan contains a provision for ongoing planning, particularly within the college and each professional school. It calls upon individual academic units to do their planning on a comparatively formal basis and with due reference to the university plan, and it incorporates such planning into the annual budget development process.

Finally, our strategic plan will serve as the basis for the university's next fund-raising campaign. In this sense the plan provides the rationale for asking friends and alumni around the world to help us move USC to the next level of academic excellence.

I present this plan to you with much optimism and enthusiasm, born of a strong sense of excitement about the future of USC. We have much to do, but we start with a proud heritage of accomplishment and great prospects for future achievements.

I look forward to working with you in implementing this plan in the years ahead.

Steven B. Sample

Steven B. Sample
President

September 1994

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The strategic plan for USC is guided by the Role and Mission Statement of the University of Southern California (see Appendix 1). It seeks to identify initiatives, responsive to changing conditions, that will enable USC to move over the next decade to a position of academic leadership among America's foremost private research universities.

The leadership role we seek can only be earned through creation of a unique academic profile for USC. This profile must be based on the significant strengths that we currently possess and must be built using our competitive advantages to the fullest. We must focus our efforts, recognizing that excellence in everything is not possible.

A situation audit (see Appendix II) shows that USC's plan needs to respond to several significant external trends:

Threats

The environment in which higher education must function has been greatly changed by the termination of the Cold War, the rise of major economic competitors abroad and a long-lasting recession. This has led to much greater demands on universities for accountability in their use of societal resources, a shift of middle-class college attendance from private to public universities, and a changing emphasis in research funding from the basic toward research applied to societal problems. Los Angeles is viewed very negatively by the public, leading to difficulties in attracting students and faculty.

Opportunities

The Southern California economy is one of the largest in the world, and such areas as communication, health care, biotechnology, and transportation will be major growth industries in the

near future. Internationalization is of growing importance, and Southern California is the major economic center of the U.S. for interactions with Mexico and the countries of the Pacific and Latin America. The entire Southern California area serves as a prototype for the urban center of the 21st century, thus providing a unique laboratory for USC faculty to do research on urban issues and their resolution. Because of its traditionally strong professional schools with their emphasis on problems relating to society and its strengths in the social sciences, USC stands to benefit from the changing emphasis of research funding.

We also found that USC's ability to meet these challenges and opportunities is defined by:

USC Strengths

USC is one of the major research universities in the country, as reflected in its AAU membership and its success in attracting competitive research funding. It has historically had strong professional programs, now enriched by visible, high-quality programs in the liberal arts. USC is already very international, having the largest number of foreign graduates of any U.S. university and a very large number of faculty with foreign connections. Taken together, our arts, management and communications strengths are among the best in the world. USC is extraordinarily well managed financially, and our endowment has grown more rapidly over the past 35 years than that of any other university in the country.

USC Weaknesses

The image of USC is diffuse and does not well reflect the present overall high academic quality of the institution. Quality is not uniform, however, and there are some lower-quality graduate and professional programs. Our pool

of undergraduates is too small, which drives up student support costs and constrains our ability to attract a greater fraction of the best students. Our endowment per student is very low, making us highly tuition dependent. Our academic organization with 21 schools contributes to the lack of clear image, and makes effective management particularly difficult.

Four strategic initiatives have been devised to exploit these external trends while building on the present strengths of USC:

Initiative 1: Undergraduate education

Provide a distinctive undergraduate experience built on excellent liberal arts (the term includes the humanities, the natural sciences and the social sciences) and professional programs, incorporating a characteristic "USC core" liberal education and providing unique opportunities for career preparation through innovative collaborations between the liberal arts and our diverse array of professional schools.

Initiative 2: Interdisciplinary research and education

Create the organizational flexibility, and capacity for teamwork, to become a world center for innovative interdisciplinary research and education in selected areas. Emphasize programs that span the spectrum from basic to applied research and programs with a high degree of societal relevance.

Initiative 3: Programs building on the resources of Southern California and Los Angeles

Create programs of research and education that utilize and contribute to the special characteristics of Southern California and Los Angeles as a center of urban issues, multiculturalism, arts, entertainment, communications, and business.

Initiative 4: Internationalization

Build upon USC's strong international base of alumni, students, and established relationships and Southern California's position as an international center to enhance future global opportunities for education, research, and career development. Because of the characteristics of Southern California and of our students and alumni, focus efforts on the countries of the Pacific Rim and of Central and South America.

The success of these strategic initiatives will depend on our maintaining and improving strong programs of research and graduate education in key departments of the college and the professional schools. It will also require us to enhance our activities in four areas:

1. Alumni: Enhance continuing alumni involvement and participation at all levels of university activities. Our alumni are a tremendous resource that the university has not tapped as well as it should.

2. Faculty: Nurture and recruit outstanding faculty who will win the university recognition through their research, scholarship and creative work, and who will enthusiastically teach undergraduates as well as graduate students. Focus on key areas relevant to the four initiatives.

3. Information resources and technologies: Invest aggressively in emerging technologies relating to libraries, classrooms, and student residences as needed to achieve the strategic initiatives.

4. Image: Provide a clear and realistic image of USC's unique strengths as a university at the cutting edge. Our image for quality seriously lags reality; the former must be brought into line with the latter.

The strategic initiatives are discussed in Section III, and their implications for resource allocation and utilization are discussed in Section IV. Actions required to implement the Strategic Initiatives and support our other primary commitments are discussed in Section V.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

I. CIRCUMSTANCES

The plan is guided by the Role and Mission Statement of the university, which accompanies this document (see Appendix I). Unlike the Role and Mission Statement, however, which balances the university's full range of activities and aspirations, this document focuses almost exclusively on specific strategic initiatives. In the interest of a relatively brief document, we have foregone a review of all that is excellent or basic – or both – to this university. Readers of this plan should understand that those bases are assumed; that is, for dozens of programs and activities, omission is not significant, but merely practical.

The University of Southern California has improved dramatically over the past three decades. However, the environment for higher education in the decades to come will be greatly different from what has existed since the end of World War II. The end of the Cold War, intense foreign economic competition, rapidly rising health care costs, seemingly intractable urban problems and a massive restructuring of the American economy have been precipitating factors for fundamental changes in society's expectations for all our institutions – including our universities. As a consequence USC's ability to fulfill its mission is being affected by several significant trends:

Affordability, accountability, and the pressure for relevance:

The increasing cost of attending universities is leading to pressures for stricter accountability of the benefits and costs of higher education.

Declining support from federal and other sources of external funds for basic research is leading to a shift of emphasis toward more immediate problems and away from fundamental research.

With the increased emphasis on relevance has emerged a greater recognition of the need for interdisciplinary research and teaching, which may be in tension with traditional academic structures and disciplines.

Competition for students, resources, and visibility:

Excess capacity in private higher education is leading to greater competition for students and resources. As a result, university reputation and image have become more important than ever before. In an era of intense competition and scarce resources, it will be difficult for the second- and third-tier institutions to survive.

Technology and information as agents of change:

Growing recognition of information as a commodity and the steadily growing role of technology are fundamentally transforming processes for generating, storing, and transmitting knowledge. Concepts of libraries and classrooms are changing rapidly. While it is essential for an institution of higher learning to build a modern infrastructure of information and communications technologies, the investment required to do so is formidable.

Globalization of knowledge, careers, students, and alumni:

Globalization is affecting every facet of university education and research. Information is being shared across borders, international research collaborations are common, and students frequently come from overseas or work overseas. These changes place new demands on the content and process of education, on the relevant agendas for research, on the training and support for faculty, and on the links between the university and diverse communities in the U.S. and overseas.

The Southern California region:

Though this region remains unique as an urban center of diversity and as a major economic center, it is going through a period of economic hardship and social instability which has

severely affected the region's image. USC has a unique opportunity to contribute to rebuilding the region and also to use the region as an urban laboratory for teaching and research.

Fortunately, many of these changes provide unique opportunities for the University of Southern California to move forward even more dramatically. Appendix II: Situation Audit reviews in further detail these changes, USC's current strengths and weaknesses, and the threats and opportunities confronting this university.

II. GOAL AND STRATEGY

We begin this planning process with the ambition of mapping out ways in which USC can adapt itself to the changing expectations, demands, and opportunities of this new environment.

Our goal is to seize those new opportunities that will enable USC to move over the next decade to a position of academic excellence that will define it clearly as one of the leading private research universities in America.

In achieving this goal, we must acknowledge that society now has many of the same expectations for higher education that it has for all its institutions: our "products" – education, research and service – will be carefully weighed for both quality and relevance with respect to the needs of society; at the same time we will be required to contain our costs by utilizing our resources more effectively.

We also know that the leadership role we seek cannot be achieved by copying the successes of others, but rather must be earned through creation of a unique academic profile for USC. This profile must first be based on the significant strengths that we currently possess and must be built using our competitive advantages to the fullest. We must focus our efforts in order to achieve real excellence in the areas most important to the attainment of our goal, recognizing that excellence in everything is not possible.

The emphasis of this plan is therefore three-fold:
  • build on excellence, build to excellence
  • make more effective use of financial and intellectual resources

  • build on competitive advantage

We have identified four strategic initiatives that respond to the ongoing changes in the environment for higher education and exploit characteristics of USC and of our location to provide sustainable competitive advantages. They are:

Initiative 1: Undergraduate education
Provide a distinctive undergraduate experience built on excellent liberal arts (the term includes the humanities, the natural sciences and the social sciences) and professional programs, incorporating a characteristic "USC core" liberal education and providing unique opportunities for career preparation through innovative collaborations between the liberal arts and our diverse array of professional schools.

Initiative 2: Interdisciplinary research and education
Create the organizational flexibility, and capacity for teamwork, to become a world center for innovative interdisciplinary research and education in selected areas. Emphasize programs that span the spectrum from basic to applied research, and programs with a high degree of societal relevance.

Initiative 3: Programs building on the resources of Southern California and Los Angeles
Create programs of research and education that utilize and contribute to the special characteristics of Southern California and Los Angeles as a center of urban issues, multiculturalism, arts, entertainment, communications, and business.

Initiative 4: Internationalization
Build upon USC's strong international base of alumni, students, and established relationships and Southern California's position as an international center to enhance future global opportunities for education, research, and career development. Because of the characteristics of Southern California and of our students and alumni, focus efforts on the countries of the Pacific Rim and of Central and South America.

4

The success of these strategic initiatives will depend on our maintaining and improving strong programs of research and graduate education in key departments of the college and professional schools (as discussed in Section III). It will also require greater resources and closer links with external constituencies than currently exist. In particular, we will need to enhance our activities in four areas:

1. Alumni: Enhance continuing alumni involvement and participation at all levels of university activities. Our alumni are a tremendous resource that the university has not tapped as well as it should.

2. Faculty: Nurture and recruit outstanding faculty who will win the university recognition through their research, scholarship or other creative work, and who will enthusiastically teach undergraduates as well as graduate students. Focus on key areas relevant to the four initiatives.

3. Information resources and technologies: Invest aggressively in emerging technologies relating to libraries, classrooms, and student residences as needed to achieve the strategic initiatives.

4. Image: Provide a clear and realistic image of USC's unique strengths as a university at the cutting edge. Our image for quality seriously lags reality; the former must be brought into line with the latter. By concentrating our efforts in the four areas defined by the strategic initiatives, we will make a major step in clarifying our image.

These strategic initiatives are discussed in Section III, and their implications for resource allocation and utilization are discussed in Section IV. Actions required to implement the strategic initiatives and support our other primary commitments are discussed in Section V.

III. STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

1. Strategic initiative in undergraduate education

We will provide a distinctive undergraduate experience that attracts larger numbers of highly qualified applicants and gives our students the capacities and skills needed to excel in and contribute to a rapidly changing world. Critical differentiation will be obtained by:

(1) building all undergraduate programs on the foundation of a unique "USC" liberal education, and

(2) offering all students multiple opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary learning and career development by utilizing the broad strengths of the university.

Strategies:

1. Articulate clearly the goals and benefits of a distinctive liberal arts core appropriate to all USC undergraduates, and develop a core curriculum that achieves those goals. Responsibility for developing and administering this core will reside, at least initially, in the provost's office.

2. Create distinctive undergraduate programs that provide excellent education in both the liberal arts and appropriate professional fields in a rich extracurricular environment.

3. Create unique opportunities for both liberal arts and professional students to engage in career exploration, development, and interdisciplinary learning through innovative joining of liberal arts and professional strengths. This will be a university-wide differentiating characteristic of all our undergraduate programs.

4. Draw upon the research expertise of the faculty as a positive and visible resource for undergraduate education. Seek to hire faculty of stellar reputation who have genuine interest in teaching undergraduates. Provide specific opportunities for honors students to work with individual research mentors throughout their undergraduate careers.

5. Develop policies and incentives that facilitate collaboration in teaching between different revenue centers and defuse fragmentation and competition among units.

6. Strongly encourage involvement by senior faculty in undergraduate education and in extracurricular and co-curricular programs.

7. Improve the quality of all student services and facilities, from admissions and dormitories to student accounts and placement, and make these services much more customer oriented.

8. Develop an academic advising program that effectively helps students gain the maximum

benefit from the innovative offerings of the university, that supports them in continuing at the university through graduation, and that enables them to graduate in a timely manner.

9. Take the lead in working with the city and the community to dramatically improve the neighborhoods surrounding the two campuses of USC, thereby making the university more attractive and receptive to students from around the country and the world.

2. Strategic initiative in interdisciplinary research and education

The most interesting and important problems facing society today tend to be highly interdisciplinary. With our complementary research strengths, we have the potential to be a leader in addressing selected interdisciplinary problems of importance to society – if we can overcome disciplinary barriers and create genuine teams in research, graduate and postdoctoral programs. We already have several interdisciplinary programs, such as gerontology, the study of women and men in society, and neurosciences, and are starting a major new one in communications. By including the range from the most basic to the most applied, we will underline the critical role of basic research in addressing important societal problems.

Strategies:

1. Support excellent individual research in critical areas. Excellence in research is to be seen as including the training of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

2. Encourage research that is creative, interdisciplinary, and has high societal relevance; develop programs to stimulate faculty interest in selected broad interdisciplinary problems; eliminate existing disincentives and provide positive incentives for excellent interdisciplinary research, with emphasis on areas that are truly innovative.

3. Develop a management structure that helps identify and develop promising interdisciplinary and interdivisional programs with a rapid response time, contains elements of program review, and provides for program discontinuation.

4. Emphasize in programs, where possible, the full range of research from the basic to the

applied, including the dissemination of research knowledge in the community.

5. Recruit faculty and graduate students who are engaged in interdisciplinary research of distinction.

3. Strategic initiative to build on the resources of Southern California and Los Angeles

Southern California and its major city, Los Angeles, are in many ways the paradigm for the 21st-century urban region. Viewed in that light, our region becomes an invaluable resource for teaching and research on a wide range of topics including the urban condition itself, immigration, multiculturalism, health care, post-industrial economic conditions, etc. – a resource that gives us the opportunity to set the research agenda for the rest of the world in these areas.

Southern California is unusually endowed in the arts, all of which must also exist in and relate to this urban context. This regional strength has contributed to the unusual vitality of our several schools in the arts. In addition, the region is home for some of the most dynamic established and emerging industries, such as entertainment, communications, health care and transportation. We must emphasize our programs that utilize this regional resource and create university partnerships for mutual benefit in teaching, research and community activities at the local and regional levels. This includes university efforts to enhance professional development for those who work in these established and emerging industries and the professions.

Strategies:

1. Use the Southern California region as an urban laboratory for teaching, research, service and internships. Coordinate activities as appropriate among the many schools and departments involved in order to provide focus and visibility. Emphasize programs that are defining new approaches and new fields of study.

2. Develop curricula and research related to urban problems of national concern.

3. Coordinate our unusually large number of health-related schools and departments to create new and innovative approaches to health care for a complex urban region.

4. Build programs that are closely linked to the established or emerging growth industries of Southern California, such as cinema-television, communications, biotechnology, health care and transportation.

5. Sustain programs of excellence in the arts that build on and contribute to the cultural resources of Southern California.

6. Pursue mutual goals with the ethnic communities of the region.

7. Use the rich ethnic diversity of the region as an advantage in the recruitment of a more ethnically diverse faculty.

8. Take the lead in helping to create, in the neighborhoods immediately surrounding USC's two campuses, a model of excellence for Los Angeles and other major urban centers.

4. Strategic initiative in internationalization

Our students will have to function in a world that is rapidly becoming more international. Their effectiveness will be enhanced by understanding the languages and cultures of the people with whom they will interact. Research and scholarship know fewer geographic boundaries as communication and transportation improve rapidly. USC has many strengths on which to build in this area, including our uniquely large pool of foreign alumni and students, Southern California's position as a global center, and our many faculty with international involvements. In large part because of the characteristics of Southern California and of our students and alumni, our ties are much closer to the countries of the Pacific Rim and of Central and South America, and we should focus on those areas.

Strategies:

1. Foster international involvement in the Pacific Rim and Latin America through research and teaching.

2. Build connections with universities, communities, alumni and corporations abroad to increase research collaborations; attract students, postdoctoral fellows, and visiting faculty of high quality; and develop opportunities in other countries for USC faculty and students.

3. Create internal structures and policies that support educational and research linkages abroad and that coordinate major international activities across schools.

4. Create closer relationships with communities in Southern California that have strong ties to the countries of the Pacific Rim and Latin America.

5. Utilize the emerging global communications infrastructure to create new types of linkages with foreign universities and researchers, and to investigate the possibilities of global teaching.

6. Foster programs on campus that bring international and domestic students into closer contact, and that create an environment which is especially attractive to the very best international students.

IV. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FOR RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND UTILIZATION

Our strategic initiatives do not focus on a single school or department, but rather on programs that generally involve multiple schools and departments. Thus, our vision of the future incorporates the concept that academic leadership and excellence will be defined more by focused interdisciplinary programs (or perhaps interdisciplinary programs that evolve into a new discipline) than by the more narrowly defined disciplinary departments or schools of today. However, it is not likely that the key disciplines that undergird much of this interdisciplinary work will disappear or lose their own viability in the near future. Thus, our allocation of resources and the organizational structure we choose must reflect a dual focus.

1. Resource allocation

Focus resources on programs in teaching, research, scholarship, and creative activities that will most contribute to our attaining the desired levels of leadership and excellence:

1.1 Utilize objective data and national surveys, along with other factors, to determine the relative strength of programs at USC vis a vis their national competitors.

1.2 Sustain areas of present demonstrable excellence and visibility throughout the university. Focus doctoral programs more sharply, so that USC develops great strength in fewer fields at the doctoral level while still offering a

full range of undergraduate courses.

1.3 Sustain areas of teaching and research most important to the perception of a leading research university: key liberal arts programs in the college and elsewhere that are the most critical to our stature as a center of liberal learning; and key programs in those professional schools commonly acknowledged as being most important to the external perception of universities, that is, business, engineering, law, and medicine. Key programs will be defined by the individual schools based on their knowledge of the disciplines.

1.4 In building to new levels of excellence, focus first on areas of current excellence and visibility where the strategic initiatives identify sustainable competitive advantages.

1.5 As resources become available, build up other areas where the strategic initiatives identify sustainable competitive advantages.

2. Resource utilization

Utilize resources as efficiently as possible in order to maximize resources available to improve academic programs:

2.1 Reorganize administrative and support activities as necessary to minimize redundancy and maximize effectiveness.

2.2 Improve utilization of physical plant, and most especially of classrooms and teaching laboratories.

2.3 Combine or link, where necessary and appropriate, smaller, quality programs in order to create larger programs that achieve demonstrable excellence and visibility (cf. IV 1.1 above).

V. PLANS FOR ACTION

Details for follow-up action in each strategic initiative are presented in this section. Tag-words in brackets (Undergraduate, Interdisciplinary, Southern California, and International) refer to specific strategies as discussed in III or (Resource Allocation, Resource Utilization) to the resource implications as discussed in IV.

IV. 1 Actions already begun

1. A committee jointly sponsored by the Academic Senate and the college has begun studying the General Education requirement in the core liberal education of USC. The report of this committee will be used to inform the discussions of a new committee sponsored by the provost that will be charged to produce the core curriculum envisioned in the strategic initiative in time for implementation in Fall, 1996. [Undergraduate, International, Resource Utilization]

2. A special commission chaired by the vice provost for undergraduate studies is working on innovative combinations of USC's liberal arts and professional strengths, such as professional minors and early admission to professional graduate programs. Its first recommendations should be implemented during the coming academic year. [Undergraduate]

3. The current task force on Revenue Center Management will recommend ways to facilitate collaboration among academic units in both teaching and interdisciplinary research, in order to minimize competition, eliminate duplication, and provide positive incentives. In the arena of research, these recommendations will incorporate suggestions made by the University Research Committee in its 1991 report. The vice provost for research will take leadership in fostering cross-disciplinary study groups and collaborations, leading faculty to new research opportunities. [Undergraduate, Interdisciplinary, Resource Utilization]

4. A prototype study of Admissions and Financial Aid will determine if improved service and increased efficiency in central administration activities can be obtained through reorganization. It will be integrated with a parallel study of student services costs in academic units for which data have just been gathered. Similar studies of academic units will follow. [Undergraduate, Resource Utilization]

5. An initiative on undergraduate advising was implemented last year, based in part on improved information systems developed by the Office of the Registrar. Under the direction of the vice provost for undergraduate studies, we will continue to emphasize and refine this process. [Undergraduate]

6. A committee composed of the vice president for health affairs, the deans of pharmacy, gerontology, dentistry, and social work, the asso-

ciate dean of medicine, the lead faculty member for the Strategic Plan for the School of Medicine, a faculty member from psychology and one from public administration is working on defining and implementing new approaches to health care delivery. [Southern California, Interdisciplinary]

7. We are preparing a thorough inventory of existing international involvements as a basis for further action, which may range from increased study abroad, to international television downlinks, to major academic partnerships (procedure now in draft). [International]

8. Measurements for continual monitoring of excellence in the college and schools are now being developed by the deans working through the Provost's Council. [Undergraduate, Interdisciplinary, Resource Allocation]

9. We will continue with our plans to convert student residential units into residential colleges. [Undergraduate]

10. Under guidelines developed by the provost's task force on minority faculty recruitment, the vice provost for minority affairs will continue to support departments' efforts to diversify their candidate pools for faculty and to retain minority faculty presently on staff. [Undergraduate, Southern California]

IV. 2 Actions in the next year

1. Provide career guidance, training in teaching, help in finding grants, and research mentoring for young faculty. Provide greater assistance to all faculty in locating sources of grant support both domestic and international. This must be done through the departments and schools, led by the vice provosts for faculty affairs and research, assisted by the Center for Excellence in Teaching. [Undergraduate, Interdisciplinary, International]

2. Clarify responsibilities of faculty to the university (and vice versa), beginning with a study group led by the provost and building on the work currently in progress by the Academic Senate's Committee on Campus Presence. Reassert the importance of effective teaching in promotion and salary advancement. Seek promotion and merit review procedures that do not penalize faculty working in interdisciplinary areas. Make the treatment of teaching and interdisciplinary research

part of a general review of promotion and merit review procedures to be chaired by the vice provost for faculty affairs. Emphasize the importance of both these areas in the provost's annual review of deans. [Undergraduate, Interdisciplinary, Southern California]

3. Set up a committee of deans, researchers, and organizational experts from the School of Business Administration to review current models of management structures that can enable interdivisional programs (Organized Research Units; the new Health Sciences committee) to see what works under different conditions. [Interdisciplinary, Resource Allocation and Utilization]

4. Bring together initiatives and resources, both internal and external, that use the Southern California region as a research base or that conduct research that serves the region. Make existing resources better known and improve the matching of regional needs to USC's capacity. Reach out to community leaders. Coordinate the project jointly through the Office of the Provost and the Office of External Relations. Later, consider the development of this resource base into an institute for Southern California. [Undergraduate, Southern California]

5. The vice provosts for enrollment and undergraduate studies will work together to create a coherent representation of the full range of USC's integration of the region into the undergraduate experience, from course work to volunteer opportunities. [Undergraduate, Southern California]

6. Following from IV.1.7, coordinate further efforts in internationalization from the provost's office. Create advisory councils specific to selected regions of the globe. Review reports in recent years from the International Education Committee for updating and implementation of specific recommendations. [International]

7. If they have not already done so, the college and the schools will identify key areas in their fields, using whatever process is appropriate. Resources of the schools should be focused on sustaining those key areas and moving them to higher levels of excellence when a competitive advantage can be identified. [Interdisciplinary, Resource Allocation]

8. Review the current academic organization

of USC, establish its strengths and drawbacks, and recommend a range of alternative possibilities. Inputs to the review could include strategic plans submitted by units and programs, meetings with program and unit heads and faculty, and possibly an external consultant report. With the framework thus created, the provost will conduct broad discussions with faculty to select the modalities that will realize most effectively USC's mission and strategic initiatives.

9. Institute a five-year strategic planning process for each school focused on an annual early fall meeting with the provost to discuss strategies, budgets and anticipated commitments in the following year's budget. Among the areas that should be included in the planning for each school:

• update on the school's progress with regard to the metrics of excellence (IV.1.8);

• discussion of ways in which the school can contribute to each strategic initiative, and progress in doing so;

• progress in identifying key areas and creating excellence in those areas. [all strategic initiatives, Resource Allocation]

10. A committee of deans and senior staff of auxiliary and business services will create a phased program for coordinating, improving, and expanding professional development activities.

IV. 3 Actions in the next two to three years

1. Conduct a space study of the campus using the national norms for space usage in different fields. Set up a committee to make recommendations for increased classroom utilization (e.g., courses spread more uniformly over a nine-hour day and a five-day week, increased summer utilization). [Resource Utilization]

2. Develop a coherent image for USC, communicated internally and externally by a public relations and marketing strategy that links the university's mission statement, strategic initiatives, major interdisciplinary efforts, and newsworthy academic programs. Actively cultivate and clarify USC's image in Southern California ethnic communities. This will require coordination by the Office of the Vice President for External Relations with schools and departments, intercollegiate athletics,

alumni relations, etc. [all strategic initiatives]

3. Conduct a major review of the general alumni organization, including its information base, emphasizing continuing contact with alumni. Revive relationships with alumni in foreign countries. Involve alumni more fully in recruiting, mentoring, internships, placement, fund raising, etc. Develop a wider range of cultural and intellectual activities targeted to alumni. Use successful alumni as more visible representatives of the university. [Undergraduate, Southern California, International]

4. Continue to focus development of the library on emerging electronic technologies. Establish central coordination of all electronic information and communications networks and services. Explore alternatives for accelerated development of information infrastructure, such as corporate sponsorship to retrofit specific buildings for advanced technologies. [all strategic initiatives, Resource Allocation, Resource Utilization]

5. Review actions concerning involvement of undergraduates in research proposed in the self-study for USC's last WASC Reaccreditation for updating and fuller implementation. Review the freshman research assistance and summer research programs for expansion. Broaden the definition of teaching to include faculty participation in such efforts. Consider offering honor students an opportunity to work with an individual research mentor throughout their undergraduate program. [Undergraduate]

6. Explore thoroughly the creation of a publications program under USC imprimatur that would add visibility to our interdisciplinary reputation throughout the scholarly world. [Interdisciplinary]

7. Review all doctoral programs to answer the question of whether they allow or encourage the flexibility for interdisciplinary work within the program, such as through the recognition of a related minor area. These reviews will be conducted at the department level with direction from the dean of the graduate school. [Interdisciplinary]

8. Create a coherent program of postdoctoral education that includes such factors as recruitment, stipends and benefits, recognition, and placement. [Interdisciplinary]. ❐

THE ROLE AND MISSION
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The central mission of the University of Southern California is the development of human beings and society as a whole through the cultivation and enrichment of the human mind and spirit. The principal means by which our mission is accomplished are teaching, research, artistic creation, professional practice and selected forms of public service.

Our first priority as faculty and staff is the education of our students, from freshmen to postdoctorals, through a broad array of academic, professional, extracurricular and athletic programs of the first rank. The integration of liberal and professional learning is one of USC's special strengths. We strive constantly for excellence in teaching knowledge and skills to our students, while at the same time helping them to acquire wisdom and insight, love of truth and beauty, moral discernment, understanding of self, and respect and appreciation for others.

Research of the highest quality by our faculty and students is fundamental to our mission. USC is one of a very small number of premier academic institutions in which research and teaching are inextricably intertwined, and on which the nation depends for a steady stream of new knowledge, art, and technology. Our faculty are not simply teachers of the works of others, but active contributors to what is taught, thought and practiced throughout the world.

USC is pluralistic, welcoming outstanding men and women of every race, creed and background. We are a global institution in a global center, attracting more international students over the years than any other American university. And we are private, unfettered by political control, strongly committed to academic freedom, and proud of our entrepreneurial heritage.

An extraordinary closeness and willingness to help one another are evident among USC students, alumni, faculty, and staff; indeed, for those within its compass the Trojan Family is a genuinely supportive community. Alumni, trustees, volunteers and friends of USC are essential to this family tradition, providing generous financial support, participating in university governance, and assisting students at every turn.

In our surrounding neighborhoods and around the globe, USC provides public leadership and public service in such diverse fields as health care, economic development, social welfare, scientific research, public policy and the arts. We also serve the public interest by being the largest private employer in the city of Los Angeles, as well as the city's largest export industry in the private sector.

USC has played a major role in the development of Southern California for more than a century, and plays an increasingly important role in the development of the nation and the world. We expect to continue to play these roles for many centuries to come. Thus our planning, commitments and fiscal policies are directed toward building quality and excellence in the long term.

Adopted by the USC Board of Trustees, February 3, 1993

SITUATION AUDIT

The situation audit is composed of three sections:

Section I. Expectations of outside constituencies

Section II. Evaluation of the environment
   A. Environmental threats
   B. Environmental opportunities

Section III. Evaluation of USC
   A. Strengths
   B. Weaknesses

I. EXPECTATIONS OF OUTSIDE CONSTITUENCIES

1. Students and families: Prospective students and their families are increasingly curious and informed about the benefits and costs of higher education and expect greater attention to undergraduate education, especially at research universities; price-worthiness may challenge prestige as a measure of academic attractiveness.

2. Career preparation: There will be more pressure for relevance to career preparation in the curriculum, but also more nontraditional providers of higher education to sharpen that pressure and force greater differentiation.

3. Research: The belief that basic research in universities contributes directly to economic might has eroded. Along with possible decreased federal support for research will come pressure from federal agencies and others for redirecting research to immediate problems and for greater effectiveness in the transfer of research solutions to applications.

4. Diversity: The university will be expected to respond to the increasing diversity of our society and to the emergence of women and members of minority groups in leadership positions. The response will be expected in the composition of its students, staff, and faculty, and in its programs of teaching and research.

5. Technology and information: The growing recognition of information as a commodity and the growing role of information technology create constant pressure on the university to remain at the forefront of developments in instrumentation, computing, robotics, and the transmission of information.

6. Neighborhood: Neighbors, local and state officials and the public at large expect USC to contribute materially to the advancement of its neighborhood, from K-12 education to housing, to employment opportunities, to research that addresses local and regional problems.

7. Internationalism: The university will be expected to keep pace with increasing internationalization of business, industry, communications and research.

8. Athletics: Alumni will continue to expect USC to be a major athletic campus and the public at large will expect us to maintain an athletic program which is absolutely clean and absolutely in compliance with NCAA regulations.

9. Cost control: Economic forces are requiring greatly increased attention by all components of our society to controlling costs. Universities are increasingly expected to correct inefficiencies, improve performance, and lower costs.

II. EVALUATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

A. Environmental Threats

1. Politics: The sheltered political and regulatory environment once enjoyed by universities is being replaced by expectations of stricter accountability to higher education's numerous clients. The negative perception of universities of recent years may continue, leading to greatly increased oversight on such issues as conflict of interest and the relative commitments of a university to research,

scholarship, and teaching.

2. Economy: The California economy may continue to lag the nation, in contrast to its leadership in the '80s. There will be stiffer competition for scarce resources. The proportion of students requiring financial aid may not decline and may increase; the proportion willing to pay high tuition costs may continue to decline; governmental support for students with need may fail to improve or decline.

3. Competition: Universities are likely to compete more intensely with each other, as well as with nontraditional providers of education such as corporations. Private higher education has an over-capacity relative to the number of students in the pipeline who are able to pay private university tuition rates. Public universities will continue their forays into private fund raising.

4. Research support: Federal funding of research support has waned with the end of the Cold War and may continue to decline as a percentage of the overall federal budget. We are likely to see a shift toward research which is applicable to business and industry.

5. Los Angeles: The dangers of continuing instability in USC's immediate neighborhoods, along with Los Angeles' other problems, are detrimental to the continuing success of the university. Issues include crime, poor primary and secondary education, unemployment, urban blight, weakened families, and natural disasters.

6. Health care: Major restructuring in the nation's health care systems may destabilize health care education and research at academic health centers throughout the country.

7. Universities abroad: New universities in Asia, the Middle East and Europe that operate on the American model may make it much more difficult to recruit good students from abroad. Political, ideological and economic changes in other countries may limit the ability of foreign nationals from those countries to study in the United States.

B. Environmental Opportunities

1. Southern California and Los Angeles: Southern California remains unique as an urban center of great human diversity and talent. The energy and variety of its population encourage USC to continue to develop a model relationship with its neighborhoods, with the city, and with the surrounding region. USC can move with Southern California to the vanguard in addressing the challenges to major urban centers, and in understanding the complex historical and sociological relationships that define the city and the region.

2. International: Southern California is the major economic center of the western United States, closely tied to Latin America to the south and to the countries of the Pacific to the west. If these regions play their anticipated roles in the economic and political development of the world in the next decade, Southern California will be the favored region in the United States to participate in that development. USC is further positioned to play a role in the international arena because we have perhaps the largest number of foreign graduates of any university in the United States.

3. California industries: California is unique in its combination of institutions that produce knowledge and industries that utilize that knowledge (electronics, communications, cinema, biotechnology, computing, etc.). The region retains the potential to grow in global economic and cultural importance.

4. California population: A growing demand from immigrant populations in Southern California for higher education may run counter to the national demographic trend, and in the process create enrollment opportunities for private colleges and universities.

5. California public higher education: Increased tuition costs at public universities in California may narrow the tuition gap somewhat. The high cost of building new public universities may lead to greater state support for students attending private institutions.

6. Health care: Changes in health care delivery offer opportunities to USC with its broad spectrum of health-related programs. We have an opportunity to build a new model of excellence in broadly based, integrated clinical care and clinical research in this changing environment.

7. Research support: USC may seize opportunities made available in the shift of emphasis toward research which directly serves societal needs.

8. Continuing education: The level of advanced education in the population as a whole will continue to rise. An aging population, as it loses its social support from the workplace, may seek greater connectedness to other institutions such as their alma mater; this may create new opportunities for delivering continuing education.

9. Postdoctoral education: USC could provide national leadership in the organized development of postdoctoral education.

III. EVALUATION OF USC

A. USC's Strengths

1. Status: USC is a major private AAU research university.

2. Professional programs: USC has historical strength in an unusually large number of professional programs, many at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

3. Liberal arts: In the past two decades USC has gained significant strength and visibility in the liberal arts.

4. Internationalism: USC has a leadership edge in its large number of international students and alumni, and its location in Southern California, a major international center.

5. Arts: In sum, the arts programs at USC may be without peer.

6. Management: In sum, USC has great strength in its numerous management programs.

7. Communications: The Annenberg gift will enable USC to pull together and further develop its many strengths in the area of communication. New developments in communication will offer potential for great change in the ways in which research is carried out and in education, and our strengths in this area could provide us with significant advantages.

8. Libraries: The library system at USC is forward-looking in its development of electronic modes of access to sources of information around the world, in its development of cooperative arrangements with other libraries,

and in the design of the Leavey Library. (But see also USC's Weaknesses, item 10.)

9. Trend: USC has improved significantly over the past two decades in virtually every dimension: in the academic quality of its students and faculty, and in its physical plant, research sponsorship, philanthropic support, and endowment.

10. Research: USC has seen great growth in recent decades in sponsored research, national academy memberships, and other external recognition of research quality.

11. The concept of the Trojan Family is a strong unifying force among students, alumni, trustees, staff and faculty at USC.

12. USC has a strong board of trustees comprised of both alumni and non-alumni who have achieved significant success in their professional careers.

13. An extraordinarily high fraction of USC undergraduates are involved in extracurricular activities and community service.

14. Entrepreneurism: Decentralized management has aided and abetted a tradition of entrepreneurism throughout the university.

15. Neighborhood: USC has made great progress in the past two decades in building good relationships with its neighborhoods.

16. Philanthropy: USC has a strong record as a philanthropic beneficiary and a large alumni pool.

17. Physical plant: USC has two very attractive campuses with relatively low deferred maintenance.

18. Budget: USC has always had a balanced budget, reflecting its long tradition of careful fiscal management.

19. Endowment: USC has had more rapid growth in endowment over the past 35 years than any other university in the country.

B. USC's Weaknesses

1. Image: The perception of USC, both external and internal, is not as positive and strong as its reality. Its overall image is not well defined, and consequently USC is often better known by its parts than by its totality. The image for undergraduate education does not adequately reflect the growth in quality achieved in recent years.

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2. USC's location in the center of Los Angeles is perceived by many as a major negative factor in the recruitment of students and faculty. (But see also USC's Strengths, item 4.)

3. Endowment: Endowment per student is very low. The university is heavily tuition dependent with limited resources for financial aid.

4. Undergraduate students and programs: There is insufficient depth in the undergraduate applicant pool, limiting competitiveness. The large number of undergraduate programs in separate units creates incoherence. The quality of life for students does not meet the university's aspirations.

5. Graduate programs: Graduate programs are mixed in quality, from excellent to marginal, and are generally underfunded.

6. Diversity: While the university has made great progress in diversifying its student body, staff and trustees, diversity of faculty remains insufficient.

7. Faculty: As in most research universities, faculty are generally less identified with their university than with their own national and international scholarly community.

8. Interdisciplinary programs: USC's decentralized management structure is viewed by some as not hospitable to interdisciplinary programs, particularly in teaching.

9. Library: By the traditional measure of print holdings, USC's library is weak relative to the university's quality and aspirations.

10. High-tech classrooms: USC's classrooms need refurbishing in general; in addition, computerization of classroom facilities lags demand.

11. Academic structure: It is not clear that USC's present structure of numerous small schools continues to serve the university's best interests. Key strengths may be diffused across several units, preventing external recognition of our overall strength. There are wasteful redundancies and internal competition between schools. We should be sure that USC's organization supports its goals and strategic plan. USC may be trying to do too many things for too many people, and stretching its resources too thinly to attain excellence in some critical areas. In statistical profile, USC resembles the large land-grant universities more than it does other elite private universities. ❏