



August 20, 2021

Dear USC students,

The start of the 2021 academic year is upon us, and our campuses are bustling. It's been thrilling to see so many of you reconnecting with each other in person. Yesterday's convocation ceremony, where we formally welcomed more than 8,000 new Trojans onto campus, was an incredible display of Trojan tradition and pride. The ability to hold this kind of event is a real testament to how far we've come since the start of the pandemic, as well as the safety precautions we all must take to ensure we remain on the right trajectory.

We know this semester will pose some unique challenges for the Trojan community as we adjust to on-campus life once again. Many of you have only known USC through photos, videos, and Zoom screens. Normal does not look or feel the same as it did before, and we must learn to support each other in new ways. We need to acknowledge that this is a transition for all of us – students, staff, and faculty. Thank you for all you have done to sustain our community and engage in the Trojan experience.

### **Health and safety**

Vaccines and compliance with the university's vaccination policy are key to our continued safety. It is essential we pair this with diligently wearing facial coverings, carefully monitoring our symptoms with Trojan Check, staying home when sick, regularly testing for COVID-19, and acknowledging how our personal decisions impact ourselves, staff, faculty, and our neighborhoods. We can be good neighbors to everyone in our community by remembering that our actions affect others around us – and we expect all Trojans to set an example, have higher standards, and be the best neighbors we can be.

Please expect to have your Trojan Check confirmed each time you enter campus and at USC events. Your instructors may request to see your campus day pass, and a valid Trojan Check may be required to enter certain buildings. Together, we can limit the impact of the coronavirus on our community.

This is new for all of us and we appreciate your patience as we streamline our processes while keeping safety at the forefront. At the beginning of the semester, please allot extra time when heading to class.

Your [Trojan Check](#) will require that you have completed a COVID-19 test within the past seven days in order to enter campus. Schedule a test today through [MySHR](#). Together, we can limit the impact of the coronavirus on our community. If you have any trouble with your compliance on Trojan Check or "[Health, Hygiene and Safety Training](#)," contact [covid19@usc.edu](mailto:covid19@usc.edu) or (213) 740-6291 immediately.



### **Back in the classroom**

Each of these precautions, and your continued vigilance, are why we are able to return to our classrooms. Please **communicate early and often** with your professors and instructors if you are feeling unwell or need to self-isolate. They will not know that you need to miss an in-person lecture or lab unless you proactively reach out to inform them.

Your health and safety is our number one concern. Although you may feel compelled to come to campus to avoid missing lecture material, labs, or even an examination, faculty have been asked to practice flexibility and understanding for any health-related absences this year. Students who are following university protocols can request lecture notes, recordings of lectures (if available), and work with professors to continue their academic progress should they feel unwell or need to isolate. A formal medical excuse will not be required for any illnesses such as COVID or influenza that, while not necessarily requiring medical care, should preclude any student from entering the classroom.

Our normal Pass / No Pass ('P/NP') policy has been reinstated. We made several extensions and accommodations over the last three semesters to support our students' continued academic progress as we navigated the pandemic. This semester, September 10 is the deadline to choose P/NP grading and to drop a class without a 'W'. See a complete set of dates and deadlines [here](#).

### **Support and care on our campuses**

We also understand many of you have survived intense loss and grief over the past 18 months. We are here to support you in any way you need. Please do not hesitate to access any of our [counseling or support programs through USC Student Health's Counseling and Mental Health program](#). Appointments can be through [MySHR](#) and you can call (213) 740-9355 (WELL) 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In addition to [dedicated services for cultural communities](#), USC also has [embedded counselors](#) in each of our identity-based centers in Student Equity and Inclusion Programs and with the Office of Religious Life and Office of International Services.

If you, your roommates, or friends are struggling in any way, the [Student Affairs website](#) can guide you to the support you may need. If you are concerned about a friend, staff member, or faculty member, you can always anonymously report your concerns through [Trojans Care 4 Trojans \(TC4T\)](#) in the Campus Support & Intervention office or by emailing [uscsupport@usc.edu](mailto:uscsupport@usc.edu). And of course, if you need immediate attention due to an emergency or crisis situation where your safety is at risk, you may contact the Department of Public Safety by calling (213) 740-4321.

Staying connected with our community is essential as many of us acclimate to on-campus life again or for the first time. At USC, we pride ourselves on holding intellectual debates and exchanging ideas. Our return to campus also means heading back to a university environment where you may



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be exposed to – or participate in – discussions with those who have differing opinions or experiences different from your own. This is an opportunity for all of us to foster a community that values compassion and civil discourse. Please consider the university's [unifying values](#) – integrity; excellence; diversity, equity, and inclusion; well-being; open communication; and, accountability – as your guiding principles. We are committed to reviving our dynamic campus communities by supporting one another, respecting each person's comfort level, and acknowledging that this is a new experience for all of us.

We are looking forward to a successful semester and to meeting many of you on campus.

Stay safe, be well, and Fight On!

Charles F. Zukoski  
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Winston B. Crisp  
Vice President for Student Affairs