

In Pursuit of
Excellence



UNIVERSITY of
SOUTH FLORIDA

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2027



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A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT LAW

The University of South Florida is moving into a bold and exciting future guided by our goals and vision, and an ambitious new strategic plan. It is one that will help us maximize our impact by becoming a Top-25 public research institution and reaching eligibility for membership in the Association of American Universities. We know these aspirations are within our reach, fueled by our standing as the nation's fastest-rising university and our commitment to research productivity, student success, and the positive impact we have on the fast-growing and dynamic communities we serve.

This plan, ***In Pursuit of Excellence***, charts our course for the next five years. Importantly, our plan positions USF as a powerful engine of prosperity for the future – one that prioritizes lifelong learning, the ever-important digital ecosystem that was heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the state of Florida's goal of becoming a Top 10 global economy by 2030. Further, the plan includes clear objectives and measures of success, fostering a culture of accountability to track our progress.

This strategic plan guides us on the path forward, serving as a roadmap to becoming an even more impactful public research university and will provide a clear glide path for USF's next permanent president. I look forward to our work together to achieve excellence.

USF's Strategic Plan provides a blueprint for the continuation of USF's ascent in national and global visibility and the strengthening of our regional, national, and global communities over the next five years.

The success of this plan will be evident in the following ways:

- Access, success, and social mobility for a diverse and talented student body - **fueling a pipeline of world-class talent for Florida's employers, and beyond,**
- Reputation for excellence in research and innovation – **solving consequential global problems and addressing Florida's most significant challenges,**
- A top-tier public metropolitan research university linked in a mutually beneficial partnership with our communities, public service organizations, businesses, and industry – **promoting lifelong learning and strengthening Florida's goal of being a Top-10 global economy by 2030,**
- A destination of choice and a collaborative community of diverse and talented faculty, staff, and students – **promoting access and professional growth in a dynamic workplace and learning environment,**
- A financially resilient organization with diversified resources – **driving the strategic institutional mission through streamlined planning, processes, and digitalization.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Pursuit of Excellence

The University of South Florida (USF) has emerged as the nation's fastest-rising university over the past decade, a reflection of our unwavering pursuit of excellence for the betterment of our students, research, and the communities we serve.

Founded in 1956, USF was conceived as a progressive, modern university that would be forever tied to the development of the community of which it is a part. As a research university situated in the heart of a growing metropolis, USF is an engine of social and economic prosperity. USF brings perspective in times of conflict and hope in the face of uncertainties, creating new knowledge, addressing grand challenges, advancing our way of life, and striving to create a culture that is not only innovative and creative but compassionate and resilient. By harnessing the power of knowledge and talent, as we listen closely to the needs of our communities, we design tools to optimize human performance and improve how we live, work, travel, think, and play.

Great cities nurture great universities and vice versa. That is also true of the Tampa Bay region and USF. Tampa Bay is a growing metropolis and cosmopolitan region. Its demographics and geographic location provide an opportunity to cultivate a thriving and equity-minded ecosystem that leverages USF as an anchor institution. Indeed, USF's core mission is in direct service of its communities, and in addressing regional and national challenges.

Propelled by the consolidation of our three campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Sarasota-Manatee, and our academic assets, USF is uniquely poised to strengthen the Tampa Bay region as a catalyst for regional economic and social growth while maintaining robust national and international impact. USF's aspirations toward becoming



a Top-25 public research university and eligible for membership in the Association of American Universities (AAU) are milestones in our pursuit of institutional excellence propelling USF and our vibrant and diverse communities toward a collectively bright future.

This Strategic Plan is designed to provide a clear roadmap to further our institutional ascent over the next five years while establishing a framework to operationalize objectives to meet our institutional goals.

The identification of measures of success with more granular metrics aligns the objectives with institutional accountability plans and aspirations. In concert, the goals and associated objectives in the Strategic Plan reflect USF's commitment to the success of our students, alumni, and staff; the excellence of our faculty research and innovation; the impact of our partnerships – locally and across the globe; the strength of our diverse and inclusive community at USF; and the sustainability of our adaptable financial base.

The seven Strategic Areas of Focus identified in the Strategic Plan reflect current institutional areas of academic and interdisciplinary excellence. These areas will be evaluated periodically to continually sustain our competitive advantage in higher education's fast-paced and fluid landscape.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan requires specific strategies and tactics to guide USF's future trajectory of

excellence. With this blueprint, USF will empower deans and academic and administrative leaders to develop and operationalize unit-based strategic plans and priorities. Such plans will align with our mission, vision, and goals and provide actionable pathways to pursue our objectives. The Strategic Plan is designed to be inclusive of faculty, staff, and students across our three campuses for USF to achieve its strategic mission. To realize our aspirations, USF must be fueled by even more vigorous support from alumni, business and community partners, philanthropists, and government leaders.



AMERICA'S FASTEST-RISING UNIVERSITY!

#46

Among Public Universities
in *U.S. News & World
Report* 2022 National
University Ranking

Top 50 AMONG PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS FOR SIX RECENT RANKINGS

U.S. News & World Report 2022 National University Rankings (2022), *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings (2022), *Academic Ranking of World Universities* (2021), *Washington Monthly* (2021), *Kiplinger* Best Public College Value: In-State (2019), *Top American Research Universities* (2020)

#1 among FLORIDA PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES and #8 among ALL U.S. UNIVERSITIES

Best Universities for Reducing Inequalities
Times Higher Education (2021)

#18 Top Performer IN SOCIAL MOBILITY

among public universities in the nation
U.S. News & World Report (2022)

USF'S TRAJECTORY

The University of South Florida serves approximately 50,000 academically accomplished and diverse students pursuing undergraduate, graduate, specialist, and professional degrees across 13 colleges and three campuses. Undergraduates may choose from nearly 300 majors and a diverse array of minors and concentrations.

Over the past decade, no other university has risen faster in *U.S. News & World Report's* national university rankings, rising 78 spots among all universities and 54 spots among all public universities.

USF is one of only three Preeminent State Research Universities, a designation awarded by the Florida Board of Governors (BOG). The Preeminence program recognizes high-achieving universities based on 12 metrics, including graduation rates, student retention rates, research expenditures, and the number of patents awarded. Additionally, USF has remained a leader in the state's performance-based funding model since the system was implemented in 2014. Further affirming USF's commitment to access for success, the student success-based metrics established by the BOG focus on affordable access, graduating students on time, with minimal debt, and prepared to successfully compete for high-paying jobs in high-demand fields.

USF's demographic profile distinguishes it as the most diverse of Florida's three preeminent universities and more diverse than most current members of the Association of American Universities (AAU). USF has earned widespread national recognition as a leader in student success, including graduating under-represented minority and limited-income students at rates equal to or higher than white and higher-income students. USF continues to be a destination for the best and brightest students, striking a balance between a high-quality, rigorous curriculum and real-world experiential learning opportunities in and outside the classroom.

USF is increasingly a preferred destination for high-achieving high school graduates from across the United States and worldwide. The class of 2025 features the largest, most academically accomplished, and diverse cohort in USF history. USF continues to grow student enrollment in the Judy Genshaft Honors College, attracting National Merit Scholars, and supporting students' pursuit and attainment of such prestigious scholarships as Marshall, Goldwater, Fulbright, Gates, and Cambridge.

USF adds to the vibrancy and strength of the regional economy by serving as a research and innovation powerhouse with hundreds of millions of dollars in annual research expenditures. As a metropolitan research university with a strong applied research and innovation culture, USF serves as a vital catalyst for the social and economic ecosystem, creating extraordinary opportunities for the Tampa Bay region and Florida. USF's research, clinical, commercialization, and workforce development activities drive employment in high-wage occupations across the region and state, in turn creating an environment that attracts new companies and a growing pool of highly skilled professionals to sustain our diversifying economy.

In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, USF had an annual budget of \$1.85 billion and an annual economic impact of \$6.02 billion in Florida, directly producing 68,704 jobs and \$3.82 billion in GDP. The university also converts the state's public appropriations into amplified returns. For every dollar Florida invests in USF, the university returns \$5.99 in labor income, \$1.41 in tax revenue and \$14.07 in total economic output. In addition, as an academic medical center, USF Health conducts more than one million patient visits annually.

USF is focused on the confluence of excellence in faculty research and student success. With engagement in the region, the state, the nation, and across the globe, USF is making a sustained and far-reaching impact.

As we chart our path forward, USF must build upon its culture of courage and innovation. With our remarkable trajectory, USF is well-positioned to reach performance levels at or above those of its aspirational peers.

USF is home to a **STUDENT BODY OF**

49,867 STUDENTS

representing more than

146 COUNTRIES

(Fall 2021)

An investment in USF **IS AN INVESTMENT IN THE COMMUNITY**

**USF HAS A TOTAL
ECONOMIC IMPACT OF
\$6.02 BILLION
IN FLORIDA**

Every dollar of state funding helps to generate:

- **\$14.07** in economic output.
- **\$8.93** in value-added.
- **\$1.41** in federal, state, and local tax revenue.
- **\$5.99** in labor income.
- Every **\$6,227** in state funding to the University of South Florida supports one job in Florida.

Muma College of Business (2021 analysis)



MISSION, VISION, ASPIRATIONS, AND VALUES

USF is dedicated to meeting the needs of our diverse student population through a high-quality and highly relevant curriculum and a steadfast spirit of service to local and global communities through the development of strategic partnerships and highly relevant applied research. Our mission, vision, aspirations, and goals inform all aspects of both the strategic planning process and its implementation—reaffirming our commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, research and scholarly activity, community engagement, and equity in diversity and inclusion. Taken together, they serve as our blueprint for driving strategic focus and institutional commitments.

MISSION

Led by outstanding faculty and professional staff, the University of South Florida conducts innovative scholarship, creative activity, and basic and translational research, and delivers a world-class educational experience promoting the success of our talented and diverse undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. As a public metropolitan research university, USF, in partnership with our communities, serves the people of Florida, the nation, and the world by fostering intellectual inquiry and outcomes that positively shape the future—regionally, nationally, and globally.

VISION

The University of South Florida is driven by a commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, research and scholarship, and creative works and innovation. Changing the world through educating leaders in a diverse, inclusive environment and developing knowledge and practice to address critical challenges, USF will be recognized within the ranks of the nation's top public research universities.



ASPIRATIONS

USF has long been committed to reaching ever-higher levels of excellence in service of its surrounding communities and to attract top students, faculty, and staff. This, in turn, leads to increased academic and research productivity, which fuels greater economic impact and societal contributions, further strengthening USF's reputation and value as a community asset.

Our aspirations for the future are not the goals in and of themselves, but rather milestones in our continued ***Pursuit of Excellence*** and will further propel USF on its remarkable trajectory toward achieving a Top-25 *U.S. News & World Report* public ranking. Further indicators of USF's collective success include national and global rankings as one of the world's top universities and advancement towards eligibility for Association of American Universities (AAU) membership.



VALUES

USF is committed to the core values of **Inquiry**, **Innovation**, **Integrity**, and **Inclusion** as:

Inquiry through

- High-quality, multidisciplinary education and excellence in teaching and learning.
- High-impact scholarship, research, and creative pursuits.
- Success and achievement of its students, faculty, staff, and alumni.
- Collegiality, collaboration, academic freedom, viewpoint diversity, and an institutional commitment to the open exchange of ideas, divergent opinions and philosophies, rigorous debate, grounded in the principles of civil discourse, and professional responsibility.

Innovation through

- Exploration of new technologies to create efficiencies and solve problems.
- A culture of learning, growth, entrepreneurial spirit and partnerships.
- First-class administrative and physical infrastructure to support the university's education and research mission.
- An agile, flexible, and proactive multi-campus community that develops curricula and programs to meet rapidly changing community and global needs.

Integrity through

- Shared governance within all components of the institution.
- Transparency and accountability of the university's operations.
- Affordable and accessible education for all.
- Social, economic, and environmental sustainability at the local and global levels.

Inclusion through

- Diversity of students, faculty, and staff in safe campus environments.
- Respect and recognition of each individual through a commitment to justice, equity, and anti-racism.
- Community engagement and public service.
- A welcoming campus life with broad academic, cultural, and athletic opportunities.

UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

The USF Core Commitments are not only sources of differentiation in and of themselves, but also powerful enablers of any activity the university elects to pursue and foundational in achieving the university's Mission, Vision, and broader institutional goals.



STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

The current Strategic Areas of Focus identified in this plan are examples of some of our distinctive institutional areas of academic and interdisciplinary excellence, representing converging themes in teaching, research, and innovation across all three campuses. In keeping with the University of South Florida's dynamic, innovative, and nimble approach to solving real-world problems, these areas represent a current assessment of focus areas and will be evaluated periodically to sustain our competitive advantage in a dynamic and ever-changing world while serving our regional, national, and global communities.



Analytics and Data
Science: Integrating
USF Digitally



Biology
by Design



Design, Arts, and
Performance



Global and
National Security



Health, Society
and Biomedical Science



Social Justice and
Human Rights



Sustainability,
Environmental, and
Oceanographic Sciences

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & MEASURES OF SUCCESS

GOAL 1: Student Success at USF and beyond

To promote the success of well-educated, highly skilled, and adaptable alumni who, as lifelong learners, lead enriched lives, contribute to the democratic process, function as engaged community citizens, and thus thrive in a dynamic global market.

GOAL 1: OBJECTIVES & MEASURES OF SUCCESS

1A. Increase the development and availability of high-impact educational experiences for student success

- Increased student enrollment in High-Impact Practices (e.g., study abroad, service-learning, undergraduate research) to support the attainment of academic knowledge, soft skills, and the career-ready characteristics to be engaged citizens

1B. Enhance the pedagogical excellence of faculty in teaching and learning

- Improved incoming student profile
- Strengthened national rankings
- Reduced student-to-faculty ratio
- Increased faculty workshops and training opportunities
- Increased teaching awards

1C. Enhance support for student engagement, co-curricular activities, and well-being at USF

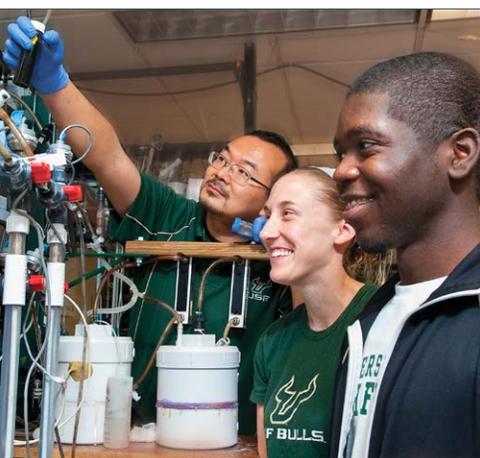
- Enhanced student support services to address engagement and co-curricular activities
- Enhanced support services to address student success and well-being

1D. Strengthen students' connections to the community, employers, and alumni for lifelong success

- Improved post-graduation outcomes for Bachelor's graduates
- Enhanced new degree programs with an industry or employer advisory council
- Reinforced programs with specialized accreditation
- Increased participation in community and business engagement activities
- Facilitated articulation with the Florida College System to address unmet education needs through online opportunities

1E. Prepare students for professional and leadership success in a competitive environment

- Improved retention rates
- Improved graduation rates
- Reduced student debt
- Increased degrees awarded in high-demand areas
- Enhanced professional licensure and certification exam pass rates



GOALS, OBJECTIVES & MEASURES OF SUCCESS

GOAL 2: Faculty excellence in research and innovation

To conduct high-impact research and innovation to advance frontiers of knowledge, solve global problems, and improve lives.

GOAL 2: OBJECTIVES & MEASURES OF SUCCESS

2A. Enhance institutional infrastructure and operational excellence for faculty success in research and innovation

- Increased research and development expenditures
- Increased postdoctoral appointees
- Increased non-faculty S&E research staff with doctorates
- Enhanced faculty profile (i.e., percent tenured/tenure-track faculty; the proportion of full-time faculty with the highest degree; percent of full-time faculty)

2B. Foster strategic collaborative research and innovation that is highly impactful and transformative

- Enhanced collaborative research activities and partnerships
- Enhanced collaborative scholarly activity

2C. Increase impact and recognition of research and innovation

- Improved citation impact
- Increased faculty awards
- Augmented economic impact of research funding
- Elevated programs to the top quartile of the disciplinary field

2D. Identify and support areas for cross-collaboration between colleges while leveraging the distinctive identities of each of USF's campus communities

- Increased external grants/contracts with faculty and/or students between colleges
- Increased publications with faculty and/or students between colleges
- Increased number of funded research projects with faculty and/or students between colleges



GOALS, OBJECTIVES & MEASURES OF SUCCESS

GOAL 3: Partnerships and engagement with local, national, and global impact

To be a major social and economic engine creating robust global, national, and regional partnerships to build a prosperous and sustainable future for our regional communities and the state of Florida.

GOAL 3: OBJECTIVES & MEASURES OF SUCCESS

3A. Strengthen and grow existing partnerships and/or establish new mutually beneficial partnerships

- Strengthened corporate and community partnerships based on the distinctive strengths of each of USF's campus communities
- Deepened national partnerships
- Expanded global partnerships

3B. Build a culture of entrepreneurship at USF

- Expanded corporate and professional training and continuing education courses offered to the community
- Increased start-up companies
- Growth in licenses and options
- Increased patents awarded

3C. Enhance USF's footprint through national and global partnerships

- Expanded national and international academic transfer/articulation agreements
- Increased Fulbright Scholars
- Extended student participation in global experiences
- Increased collaborative national and international scholarly activity while strengthening processes to protect intellectual assets
- Enhancement in international students enrolled (i.e., number of international students enrolled)

3D. Enhance USF's engagement with our communities through university-community partnerships

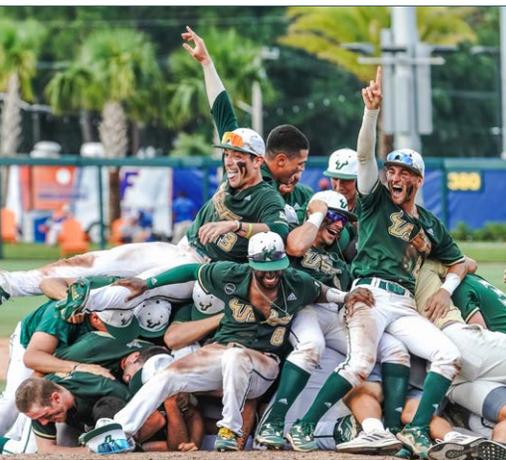
- Expanded partnerships to address community health care
- Expanded partnerships with PreK-12 school systems
- Expanded partnerships with businesses, non-profit organizations, and government agencies
- Expanded opportunities for career upskilling and reskilling for post-university graduates
- Increased noncredit courses and other continuing educational activities



GOALS, OBJECTIVES & MEASURES OF SUCCESS

GOAL 4: A diverse and inclusive community for learning and discovery

To provide a safe, inclusive, and vibrant community for learning, discovery, creative activities, and transformative experiences enabled through adaptive design of physical, social, and digital environments.



GOAL 4: OBJECTIVES & MEASURES OF SUCCESS

4A. Recruit and retain diverse faculty, staff, and students

- Enhanced diverse student enrollment and degree production
- Expanded community partnerships
- Increased diverse faculty and staff

4B. Enhance academic programs and curricula to be inclusive of diverse perspectives

- Increase in enhanced general education courses designed to address diverse perspectives
- Expanded workshops and learning opportunities for faculty and staff to promote inclusivity, equitability, critical thinking, and diversity of thought

4C. Increase and sustain the availability of flexible/adaptive instructional environments and research workspaces aligned equitably with unique campus needs to promote access and success

- Advanced infrastructure designed to promote access and success to a population with varying abilities
- Enhanced digital infrastructure designed to promote access and success

4D. Foster a positive employee experience that embraces a dynamic workplace environment

- Enhancement in positive employee experiences
- Improved workplace learning opportunities promoting professional growth and work-life balance

4E. Strengthen the university community through shared/collaborative experiences such as the arts, athletics, sustainability initiatives, and with alumni stakeholders

- Increased collaborative university community activities

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & MEASURES OF SUCCESS

GOAL 5: A strong, sustainable, and adaptable financial base

To practice continuous visionary planning and sound stewardship throughout USF to ensure a strong and sustainable financial base and adapt proactively to emerging opportunities in a dynamic environment.

GOAL 5: OBJECTIVES & MEASURES OF SUCCESS

5A. Design and implement a strategic, transparent, and predictable budget model

- Implementation of a transparent and predictable budget model
- Established action plans based on the survey input of unit leaders on their perception of the strategic nature, transparency, and predictability of the model

5B. Diversify and sustain financial revenue streams to support programs and operations in a dynamic environment

- Enhanced alumni, community, and legislative relations to bolster awareness of distinctive strengths of each campus, increase advocacy and leverage partnerships ensuring a strong and sustainable financial base
- Improved alumni giving rate
- Diversification of financial revenue streams
- Strengthened supplier diversity

5C. Ensure cost-effective and strategic use of resources in support of the university's mission

- Enhanced strategic revenue alignment
- Optimized implementation of investments and maximization of institutional assets

5D. Streamline processes for effective implementation of the university's strategic mission

- Optimization of time and cost of key processes vital to the mission of USF (e.g., hiring, MOU approval, research contract approval, etc.)
- Increased effectiveness in digitalization of university operations



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The strategic planning process was a collaborative effort involving stakeholders from all three campuses and leveraged various planning documents and activities developed over the past few years. The process included an intentional outreach effort seeking input from the many constituents within the university and communities throughout the region served.

In addition, the following sources were critical to informing the Strategic Plan's focus on the continuation of our path ***In Pursuit of Excellence***:

1. The [2025 State University System Strategic Plan](#), as approved by the Board of Governors in October 2019, focuses on three points of emphasis for the State University System 2025 Goals—Excellence, Productivity, and Strategic Priorities for a Knowledge Economy—and recognizes the universities' teaching, research, and public service priorities.
2. USF 2017-18 strategic plan discussions, which set us on the path of examining our sources of sustainable competitive differentiation, opportunities, and strategic priorities.
3. USF's current mission statement and goals, each of which involved many hours of engagement and consensus-building across our campuses and represented the core of the strategic plan.
4. SACSCOC accreditation requirements in support of the consolidation of our campuses, which gave clear direction for USF to operate.
5. USF's 2021 Accountability Plan, approved by both the USF Board of Trustees and the Florida Board of Governors, set clear operational targets and goals.

The inclusion of these various initiatives, and significant collaborations with stakeholders, resulted in the development of USF's five goals. These goals embody USF's mission and strategic direction.

In December 2020, The USF Strategic Planning Advisory Task Force was appointed to develop formal vision and strategy statements, articulate a list of the university core commitments, and assess USF's existing strengths and current gaps relative to our aspirations. The Task Force, largely comprised of faculty, held various stakeholder meetings, virtual town hall forums, interviews, and surveys.

Taken together, the sessions with university and community stakeholders and written comments from faculty, students, staff, and other friends of the university yielded a wealth of detailed observations and suggestions—ultimately shaping USF's vision, the areas of strategic focus, and university core commitments.

Further work to operationalize the goals, incorporate objectives and measurable outcomes, with reference to the core commitments, was conducted by a Strategic Plan Steering Committee appointed by President Law on September 7, 2021.

Upon completing the first draft of objectives and measurable outcomes, the Strategic Plan Steering Committee engaged with stakeholder groups including the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Administrative Advisory Council, Undergraduate Student Government, Graduate and Professional Student Government, Deans, Department Chairs, and Alumni. The Strategic Plan Steering Committee also held meetings with the USF Foundation Board, USF Greek Alumni, the University Board of Trustees, and a USF-wide Town Hall assembly to provide a public forum for meaningful discussion and feedback. Beyond meeting with internal stakeholders, the Steering Committee also sought input from members of the broader Tampa Bay community to gather public feedback.

As part of the outreach process, the Strategic Plan Steering Committee constructed a survey soliciting feedback and input on the relative importance of the objectives identified for each goal. The results of the survey indicated broad-based and enthusiastic support of the identified objectives. In addition, the feedback provided across these forums facilitated a dynamic process ensuring the objectives and measures of success represent the university's strategic aims and aspirations, and the needs of our communities.



SPECIAL THANK YOU TO...

MEMBERS OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING ADVISORY TASK FORCE

CHAIRS:

Charles Stanish, Task Force Chair; Professor of Anthropology, College of Arts and Sciences; Executive Director, Institute for the Advanced Study of Culture and the Environment

Sylvia Wilson Thomas, Task Force Vice Chair; Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering, College of Engineering

MEMBERS:

Golfo Alexopoulos, Professor of Interdisciplinary Global Studies, College of Arts and Sciences; Founding Director, Institute on Russia

Mya Breitbart, Professor of Biological Oceanography, College of Marine Science

Michael Cross, Instructor, Judy Genshaft Honors College

Bárbara Cruz, Professor of Social Science Education, College of Education

Michael Foley, Professor of Dance, College of the Arts

Robert Frisina, Distinguished University Professor and Department Chair of Medical Engineering, College of Engineering and Morsani College of Medicine; Director, Global Center for Hearing & Speech Research

Ramon Gonzalez, Professor and Florida 21st Century World Class Scholar of Chemical, Biological, and Materials Engineering, College of Engineering

Clifton Gooch, Professor and Department Chair of Neurology, Morsani College of Medicine; Tampa General Hospital Endowed Chair, Department of Neurology; Vice President, Clinical and Translational Research, Tampa General Hospital

Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman, Associate Professor of Sociology, College of Arts and Sciences, Senior Advisor to the President and Provost for Diversity and Inclusion

Matthew Knight, Associate Librarian; Affiliate Faculty of History, College of Arts and Sciences

Claire Mitchell, USF Student Body President; Member, USF Board of Trustees

Sunil Mithas, Professor and World Class Scholar of Information Systems and Management, Muma College of Business

Zacharias Pieri, Associate Professor of International Relations and Security Studies, College of Arts and Sciences

Angela Sklenka, Vice President of Human Resources

Gregory Teague, Associate Professor and Department Chair of Mental Health Law and Policy, College of Behavioral and Community Sciences

Thomas Unnasch, Distinguished USF Health Professor and Department Chair of Global Health, College of Public Health

Edelyn Verona, Professor of Psychology, College of Arts and Sciences

MEMBERS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

CHAIRS:

Theresa Chisolm, Co-chair; Vice Provost for Strategic Planning, Performance and Accountability; Professor, Communication Sciences & Disorders

British Mukherjee, Co-chair; Vice Provost and Associate Vice President Strategic Talent Recruitment, University Reputation and Impact; Professor, Department of Physics

MEMBERS:

Paige Geers, Acting Chief of Staff

Moez Limayem, Lynn Pippenger Dean, Muma College of Business

Usha Menon, Senior Associate Vice President, USF Health; Dean, College of Nursing

Zacharias Pieri, Associate Professor of International Relations and Security Studies, College of Arts and Sciences

Anthony Rolle, Dean, College of Education

Charles Stanish, Professor of Anthropology, College of Arts and Sciences; Executive Director, Institute for the Advanced Study of Culture and the Environment

Melanie Riedinger Whitmore, Professor, Department of Integrative Biology, College of Arts and Sciences

STAFF AND STUDENT ADVISORS:

Monique Brown, President, USF Staff Senate

Jessica Burgess, President, Administrative Advisory Council

Willow Craine, Graduate and Professional Student Council Vice President

Andrea Ellis, American Council on Education Fellow

Valeria Garcia, Associate Vice President of Decision Support

Ilana Thomsett, Academic Services Administrator

Tanya Vomacka, Director of Strategic Communications and Engagement

Jillian Wilson, Student Body Vice President



APPENDIX

24 University Core Commitments

42 Strategic Areas of Focus

LINK Strategic Plan Matrix



UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

FACULTY EXCELLENCE

The single most important determinant of a university's success is faculty excellence. The rationale and institutional relevance of pursuing faculty excellence originate in the core tenet that everything we value as a university is impacted by our faculty. This includes teaching and learning to inspire our students and ensure their retention, graduation, and career progression, as well as research, innovation, and creative activities leading to the generation and dissemination of new knowledge and economic impact for the region and beyond.

Faculty members play a critical role as participants in university administration and shared decision-making. In addition, they engage our community partners and build national and global partnerships. Ultimately, faculty members are the foundation for ensuring our institutional reputation. In each aspect of multi-faceted faculty excellence, there is an intimate link to institution-wide key performance indicators that drive USF's success.

USF is redoubling its efforts to succeed at faculty recruitment, development, rewards, and retention. Working in concert, those efforts will propel our faculty members' visibility and positive impact on their fields and society. Those efforts will also fuel our aims to foster greater numbers of faculty who earn recognition and leadership roles in their fields (e.g., members of the National Academies and other awards and fellowships in academic, professional, and industry organizations).

Faculty success at USF is the focus of a strategic, holistic approach that is key to multi-dimensional faculty excellence. This includes the significant goal of furthering institutional aspirations of achieving eligibility for membership in the Association of American Universities (AAU) and Top-25 ranking among public universities.



UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

STUDENT SUCCESS

Having gained national recognition for its use of predictive analytics and a holistic care management approach, USF will continue to advance our student success movement built on the principle that every student admitted to USF will succeed. By creating an institutional culture of care, USF has achieved extraordinary gains in graduation rates while reducing and, in many cases, eliminating achievement gaps by race, ethnicity, and income. In addition, USF will maintain its position as an innovator in strategies and practices designed to improve student learning outcomes, accelerate completion rates, minimize debt and prepare students for lifelong success in their chosen careers and as citizens.

Moreover, continually enhancing and refining an array of support services—from academic advising to mental and public health to cultural and recreation centers—will provide our students with the tools needed to actualize personal and academic success.

As USF continues its upward trajectory, students will benefit from the fact that USF is a comprehensive multi-campus research university dedicated to the success of its diverse student body. Although the curriculum remains the province of the faculty, our values drive us to provide an environment that contributes to student learning and development within and beyond the classroom. This includes emphasizing critical thinking, freedom of expression, communication skills, ethical standards and their application, community engagement, and participation in democracy.

USF ensures that students can engage in internships, scientific field, laboratory work, research experiences, service learning, education abroad, and other experiential learning opportunities. These broad experiences are significantly amplified for students participating in the Judy Genshaft Honors College, which provides unique educational experiences to 743 first-time in college (FTIC) students who entered USF in fall 2021 with an average SAT score of 1416 (95th percentile) and an average high school GPA of 4.4.

The USF student experience includes curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular elements. Regardless of which campus they attend, students have the opportunity to engage in vigorous campus life through participation in student government, intramural clubs, organizations, living-learning communities, art exhibitions, musical performances, multicultural events, homecoming, intercollegiate athletic events, recreational activities, and others. Through rigorous and relevant activities, USF students graduate with the skills, experiences, and resilience required to succeed in an increasingly competitive and diverse global market.

Each of USF's campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Sarasota-Manatee has unique academic and cultural strengths and provides vibrant, high-quality learning, research, campus life, and community engagement opportunities regardless of which campus they call home. Moreover, students have access to a broader array of degree programs by discipline, level, and mode of delivery.



UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

STAFF DISTINCTION

USF's staff members are at the heart of the university. The university is committed to excellence for our students, faculty, and staff, reinforced by an inclusive environment where innovation and freedom of intellectual curiosity can flourish. USF drives sustainable results through a high-performing, inclusively diverse, and engaged workforce while integrating an organizational culture USF can leverage as a competitive advantage. USF's commitment to its staff creates a value proposition where USF is an employer of choice for top talent. USF will continue to differentiate itself by attracting, retaining, engaging, and developing the best talent for the institution. To sustain this momentum, we must:

- Close gaps to professional growth for current and future talent to achieve a multiplier effect across all our teams and meet the future needs of USF.
- Build internal leader effectiveness and bench strength by understanding trends such as talent availability and changing demographics in USF's internal and external communities.
- Build a culture that accelerates and rewards appropriate risk-taking and a growth mindset.
- Embrace innovative workplace practices applicable for the nature of work, including technology-enabled flexibility.
- Become known as a great place to work among current and prospective employees, supporting retention and talent acquisition to feed a virtuous cycle of success.



UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

USF values diversity with inclusion and excellence with equity as elements of our values. These values are embedded in each of the strategic areas of focus in recognition that the success of each requires meaningful engagement with diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Beyond its presence in our academic endeavors, these values must also be embedded in our organizational infrastructure and should further drive not just who we attract and who we hire and retain, but also how we develop relationships and in which ways we invest in the success and advancement of diverse populations in our broader communities.

At USF, diversity exists along numerous axes, including gender identity, race and ethnicity, country of origin, socioeconomic status, age, religion, politics, sexual identity, veteran status, and disability, among many other considerations. With our core values in mind, racism, sexual violence, discrimination, and other acts of intolerance are rejected and treated with accountability to create a safe and welcoming environment where students, faculty, and staff can flourish professionally and academically. Our success to date indicates that we have a strong foundation upon which to build a model that is based on equity rather than diversity alone.

We endeavor to develop sustainable initiatives, policies, and programs to engage and amplify the voices of diverse students, faculty, and staff to ensure that all members feel a sense of belonging, connectedness, are represented in leadership, and have an opportunity to succeed. Closer attention to the recruitment, retention, and advancement of diverse students, faculty, and staff, as well as increased utilization of diverse suppliers, are key aspects of the intentional efforts necessary to sustain these values. Our vision moving forward is to proactively pursue inclusive excellence to enrich our campus communities and as a key aspect of our engagement with the broader region.



UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Our continued trajectory in pursuit of excellence requires courageous aspirations and a clear-eyed understanding of our operational reality. USF's historical boldness must also involve looking inward with careful reflection on resources, internal processes, and our institutional risk management posture to achieve our goals.

This begins with efforts to advance our university business systems and infrastructure, revisit and revise our policies and procedures to improve operational efficiencies and become more proactive rather than reactive. In addition, we will prioritize transparent financial stewardship and a refreshed budget planning process that supports strategic investments and reinforces a focus on strengthening USF's commitment to academic excellence. Operational excellence will also be reflected in ongoing efforts to accelerate our commitment to supplier diversity through our Office of Supplier Diversity.

Accelerating our rate of progress will inevitably necessitate taking additional risks. Analyzing risk proactively from an enterprise perspective enables responsible risk management and allows us to embrace risk as an opportunity. As a result, enterprise risk management is increasingly understood (and utilized) as both a necessary and a strategic tool for identifying, assessing, and managing risks in higher education.

USF already enjoys a low barrier to internal collaboration—among faculty and our academic leaders and across organizations and disciplines. Refining how we work in supporting our core mission should also result in a virtuous cycle where innovation enables operational efficiencies and engenders a healthy work culture.



UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

ATHLETICS

Athletics is tied to the creation of a sense of community and shared experience among students, staff, alumni, supporters, and faculty. Both spectator and participatory sports should continue to be integrated into campus life as an important area of enrichment. USF must promote a proper balance of study and healthy social activities. Athletics is an important partner in the university's community-building process.

USF Athletics serves as a powerful marketing arm by generating widespread national, regional and local exposure to the university. A strengthened brand and increased recognition of USF Athletics will benefit student enrollment, alumni relations, campus-wide fundraising efforts, school spirit for students, faculty, and staff, and help build connections with the local and regional communities.

In addition to developing champions of sport, USF Athletics is committed to developing champions in the classroom, in the community, and in life. As an example, USF Athletics' "Enhancing U" program aims to prepare student-athletes for life by providing compassionate support and direction as they develop their purpose, ambitions, and goals through special programming such as our Selmon Mentoring Institute, our Bulls Care program, and our Student-Athlete Leadership Academy.



UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

RESEARCH SUPPORT

Research support infrastructure can be broadly defined as resources required by the research community to conduct high-impact, top-level research and scholarship and includes administrative support (e.g., regulatory compliance, contract and award management, data management); major scientific equipment; knowledge-based resources (collections, archives, or information structures); high-performance computing and information technology; and advanced state-of-the-art research buildings and laboratories.

Research support is critical in enabling transformative research and innovation, catalyzing impact on academic fields, local and regional economic development, and providing cutting-edge learning opportunities for current and future generations of students and researchers alike. As a Carnegie classified Very High Research (R1) university, USF has developed a robust research infrastructure that supports high-impact transdisciplinary global research and scholarship across the institution and provides resources for external research partners.

As USF continues on a trajectory of research portfolio growth, innovation, and entrepreneurship, continuous resource investment in institutional research facilities and administration is vital.



UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

During the past 20 years, USF has been very successful in improving its academic and research portfolio, vaulting it to the fastest-rising university in the country. However, while the university has been successful in growing its research programs over the past two decades, reaching the level of the AAU will require USF to support the architecture of academic excellence by improving its underlying academic infrastructure.

The USF Libraries, and USF Information Technology (IT), focus on providing the support infrastructure for these expanding academic and research initiatives. The Libraries, IT, Office of Decision Support, and Innovative Education must be increasingly incorporated into the pursuit of the university's aspirations—indeed, they are an existential necessity for a contemporary, competitive research university. Operationally, this requires modernizing our Libraries' infrastructure and human resources, finance, student information systems, and faculty information systems.

Moreover, myriad operational efficiencies may be found across the university by further examining where we can leverage technology to advance faculty and student success, automate and streamline processes, and engage in a robust process of information governance.

Beyond these pragmatic shifts, USF has an opportunity to take more strategic advantage of its business intelligence and analytics by enhancing the partnerships through a more intentional internal collaboration between IT, Libraries, Office of Decision Support, Innovative Education, and the Office of Resource Management & Analysis, focused on the continued development of comprehensive application of analytics and implementation of a program of information governance is necessary to advance the university's commitment to accountability and evidence-based decision making, while maintaining the highest standards of reporting. Moreover, by combining our institutional research with external information—namely, competitive intelligence and market analyses—USF can establish a more proactive posture relative to strategic decision-making.



UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Libraries

To deepen the support for USF's mission, the Libraries layer service innovation on top of traditional excellence in knowledge curation. This service-oriented culture helps solidify the infrastructure for research and learning by moving beyond the traditional role of knowledge service provider and engaging in the entire lifecycle and activity range of knowledge creation.

The Libraries undergird all aspects of the university and provide crucial support to individual and institutional projects, aspirations, and goals. Whether through physical collections, electronic collections, data management and metadata support, support for textbook affordability, data literacy, research support, data visualizations, or statistical analyses, the Libraries are foundational to USF's strategic areas of focus.

By utilizing the USF Libraries' enhanced service model employing crosscutting Research Innovation Teams, faculty and students will be provided with expertise in library and information science and deep subject-area proficiency. Those teams partner with faculty on digital scholarship initiatives, collection creation, bibliometrics, and altmetrics to assist faculty members' impact management and support their tenure and promotion, intellectual property, and copyright expertise. Research Innovation Teams also connect faculty and students with professionals possessing functional expertise in areas such as data management, GIS services, statistical analysis, writing and publication support, and possess the academic preparation and subject-matter expertise needed to teach credit-bearing courses, supervise interns and engage actively in departmental research to obtain external funding.



UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Information Technology

While IT already provides operational support to our employees and technology support for delivering the university's educational mission, this central unit possesses both infrastructure and subject matter expertise increasingly utilized to support research and scholarship. There are three key ways to realize this:

Provide IT with resources to directly support faculty and other researchers with training and help take advantage of artificial intelligence and machine learning, analytical tools, high-performance computing infrastructure, and other data science resources, rather than leaving faculty to learn about and utilize these resources their own.

Work with faculty to incorporate IT resources and personnel into research proposals and projects. These direct costs would help offset IT expenses and provide additional resources to invest in USF's computing, data visualization, and related "big data" capabilities.

Recognizing that companies increasingly prefer to license data instead of patents or other forms of intellectual property, IT can become an internal partner to help build and maintain clean, accurate, and unique datasets that would confer a competitive advantage in proposals while helping to attract new faculty and graduate students.



UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Innovative Education

USF Innovative Education (InEd) is reimagining the future of higher education. Strategically positioned at the intersection of education and technology, InEd works with partners across the university to develop and implement change designed to support learning at all levels and throughout a lifetime. In partnership with colleagues across the enterprise, the division designs and develops innovative programs to attract new students, generate new revenue streams, and extend USF's reach while strengthening the university brand.

InEd leverages innovative educational technology to transform our teaching and pedagogy in order to meet changing student expectations for a more interactive delivery and to create an inclusive and diverse culture. We create flexible, academically rigorous online offerings for our students working to improve retention, persistence and time to degree. Focusing on student success, the division has created a lifetime affinity model that keeps our students engaged long after graduation. We offer continuous professional development, ensuring that students have better opportunities for upward mobility.

Innovative Education works to foster community engagement, professional development, and opportunities for lifelong learning to the Tampa Bay community and workforce. We partner with corporate leaders to develop professional development training for their teams and offer working professionals the opportunity to network and connect with mentors and peers in their respective industries. Serving as an engine for innovation and economic growth, Innovative Education promotes the lifelong success of well-educated, highly skilled and adaptable workforce who thrive in a dynamic global market, lead enriched lives, and engage in their communities.



UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Office of Decision Support (ODS)

The mission of the Office of Decision Support (ODS) is to facilitate leadership decision-making by providing data, analysis, business solutions and reporting for USF and to coordinate academic planning, reporting and related needs for USF. ODS supports the university by ensuring competitive performance and institutional accreditation.

ODS serves as a central support office to the university by providing the following:

- Valid, reliable and actionable analyses to support decision-making;
- Serves as the official data and reporting source for student and faculty data;
- Promotes sound assessment practices across all academic programs and support units;
- Oversight of program planning and review, and quality improvement initiatives;
- Provides student and faculty data, analytics and modeling for units campus-wide;
- Coordinates with the state governing body, external reporting, and accrediting agencies.



UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

THE VALUE OF THE ARTS

USF recognizes and celebrates how creativity and exposure to the richness of the arts are essential elements to the educational experience, which cultivate the whole person. The arts are a fundamental component of human existence and our capacity to cultivate a benevolent society. The study and appreciation of the arts through performance, practice, and research are essential toward cross-cultural understanding, enrichment, and awareness at the local and international levels.

The diversity of our own culture is articulated through the arts, which allows us to appreciate many perspectives and voices at the same time. Therefore, it is essential for students, faculty, and staff to find ways to express experiences at USF and beyond. The arts exist to help the individual articulate a vision or point of view that can be felt and received by its very nature. In addition, the arts create space for our society to be more deeply engaged in civic life within our surrounding communities. For instance, the city of St. Petersburg identified Art, Design, and Architecture as the #4 driver of economic development in Pinellas County. Likewise, the city of Sarasota has a long tradition of urban residential architecture in the country and is a major destination for the arts (Van Wezel, Perlman Music Program/Suncoast, Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe). Further, the USF College of the Arts contributes to the revitalized arts and culture scene throughout the Tampa Bay area, specifically through Graphicstudio and the School of Music's multiple ensembles.

Moreover, arts education fosters creative thinking and creative problem-solving skills at the essential level, which leads to innovation and production at the global level. The areas of science and business are dependent on skills honed through the collaborative and creative experience provided by the arts. The arts nurture the imagination and encourage people to identify connections and overlapping themes. This kind of aesthetic cultivation is critical in the development of new products and systems which are driving the new economy.

Through partnerships with arts organizations, the Florida Center for Partnerships for Arts Integrated Teaching (PAInT) responds to the need for statewide support for arts-integrated instruction in Florida's schools while implementing robust teaching and learning opportunities to reach vulnerable populations in PreK–12 classrooms.



UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

USF is dedicated to sustainability both on our campuses and around the world. USF recognizes the importance of meeting the needs of our metropolitan location while minimizing our environmental impact. Therefore, USF educates students, staff, and the community in environmental stewardship and sustainability. This stewardship includes building green facilities, improving our energy efficiency, water conservation, green cleaning, planting native species, recycling, and funding renewable energy projects.

At USF, we make it a responsibility to become a greener university every day by generating knowledge, developing values, changing behaviors, and initiating practices that contribute to a sustainable environment. USF continually works to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve energy efficiency through initiatives such as the Student Green Energy Fund, the Clean Energy Research Center, zero-emission electric buses, and LEED-certified buildings.

USF's work toward achieving the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was recognized in the Times Higher Education's 2021 Impact Rankings, placing the university third nationally and 30th internationally. The World University's Impact Rankings quantifiably measured the efforts of 1,115 universities from 94 countries and regions to achieve any of the UN's 17 SDGs, which are initiatives that act as a blueprint to create a "better and more sustainable future for all." USF's ranking in the top 20 schools nationally for all 17 of the categories was bolstered notably by its efforts to eliminate poverty in Goal One (placing USF No. 1 in the nation and No. 2 in the world for this category), Goal Nine focused on "Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure," seeking to create sustainable inventions and buildings all over the world (No. 2 nationally and 28th internationally), and Goal 14, "Life Below Water," which advocates for the conservation of the world's oceans and the development of marine resources (with USF ranking second nationally and 10th internationally). We will continue to build on this foundation of success and establish a culture of sustainability across all campuses of USF.



According to the Carnegie Foundation:

Community engagement describes the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. The purpose of community engagement is to bring together university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.”

UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

Community Engagement

USF’s community engagement is a purposeful means to advance learning and knowledge for social change and is a fundamental component of an urban research university. Intentional engagement with the public and private sectors enhances the quality of research, teaching, and service; delivers meaningful experience and skills to students; and prepares them to enter the job market or pursue graduate-level studies. It also fosters collaborations among units across USF and strengthens the relationships that the university has with its external stakeholders by providing a platform that enables faculty and students to engage in mutually beneficial service with community partners in efforts to find solutions to pressing problems. In this way, USF becomes indispensable to the communities it serves.

A recent example of where USF combined its research and academic delivery to benefit the larger community was a free, online, seven-week certificate program entitled “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace,” produced by the Muma College of Business. With over 130,000 enrollees, the program focused on ways organizations can create a more diverse workplace, address equity issues, and foster inclusivity. Similarly, the Muma College of Business also produced a certificate in “Post-Crisis Leadership.” In this way, USF has responded to pressing contemporary issues by providing the community with coping tools—a purposeful means to advance learning and knowledge for social change.



UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

Branding, Marketing, and Communications

USF has a compelling brand narrative that is uncommon across the higher education landscape. Our identity as an urban research university, embedded in a dynamic region in a fast-growing state, offers USF the opportunity to differentiate itself with confidence and clarity. This brand positioning will be incorporated into a marketing and communications campaign that is comprehensive and fully integrated across all our channels and networks, including national and international media, executive thought leadership, social media engagement, digital outreach, and public relations. These activities will enhance USF's reputation in peer assessments and help USF reach its aspirations of earning eligibility for membership in the Association of American Universities (AAU) and becoming a Top-25 public university. In addition, these campaigns enable USF's reputation to grow, attracting the best and brightest students, faculty, and staff—igniting the virtuous cycle that will bring higher levels of visibility and investment.

Meanwhile, internal communications efforts reflect our clarity of purpose, build trust, and create brand champions among faculty, staff, students, alumni, fans, and community partners. Indeed, our brand is more than our logo or even our story: It represents everything we say and do and how we say and do it.



UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

USF World - Global Engagement

Global engagement is essential to world-class research and educational delivery in our internationally connected world. The University of South Florida's mission as a global, urban research university includes a deep commitment to addressing the greatest challenges facing communities locally, nationally, and across the world through impactful research and a dedication to student learning that prioritizes intercultural awareness and global literacy.

The University of South Florida is committed to comprehensive and sustainable globalization that prioritizes innovation through research and scholarship, mutually beneficial international partnerships, inbound and outbound student and faculty global mobility, and events and programs that bridge geographical, cultural, and political boundaries. USF has established itself as a leader among higher education institutions in access to global learning opportunities for all students, the global diversity of its study body, and international research partnerships that produce positive societal outcomes.



UNIVERSITY CORE COMMITMENTS

LIFELONG LEARNING

USF is guided by the traditional ideals of higher education, focusing on developing transformative solutions to the complex issues facing our communities, state, and the world, both today and tomorrow. As the landscape of education and work continues to change rapidly, our students and our communities rely on USF to provide lifelong learning opportunities for their personal and professional development and support overall workforce development.

USF maintains a commitment to the success of our graduates and our surrounding communities through world-class education and a lifetime of opportunities to:

- Develop new knowledge and skills,
- Access personalized experiences for intellectual stimulation,
- Advance career success through innovative, data-driven, and market-responsive programs,
- Gain credentials through micro-credentialing and/or certificate programs,
- And meet the urgent demands of working professionals.

Our faculty expertise coupled with USF's metropolitan location provides a natural environment to collectively address grand challenges facing society today and in the future. In addition, through strategic collaborations with external partners, USF offers enormous value to our students and the community by putting knowledge into action through professional development opportunities that facilitate career advancement.



Strategic Areas of Focus

ANALYTICS AND DATA SCIENCE: INTEGRATING USF DIGITALLY

Information technology is one of the most transformative forces in our society today. Globally, governments and organizations spend close to \$4 trillion on information technology. Technological advances such as artificial intelligence and machine learning are transforming a swath of industries, raising new questions for how we learn, teach, work, research, fight wars and epidemics and engage with each other. Further, the state of Florida is third in the nation for cybersecurity innovation and tech businesses and home to Cyber Florida. The current information revolution will challenge our students to acquire new skills, such as digital intelligence, which is the ability to make sense of new and emerging technologies and tremendous amounts of data that are collected by millions of sensors in our environment.

The Analytics and Data Science initiative will produce graduates and researchers who are dexterous with data and different kinds of analytics to reimagine the future of their organizations, industries or disciplines. Analytics and data science are central to many departments, degree programs and interdisciplinary fields that rely on both traditional and emerging technology domains such as big data, artificial intelligence, environmental science, cybersecurity, and health informatics. This initiative seeks to attract and retain top talent to advance research in analytics and data science while training a new generation.

By leveraging research, coupled with degree programs or alternative credentials that employers demand, USF has unique assets in the areas of integrated and transformative analytics and data science. For example, the Health Informatics Institute leverages biomedical science, statistics, clinical trial and study design and coordination, software and data engineering, big data and high-performance computing, and integrative bioinformatics. In addition, the Institute for Data Analytics and Visualization provides consulting services in data analytics and data visualization, and the Center for Analytics and Creativity facilitates the discovery and dissemination of insights through analytical and creative thinking, fostering a climate of innovation and analytics throughout degree programs and research.

Strategic Areas of Focus

BIOLOGY BY DESIGN

Recent advances in biological sciences and engineering have transformed biology from a discipline that relied on observation and experimentation to one in which knowledge creation and engineering are based on “reading” DNA, RNA, proteins (systems biology) and “editing and writing” genes and genomes (synthetic biology). The integration of these advances with developments in computing, automation, and artificial intelligence will significantly impact all aspects of our lives by enabling a “bio-economy” (estimated at \$4T/year) with an unprecedented ability to respond to global challenges from climate change to pandemics.

Given biology’s central role in the human condition and its underpinning of not only health and biomedical research but many other disciplines, Biology by Design provides a tremendous opportunity to better understand the processes that sustain life and enable biological innovation with broader impacts including environmental preservation, energy and materials, food supply, agriculture, health, data storage and computing, ethics, and policy. This unprecedented breadth would serve to promote campus-wide collaboration and strengthening cross-disciplinary programs allowing for improved national standing and opportunities for areas traditionally outside biology to widen research applications.

Leveraging current strengths and infrastructure, USF is well-positioned to play a leading role and capture the benefits of the biological revolution while simultaneously contributing to the advancement of biological sciences, dissemination of fundamental knowledge, increasing collaboration and diversity and training the next generation of leaders in this field. The Biology by Design strategic area of focus will create a network of networks by leveraging existing pockets of excellence in centers and institutes such as Institute for Artificial Intelligence, Institute of Applied Engineering, Center for Entrepreneurship, Center for Molecular Diversity in Drug Design, Discovery and Development, Nanotechnology Research and Education Center. This will strengthen USF and Florida’s role in the national and global bio-economy. Our strategic location and partnerships with organizations such as the Tampa IP, the Florida High Tech Corridor Council, St. Pete Innovation District and BioFlorida allow for advanced research and innovation at the confluence of biological and information systems.





Strategic Areas of Focus

DESIGN, ARTS, AND PERFORMANCE

Creativity and ingenuity are at the very heart of advancing communication, industries, environments, performance and systems designs, and critical for all aspects of industry and community. Encompassing cross-cutting research with the arts, humanities and social sciences, the Design, Arts, and Performance initiative is intended to be integrative: Where overlap exists, this initiative is complementary, catalyzing, or both.

In addition to the Bio by Design initiative, the Design, Arts and Performance initiative encompasses concepts such as universal design involving that of buildings, products or environments to make them accessible to all or others, such as design for manufacturing, which is a general engineering practice to develop products so that they are more efficiently and easily manufacturable. Arts and performance cover the visual arts, music, dance and theatre, mass communication involving new media or social media, and sports performance and management. Each of these design areas is separable, but they are collectively supported by an education steeped in creative exploration and experimentation. The interdisciplinary nature of art and design addresses issues of equity and representation through evolving fields of user experience, information technology, multimedia exploration and the interactive experience, which help to convey a broad range of stories. This particular initiative makes clear the vital role of the arts supporting several of the other initiatives including, but not limited to, social justice, environment and the creation of livable/sustainable communities.

Given the prominence of the Tampa Bay region's economic activity, affinity for sports, destination for entertainment, its numerous museums, and other cultural institutions infused with arts and innovation, this initiative draws upon existing strengths that are unique to USF's communities in Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Sarasota-Manatee. Through contributions to the revitalized arts and culture scene throughout the Tampa Bay area, specifically through Graphicstudio/Institute for Research in Art and the School of Music's multiple ensembles as well as other programs in the College of The Arts, USF can build upon many assets. The Florida Center for Community Design and Research—an integral part of USF's School of Architecture and Community Design—is a statewide research center working with over 100 communities in Florida. Further, the Center for Analytics and Creativity, the Institute for Artificial Intelligence, and the Center for Urban Transportation Research demonstrate how design, art and performance channel curiosity and enable boundary-breaking collaborations. Moreover, USF's campuses in St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee have centered their thriving and expanding arts communities as anchors in engagement and enhancement initiatives as ways of embedding USF into their respective design districts.



Strategic Areas of Focus

GLOBAL AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Today's national security concerns include whole-of-society problems such as extremism, biothreats, climate change, disinformation, and cybercrime. National leaders have underscored the complex nature of contemporary security problems, both foreign and domestic. Our increasingly complex, globalized, and digitized/networked world demands robust and interdisciplinary analyses of large scale global and national security problems. The Global and National Security signature initiative combines research, community partnerships, academic programs, and federal funding opportunities to advance USF's ranking and national visibility. Given Tampa Bay is home to MacDill Air Force Base, cutting-edge scientific and medical centers, major defense industries, international airports, and a thriving port for international trade, USF is uniquely positioned to achieve prominence in academic fields related to global and national security.

Security challenges of the 21st century will require and involve diverse expertise from the humanities and social sciences to STEM. By fostering relationships with military and government agencies, USF can differentiate and establish itself as a leader in disciplines that support the Department of Defense's National Defense Strategy. Furthermore, leveraging USF's proximity to US Central Command, US Special Operations Command, and other regional and statewide assets, such as Cyber Florida, will aid in building nationally ranked academic programs and centers of unique competitive advantage to address some of the world's most pressing issues.

By leveraging USF's unique academic assets, USF is positioned to provide innovative solutions to new security threats. Examples of current differentiation include the Institute of Applied Engineering's contract with the U.S. Special Operations Command at MacDill Air Force Base to provide new discoveries in areas including autonomous systems, transportation, and infrastructure. Further, the School of Information delivers the Strategic and Cyber Intelligence Program, a federally designated Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence which is administered by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Various other relevant USF centers and institutes such as the Center for Analytics and Creativity, the Institute on Russia, the Center for Entrepreneurship and Counter Extremism, the Institute for the Study of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Institute on Black Life, the Center for Strategic and Diplomatic Studies, and programs and activities managed by USF World, provide means to respond to global and national security challenges.



Strategic Areas of Focus

HEALTH, SOCIETY, AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE

USF seeks to maintain and improve health and well-being for all individuals while promoting equity of access to quality affordable care, emerging treatments, innovation and better quality of life, particularly among diverse communities in the Tampa Bay region, the state of Florida and beyond. The Health, Society, and Biomedical Science initiative builds on existing strengths in our understanding of the basic mechanisms of disease and links this work to translational and clinical researchers who devise rational diagnostics, treatments, and cures. USF's current strengths in health sciences span the biomedical sphere, including discoveries in Type I diabetes and autoimmune diseases, cardiovascular disease treatment, neurology centers of excellence, biomedical engineering, drug delivery and discovery and infectious and vector-borne disease discovery and prevention.



The health research and education portfolio at USF is represented across colleges, community partners, multiple programs, centers and institutes. Health construed more broadly engages a wide range of colleges and programs including the Morsani College of Medicine, the Taneja College of Pharmacy, and the colleges of Arts and Sciences, Behavioral and Community Sciences, Engineering, Nursing, and Public Health. Related work in these colleges comprise behavioral health; social work and aging; health economics, informatics, and communication; migration, food security and water quality; and health humanities, which collectively enable health science interdigitation throughout the university.

The economic potential and demographic profile of the Tampa Bay metro area, the state of Florida, and USF's institutional and community partnerships are also key to USF's leadership in health. USF's downtown Morsani College of Medicine and Center for Advanced Medical Learning and Simulation brings students and faculty closer to the college's primary teaching hospital, Tampa General Hospital (TGH). Central to this is the university's enhanced affiliation agreement with TGH, which is establishing the first clinically integrated academic medical center on the west coast of Florida. This center is strengthened by an integrated office of clinical research to enhance collaborations and efficiency and will bring the benefits of academic medicine to patients and support world-class health care research and education. The



James Haley V.A. Hospital is another core teaching affiliate for USF, providing an important site for both inpatient and outpatient education of our medical and allied health students and residents.

Analysis of the health enterprise at USF, located near world-class hospitals and health facilities, reveals a tremendous number of opportunities to connect existing strengths with areas of unique competitive advantage through research, education, and patient care. Another key enabler is the university's longstanding relationship with the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute (MCC), a National Cancer Institute-designated cancer center located on the USF Tampa campus. This relationship features graduate programs in cancer epidemiology and immunology—including USF's highly regarded PhD program in cancer biology that places doctoral students into research positions at MCC—along with joint faculty appointments to enhance opportunities for collaboration and shared research infrastructure to create efficiencies.

Leveraging these partnerships with a broad, diverse array of providers, researchers, educators, and partners specific to the Tampa Bay region who embrace the vision of an integrative health community to promote social sustainability, USF produces world-class research and educates a resilient, culturally conscious workforce.





SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Growing attention to social justice and human rights reflects escalating concerns related to racism, discrimination, immigration, criminal justice and structural inequities. USF's competitive advantage in these domains rests in the confluence of several unique considerations. Those include existing and community-engaged centers and institutes already providing support for social sustainability and human rights across USF's colleges; our urban location, which provides an intimate and immediate setting for researching social problems; our Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, which is evidence of our robust community engagement; our public K-12 school districts size and diversity, which are among the largest and most racially and ethnically diverse in the country; and our geographic and demographic considerations, in particular, access to Latin America and the Caribbean. As demographic shifts in the U.S. predict that the country is becoming both more urbanized and more minority-majority, USF faculty research and engagement within the already urbanized and diverse Tampa Bay region enables USF to provide thought leadership and solution-oriented research that can guide researchers and practitioners across the nation.



The Social Justice and Human Rights initiative builds on national imperatives and couples our ability to cultivate business partnerships and research engagement to advance urban development. USF has been a key partner in the emergence of a burgeoning community innovation ecosystem that is rooted in a concern for social sustainability and human rights—providing an opportunity to collaborate with faculty to ensure that the revitalization of urban communities of color is equitable. Further support for an infrastructure to promote faculty and student research that is solution-focused and will increase workforce readiness, will contribute to our institutional and regional competitiveness.



Overall, our strategic geographic location and competitive advantages in the area of social justice and human rights leverage existing academic programs that address questions of identity, culture and our past. This initiative will also broaden the contours of how we conceptualize social sustainability to include chronic challenges such as poverty, housing, transportation, education, food and water security and community design. Furthermore, the Institute on Black Life, the Institute for the Study of Latin America and the Caribbean, the USF Humanities Institute, and the USF Libraries offer substantial learning and research enhancements. The Libraries' wealth, especially, includes the African-American History Collections, the LGBTQ+ Collections, the Latin American, Caribbean and Spanish Language Collection, the Cuban Wars of Liberation-Spanish-American War Collection, the Cigar Industry and Arts Collection, the Ybor City and West Tampa Collection, and the Holocaust and Genocide Studies Collections—all of which illustrate how to further support interdisciplinary global and social justice education.



SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND OCEANOGRAPHIC SCIENCES

The issues of sustainable development, particularly in the context of climate change, arguably represent the greatest societal challenges of our time. As the global population grows, so does pressure on our environment and the goods and services it provides. Threats to the built environment are pervasive—everything from critical infrastructures to food and water security to air quality to transportation and mobility. The need to understand and mitigate the potentially catastrophic economic losses from projected sea level rise and the effects on the estuarine, coastal and marine ecosystems that constitute a cornerstone of Florida’s economy has never been greater.



To ensure protection of our environment and conservation of our natural resources that, in turn, fuel a vibrant state and global economy, the Sustainability, Environmental, and Oceanographic Sciences initiative focuses research excellence in these domains on addressing critical state issues and challenges deriving from urbanization. USF’s location in the major metropolitan area of Tampa Bay along the Gulf Coast of Florida positions us to deliver cutting-edge, evidence-based solutions to address the increasing number of social, environmental and public policy challenges facing contemporary society, including mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

Many new state and federal coastal construction projects require designs for coastal areas to be resilient to these threats over their typical life expectancy. By actively engaging with the Florida Institute of Oceanography (FIO,) of which USF serves as the host institution and other nearby consortia such as the St. Petersburg Ocean Team, as well as proximate state and federal agencies (e.g., Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, United States Geological Survey), the university’s scientists and engineers will establish and maintain leadership in discovery, technological innovation and science application in support of global sustainability.



Coupling existing campus resources such as the Patel College of Global Sustainability, College of Marine Science, the School of Geosciences, Center for Integrated Modeling and Analysis of Gulf Ecosystems, which continues to deliver unprecedented insights into the impacts of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, with new initiatives such as the Florida Flood Hub for Applied Research and Innovation and the FIO research vessels the Weatherbird and Hogarth, provides the university with a unique opportunity to exercise its competitive advantage for research and education in an applied setting. Moreover, partnerships with interdisciplinary research centers such as the FIO Keys Marine Lab, the Center for Ocean Technology, Clean Energy Research Center, Center for Urban Transportation Research, Center for Ocean Mapping and Innovative Technologies, and Sustainability Innovation Center provide for further opportunities for achieving national prominence.

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