

CULTURE REPORT

2022



USC University of
Southern California

**A MESSAGE FROM
PRESIDENT FOLT**

Dear Trojan Community,

I am pleased to share this update on USC's Culture Journey.

For the past three years, tens of thousands of students, faculty, staff, and administrators have collaborated, contributing to discussions and surveys resulting in the creation of USC's Six Unifying Values. Together, we are intentionally defining and building an ethical and inclusive culture we can all own.

The 2022 Culture Report I am sharing today demonstrates progress in key priority areas and reflects your commitment to advancing our values and holding ourselves accountable. Most importantly, the critical work highlighted here is brought to life by you – passionate individuals dedicated to making positive changes at USC.

I am grateful to everyone in the Trojan Family who has helped drive this important work. The Culture Council and Working Group on University Culture and its committees – made up of volunteers from our community – deserve special acknowledgment. The Board of Trustees has been steadfast in its support from day one. Our Culture Council co-chairs – Senior Vice President of Human Resources, Equity & Compliance Felicia A. Washington; Vice President of Culture, Ethics and Compliance Stacy Giwa; and Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer Christopher Manning – have dedicated themselves to bringing together a team to keep this work front and center.

Our culture shapes our future. Each day, there are countless meaningful conversations and advancements happening in every corner of our university and medical system. Listening to the community, learning from our collective experiences, and centering our Unifying Values are fundamental tenets to building our culture together.

I hope you will take a moment to read the personal stories and reflect on your own experiences. We each play a part in achieving the culture we want. Please get involved by joining the Culture Network, sharing your own story, asking a question, attending an event, or participating in a discussion. Visit the USC Culture Journey website for more information and resources.

Thank you, and Fight On!

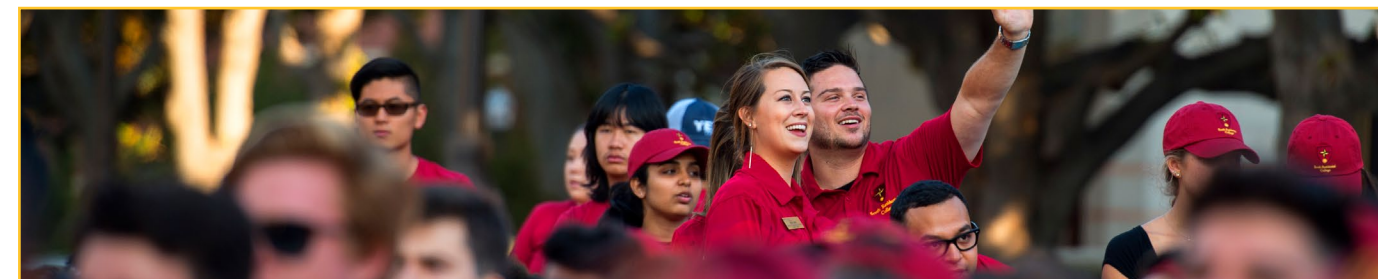
Carol L. Folt
President

December 2022



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Nearly four years ago, USC embarked on a journey to address some serious concerns. A series of tumultuous events had left many faculty, staff, and students feeling disappointed, frustrated, hurt, and in question of our institutional culture. So, USC leadership set out to engage the entire Trojan community in an exercise to assess the prevailing culture, define a unifying set of values, align around behaviors that support and animate those values, and create opportunities to improve our systems and processes. We have come to call this vital work our Culture Journey.

Engaging a community as large and multifaceted as ours is not easy. To focus this effort with a coordinated approach, USC's leadership established a [Working Group on University Culture](#) made up of staff and faculty members from across the university; and the [USC Culture Council](#), a body to continually guide progress, shape priorities, and engage our entire community. The journey to date has built inclusive community engagement and collaboration, and that will continue. In 2019, tens of thousands of students, faculty and staff members took part in surveys and discussions that led to the identification of areas we need to focus on to improve our culture. Through these open conversations with our community came the creation of our [Six Unifying Values](#) in 2020: Integrity, Excellence, Diversity Equity and Inclusion, Well-Being, Open Communication, and Accountability.

In the two years since, and in spite of a pandemic, USC has steadily progressed along our Culture Journey, at times being challenged along the way to put our Unifying Values into practice when difficult situations arose. A dedicated network of staff, faculty, and student culture champions has worked hard to promote key behaviors and practices that align with our values and integrate them into our systems and policies, codes and handbooks, educational and administrative programs, and shared language.

There is more work to be done. This report has been compiled as an exercise in accountability and as an update for our community. It describes some of the progress and pivots we've made with respect to our culture in the past two years since our Unifying Values were articulated. It also provides links and resources to learn more, reflects on lessons learned, and forecasts future work we will focus on as we continually nurture, improve, and reinforce our culture.

Thank you to every individual who participates in culture-focused activities and does the work of advancing and modeling our values – be that through an advisory body or working group, dedicated projects, or simply and powerfully through your everyday interactions and decisions. **Together, we can and will pursue excellence with integrity, lean into our values to manage tough issues that arise, heal together, and work to shape a great future for USC.**



Our Culture Journey



Numerous **ethical breaches** eroded trust in institution

2017

Created a **taskforce** on workforce standards and campus wellness

2018

Reported **taskforce findings** and identified key focus areas to explore

2019

Launched a Working Group on **University Culture** with students, faculty, and staff

Polled nearly **20,000** students, faculty, and staff to identify areas for culture change

Key focus areas identified to organize efforts based on community recommendations: **DEI, Well-being, Culture, Raising Concerns, and Developing our People**

2021

Identified **recommended actions** to improve systems and processes



Articulated **6 Unifying Values**

Facilitated **175+** discussions with **4,400+** students, faculty, & staff on poll findings

Lead appointed in each focus area to **advance** and **integrate efforts**

Created the new role of USC's **Chief Inclusion & Diversity Officer**

Promoted **continuing dialogue** with virtual Culture Journey events, speaker series, and a Culture Journey newsletter

Adjusted **Culture Journey's** approach, delivery, and programming to support **community** and **address impacts** of Covid

2020

Launched **President's Culture Commission** with deans and senior leaders

Established **Culture Network** dedicated employee volunteer group trained to facilitate **culture discussion sessions**

Our Culture Journey continues...

Issued **Student Commitment**

Updating **university policies and procedures** to reflect and support values and culture

Expanding **Culture Network activities** and **outreach** to support Unifying Values in action throughout USC

2022

Issued a new **USC Integrity & Accountability Code** for all faculty and staff

24,000+ Trojans and counting **actively involved**

Culture Infrastructure at USC

In 2019, as part of our Culture Journey, the university reinforced efforts that were already well underway by forming a Culture Council and a Working Group on University Culture. Working collaboratively across USC, these groups have helped to structure and streamline culture change activities. The Council and Working Group are supported by our Culture Network and a number of active culture committees representing schools and administrative units throughout USC. Learn more about each body here:

The Culture Council

The Culture Council is an advisory body composed of senior university leaders, with rotating participation from deans, members from different schools and business units, and student, staff, and faculty leaders. They provide guidance and insights, make strategic recommendations across culture focus areas, and communicate annual culture goals to our university's senior leadership.

The Working Group on University Culture

The Working Group on University Culture is a group of 23 volunteer staff, faculty, students and administrators who gather regularly and participate in active committees that collect community input for culture priorities, identify integration points for our Unifying Values, and drive engagement.

Our Culture Network

Our Culture Network is made up of more than 100 dedicated volunteer faculty and staff members who serve as culture champions and on-the-ground support for culture initiatives. With representation from each of our USC's schools and administrative units, including Culture Liaisons assigned by each dean and unit leader; many Culture Network members serve as facilitators in community discussions, promote events, and share resources that advance culture shifts to benefit students and colleagues in big and small ways.

USC Office of Culture, Ethics and Compliance

In addition, a dedicated Culture Team was established as part of the USC Office of Culture, Ethics and Compliance to manage the Culture Journey and its advisory bodies, drive community engagement, and facilitate discussions and programs around evolving Trojan culture to make our institution the best it can be.



Areas of Focus to Advance Our Culture Journey

Through our 2019 Values Survey and subsequent deep-dive conversations with staff, faculty, and students, the USC community identified five main focus areas to maximize positive impact on USC's culture:



Improving the ways we listen to and address the **Concerns** of the USC community.



Prioritizing the wholistic **Well-Being** of our people and nurturing their healthy connections with self and others.



Weaving **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging** into all we do – welcoming diverse viewpoints, and providing equitable access, opportunity and representation



Developing Our People – continually building their skills and management capabilities.



Ensuring all Trojans can live our **Unifying Values** in their everyday interactions.

On the following pages, you will see a summary of progress made over the past two years in each of these areas, with links to resources and more information.



FOCUS ON

RAISING AND ADDRESSING CONCERNS

What We Heard

What was shared through our polls and discussions made it clear that there were far too many people at USC who did not feel comfortable coming forward to share concerns, either because they feared retaliation against them for speaking up, or because they didn't trust that the issues would be handled fairly. Your input let us know that we need more justice, transparency, and consistency regarding how concerns and complaints from the community are handled.

Key Progress and Ongoing Initiatives

USC has doubled down on its commitment to fostering a safe and inclusive university environment free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation; where those who are harmed are provided support and resolution options; and where a fair and impartial resolution process is provided to all parties. In recent years, university leadership has issued timely reports on misconduct whenever possible, and invested in the enhancement of policies, systems, processes, procedures, and practices to resolve concerns in an equitable and consistent manner.

The Office of Professionalism and Ethics (OPE) has been established to serve as a central place for the tracking of complaints at USC's University Park and Health Science Campuses and all university programs and affiliates. Centralized tracking of complaints provides university leadership with the ability to more readily spot trends and respond swiftly when necessary, closing gaps that had existed when departments were handling issues in a more siloed environment. OPE is also tasked with quality-assurance responsibilities to ensure university reporting obligations are met for each complaint, including referrals to our Equity and Equal Opportunity and Title IX Office for matters involving protected characteristics, our Youth Protection team statutory mandated reporting, and ensuring issues implicating the Clery Act are promptly reported.

It is important to have high levels of consistency and integrity in all investigations and outcomes. To this end, we are implementing an **innovative case management platform** to replace the university's previous central case management platform. The new system provides pan-institutional coordination and tracking of reports and response coordination across university functions.

The rollout of the new system is currently underway, and is being customized to the needs of each investigatory unit. We are also working to ensure users are trained to use it efficiently and effectively.

The USC Ombuds has offices at our University Park and Health Sciences Campuses, open to all members of the USC community who have a campus related issue.

In an individual meeting, an Ombuds will work with you to:

- Listen to your issue or concern
- Provide a neutral perspective
- Brainstorm possible paths through the conflict
- Develop and weigh strategies to address the concerns
- Identify relevant policies and resources that might be helpful to you
- Offer conflict management and coaching as you explore next steps

All meetings with the ombuds are voluntary and confidential.

A robust Employee Relations (ER) function is currently being built within University HR to ensure that non-protected status workplace concerns -- whether about specific individuals, workplace environments, or systems and processes -- are not only noted and documented, but also resolved. The ER team will engage with university leaders and employees to ensure they have the tools to resolve concerns in a respective, proactive, and supportive manner that serves the USC community and mission.

¹The University encourages the prompt reporting to the [Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) of concerns about discrimination and harassment based on protected characteristics—including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking—involving students, staff, and faculty, and related retaliation.

RELATED RESOURCES

- [Help & Hotline reporting portal](#)
- [Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#)
- [Omsbud](#)
- [Updated Integrity and Accountability Code for Staff and Faculty](#)
- [Updated Student Handbook](#)

OUR VALUES IN ACTION OPEN COMMUNICATION

How an App Led to Revelations and More Open Communication



“Without a doubt, COVID-19 has changed workplace operations as we once knew them. Prior to the pandemic, USC Annenberg typically held a few in-person, all-staff meetings throughout the year. Since March 2020, however, Dean Willow Bay has implemented a regular cadence of staff meetings on Zoom to provide timely and accurate updates around policies, health and wellness considerations, safety measures and operational changes.

We decided to introduce Slido into our regular staff meetings a few months into the pandemic. The Slido application makes it possible for staff to ask questions anonymously without drawing attention to themselves, fearing embarrassment, repercussions, or feeling judged. We began to include a Slido link on every Zoom calendar invite to encourage employees to drop in questions in advance of upcoming meetings. It took a few sessions for staff to fully engage, but once they began using it, they embraced the application in short order.

The benefits of Slido have been many. Not only has it empowered staff to ask difficult or unpopular questions, it has also provided staff with the latitude to ask ‘stupid’ questions, which sometimes revealed gaps in understanding of an issue or policy, or illuminated issues that leadership was unaware of so they could be effectively addressed.

Even though we are now back on campus, staff have expressed a preference that our larger meetings continue to be held on Zoom. Often, in live group discussions held in-person, it is only a brave few who speak up on behalf of the many. In contrast, Slido allows for the opinions and ideas of our quieter staff to be heard as loudly as those more willing to speak up publicly. By separating the individual from the question, it forces the focus to be solely on the question, allowing for a truly objective response.

We believe our implementation and continued use of Slido has helped not only to dispel rumors but has ensured a more open, transparent culture where honesty, respect—and sometimes healthy disagreement—are embraced and practiced.”

—Staff Member, USC Annenberg

Maybe I'm not the only one to have this question...





FOCUS ON
WELL-BEING

What We Heard

Our community clearly expressed the need for USC to invest in the mental health of its students, faculty, and staff. The Covid-19 pandemic put a spotlight on the importance of well-being to overall health and wellness. When people are burned-out and overwhelmed, they can't bring their best to school or work. USC feels a responsibility to support its people's well-being as a part of its overall mission.

Key Progress and Ongoing Initiatives

According to the World Health Organization, well-being encompasses quality of life, as well as the ability of people to contribute to the world with a sense of meaning and purpose. USC focuses on supporting the well-being of students, faculty, and staff through the cultivation of empathic and meaningful relationships with one other, and by creating and promoting equitable policies, norms, and behaviors that allow each of us to live according to the values we hold. Fostering well-being is essential to the sustainable pursuit of USC's mission: we must be both proactive and responsive in addressing our community's social, emotional, physical and psychological well-being.

USC's Office of Campus Well-being and Education is entering its fifth year. This office was established to help leaders, teams, and departments learn about their own cultures of well-being, and to receive expert consultation and tailored guidance and support in resetting norms, behaviors, and beliefs in support of the academic mission, and the university's goals. One of its most popular offerings is [Thrive 101 - new Trojans onboarding program](#) which gives new faculty and staff an opportunity to connect with others

and explore the ways in which the Unifying Values shape our community at USC. It also teaches practical skills to build an inclusive culture and handle crucial conversations at work.

Through [Mindful USC](#), the entire USC community – including staff, faculty, and students – are supported with a variety of offerings such as ongoing mindfulness classes and other programming that emphasizes building self-awareness and self-compassion as the cornerstones of building a community of kindness.

For USC students, our [OT101- Thrive: Foundations of Well-being](#) academic for-credit course allows students to explore their well-being, connections with others, and learn strategies for living their best lives. With a foundation in the fields of positive psychology, social psychology, and occupational therapy; the potential of this course to contribute to the broader goals of culture change around wellbeing at USC is immeasurable. This is just one of many academic courses that offers students the opportunity to connect with peers around topics like community, identity, spirituality, equity, and sustainability for planetary health.

The [USC WorkWell Center](#) provides programs, resources, and services for more than 20,000 USC benefits-eligible faculty, staff, and their dependents—as well as post-docs and retirees—to help them thrive in all areas of work-life wellness. Previously named the Center for Work and Family Life, the WorkWell Center provides confidential and cost-free counseling, coaching, consultation, critical incident support, and health and wellness programs. In addition, its flagship health and well-being program, [Healthy Campus](#), is an initiative that aims to incorporate health and well-being into the daily work life of faculty and staff to ensure a healthy campus for all through a collaboration of campus and community partners working together to create and sustain a campus culture that infuses health & well-being into all policies, practices, systems and environments.

A WorkWell Advisory Committee consisting of faculty and staff from across schools and units held an inaugural meeting in March 2022 with Felicia A. Washington, Senior Vice President, in attendance. The Advisory Committee will be evolving to form subcommittees based on needs assessments, benchmarking data, and committee input, along with campus-wide baseline metrics. Subcommittees are tasked with the development of action plans and the identification of resources to support the programs they develop. The creation of subcommittees will offer an opportunity to engage USC staff and faculty to collaborate on projects where they work together, learn, and exchange information, and support with the goal of identifying areas to infuse health and well-being throughout USC campus

practices, policies, and systems. Visit our website to get involved in one or more subcommittees.

The [USC Well-Being Collective](#) utilizes an adapted [Collective Impact Framework](#) to bring together distinct and often otherwise siloed academic departments, administrative units, recognized student organizations, and local non-profits to work toward the common agenda of strengthening a campus culture driven by well-being. Partners in the Collective align using a five-fold focus on healthy public policy, the creation of environments supportive to health, strengthening community action, developing personal skills, and re-orienting all services and sectors towards prevention.

The [Office of Health Promotion Strategy](#) serves as the backbone organization to this collaborative leadership effort. Entering its fifth year, the Collective established shared measurement by tracking [Student Well-being Key Performance Indicators \(KPIs\)](#) while working with students and Partner units to use disaggregate population-level data to address health inequities, while also shifting health promotion away from problems (as characterized by particular behaviors or by specific at-risk groups) and towards solution-finding environments and settings. This effort will be reinforced when USC joins the international community of post-secondary and higher education institutions globally that have adopted the [Okanagan Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges](#) and are working towards well-being in person, place, and planet.



RELATED RESOURCES

- [Campus Wellbeing and Education Programs](#)
- [USC Healthy Campus](#)
- [Student Health Services for Diverse Communities](#)
- [USC Center for Religious and Spiritual Life](#)
- [Student Basic Needs](#)
- [Care for the Caregiver - Keck Medicine of USC](#)



OUR VALUES IN ACTION WELL-BEING

Implementing Healthy Email and Meeting Management to Reduce Burnout



“The Keck School of Medicine’s Well-being Council developed a resource entitled ‘Well-Being Recommendations for 2022,’ with the goal of reducing burnout and improving well-being for our staff and faculty. In response, the Department of Medical Education decided these recommendations were something that could greatly benefit our team as we navigate the ongoing challenges of delivering clinical education to over 750 medical students during a pandemic.

We intentionally implemented all three elements from the recommendations: healthy email, healthy meetings, and appreciation/belonging. Every staff and faculty member in the Department had the opportunity to discuss and contribute ideas to this initiative during department meetings, email exchanges, and anonymous polls.

The clear and simple message, that the Department’s leadership acknowledged high levels of burnout and stress within our community – including sharing their own experiences and being willing to do something about it – was instrumental in our ability to engage everyone in the conversation. Being invited and included in a space where we could talk about what would make our work-life less stressful was cathartic, as was seeing that what we were going through resonated with others and that we were not alone.

As a result, we developed new guidelines for healthy email management. For example, staff and faculty were invited to develop a personalized email response in their email signature such as:

“Thank you for your email. I review emails during business hours Monday through Friday between 9 am-10 am and 4 pm-5 pm. Your email will be acknowledged within 2 business days. If your email requires an immediate reply, please call me.”

For healthy meetings, we established one meeting-free day per week for all staff in the entire department (Thursdays), as well as community-building activities, including a walking group and tennis teams. Many staff members have appreciated the guidelines and programs to come out of this initiative, and it’s clear that the focus on well-being and open communication will last far beyond the pandemic.”

—Staff Member, Department of Medical Education, Keck School of Medicine



FOCUS ON
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

What We Heard

In survey responses and discussion sessions, our community members noted a lack of diversity at the top levels of USC and in the faculty, in addition to other inequities. The point was made that having diversity in the leadership of USC will lead to a wider range of perspectives and better solutions to issues affecting the university. Our community also expressed that more visibility needs to be given to diverse cultures and identities, to create a more equitable and inclusive environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging and has the tools and support they need to succeed at USC and beyond.

Key Progress and Ongoing Initiatives

In addition to a multitude of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts that have been ongoing for years at the school and unit levels, in 2021 USC President Carol Folt established the central role of [Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer](#), reporting directly to her. With Christopher Manning now in that role, USC is focused on building infrastructure and providing strategic support and resources to members of

the community – with the overarching goal of advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, healing and belonging at USC. In its first year, this new office has created university-wide communications and support networks, facilitated the creation of resources to help USC reach its DEI goals, and is synergizing many of the university’s numerous DEI initiatives for consistency and cross-collaboration.

OUR VALUES IN ACTION **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

Welcome Changes to Club Application Processes



“I’ve noticed that a lot of clubs have been creating positions focusing exclusively on DEI. Because clubs in college are competitive and only accept certain applications, having a student-driven process can sometimes lead to discrimination or exclusivity during the application process, regardless of whether or not it’s intentional. Having DEI positions that can look at the application process and also continue to promote DEI values to members once they’re a part of the club has been a really important part of my experience in extracurriculars. It’s a shift that I’ve been really happy to see. My clubs are hosting DEI workshops and are open to criticism and acknowledge that there’s room for improvement, which is a significant change.”

—**Graduate Student, Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences**

OUR VALUES IN ACTION **EXCELLENCE**

Empowering Medical Students to Create Systematic Change



“The Keck School of Medicine has become one of the first major medical schools in the United States to make a health justice curriculum mandatory for all students. As Ricky Bluthenthal, PhD, Associate Dean for Social Justice and Chair

of the JEDI-WeST, stated, ‘Our students and staff need to feel like they belong, that they are supported, and that they can be their whole selves here. That’s why we made the health justice curriculum mandatory. It’s important for people to know that what’s important to them is also important to us as an institution.’

The goal of the Health Justice & Systems of Care curriculum is to empower students to effect transformative changes — in health systems, policies, or broader structures — that lead to health equity and racial justice in medicine. Through this groundbreaking curriculum directed by Drs. Ronan Hallowell and Sonali Saluja, students learn to recognize and interrupt inequities and disparities where one trains and in future practice, assess and refer or treat patients for their social needs, advocate for policies that improve access to care and create systemic change, and become better and more empathic doctors.”

—**Staff Member, Keck School of Medicine**

University-Wide Observances, Programs and Spaces to Celebrate and Support Diverse Cultures and Identities

Under the leadership of our Student Affairs department, USC’s [Student Equity and Inclusion Programs \(SEIP\)](#) is a cluster of student development centers and initiatives that offer student support services and programs that focus on intersectionality, a sense of belonging, and well-being. SEIP facilitates dialogue and community-building and leads campus-wide equity and inclusion research and development initiatives to transform the student experience. It also holds a series of events and celebrations throughout the year to recognize cultural and identity months and other observances throughout the year. Often beginning with a kickoff event opened by President Folt and reinforced with banners along Trousdale Boulevard and a variety of inclusive activities, these events serve as a great way for members of the Trojan community to connect with one another, raise their voices, and spread awareness that leads to greater understanding of the differences and similarities that make us who we are.

Identity-affiliated centers and lounges increased their square footage by 50% to accommodate expanding staff activities and includes the new community-building spaces: the Middle Eastern and North African Student Lounge (housed within the Center for Black Cultural and Student Affairs - CBCSA), and the Native American and Pasifika Student Lounge.

[CBCSA](#) and [La CASA](#) host an annual New Student Symposium, a series of workshops and resources for incoming Black and Latinx students to help connect them to resources early and build connections across communities. The Symposium occurs every Fall and Spring semester. In addition, USC’s Veterans Resource Center hired a full-time coordinator in Spring 2022 to develop programming and events serving our military-affiliated students. There are also a variety of support group, peer mentoring, and leadership programs available for students.



(CARE) Challenge

For the 2022-2023 academic year, the Office of Sustainability and the Office of Inclusion and Diversity have curated a year-long engagement series with the goal of bolstering regional community relations and furthering the education of the surrounding USC community about the environmental challenges faced daily by our region's residents. This year-long series is a challenge, invitation, and call to action to the USC community to reimagine the previously established DEI week as a year-long series dedicated to exploring topics related to DEI using contributions from our university community (faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community neighbors).

As an interpretative lens, "ecology," the chosen theme, allows the network of connected USC community members to see the web connecting our social contexts with the physical world and problem-solve the great challenges today. The collaboration between USC stakeholders has yielded the branding of the C.A.R.E. (Community, Accessibility, Restoration, and Ecology) Challenge to officially market this initiative.

The CARE Challenge is grounded in a partnership with the [Office of Sustainability](#), the [Small Business Diversity Office \(SBDO\)](#), and other USC stakeholders.

Planned programs include:

Local and Diverse Vendor Business Conference:

- Spring 2023: Two-day regional and local community vendor conference dedicated to educating diverse businesses about sustainability initiatives set by the university in addition to targeted education about reducing the amount of plastic utilization within daily operations.

USC Peace Garden DEI Programming:

- Throughout the 2022-2023 academic calendar, in partnership with the USC Peace Garden, the Office of Inclusion and Diversity is integrating DEI themes into their ongoing programming. The garden is a place where experiential and service-learning models and community-based health-promotion programs are implemented on an ongoing basis.

Minority-Serving Institution Conference and Recruitment Fair

The 2022 Minority Serving Institution (MSI) Graduate & Professional Recruitment Conference will allow USC to establish deeper and intentional pipelines with MSIs to recruit Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students and faculty.

The two-day conference will include: (1) USC graduate school recruitment sessions hosted by at least 15+ participating schools; (2) Undergraduate mixers where students can informally engage with program directors, cultural centers, and student organizations; (3) Graduate student mixers to foster networking between graduate students, department chairs, and deans; (4) A career/job fair where conference participants and USC BIPOC students can develop professional relationships with representatives from local industries (health care, media, entertainment, social work, education, government, business, etc.).

RELATED RESOURCES

- [President's and Provost's Task Force on Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(REDI\)](#)
- [REDI Report, 2021](#)
- [College Diversity Officers](#)
- [USC Student Health Services for Diverse Communities Portal](#)
- [JEDI Peer Educator Program](#)
- [First Generation Plus Success Center](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Student Center](#)
- [Special Interest Communities](#)

OUR VALUES IN ACTION DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Holding Space Online for Collective Learning and Sharing

"The USC McMorrow NAI DEI workgroup was created to cultivate a safe space for us to have conversations about the biases and conditions that create disadvantages and marginalize members of our community. We created this space with horizontal leadership for our personal and collective well-being and to have opportunities for co-creating knowledge and sharing information. We openly discuss and interrogate current events, seminal texts, and literature and to share our own experiences within our workgroup.



We recognize that DEI is an urgent matter that requires time and patience and that it should be a continuous conversation in which we reflect, explore and challenge individual thinking and systems. Our workgroup offered a safe space for narrative storytelling in which we were allowed to express concerns, share experiences and empower one another as individuals and in our work. At a larger scale, we've also been able to present DEI workshops to the community with the goal of building understanding and strengthening connections. We convened with over 300 participants via Zoom webinars where we utilized the various modalities of the virtual platform to encourage engagement from participants. We gathered comments, poll responses, and surveys from most participants. We also had many participants unmute their mics and share personal anecdotes and reflections, and that type of engagement really helped inform how we curated the following conversation. It was important that we carefully analyzed and reflected on the results and feedback after each conversation before creating the next one.

While it is difficult to pinpoint results because so much of DEI work is introspective, personal, and gradual, we firmly believe that seeds have been planted, that some students and families have been validated in their experiences, and that awareness and understanding has been increased. Holding space for each other and sharing meaningful language and feelings provides space to be seen and validated and that is powerful. We also witness participants not only open up about their own experiences, but also take accountability of their own biases. We collectively learned that unpacking this information slowly, and taking our time to really define, reflect, and share is an effective way to build trust and understanding."

—Staff Member, USC Office of University Relations



FOCUS ON
OUR PEOPLE: DEVELOPMENT, LEARNING, AND GROWTH

What We Heard

While many staff and faculty noted they love working at USC, they wanted to see more investment in their development and long-term growth. A recurring theme that emerged was that people working at USC want to see more promotions from within and greater flexibility in moving between departments. Students, too, expressed the need for more extracurricular leadership development opportunities. To address this, we have focused on implementing skills development and training programs for our staff and faculty, who make up the engine that runs USC.

Key Progress and Ongoing Initiatives

To accomplish USC’s overarching [mission](#) to develop human beings and society as a whole through the cultivation and enrichment of the human mind and spirit – we know it is imperative that we attract, retain and develop the very best faculty and staff.

Under the leadership of Senior Vice President Felicia A. Washington, who joined the university in 2019, the university’s key central people teams came together to form the Human Resources, Equity, and Compliance (HREC) division with the following business units:

- University Human Resources
- Office of Culture, Ethics, and Compliance
- Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX
- Office of Professionalism and Ethics

Central to the ongoing success of the university has been an initiative to transform USC’s human resources division. We called this initiative HR: Designing for USC’s Future (HRDF). Over the past two years, HRDF has brought together representatives from the administration, Staff Assembly, and Academic Senate to improve HR services within a more closely aligned and skilled network that:

- Elevates our employees’ experience
- Advances USC’s academic and people missions
- Instills university-wide cohesiveness, and
- Integrates and implements legal requirements

Centers of Expertise have been established to align around specific functional areas and develop strategic services and capabilities across USC, including:

- Talent Management
- HR Solution Center
- HR Systems & Data Analytics
- HR Strategy & Program Management
- Total Rewards
- Employee Relations
- Client Services

As part of our reimagining of the workplace culture at USC, a refreshed faculty and staff onboarding program was designed and rolled out to all new hires. It includes an introduction to our mission, our six unifying values, wellness programs, and other useful resources such as the [Thrive 101](#) well-being program for new Trojan staff and faculty. In recognition of the important role that managers have in the employee experience, we will also be revamping our USC Management Essentials program. This six-month learning experience will equip managers with enhanced self-awareness and the skills they need to foster a sense of belonging in the workplace, and to build an inclusive culture that welcomes diverse perspectives and emphasizes excellence, integrity, accountability, well-being, and DEI. The Management Essentials course materials will be supplemented by interactive discussions, cross-departmental collaboration, and a toolkit that reinforces the concepts learned in the course.

OUR VALUES IN ACTION ACCOUNTABILITY



Building Strong Community Partnerships

“With the Unifying Values as our foundation and 50 years’ experience of successfully leading USC students through service-learning, work study and community-engaged volunteering, several JEP staffers developed a guide to principled community engagement.

Together with a training video, the new community-informed guide is our response to the growing interest among students to be more active in various communities and their corresponding need for guidance as they navigate these types of engagements.

Our goal with the guide and training is to foster a mindset that will help students engage ethically and build or maintain community partnerships that are sustainable, respectful, and mutually beneficial. Ultimately, we believe this will help our Trojans embody the Unifying Values in any service-learning or community engagement endeavor that they embark on during their time at USC and beyond.”

—Staff Member, Joint Educational Project, Dornsife

In the coming year, we are committed to continuing to develop best-in-class programs for Trojans throughout the university in the areas of learning and talent development, team effectiveness, organizational health, employee engagement, and career planning. In addition, we are building out standardized processes for finding resolutions to staff concerns and complaints as part of our Employee Relations Center of Excellence.

Beyond staff and faculty, USC undergraduate and graduate students benefit from a variety of updated career and personal development programs throughout the year, with many offered institution-wide, and others within individual schools that target specific career paths. The USC Career Center welcomes students, and alumni of different cultures, identities, talents and interests, offering access

to trainings to all on topics such as communication, ethical behavior in the workplace, teamwork and taking initiative, stakeholder engagement, and the importance of mentors.

TrojanLearn, USC’s online training center, is accessible by students, faculty and staff and contains hundreds of modules that teach information and strengthen skills in areas such as Title IX, DEI, coaching, leadership, and legal compliance.

RELATED RESOURCES

- [USC Career Center](#)
- [USC Human Resources](#)
- [TrojanLearn](#)

OUR VALUES IN ACTION ACCOUNTABILITY

Athletic Department’s Culture Champions Bringing Our Unifying Values to Life

“Over the past several years – in coordination with USC’s Culture Journey, and under the leadership of Athletic Director Mike Bohn and Director of Culture, Wellbeing and Sports Psychology Robin Scholefield – USC Athletics has administered a series of trainings, workshops, surveys, and events to bring their values and USC’s unifying values to life in meaningful ways. This work has been made possible with support from a dedicated group of 35 staff volunteers who serve as the department’s Culture Champions.

Through transparent, honest, and open communication—and regularly held forums where members of the USC Athletics community are encouraged to connect and engage—words are being turned into behaviors and actions. The department’s ongoing focus on culture and on providing opportunities for safe dialogue and community-strengthening activities enables staff at all levels to operate with common goals, and clear expectations. It also helps to create an environment in which speaking up, taking responsibility and respecting diverse ideas, experiences, identities, abilities, and voices at the personal, team, and institutional levels is the expectation for all.

To date, training on the values has been delivered to approximately 280 staff members. Last year, there were professional development workshops planned for 45 leaders and supervisors. These trainings will continue this year and have become a permanent part of the infrastructure in response to request for professional development. There will be an emphasis on training the approximately 60 staff members who have joined the department remotely since the Covid pandemic began in 2020. Additionally, Culture Champions will continue to facilitate discussions on key topics and to plan social gatherings that serve to strengthen Trojan Family bonds.”

—**Staff Member and Culture Champion, USC Athletics**





FOCUS ON
UNIFYING VALUES IN ACTION

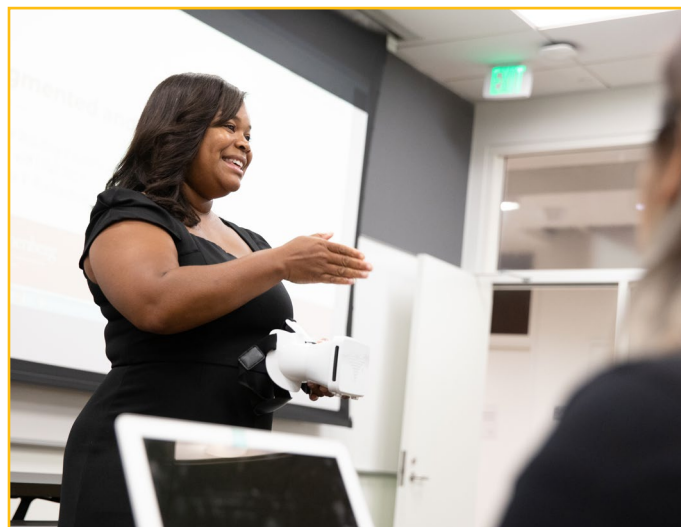
What We Heard

In our community-wide poll and discussions, we heard about interactions that were too often marked by bias, bullying, and disrespect, and too little opportunity to raise concerns and change things. There was an imperative that we articulate our values and address these issues with an emphasis on increased transparency, open communication, and equity.

Key Progress and Ongoing Initiatives

Over the course of the pandemic, the Culture Team sponsored numerous virtual events including panel discussions, workshops, and guest speakers to engage with the students, faculty, staff and alumni on topics related to our values and the culture shifts we're making at USC. More than 6,000 members of the USC community have participated in 20 events over the past two years, with 76% reporting that they would recommend Culture Journey events to colleagues and classmates. These efforts are continuing in the 2022-23 academic year with the Culture Team's [Open Communication Webinar Series](#). Recordings of most events are available to students, faculty, and staff to view at any time by accessing the [Culture Journey Intranet](#) using your USC credentials.

This past year, in partnership with the Provost's Office, USC's Culture Team conducted a series of listening sessions on the topic of Inclusive Learning Environments. The aggregated feedback from those sessions will be used to inform future decisions that will be made by the Provost's Leadership Team, whose goal is to make all classrooms and other learning environments at USC places where students are supported intellectually and academically, and have a sense of belonging regardless of identity, personal experiences, or preferences.



None of these advancements would be possible without the active participation of Culture Network members and partners throughout USC – volunteers who are passionate about culture change and putting our values into action every day. Culture is not a one-size-fits all recipe. For culture improvements to take effect, it is critical to approach this work from both the institutional level and more directly from within our schools and units. Every school and unit has its own cultural attributes, and the Culture Team supports individual schools, units, and other USC organizations with resources to help them achieve their goals.

RELATED RESOURCES

- [The Culture Journey Website](#)
- [USC's Integrity and Accountability Code](#)
- [USC's Student Commitment](#)
- [August 2022 Report of the Working Group on Intrafraternity Council Culture, Prevention and Accountability](#)
- [USC Student Handbook](#)

OUR VALUES IN ACTION INTEGRITY

Providing a Safe Space for Students to Connect and Learn on a Spiritual Level



“Culture transformation is possible when people are given the space and psychological safety to connect with themselves and one another on a deep level, and discover different ways of doing things that benefit the community.

USC's Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (ORSL) facilitates exactly these types of connections year-round by bringing all six of USC's unifying values to life through a range of programming that emphasizes open communication, equity and inclusion, well-being, and a focus on moral, religious, and spiritual topics. Programs sponsored by ORSL provide students with support around ethical decision-making, offer an exploration into the spiritual dimensions of life, and nurture a diverse community that values differences, integrity, and personal growth.

USC has more student religious groups than any other university in the United States, and ORSL is a place where students go when they're seeking spiritual fulfillment, exposure to new ideas, and a welcoming community. One initiative of the ORSL is the Interfaith Council, which includes students representing the wide diversity of faiths across campus. All USC students are invited to attend any or all meetings of the Interfaith Council to learn and share about their faith traditions from each other. The ORSL also houses multiple meeting rooms and worship spaces for students of all backgrounds to meditate, pray, reflect, or gather for discussions.

In early 2022, President Folt created and convened an Advisory Committee on Jewish Life to address how to best reconcile USC's commitment to free speech with the university's responsibility to keep our community safe from antisemitic intimidation, which has sadly risen in recent years throughout the United States. This Advisory Committee was chaired by Varun Soni, Dean of Religious Life at USC, who heads the ORSL. This Fall, the committee delivered its final report which includes concrete recommendations to support the lives of Jewish students, faculty, and staff at USC. Later this year, an Advisory Committee on Muslim Life will be launched and will follow the same format. These initiatives set an example for how we can support all of our communities on campus going forward.”

—Staff member, USC Office of Spiritual and Religious Life



KECK MEDICINE OF USC

In health care, a strong, positive culture is imperative. It is the cornerstone of any high-reliability organization and is essential to delivering quality patient care. Since the very beginnings of the medical enterprise, Keck Medicine of USC has strived to create a culture that is nurturing, tolerant, and inclusive for all those stepping into its environments.

Keck Medicine’s culture journey began in 2009 when USC acquired University Hospital and Norris Cancer Hospital. We knew then that for the culture of this new enterprise to be meaningful and successful, it had to be shaped by the entire Keck Medicine community. Our goal was to involve all caregivers in creating a safety culture for both employees and those seeking our help.

To this end, with support from Keck Medicine’s Patient Experience team, the organization implemented a number of programs including patient advocacy, concierge services, volunteerism, and enhancements such as welcome rounds, an entertainment library, and patient and family resource

centers. Additionally, with input from administrative and medical leadership, the Patient Experience team developed the health system’s mission, vision and value statements to further guide employee actions around patient care; including Keck Medicine’s service credo called our KNOWN Service Standards. The acronym KNOWN stands for: Kind Greeting; Notice Needs; Own it; Wow them; and Next Steps.

Then in 2015, Keck Medicine launched a strategic program called Lean Management. This program enabled employees representing all levels and functions to discover new tools and approaches to enhance customer satisfaction and employee engagement. The result of these efforts was the development of the Keck Operating System – a system of interconnected tools and supporting structures that enable us to achieve shared goals. Some of the programs and strategies that were a direct result of the Keck Operating System include daily tiered huddles, a strategy review process, and worksite reviews.

The following year when we were assessed by Vanderbilt University Medical Center’s Patient and Professional Advocacy team, we created a statement of professional standards around which our organization could align. This came to be known as the Keck Professionalism Program and was set up to allow healthcare professionals to receive feedback on flawed behavior in a work environment, reflect on it, and then self-correct. The program involves delivering patient and coworker complaints through a peer-to-peer coaching system. Today, Keck Medicine has more than 100 trained peer physician coaches, and our success rate with peer coaching and holding colleagues accountable for their actions beats the national average. In addition, Keck became the first health system in the nation to pilot a professionalism program for nursing, with the launch of the Keck Nursing Professionalism Program at Keck Hospital, USC Norris Cancer Hospital, and USC Verdugo Hills Hospital.

An official Culture of Safety (COS) executive steering committee comprised of leaders from all enterprise entities, integrated offices, and physician practices then launched our Culture of Safety initiative in 2017, and two years later the Keck Commitment was created: our statement of professional standards that was built with the input from 1,800 members of the Keck Medicine community.

In March 2018, the COS executive steering committee endorsed a move to utilize the new SCORE (Safety Communication Operational risk Resilience Engagement) tool. This is an integrated survey instrument with uniquely powerful psychometric properties that enable health care leaders to identify challenges and barriers to delivering high-reliability patient care. The survey received about 4,400 respondents enterprise-wide. After the roll out, work teams conducted department debriefs of the survey results and action planning meetings with department leaders. The actions taken by the COS committee led to tremendous improvements when the enterprise initiated a second SCORE survey in 2021.

In August of that same year, Keck Medicine brought TeamSTEPPS® (Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety) communication and teamwork training to its perioperative areas at Keck Medical Center. TeamSTEPPS® is an evidence-based teamwork system designed to improve communication and teamwork skills for healthcare professionals. The 3-phased approach of this training (site assessment, implementation, sustainment) aims to create and sustain a culture of safety by producing highly-effective medical teams that optimize the use of information, people, and resources to achieve the best clinical outcomes for patients.

KECK MEDICINE OF USC’S CULTURE JOURNEY TIMELINE

- 2009** USC acquires the USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital
- 2011** USC receives a naming gift from the W.M. Keck Foundation, and the medical enterprise officially became Keck Medicine of USC.
- 2012-2014** Patient Experience team implements a number of programs including patient advocacy programs, concierge services, volunteer services, welcome rounds, and an entertainment library. They also develop the system’s mission and value statements, including our KNOWN Service Standards.
- 2015** Keck Medicine implements Lean Management strategy to further enhance our approach to patient care and employee engagement.
- 2016** Keck Medicine engages with Vanderbilt University to develop the Keck Medicine Professionalism Program and the Keck Commitment.
- 2017** Keck Medicine launches its COS initiative, which includes the SCORE survey; TeamSTEPPS; Standards for Sensitive Exams; and Care for the Caregiver.
- 2018** Keck Medicine implements daily tiered huddles as a direct result of the Keck Operation System.
- 2019** Keck Medicine became the first health system in the nation to pilot a professionalism program for nursing with the launch of the Keck Nursing Professionalism Program at Keck Hospital, USC Norris Cancer Hospital, and USC Verdugo Hills Hospital.
- 2020** Keck Medicine launches the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- 2021** Keck Medicine submits for validation in the BETA HEART® (healing, empathy, accountability, resolution, and trust) domains. BETA HEART® is a coordinated program that helps participating member organizations create a reliable, sustainable, and transparent culture of safety.
- 2022** Keck Medicine launches its 5-Star Experience Framework

Then in August 2019, Keck Medicine launched a chaperon policy called the Sensitive Health Exam project. Stakeholders from across the enterprise – as well as relevant parties from the Keck School of Medicine and the University Park Campus – formed a steering committee tasked with developing best practices for sensitive health exams.

In 2020, Keck Medicine also created its own Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to help guide our diversity initiatives and take responsibility for continual progress. In September 2022, we welcomed our first chief diversity and inclusion officer, Shannon Bradley.

The following year, we submitted for validation in the BETA HEART domains. BETA HEART is a coordinated program that helps participating member organizations create a reliable, sustainable, and transparent culture of safety. It ensures accountability for reliable systems that support the delivery of safe care and provides a mechanism for early, ethical resolutions when harm occurs as a result of medical error or inappropriate care. In September 2022, all five out of five possible domains were awarded a total malpractice premium reduction of 8%.

Although Keck Medicine of USC has accomplished a great deal in only a decade of existence, our journey has just begun. We are committed to further refining and improving

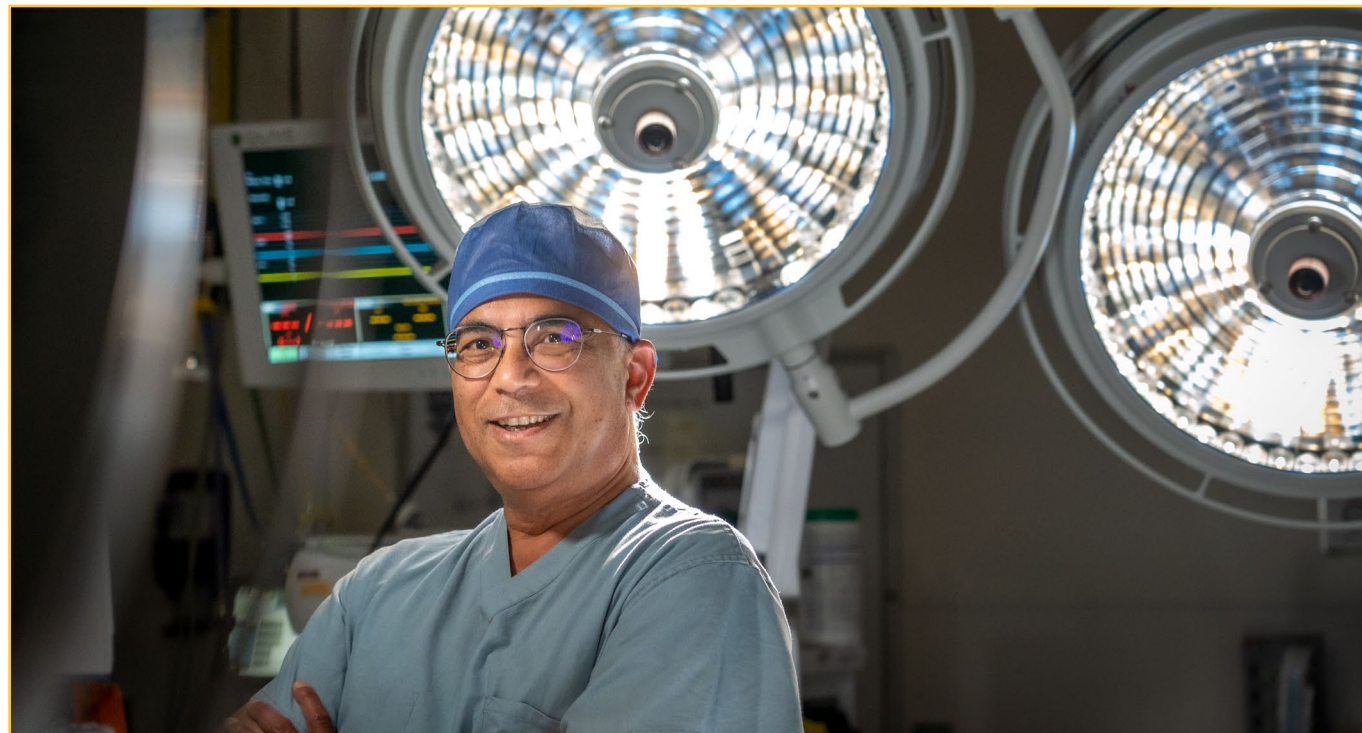
our strategies and capabilities. We recently launched the next evolution in our culture journey in the form of our 5-Star Experience Framework. Keck Medicine caregivers use these 5 simple principles in their everyday work interactions:

- Prioritizing Safety and Quality
- Teamwork and building trust
- Upholding the Keck Commitment and practicing our KNOWN service standards
- Continuously improving to be efficient
- Communicating compassionately, clearly, and consistently.

The next chapter of Keck Medicine’s story will be written by our staff, whose talents, dedication, and creativity is improving the world around us as we continue along our culture journey as part of the The University of Southern California.

Read the entire Keck Medicine of USC Culture journey [here](#).

For more information about the health system, visit [the Keck Medicine website](#).



Providing Care for Caregivers

Launched in March of 2020, Care for the Caregiver is a comprehensive program designed to ease potential employee stress, create work environments that align with Keck Medicine values, and return to our staff the same level of comfort and care that they supply to patients and families.

Examples of this program in action include emotional well-being support; wellness activities; tutoring services; childcare resources; support groups and workshops; and our Keck Kindness Program. Keck Kindness is designed to provide rent when household incomes have been reduced due to the pandemic; cover funeral costs for family members; buy groceries; provide child care for single parents with little or no support; and offer escape from situations of domestic violence. In 2022, the UniHealth Foundation also awarded Keck Medicine \$2 million to study solutions to combat physician burnout. This funding will allow us to conduct a randomized clinical trial to explore approaches to improve the mental health and job satisfaction of clinicians.

In 2020, the Care for the Caregiver program won the Los Angeles Business Journal’s “Program of the Year” award. In addition, Steven Siegel, MD, chief mental health and wellness officer for Keck Medicine, was awarded the U.S. News & World Report Hospital Hero Award for his work on Care for the Caregiver.

OUR ONGOING COMMITMENT

We have called this work on USC’s culture a “Culture Journey” because we want to acknowledge that culture is not a “one and done” matter. Our Unifying Values give us a compass heading for an ongoing process of collective self-examination, improvement, and renewal.

This first report on our progress highlights what we have accomplished and what we are working on. It is clear that much remains to be done in the years ahead. Here are some of the initiatives planned for the coming year that will positively influence our culture:

- 1 Execute a second culture assessment and climate survey to learn how units, schools, and the university at large are performing relative to the Unifying Values.
- 2 Publish and share a Culture Dashboard with data from the survey.
- 3 Host town halls and discussion sessions to sustain a focus on culture at USC and within the schools and units.
- 4 Continue promoting centralized reporting portal where any member of the USC community can submit university concerns which will be handled equitably, consistently, and without retaliation.
- 5 Institute an Employee Relations program to provide consultancy to departments throughout the university promoting good management practice and finding effective resolutions to issues that arise.
- 6 Roll out DEI report and talent recruiting development programs to attract and retain diverse employees and support their growth and development at USC.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- [Download resources](#)
- [Join the Culture Network](#)
- [Tell your story of the values in action](#)
- [Subscribe to the Culture Journey Newsletter](#)





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CULTURE REPORT

2022



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