

January 7, 2008

Dear Colleagues,

Happy New Year and welcome back to campus for a semester that promises to usher in a broad array of new opportunities and challenges for us. I know that you join me in wishing Provost Renu Khator the very best as she embarks upon the next exciting chapter in her life, as Chancellor and President of the University of Houston. The departure of Drs. Renu and Suresh Khator will leave a significant void at USF, as well as in the broader community. Although we recognize how wonderful and well deserved this new opportunity is, we will definitely miss them.

While I officially begin my term as Provost on January 15, 2008, I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you some important developments that will impact Academic Affairs – a communication practice that I intend to follow in the coming weeks and months. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly with questions and constructive ideas that promise to continue our path toward progress. Moreover, I hope that you will consider joining the Academic Affairs leadership team for morning coffee or afternoon tea (whichever your schedule permits), in the Provost's Office, and at the following times this semester: Friday February 1, 2008, 3-4 pm; Wednesday March 5, 2008, 8:30-9:30 am; Tuesday April 1, 2008, 3-4 pm; and Monday April 21, 8:30-9:30 am. These conversations are designed to promote an exchange of ideas among our faculty and those in the Office of the Provost.

With the onset of a new semester, I am pleased to welcome two new deans to USF. Dr. William T. Hogarth joins us next week as Interim Dean of the College of Marine Science, succeeding founding Dean Peter Betzer who is charting a new course toward retirement. We appreciate the leadership that Dean Betzer has provided over the years, building USF's College of Marine Science to one that enjoys national prominence in the field. Dr. Hogarth earned his PhD from North Carolina State University and has served as Assistant Administrator for Fisheries at the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA) since 2001. He is an accomplished researcher and brings an impressive administrative record which includes his current service as Chair of the International Whaling Commission.

Next month, Mr. William A. "Bill" Garrison will join us as Dean of the USF Libraries, stepping into the shoes of Dean Derrie Perez who has so ably guided our Libraries over the past few years. Dean Perez will be returning to the faculty of the School of Library and Information Science. Presently, Bill Garrison serves as Deputy University Librarian and Associate Dean of Libraries at Syracuse University, having held senior positions at the University of Colorado at Boulder, Stanford University, and Northwestern University. He holds a graduate degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, and is a Fellow of the Association of Research Libraries' (ARL) Leadership Program.

Finally, I am absolutely delighted to welcome two new colleagues to the Provost's Office. Dr. Tapas Das joins us as Associate Provost with responsibility for higher education policy analysis, planning, and performance. He holds a PhD from Texas A& M University, is a Professor in the

College of Engineering's Department of Industrial and Management Systems, and has been at USF since 1992. Professor Das is a Fellow of the Institute of Industrial Engineers (IIE), and is an accomplished scholar and teacher who has served in the Faculty Senate and on the Board of Trustees' Finance and Audit Workgroup.

Dr. Linda Whiteford joins us as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs with responsibility for promoting key strategic priorities in community engagement; global literacy and impact; integrated, interdisciplinary inquiry; and sustainability. Professor Whiteford is a medical anthropologist who completed her PhD at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and holds an MPH from the University of Texas Health Science Center. She has been at USF since 1984 and has served as Chair of the Department of Anthropology, as well as a member of the Faculty Senate. Dr. Whiteford is an internationally-recognized scholar, has served as President of the Society for Applied Anthropology and, most recently, was the recipient of USF's Women in Leadership and Philanthropy award.

I ask that you please join me in welcoming these outstanding colleagues to their new positions at USF and I want you to know that our Academic Affairs leadership team understands its primary role to serve the needs of our faculty and students.

As we enter 2008, Florida's economic woes appear to be worsening. Revenue collections and forecasts are considerably lower than we earlier thought, and we have been told to brace for additional budget cuts in the current fiscal year, as well as next year. Like you, I would much prefer to be starting a new semester without such a dark cloud hovering above, yet together we will need to embrace the challenge before us with the goal of emerging as a stronger and more focused university. To this end, I am committed to working in concert with our Board of Trustees, university leaders, deans, chairs, Faculty Senate, and other stakeholders, to ensure that we continue progress toward our core mission and strategic goals through sustaining our commitment to student learning and success, and supporting our faculty's scholarly and research activities.

I deeply appreciate the challenging work of the Budget Priorities Advisory Task Force, under the leadership of Drs. Dale Johnson and John Ward, and I eagerly await their recommendations next month. It is essential that we do not let Florida's deteriorating economic climate paralyze us. As necessary, we will seek targeted and strategic budget reductions based upon the principles of program **centrality**; **excellence** and **impact**; **demand**; together with **viability** and **sustainability**. Moreover, it is altogether likely that, in the parallel search for cost savings and new revenues, our institutional structure will need to change in the coming months – through consolidation, reduction and elimination of programs – while selected organizational behaviors will likely undergo transformation.

Daily, I remain so very impressed by the announcements of our faculty's accomplishments, our student success stories, and our academic and research programs that continue to receive national and international recognition. We have so much to be proud of at USF, and it is to our faculty, staff and students that we owe a big "Thank You".

As we embark upon a new semester, I urge you to actively engage in the varied life of our university community. On Friday of this week, from 1-4 pm in Traditions Hall of the Gibbons Alumni Center, USF will be hosting a session on “Best Practices in Diversity to Enhance Student and Faculty Success”. The keynote speaker is Dr. Luis Vazquez from the University of New Mexico, and he will be followed by a panel of your peers discussing diversity practices in higher education. Then, next Monday evening (January 14, 2008), we are privileged to welcome Dr. Maya Angelou to USF, beginning at 7:00 pm in the Sun Dome. I hope to see you there.

Once again, I wish you well for a happy, healthy, and productive New Year, and I know that together we will weather Florida’s economic storm clouds, emerging as a stronger and more focused University – one with a very bright future.

Kindest regards,

*Ralph*

Ralph C. Wilcox