

From: Wilcox, Ralph
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Subject: Message to the Faculty



August 25, 2008

Dear Colleagues,

I'd like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome back to the beginning of a new academic year. I trust that you enjoyed a productive Summer and found time to regenerate your energies in anticipation of what promises to be another exciting year at USF. As I walked around campus this morning it became quite clear that the University community is abuzz with a renewed sense of optimism as we embark upon a new semester. In addition to visiting a handful of classes (I should add, only in cases where the instructors were already expecting me), I also had the pleasure of meeting many students and faculty members who are new to USF. For the USF veterans, please join those volunteers who are staffing our *Week of Welcome* (WOW) information stations in taking a moment to help those with quizzical looks as they seek to navigate our campus.

Last Friday, we held our first Fall Faculty Assembly in the Ballroom of the new Marshall Student Center. On behalf of Dr. Larry Branch, President of the USF Faculty Senate, and myself, I would like to extend our appreciation to those faculty members who were able to take time out of their busy schedules to join us. If you were unable to attend and are interested in reading my remarks in full, you may do so [online](#). A netcast of the event, which includes remarks from Dr. Branch and President Genshaft, will be posted to my [website](#) shortly. As you will see I sincerely believe that, in spite of the broader economic uncertainties we face, there is much to be excited about, and proud of, at USF today. During the past year, you have broken our University's record in research contracts and grants awarded, and we have significantly increased our prior performance in private giving and the number of doctorates awarded. More and more of you are being recognized with prestigious national and international honors, our students are graduating at unprecedented levels, and this year's freshman class brings with it the highest academic credentials in the history of the University. In the coming year we will break ground on a number of new building projects that will bring to nearly \$300 million, the amount of construction underway on the Tampa campus alone – and that doesn't count the new Marshall Student Center which is certainly a long awaited sight to be seen! Among the changes you will be most interested in are the 47 general use classrooms that have newly installed media technology, with three more to be completed by next week. Bringing these tools to the faculty and students was one of my commitments to the Faculty Senate earlier this year and I certainly hope that you will strive to integrate this state-of-the-art technology into your instruction to enhance student learning. If you have questions or need assistance integrating technology into your classes, please contact the professionals at USF's [Classroom Technology Services](#).

Later today, much of the world's gaze will shift from Beijing's Olympic venues to Denver and then, next week, Minneapolis-St. Paul, as the national political season heats up. It promises to be an interesting time – one in which we will need to be even more focused on our highest priorities laid out in our Strategic Plan. In the coming weeks and months, you will be hearing more about SACS, VSA, compact planning and our faculty task forces on faculty roles, responsibilities and rewards; integrated, interdisciplinary initiatives; and USF World. Throughout the year, nothing will be more important than holding true to our core values – shared governance,

academic freedom, promoting diversity and inclusion, integrity and responsibility, collegiality and civility, along with strengthening our vision for one university through collaboration.

With the guidance of our Budget Planning Workgroup (made up of faculty, chairs and deans), through the leadership of our deans, and in consultation with the Faculty Senate, I am confident that we will continue to weather the current economic storm and emerge stronger, all the while continuing USF's impressive institutional progress. I am glad that you have chosen to be part of this journey, and I thank you in anticipation of your important contributions. Meanwhile, I look forward to meeting you at any number of events on campus throughout the coming year.

Best regards,

Ralph

Ralph C. Wilcox
Provost and Senior Vice President