Colleagues:

Happy New Year and welcome back! Year 2006 ended with a big bang for us: Academically, we got ranked in the top tier of Carnegie’s classification for Community Engagement (USF is one of the very few to be in the top-tier of both Research and Community Engagement classifications along with UCLA, UNC-Chapel Hill, Michigan State, Minnesota, and Virginia Tech); Athletically, our 10-year old football team won its first Bowl Game and thus staking its claim in the top tier (Watch out for next year’s pre-season rankings, for we think USF may be ranked in the top 25!). In December, I sent you a 3-year report of our collective achievements and challenges. You can read it on our webpage under Publications or by directly clicking at: http://files.acad.usf.edu/provost/Update-12-2006-Three-Year-Report-to-Faculty.pdf

Here is a quick update for you as you start the Spring Semester:

Spring enrollment is stronger than ever: For the first time in history, USF enrolled more than 40,000 students in Spring Semester! As of first day of classes, our undergraduate enrollment is up by 5%, graduate (Masters) by 10%, and graduate (doctoral) by 15%. This may change after the Drop-Add tomorrow. This increase is due in part to all the efforts in our departments and colleges and all the hard work by the Graduate School to streamline processes so we could be more responsive to new students and better serving to continuing students. In comparison to last Spring Semester, we have enrolled 49% more new graduate students! Having a vibrant, strong graduate student population is important for a research university aspiring to be in the Top 50. You can see the quality and diversity (both look good) of the student profile by clicking at: http://usfweb2.usf.edu/infomart/eprofiles/currentprofile/eProfilesUSFSystem.htm.

USF is rising in both selectivity and diversity: While we have healthy enrollment for Spring 2006, the story is even better for Fall 2007. Our freshmen admit pool is bigger, stronger and more diverse than ever, even though we have raised admissions standards and are admitting only those students who are academically prepared to succeed. Three times more National Merit Finalists have applied than before and three times more students have been admitted to our Honors College with their rigorous standards. Numbers are up for students admitted from underserved populations as well. Of course, our challenge now is to convince the admitted students to enroll...but nonetheless, the strength and diversity of the pool in itself is
worth celebrating because it is directly reflective of the kind of educational experience you provide.

**It is time to award graduate teaching:** We have been recognizing excellence in undergraduate teaching and research through institutionalized awards. What about graduate teaching? The Faculty Senate is currently developing criteria to establish a graduate teaching award...stay tuned.

**Collective bargaining continues:** Because of the holidays and semester break, there is nothing new to report on collective bargaining. The teams should begin the process and we sincerely hope to have a resolution soon. UFF and UBOT teams have agreed on an additional 1.5% increase in faculty salaries, but the distribution of the pool is not yet agreed upon. ASCME and UBOT teams are negotiating their first ever contract.

**Strategic Plan needs your attention:** Last year, the process to draft our Strategic Plan began by having a group representing all stakeholders meet to brainstorm ideas and dreams. A drafting committee took these suggestions and drafted a document. After initial input from everyone, the document was further refined. The Board of Trustees in its November meeting approved this Draft Strategic Plan. During February and March, the Draft Plan will be presented and discussed in Town Hall meetings, where your presence and input is critical. After hearing from everyone, the drafting committee will make final revisions and the plan, after approval from the Board of Trustees, will be put in motion. I urge you to participate because once approved, it will become our guide book for the next five years.

**Planning and construction on buildings continue:** You may have noticed that the Special Events Center has been demolished. In its place, a cutting-edge Marshall Center, funded by student fee, is taking shape. Soon, the existing Marshall Center will also be demolished and that space will also become part of the new Marshall Center. We just heard that the funding for Interdisciplinary Science Building has moved up in the schedule, which means that we can build it faster and then focus on our next project, i.e., a very badly needed Freshmen Classroom Building which will also house the Honors College.

**Executive searches are underway:** Let’s welcome Ms. Betty Castor back to USF as the Executive Director of the Patel Center for Global Solutions. If you are a globally-inclined person, I urge you to review the Vision, Mission, Plan and Projects of the Center by clicking at: [www.patelcenter.usf.edu/about_us/strategic_plan.php](http://www.patelcenter.usf.edu/about_us/strategic_plan.php). Other searches currently underway are:

- Dean of Marine Science: Two candidates are returning for their second visit.
- Dean of Engineering: Search Committee is receiving applications.
- Dean of FMHI: Search Committee is receiving applications.
- Dean of the Libraries: Search Committee will advertise the position this month.
- Chief Technology Officer (CTO): Search Committee will be formed this month.
• CEO - Sarasota: Candidates are interviewing currently.
• VP for Advancement: Search Consultant and the Search Committee are gearing up for the second round of candidate screening as the first round did not yield an appropriate hire.

To serve you better...our new webpage is here: There is a new look to the Provost’s Office Webpage which can be found at http://www.acad.usf.edu/. It has been designed to give you easier access to relevant information, including documents, forms, and news that you and your office may need. There is also a section for you to send me your advice, suggestion, or criticism on any topic so that I may serve you better.

Thank you for your time. I wish you all a productive semester and a very happy new year!

Renu Khator
Provost and Senior Vice President
University of South Florida
813-974-8347
http://www.acad.usf.edu