

The Honorable  
**Steven B. Sample**  
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## USC: Inventing the Future, Honoring the Past

I'm delighted to be here today to talk about a subject that's near and dear to my heart, namely the University of Southern California. This year USC is celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the theme *Inventing the Future by Honoring the Past*. USC began in 1880 with 53 students, ten faculty, and no library, all in a little two-story frame building in a mustard field. What USC founders lacked in facilities, however, they made up in leadership and sheer determination. Think about it. They placed this pretentious name—the University of Southern California—over the door of a little college with only one little building. A one-building college, I might add, that was located on the outskirts of an out-of-the-way little village of some 10,000 people with the pretentious name of the City of Angels. Although Los Angeles was a century old at the time of USC's birth in 1880, the city was still a little dusty, two-for-a-nickel, hick, out of the way town.

Who would have imagined that the City of Angels, bereft of a natural harbor and walled off from the rest of the nation by mountains and deserts would become a great city? You see, USC and Los Angeles have come farther, faster in the last century than any other university or any other city on earth. Why did that happen? I believe it's because both USC and Los Angeles have an abundance of those qualities that insured dynamism, specifically restlessness, resilience, and ingenuity. And it helps to have pretty good weather. These two unlikely candidates for greatness, USC and Los Angeles, have literally grown up together.

Today, Los Angeles is a mega-city of 10 million people. Never before in the history of the world has a little village of 10,000 grown to a city of 10 million in just a century. The USC student body, likewise, has exploded in size and complexity, growing from 53 students in 1880 to 32,000 students today. It is well on its way to becoming one of the world's leading research universities.

USC as a global university and Los Angeles as a true metropolis are both exemplars of cultural diversity. USC has more international alumni and enrolls more international students than any other university in America. And Los Angeles as an economical, political and cultural crossroads is the de facto capital of the Pacific Rim. Think about that—the de facto capital of the Pacific Rim. No, that capital title couldn't go to San Francisco—they don't have the strong Hispanic presence that we have, they don't have the economic dynamism that we have. It certainly isn't

Hong Kong, Sydney or Tokyo—those tend to be singular cultural cities. Los Angeles, however, is the capital of the Pacific Rim in every way you could cut it, and in the way New York was never the capital of the Atlantic. And just as Los Angeles serves as a paradigm for urban regions around the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, USC is developing into the paradigm for research universities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Los Angeles is often the subject of USC research. Los Angeles is also a classroom for our students and for our researchers in medicine, dentistry, urban planning and other fields. Los Angeles is one of the world's great living laboratories.

So, let me talk for just a few minutes about the top two things that the university is doing now to shape its future as a premier research institution. First, we're expanding our international connections, and secondly we're strengthening our leadership to address societal needs.

Let me take the first point. USC is a 21<sup>st</sup> century research university and expanding our international reach. We have a long history of promoting global connections. For example, the nation's first School of Diplomacy was created at USC in the 1920s to train students for the foreign service. Our first international students came just two years after our founding—two students from Japan in 1882. Trojans today are everywhere around the world, but particularly in the countries that comprise the Pacific Rim.

Katherine and I went to Beijing to open an alumni club there—400 Trojans—we went to Bangkok on that same

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tour and opened an alumni club there, 300 Trojans. On the way back we stopped in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia because someone had arranged a five-minute private interview to meet with the Prime Minister Mahathir, and at the end of the interview, which lasted an hour by the way, I said, "Mr. Prime Minister, I can't thank

are of great benefit to our domestic students because, remember, the United States has the most parochial young people in the world. It's the only advanced nation in the world where you can graduate from high school and know only one language. So, the focus of our students tends to be very, very introspective and those international students help our kids broaden their attitudes. In fact, Asian students come to USC because they know they'll meet more students from other Asian countries at USC than they would ever meet at a university in Asia.

United States.

USC presently has 45 faculty members who are conducting or collaborating on research in China itself. For example, our journalism graduate students intern with local media in China. Our law students take Chinese law courses in Hong Kong. In addition, the USC Marshall School of Business offers a global executive MBA program in Shanghai for mid-career managers. The USC School of Engineering collaborates with the Chinese University on distance learning and USC's Institute for Health Promotions and Disease Prevention provides an advanced training program for Chinese public health officials.

A global perspective and global presence are essential if USC is to be truly an influential and productive 21<sup>st</sup> century research university. Most of society's major challenges are global in scope. These include sustainability, disease prevention, population control, environmental quality, economic development and fossil fuel alternatives.

Global challenges bring me to my second point. USC is strengthening its stature as a premier research university, but as one that meets societal needs. As you may know, for the first 60 years or so of its existence, USC served primarily a local clientele and played a quasi-land grant role. Now, we weren't a land grant university. We never got land grant money from the federal government or the state government, but there wasn't anybody else to do it in Southern California. Everything was locked up in Northern California. So USC stepped up to the plate and became a quasi land grant institution that trained the doctors, lawyers, pharmacists, dentists, engineers, nurses, teachers, business leaders and all the other professionals that this region desperately needed. But by the late 1950s, USC's role changed. USC's president at that time, Dr. Norman Topping, saw that our quasi-land grant



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you enough. You've been so generous with your time." He said, "Well, Dr. Sample, it turns out that I have to be nice to the president of USC. My government is riddled with these—what do you call them, Trojans?" I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, a majority of the secretaries general in my cabinet departments are USC graduates, my own chief of staff, the Lord Mayor of Kuala Lumpur, and the president of the University of Malaya, they are everywhere." And he's right. USC has alumni clubs around the world and we maintain offices in a number of Pacific Rim countries, including our newest office in Mexico City.

USC's alumni and the university's international presence are key factors in helping us recruit top students from other countries. International students make up 17 percent of our total student population. The unique perspectives and experience that these students bring to USC

faculty is conducting research on every continent and the university is forging collaborations worldwide. For example, USC is a founding member of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, which is a consortium of the 36 best research universities around the Pacific Rim. The Association of Pacific Rim Universities, or APRU as we call it, has been an important mechanism for developing academic and research collaborations between American institutions that are part of APRU and Asian institutions. These collaborations are in turn contributing to the educational, cultural and economic growth of Southern California. Next May our whole Board of Trustees will be traveling to China to visit APRU member institutions in Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong. Our trustees will be able to see first-hand some of USC's ongoing collaborations in the rapidly changing country of China, which right now is graduating five times as many engineers as the

But don't think of USC as merely a destination. We're on the move internationally. The

role was being taken over, and properly so, by strong public universities: the emerging UCLA, UC Santa Barbara, UC San Diego. Dr. Topping understood that USC needed a new role and that this new role would necessarily involve our becoming a national university, an endowed university, and a research university, and this new role has been aggressively pursued with spectacular success for some 40 years.

In today's world USC understands the tremendous responsibility that it has as an American research university. As members of the Association of American Universities, USC, UCLA and Caltech are parts of a very small subset of universities in this country that conduct most of America's basic research. There are 4,000 colleges and universities in the United States—only 62 belong to the AAU, but it's that group of 62 that trains most of the Ph.D.s., most of the physicians, most of the engineers, and conducts, as I said earlier, most of the nation's basic research.

So, what are we doing to make sure that we're at the forefront of not just our own ivory towers but societal needs? I want to tell you about some of the programs, and particularly some of the extraordinary research centers. USC is one of only four universities in the nation, and the only university in California, to have two national engineer and research centers operating at the same time. Two happens to be the maximum number of research centers that any university can have. Our two centers are the integrated Media Systems Center, which is developing the next generation of the Internet, and the Biomimetic Microelectronics System Center, which is developing implantable devices that will treat incurable diseases such as blindness, paralysis and memory loss. There is also the Institution for Creative Technologies, which is funded by a \$100 million contract with the Department of the Army. It's unclassified work. Its purpose is to collaborate

with the entertainment industry, with the computer game community, with the military and with academe to create state-of-the-art modeling and simulation technologies for military training and for civilian training as well.

Another one to talk about is the Homeland Security Center. USC was cho-

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sen as the Department of Homeland Security's first homeland security center of excellence. Researchers at this center are studying the targets and means of terrorism, with emphasis on protecting the nation's critical infrastructure, such as transportation, electric power and telecommunications.

Then there's the USC Center of Excellence in Genomic Science. It's developing faster and more effective ways to identify the genes that cause diseases. It's funded by the National Human Genome Research Institute. Just this month, we announced a major new initiative in bio-medical nano-science. Nano-technology is a rapidly growing field involving the study and the building of devices at the scale of atoms and molecules. USC's biomedical nano-science initiative will focus on creating devices that will detect diseases, deliver crucial drugs inside the body and reestablish tissue and organ functions in patients. Again, it's multi-

disciplinary. That's one of the key words to keep in mind. For us to satisfy human needs, to address some of those global problems, we had to bring many disciplines together, we have to break down the silos, so to speak, that have comfortably lodged various groups of academics in years past.

USC's huge capital construction program will add additional classrooms and more research space, especially in the biological and life related sciences. This is certainly the biggest building program in our history and one of the largest in the history of American higher education. We are actively building now 28 new buildings, 18 of which are being built by USC and ten of which are being built by our hospital partners. World class research laboratories, such as we're now constructing, are a magnet for attracting more federal funding, to attracting the best professors in their respective disciplines, and for attracting more of the outstanding students, particularly Ph.D. and post-doctorate students. We've opened a federal relations office in Washington to more vigorously pursue federal funding for faculty research and to boost visibility as a top-ranked research university. We now do about \$400 million a year in sponsored research activity—we'd like to get that up closer to \$600-\$800 million.

In conclusion, I want to say only that USC is doing all it can to fulfill its central mission, which is the development of human beings and society as a whole, to the cultivation and enrichment of the human mind and spirit. That central message, that central mission, will not change. The USC of yesterday, of today and of tomorrow is in the people-building business and that central mission is enduring. Society will continue to look, I think, to universities to solve many of its problems and it will also look to universities, such as USC, to help young people acquire, in the words of our role admissions statement, "wisdom and insight,

love of truth and beauty, moral discernment, understanding of self, and respect and appreciation for others.” USC has certainly been blessed during its first remarkable 125 years. Many people believe, as I said a few moments ago, that USC has come farther, faster than any other research university in the country. We’re not going to rest on our laurels; we’re going to invent an even more exciting future, one that will benefit generations of young people yet unborn, as well as the largest society of our country and of the world, of which USC is an intrinsic part.

Thank you.

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