



April 10, 2014

Dear USC Students,

The *Los Angeles Times Festival of Books* returns to our University Park Campus this weekend, and I wholeheartedly encourage you to take advantage of its many exciting offerings. The atmosphere of this weekend is always festive, as it's a true celebration of community, creativity, and intellectual curiosity. I very much hope you will stroll through the campus this weekend, and perhaps attend some of the author readings, panel discussions, and musical performances.

On a related note, I am pleased to share this year's summer reading list. This is a list of exceptional, thought-provoking works that we can read together, creating a common ground for discussions in the coming academic year. These books are *not* required for your classes, but we'll have a number of opportunities to reflect on them as a community:

The Man Who Saved the Union: Ulysses Grant in War and Peace,
by H. W. Brands

*Lost Enlightenment: Central Asia's Golden Age from Arab Conquest
to Tamerlane*, by S. Frederick Starr

Vanished Kingdoms: The Rise and Fall of States and Nations,
by Norman Davies

No Future Without Forgiveness, by Desmond Tutu

Enigma Variations, a play by Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt
(translated by Jeremy Sams)

All of these books are available in the USC bookstore. I hope you are able to attend the Festival of Books this weekend.

Fight On!

C. L. Max Nikias
President