January 26, 2011

Dear USC Students,

The University of Southern California has a long history of working to protect and promote the health, safety, and well-being of our Trojan Family. We seek out various channels to remind students that each member of our campus community is an important link in maintaining a vibrant campus environment. As just one example, in 2008 we launched the pioneering Trojans Care for Trojans (TC4T) program designed to empower students to take action when they are concerned about a fellow Trojan. Although it has been in place only a few years, TC4T has already helped more than 100 students, illustrating the impact that a simple, individual action can have on the lives of others.

Similarly, I want to reinforce that USC’s administrators, faculty, and staff consider your success our utmost priority. This goal stands at the core of all that we do, and we share an unwavering commitment to creating an environment in which you blossom both in the classroom and in your personal lives.

For this reason I wish to warn you about a specific danger that has become increasingly prevalent in the City of Los Angeles: raves. Occasionally, these are held close to our campuses, often at the Coliseum or the Shrine, and they present serious risks to all who attend. Ecstasy, which is common at raves, produces a number of adverse reactions that may include disorientation, anxiety, paranoia, panic attacks, and hallucinations. These reactions, even in mild forms, can create a ripple effect of dangers that lead to catastrophic consequences. (Visit the USC Drug Free website for additional information and resources.) Therefore, with the collective support of the university’s senior administration—and as the father of two USC students—I strongly discourage your participation in rave events.

More generally, I encourage you to be cognizant of your choices and to make wise decisions during your time here at USC, whether you are attending an event with a “buddy,” taking advantage of a safe ride program, or calling attention to a fellow Trojan in need of help. The Division of Student Affairs has wide-ranging resources available to students, including the Student Counseling Center, Center for Women and Men, Health Promotion and Prevention Services, and Student Support and Advocacy departments, to identify just a few.

As a community, we are here for each other, and you should never hesitate to seek support or guidance. Most importantly, we urge you to practice judicious, healthy habits and to model these behaviors among your colleagues and our entire Trojan Family.

Sincerely,

C. L. Max Nikias
President