



March 20, 2019

Greetings Trojan Family,

I am honored to be joining you as the twelfth president of the University of Southern California, and am deeply grateful to the USC community and its leaders for giving me the privilege of working with you to set a bold and transformational path for our university.

The opportunities ahead for USC are extraordinary. Walking across both campuses, I feel the spirit of this place, the strength of the work being done here, and it is teeming with possibility and promise. I feel the powerful legacy that comes from its frontier history, rising with the growth of Los Angeles in the late 1800s, embracing diversity and global reach well before others, and innovating with spirit and a drive for excellence and service at the center of it all.

Already, in every conversation, our community has been telling me that they desire to push this great university even further. I see you have the energy for that, and I am eager to get started working with you. Of course, I also see that our community is deeply troubled by a number of immediate challenges. I assure you that we will meet these challenges together directly, decisively, and with honesty and candor. I have learned already how much our people—our students, faculty, staff, and alumni—love and are committed to our university, and how much discovery and innovation takes place here every day. With so much to celebrate, so many strengths, and so much public good, we must look to ourselves to strengthen our culture and our bonds of trust, and take actions that drive positive change. At the same time, we also must stay focused on our educational mission—our daily work of teaching, research, taking care of patients, service—and on the future. This is a moment of responsibility and opportunity, and we will seize them both.

It is also a great pleasure to be moving back to California. So much of my formative time was here. I came here as a community college student, then as an undergrad and grad student at UC Santa Barbara and UC Davis. I learned the excitement and the disciplinary rigor of science, made lifelong friends, and studied many of California's diverse ecosystems and wild places. And while I still have much to learn about the Los Angeles region, the creative energy here is instantly obvious and infectious. USC's diversity and inextricable link to our local communities distinguishes us among other preeminent universities with a national and global reach. I love that USC's first valedictorian was a woman, Minnie Miltimore, who graduated in 1884, and that USC has always looked outward—to the local community, to the Pacific Rim, and beyond—for inspiration and mission.

My sincere thanks to Interim President Wanda Austin, Board Chair Rick Caruso, the search committee, the Board of Trustees, and the USC staff who have graciously welcomed me and are working to make sure I have a smooth transition. Shared governance is a distinguishing feature of higher education and is essential to our success. I look forward to listening to and working closely with our outstanding students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community to ensure your perspectives are reflected as we move forward.

One of my greatest joys of being your president will be getting to know you, spending time with you, listening as you share your concerns and your dreams, and celebrating your accomplishments and victories. I'll see you at performances, lectures, games, in classrooms and labs, and in places across our campuses. I hope you'll reach out and introduce yourselves at every opportunity.

Thank you again. And let me say, proudly, for the first time: Fight On, together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol L. Folt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol L. Folt  
President-elect