



March 13, 2020

Dear Trojan Community,

As we head into Spring Recess and an extended period of remote teaching, cancellations and delays of events, and uncertainty about the next few weeks and months, I wanted to reach out to all of you to express my gratitude.

I have been deeply moved by your patience, strength and resolve as the COVID-19 pandemic changes our lives. I am hearing and seeing that strength in our community now, and it is an inspiration. It is especially moving because I know that everyone here is also concerned about how this pandemic will affect their own families and communities, often far away. I feel all those things too. Yet what I see is everyone selflessly putting aside their own disappointments and fears and doing their utmost to help the university pivot to an entirely new way of doing business, online and often at home. You're moving quickly and creatively, and treating each other humanely and kindly under constantly changing circumstances. This is a defining moment for who the Trojan family is and what the Trojan family and community means to us.

Trojans are a powerfully productive, diverse and global force for good in the world: you, the 80,000+ students, faculty and staff based on our various campuses; and you, the 400,000+ alumni out there changing the world for the better. We are teaching, working, studying, creating, treating patients, doing community service every minute some place on this planet – and millions of people depend on us. These new circumstances will certainly constrain us for a while. But I already see you rising to the challenge and finding new, creative ways to live full lives and get things done.

And I'd like to speak now directly to our students. This is not the spring semester we ever wanted, especially for our seniors and those about to graduate. Spring semester is usually filled with events, programs, thesis presentations, recitals, competitions, and celebrations. For so many, these final activities are the culmination of a lifetime of talent, hard work and preparation. We all love commencement. It is a joyful time for our students and their families, and for the faculty and staff who have been working with them for years. While we remain hopeful that we will be able to resume on-campus activities and host a full set of commencement events, we know this may not be possible. We will keep you updated and please know we already are thinking creatively should alternatives be needed.

So many of you have been asking how USC is working to help the community. I assure you we are already deep at work, reaching out to our community partners, and to county, city and local leaders. Our hospitals and clinics, our street medicine and other programs are open and already helping. We feel a great sense of responsibility to this region and the neighbors we love.

Even as I write this memo, new decisions are being made across the country that will affect us and some are likely to offer relief to our community. We promise to continually re-evaluate our options and to reach out to you whenever we have news, or if we plan further changes in USC activities, services and operations.

I'll be thinking of you all in the days ahead as we face this challenge together. Be safe, take care of yourselves and your families, reach out with questions, and know that we are here to help.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol L. Folt".

Carol L. Folt
President