

USC

UNIVERSITY
OF SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA

Counselor News

Quarterly Updates for Guidance Counselors

Fall 2005

You're Invited!



September 30
High
School
Guidance
Counselor
Conference

There's still time to register for our annual all-day guidance counselor conference on the USC campus. The program includes presentations by our nationally ranked schools of cinema, communication, business, engineering, theatre, fine arts, music, architecture, and liberal arts. Come to informative workshops on new resources, tools and tips for surviving the application process, take a campus tour, meet admission staff and more. Watch your mailbox for an invitation. E-mail us at admrvsp@enroll1.usc.edu for additional information or to reserve your spot.

October 6-9

Celebrating 125 Years!

The premiere public event of USC's 125th Anniversary will be a four day, all-university celebration, "USC Festival 125." The weekend includes a campus wide open house, facility/laboratory tours, lectures, cultural performances, and other celebratory events. Visit www.usc.edu/125 for a complete schedule of academic, cultural and athletic events taking place during the anniversary year.

Letter from the Dean



Dear Counselors,

I am happy to bring you the first issue of a new publication designed especially for the college counseling community. With *Counselor News* we aim to keep you informed about all that USC has to offer your students and give you new information as it develops.

As a highly selective private research university, the University of Southern California continues to experience amazing increases in the academic quality of incoming students. In addition to academic quality, we strive to maintain an undergraduate population that is diverse on all measures – ethnicity, geography, life experience, and academic interests – because we believe such diversity is a necessary component of an exciting and stimulating learning environment. Add to this USC's long-standing traditions and our strength in intercollegiate athletics and you have the best of both worlds – a challenging intellectual environment paired with a spirited undergraduate campus community.

Let me tell you about some recent changes in our office. I now serve as Dean of Admission and Financial Aid. I am also pleased to announce that Timothy Brunold has been named Director of Undergraduate Admission. Tim and I have worked together for many years. He first came to USC as a student and was a part of our Thematic Option honors program. Tim graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa with a B.A. in International Relations. After graduation Tim served in the USC Viterbi School of Engineering's Student Affairs Office. Since then, he has held a number of positions of increasing responsibility in the Office of Admission.

I asked Tim to take on the role of Director of Undergraduate Admission because of his deep knowledge of the university and the admission process, and because of his commitment to students and their families. Tim has direct experience in every aspect of our business. His expertise and leadership will benefit us all. In this new role, Tim will oversee all of our admission officers and manage the day-to-day operation of our 65-person undergraduate admission office. If you have any questions, concerns, or just want to send your greetings, you can reach Tim by e-mail at admdir@usc.edu or by telephone at (213) 740-6753.

Finally, please visit us! I am certain that a trip to our campus will give you the very best sense of what this special place is like, what is going on here, and what USC can offer your students.

Sincerely,

L. Katharine Harrington, Ph.D.,
Dean, Admission and Financial Aid

The Write Stuff – USC's New SAT Policy

As you know, this year marks the official transition to the new SAT. We welcome this new test as we feel that it will provide yet another dimension to the comprehensive review process long-used at USC. So, beginning this cycle, we will require a standardized writing exam from all applicants. This requirement can be met through either the new SAT or the ACT with its optional writing section. The results of these new exams will be considered along with all the other components of a student's application. While we won't read every applicant's actual SAT writing sample, we may request it in individual cases where we feel it will help us better review those applicants. In the rare case that a 2006 applicant is unable to complete the new exam formats, we will accept the old SAT I, if accompanied by a score from the SAT II: Writing Exam. Also, please note that USC does not require students to submit results from SAT Subject tests.

Q&A with Timothy Brunold, Director of Admission



As you take on this new job, what's going through your mind?

First, it's an honor to continue to serve my alma mater in a new and highly responsible capacity. Among other things, it's my job to ensure that USC enrolls the strongest student body possible. And with USC increasingly in the national spotlight, it's an exciting time to be here.

What changes are you seeing?

From my perspective, it's the ever-increasing quality of our students that has me most excited. Over the last decade, USC has seen the average SAT scores of its incoming freshman class rise by an amazing 250 points.

In the past five years alone, the entering class average has increased nearly 60 points. Test scores really only tell a small part of the story, however. Our incoming students are more academically prepared, intellectually curious, socially conscious and committed to service than ever before.

USC has been on a meteoric rise as we have grown from a solid regional university into a globally recognized institution in the top tier of all universities, by any measure. And yet, perceptions about USC sometimes lag behind this reality. I am eager to tell folks about what's going on at USC and the amazing students who are choosing to study here.

As a highly selective private university, some believe that USC is full of students of privilege. Is this true? What kinds of students actually attend USC?

USC is proud that it has always practiced a need-blind admission policy. One's ability to pay has no bearing on one's acceptance to this university. As you'd imagine, this allows our admission committee to focus its review process squarely on each applicant's academic achievement and personal characteristics.

USC offers both need-based and merit-based financial aid. Although many of our peer institutions offer only need-based aid, we feel that both kinds of aid are warranted. Regardless of their financial need, close to 20% of the 2005 entering freshman class received a merit scholarship of some kind, scholarships that total more than \$8 million per year. We believe that recognizing academic achievement with scholarships encourages many of the best students in the nation, regardless of their socioeconomic background, to attend. 2005's entering class was comprised of approximately 200 National Merit, National Achievement and National Hispanic Scholars.

And how many students receive financial aid?

A very significant number. This past year, nearly 1,700 (60+%) of the 2,750 matriculating freshmen received merit or need-based aid.

So, the USC student body has a lot of socioeconomic diversity, but what about ethnic, or even global, diversity?

A large group of international students are admitted each year and typically comprise 7-8% of our incoming class. Furthermore, 43% of this year's incoming freshman class was comprised of ethnic minorities. Also, 9% were first-generation college-goers. Such a heterogeneous class allows USC students to easily interact with peers from different countries, different sections of our country, and from different backgrounds. Experiences like these prepare our graduates to operate in a diverse and interconnected world.

How does USC select its student body?

It's never easy, because there are so many talented students who apply – students who are gifted academically, creatively, and emotionally. In building our incoming classes, we're seeking to identify all kinds of talent and potential. We're interested in recruiting the top scholars, the top artists, the top musicians, the top athletes – you get the idea. And, our definition of excellence is broad. Many students who join us have shown great potential for future success.

Does USC focus more on liberal arts or professional programs?

We genuinely offer both. Although we attract numerous students who have interests in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences, we also have a significant number who are focused on more specialized professional programs. Furthermore, many of our students pursue combined courses of study in diverse academic disciplines. At USC, it's not uncommon to see English majors preparing for medical school, engineers minoring in business, and arts students double-majoring in the neurosciences.

continued on next page

"Many of you will live healthy lives past the age of *100*. Most of you will still be working in your *80s*. Most of you will have *3* or *4* different careers – not jobs – careers. And essentially *all* of you will go to graduate school, most of you *more* than once. That's why we encourage you to pursue an education that encourages breadth as well as depth."

- USC President

Steven Sample,

addressing the incoming Freshman Class



Timothy Brunold, *continued*

Is there a minimum GPA or SAT score?

I'm sure that some universities choose students that way, but at USC we spend an incredible amount of time giving each application a comprehensive review. We evaluate grades, the student's course of study, SAT or ACT scores, writing samples, and teacher and counselor recommendations. We also consider extracurricular activities, as well as each individual student's background and unique situation. Every application is read at least twice and the final decision is made in committee. We wouldn't feel comfortable doing it any other way.

Do you see trends among the entering class students?

Indeed I do. Every year, more and more talented students want to matriculate at USC. The un-adjusted academic GPA of this year's incoming class was 3.7 (and was well over a 4.0 when we adjusted for AP and IB courses). The middle 50% of the incoming class had SAT scores in the range of 1290-1430. But numbers are easy to quote and only tell part of the story. As I mentioned earlier, I want to emphasize that our students are not selected by grades and test scores alone.

Well, given statistics like that, where does USC go from here? It sounds like you're pretty close on the heels of other elite institutions.

We see other universities as colleagues, not competitors. There are plenty of well-prepared students interested in going to college. I think I speak for all admission professionals when I say that my chief interest is in helping students find a college that "feels right," even if that school happens not to be USC. It is my goal that USC's Office of Admission be thorough in presenting what this institution has to offer and then be fair and consistent as we evaluate the applicant pool. After that, our job is to step back and allow prospective students to determine if we're ultimately the right fit for them.

A Word From Our Students – *the African American Experience at USC*

We take our commitment to diversity very seriously, and are proud to enroll among the highest numbers of under-represented students of any top tier institution. We asked four of our current African American students to share their impressions of life at USC.

Dominique Collins, Senior, *major in Communications with an entertainment emphasis, minor in Business*

I attended a top college prep school in New Orleans, where I was clearly in the minority, so I wanted a more diverse social environment. I was accepted at some other great schools, but chose USC because I felt it offered a greater mix of students. When I got here I thought the campus was beautiful and I made a lot of new friends – white, Asian, Latino and black – a really diverse group. But the most important thing I did was to dorm at Somerville Place. Somerville houses 32 students, half guys, half girls, but all African Americans. It helped me make an easy transition to USC, and being there enriched my entire freshman year. Right out of the gate, I was hooked up to different meetings, opportunities, and programs. The most important thing I have learned at USC? Keep striving to be your best. You're doing it for yourself, for your family,

for future generations, and for past generations. Being a minority, and a black person, I believe that there's a double weight on you to represent yourself and your race well, and that's what I strive to do.

Kelli Mays-Aboagye, Junior, *major in Biological Sciences, minor in Theatre*

I don't think of myself as a minority student – I'm pretty much race blind. When I was looking for colleges, my top priority was diversity – not just ethnic, but different values, different styles, different perspectives. One statistic that mattered to me about USC was the number of international students. I was expecting a college full of rich kids, but I went to visit and I instantly liked it – it looked like what college should be, with different kinds of people everywhere, and everyone was smiling. There is a visible Greek scene here, but it's only a fraction of the total student body and I've found that you can always find your own crowd. USC has lived up to its claim of diversity – and the value of that has exceeded my expectations, as I see how it truly helps eliminate one's inherent nature to judge others based on appearance. USC has a very down to earth feeling, and I feel comfortable here. The strength of the USC community is something you just

don't find anywhere else – both on and off campus – and it feels like the perfect fit for me.

Nii-Quartelai Quartey, Senior, *major in Political Science, minor in Critical Approaches to Leadership*
I'm named after my family tree. While my mom was from Tampa Bay, my father was raised in Ghana.

I grew up in Concord, California and attended a mostly white Catholic high school. I came to USC looking for a more diverse environment and a hands-on academic program and found myself majoring in Broadcast Journalism. But I was able to obtain so many media internships, such as with CNN's "Larry King Live," that I realized that journalism skills came to me naturally. Since I understood the need to be more informed about the world, I changed my major to Political Science. My minor, Critical Approaches to Leadership, is unusual, focusing on leadership and community building in government, the media, and at the grass roots level. Right now, I am a student worker in the Office of Admission and one of our primary focuses is outreach and recruitment of under-represented students. I feel truly blessed to go into an economically disadvantaged neighborhood school to talk about the benefits of a USC education.

Crystal Nelson, Senior, *major in Health Promotion (Pre-med)*

My high school was small, private and was nearly all African American Christians, who thought the same way. I was looking for a college that had academics, diversity, and would be a place to find different ways of thinking. My freshman roommate was Korean and a Republican – that was amazing! We came from such different points of view, but we learned so much from each other and are friends for life. I also knew I was going to the right school because of the incredible depth of the community service here – I love kids and love to teach, and have gotten to teach math at the local elementary school. I feel like I had a lot of support in preparing for college because I came from a household where my parents were determined I would succeed – so I am especially glad to have gotten the chance to give back by serving as a mentor to several African American high school science students. The biggest thing that I will take away from USC, that I will pass on to my kids, is the value of putting yourself out there and connecting with people.

Profile of Our Entering Freshmen

Class of 2009 (as of mid-August 2005)

Total Applicants: 31,630
Admit Rate: 27%
Total Matriculants: 2,750
Mean GPA: (unweighted) 3.7
Middle 50% SAT I: 1290-1430
Middle 50% ACT: 28-32
National Merit, National Achievement and National Hispanic Scholars: more than 200
Gender: Male 49% Female 51%
Ethnic Background: African American 5%, Latino/Hispanic 12%, Native American/Pacific Islander 2%, Asian/Asian American 21%, Caucasian 50%, International 8%
First Generation College: 9%
Financial Aid: 60+% of entering students receive financial aid or merit awards, including: 110 USC Trustee Scholars (full tuition), 261 USC Presidential Scholars (half tuition), 53 Dean's Scholars (quarter tuition)

Our 2005 freshman class comes from all over the world!

We received applications from students at 5,900 high schools. See below for the geographic breakdown of our entering class.

Over 200 students	Michigan	Also represented	Vermont	Pakistan
California	Minnesota	Alabama	Washington DC	Panama
	Missouri	Alaska	West Virginia	Peru
	Nevada	Arkansas	International:	Philippines
50-199	New Jersey	Idaho	Austria	Poland
Colorado	Pennsylvania	Iowa	Bangladesh	Portugal
Hawaii	Ohio	Kansas	Belgium	Romania
Illinois	Virginia	Kentucky	China	Saudi Arabia
Massachusetts	International:	Louisiana	Cyprus	South Korea
New York	Canada	Montana	Estonia	Sweden
Oregon	India	Maine	Germany	Thailand
Texas	Singapore	Mississippi	Greece	Turkey
Washington		Montana	Indonesia	Uruguay
International:	5-19	Nebraska	Iran	
Hong Kong	Indiana	New Hampshire	Israel	
	N. Carolina	New Mexico	Italy	
20-49	Utah	Oklahoma	Japan	
Arizona	Wisconsin	Rhode Island	Kuwait	
Connecticut	International:	S. Carolina	Lithuania	
Florida	Taiwan	S. Dakota	Malaysia	
Georgia	U.K.	Tennessee	Mexico	
Maryland		U.S. Territories	Nigeria	

NEW! Set Up Your Own Online Counselor Account

It's even easier to get the USC information you need through our new web portal, called the **Student Information Gateway (SIG)**. This comprehensive, user-customizable site puts an enormous amount of USC-related information at your fingertips, including details on: academic programs, paying for college, campus life, extracurricular activities, life in Los Angeles and more. After registering, you will be able to view the number of students from your school who have expressed an interest in USC, as well as their expressed academic interests. So, we encourage you to activate your user account and begin exploring SIG. Simply visit <http://sig.usc.edu>, select the *Counselor* tab and complete the online registration. Your account will become active within 1-2 business days.

Hot Topics – This Year's Essay Questions

When we ask students what advice they would give to high school seniors to help them survive the application process, one of the most frequent answers we hear is: "Start writing your essays as early as you possibly can – it gives you time to think more deeply about the subject and take your composition to the next level." So, to give your students that extra leg up, here are the three essay questions from this year's application. (*Applicants must respond to one of these prompts with a 500-700 word essay.*)

The 18th century French philosopher Denis Diderot said, "Only passions, great passions, can elevate the soul to great things." Describe one of your passions and reflect on how it has contributed to your personal growth.

It is common knowledge that Thomas Edison invented the light bulb. What most people don't know is that he tried over 6,000 times before succeeding. Reflect on an accomplishment you achieved in an unlikely way.

Newton's First Law of Motion states that an object in motion tends to stay in motion in the same direction unless acted on by an external force. Tell us about an external influence (a person, an event, etc.) that affected you and how it caused you to change direction.

Important Dates and Deadlines

Sept 30 **High School Counselor Conference** – you're cordially invited to our campus for our annual *Guidance Counselor Conference*. Watch your mailbox for an invitation. E-mail us at admrsvp@enroll1.usc.edu for more information or to reserve your spot.

Oct 2-Nov 13 **USC World Tour** – see the back page of this newsletter for the dates and locations of this fall's off-campus admission receptions.

Oct 15 **Part I Applications due**

Dec 10 **Part II Applications due** for merit scholarship applicants

Jan 10 **Part II Applications due** for all other scholarship/financial aid applicants

Jan 20 **FAFSA & PROFILE filing deadline** to receive priority aid consideration

Early Feb Admission notification for merit scholarship finalists

Mar 1 Student and family tax returns should be submitted to the Financial Aid Office to ensure an offer of eligibility before May 1

Apr 1 All applicants notified by this date

May 1 National candidate reply date

Aug 16 New student move-in day

Aug 21 First day of fall 2006 classes

Note: USC does not offer early action or early decision admission programs

USC Admission Directory

How to Contact Us You can find the USC admission officer responsible for working with your students by referencing the list below. **These individuals will serve as your primary point of contact with our Office of Admission.** Please note that many new staff members joined our office this year. At the time of printing, we did not yet have their direct phone numbers or e-mail addresses. Once these have been established, this information will be updated on our website.

U.S.

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi	Kevin Henry, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-7421	khenry@usc.edu
Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Utah .	Beza Merid, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-1111	admitusc@usc.edu
Arizona	Bruce Grier, <i>Associate Director</i>	(213) 740-6630	bgrier@usc.edu
Arakansas	Chris Tokuhama, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-1111	admitusc@usc.edu
Connecticut, New York	Kim Cragg, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-5844	kcragg@usc.edu
Delaware, Maryland, North & South Carolina, Virginia, Washington DC, West Virginia	Rakin Hall, <i>Associate Director</i>	(213) 740-1111	admitusc@usc.edu
Hawaii	Karen Rowan-Badger, <i>Director, USC College</i>	(213) 740-5930	krowan@usc.edu
Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky	Risa Tewksbury, <i>Director, Midwest Region</i>	(217) 356-1854	tewksbur@usc.edu
Louisiana, Tennessee.	Chris Tokuhama, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-1111	admitusc@usc.edu
Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont.	Patti Spada, <i>Senior Assistant Director</i>	(213) 821-2165	pspada@usc.edu
Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin	Risa Tewksbury, <i>Director, Midwest Region</i>	(217) 356-1854	tewksbur@usc.edu
New Jersey, Pennsylvania	Diana Sabogal, <i>Senior Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-6626	dsabogal@usc.edu
New Mexico	Therese Sandoval, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-1111	admitusc@usc.edu
Oklahoma, Texas	Shannon McHugh, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-1111	admitusc@usc.edu
Oregon, Washington, Wyoming	Michael Cooper, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-6613	mbc@usc.edu

California

Alameda County, Contra Costa County, Marin County, Sacramento County, San Francisco, Far Northern California	September Trevino, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-1111	admitusc@usc.edu
Central Coast, San Mateo County, Santa Clara County	Ross Aikins, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-1111	admitusc@usc.edu
Central Valley, Imperial Valley, Santa Barbara	Beza Merid, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-1111	admitusc@usc.edu
Covina & West Covina, Glendale, Pasadena	Ben Lah, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-7449	benjamjl@usc.edu
Long Beach	Kim Cragg, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-5844	kcragg@usc.edu
Los Angeles (central & west)	Mike Gerst, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-1111	admitusc@usc.edu
Los Angeles (east)	Rakin Hall, <i>Associate Director</i>	(213) 740-1111	admitusc@usc.edu
Los Angeles (south)	Kevin Henry, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-7421	khenry@usc.edu
Orange County (central), Riverside, San Bernardino .	Therese Sandoval, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-1111	admitusc@usc.edu
Orange County (north)	Diana Sabogal, <i>Senior Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-6626	dsabogal@usc.edu
Orange County (south).	Chris Tokuhama, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-1111	admitusc@usc.edu
San Diego County.	Bruce Grier, <i>Associate Director</i>	(213) 740-6630	bgrier@usc.edu
San Fernando Valley	Cathy Chen, <i>Associate Director</i>	(213) 740-3040	cathyc@usc.edu
South Bay.	Patti Spada, <i>Senior Assistant Director</i>	(213) 821-2165	pspada@usc.edu

International

Judith Jurek, <i>Senior Associate Director</i>	(213) 740-5684	jurek@usc.edu
David Park, <i>Assistant Director</i>	(213) 740-5685	davidmpa@usc.edu

Counselor News

Quarterly News for Guidance Counselors Fall 2005

Counselor News *Quarterly Updates for Guidance Counselors*

We're Headed Your Way

*You're Cordially Invited to a
USC Reception in Your Area*

It's your chance to personally meet the admission decision makers. Every fall we host receptions around the country for prospective students and their families. This year we'd like to extend that invitation to you as well, since we believe that the better we know each other, the more successful we will be in jointly identifying and connecting with the students at your school who will thrive at USC.

We promise programs that are both informal and informative, where you can get a flavor of life at USC and have your questions answered by a knowledgeable team that includes one of our senior admission officers, the admission counselor responsible for your school, and representatives from each of our four major colleges (College of Letters, Arts & Sciences, Marshall School of Business, Annenberg School of Communication, and the Viterbi School of Engineering), along with an all-important financial aid specialist.

Receptions will take place in 19 cities throughout the month of October. To RSVP to the reception nearest you, please send an e-mail to scounsel@usc.edu. We'll provide you with specific location information after we receive your response. We hope that you'll join us!

Cities to be included in this year's USC world tour:

Atlanta	Sunday, Oct. 30	2 - 4 p.m.
Boston	Saturday, Oct. 22	2 - 4 p.m.
Chicago	Sunday, Oct. 23	2 - 4 p.m.
Dallas	Saturday, Oct. 15	2 - 4 p.m.
Denver	Monday, Oct. 10	7 - 9 p.m.
Honolulu	Sunday, Oct. 9	1 - 3 p.m.
Hong Kong	Sunday, Nov. 13	1 - 4 p.m.
Houston	Sunday, Oct. 16	2 - 4 p.m.
Las Vegas	Wednesday, Oct. 19	7 - 9 p.m.
Minneapolis	Monday, Oct. 24	7 - 9 p.m.
New York	Sunday, Oct. 23	2 - 4 p.m.
Oakland	Sunday, Oct. 16	2 - 4 p.m.
Philadelphia	Monday, Oct. 24	7 - 9 p.m.
Phoenix	Sunday, Oct. 2	2 - 4 p.m.
Portland	Saturday, Oct. 29	2 - 4 p.m.
Sacramento	Monday, Oct. 17	7 - 9 p.m.
San Diego	Saturday, Oct. 15	2 - 4 p.m.
Seattle	Sunday, Oct. 30	2 - 4 p.m.
Washington, D.C.	Tuesday, Oct. 25	7 - 9 p.m.

USC's Codes

CEEB Code: 4852

*Used for PROFILE
Application and SAT scores*

**Federal School Code:
001328**

*Used for FAFSA
application*

ACT Code: 0470

*Used for sending ACT
scores*

*A college
isn't a
trophy –
it's a match.*