

## A. General Policy Statements

### 1. University Governance

As a private corporation, USC is governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board is a self-perpetuating body. The trustees delegate certain powers to the administration of the university and serve as the ultimate decision-making body.

The President is the chief executive officer of USC. The President carries out policies established by the trustees and, in doing so, has the power to delegate this authority to the officers of the university.

The Academic Senate, Undergraduate Student Government, Graduate Student Government and the Staff Assembly serve as consultative bodies for the President and the administration, preparing studies and reports and making recommendations directly to the president on matters pertinent to the functioning of the university.

Students, faculty, staff and administrators serve on university committees, which provide advice and counsel to the President and administration on a broad variety of matters related to the operation of the university.

Nominations for membership on university committees are made usually during the spring semester. Appointments are made by the President of the university. Information and applications for committee membership are available in the Undergraduate Student Government office, Ronald Tutor Campus Center 224, (213) 740-5620, or the Graduate Student Government office, Ronald Tutor Campus Center 224, (213) 740-5649.

Departmental and divisional committees and councils exist in many academic units. Information is available through each particular office. In addition, many of the non-academic offices on campus, such as the Engemann Student Health Center, have organized student advisory boards to voice opinions and participate in program development. The appropriate office or department should be contacted for this information.

### 2. Power of the Board

WHEREAS, the University of Southern California, like other independent and private universities, is financed primarily by charitable contributions and grants as well as by tuition, fees and contracts; and

WHEREAS, as a private institution, the university admits students selectively and students who elect this university recognize that their admission and continuance is in the nature of a privilege and not a right; and

WHEREAS, the powers of this corporation are exercised, its property controlled and its affairs conducted by this Board of Trustees, pursuant to the laws of the State of California, the Articles of Incorporation of the University and the By-laws of the University;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees, acting through its officers, has both the right and responsibility to and hereby does affirm its final authority over the on-going institution, and nothing in the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities or any other policy

pertaining to any subject promulgated by this Board shall be construed as in any way abridging the basic powers, rights and responsibilities of this Board.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees, June 7, 1978

### 3. Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities

#### Preamble

Students, faculty and administrative officials at the University of Southern California, as members of the academic community, fulfill a purpose and a responsibility. The purpose is the humane and critical examination of major issues of social, political, economic, ethical and aesthetic importance which have in the past confronted, and which will in the coming years constantly confront, the society as a whole.

The responsibility is to understand the spectrum of viewpoints on an issue, and, equally, to be actively involved in the solution of the problems these issues delineate.

The university must, therefore, provide an optimal learning environment, and all members of the university community have a responsibility to provide and maintain an atmosphere of free inquiry and expression. The relationship of the individual to this community involves these principles:

1. The fundamental human rights of others;
2. The rights of others based upon the nature of the educational process;
3. The rights of the institution.

Each member of the campus has the right to organize and maintain their own personal life and behavior, so long as it does not violate the law or agreements voluntarily entered into and does not interfere with the rights of others or the educational process.

Each member has the right to identify themselves as a member of the campus but has a concurrent obligation not to speak or act on behalf of the institution without authorization. Every member of the academic community shall enjoy the rights of free speech, peaceful assembly and the right of petition.

#### I. Relationship to the Institution

##### a. Non-Discrimination

See Section A.4. Equal Opportunity

##### b. Student Participation in the University Government

As members of the academic community, students are free, individually and collectively, to express their views on issues of university policy and on matters of interest to the student body. The student body shall have clearly defined means to participate in the formation and application of university policy affecting academic and student affairs. The actions of the student government within the areas of its jurisdiction shall be reviewed only through orderly, prescribed procedures. Students shall maintain professional standards of discretion concerning information gained about other students and members of the academic community in the course of active participation in university affairs.

##### c. Student Right To Be Informed

All students shall have the right of free access to statements of policy which affect the student body. The university shall have the corresponding responsibility to publish or in other ways make known, those policies which vitally affect students.

d. Financial Matters

The student has a right to a full statement of tuition and fees for which he or she is liable and to be informed, as extensively as possible, how such monies are spent. Fees which students, through the student government, impose on themselves, shall be allocated by students within governmental and university policies and regulations.

e. Political Activity

Students have the same rights as any individual to engage in political activity either individually or in groups. However, the university will not permit its name or emblems to be used by any person in connection with a campaign, or its campus, facilities or equipment to be used for campaign activities. Nothing in this policy statement is intended to prohibit candidates or others from making public addresses on campus pursuant to campus policies and procedures or the traditional activities of recognized campus organizations.

f. Utilization of Campus Facilities

The university has the responsibility to provide students the use of campus facilities according to campus regulations. The university reserves the right to prohibit individuals and groups who are not members of the campus from using its name, finances, or physical and operating facilities for commercial activities. (See Section G.4 Facilities.)

g. Authorized Search of University Premises

In university-controlled housing and offices, the university reserves the right to have its authorized agents or employees enter the premises to make necessary inspection for services, maintenance and repairs. Authorized agents or employees may enter the premises any time for the security of resident(s) or for other emergency reasons.

II. Student/Faculty Relations

Because the university is essentially an academic community in which students and faculty are co-participants, both must conduct themselves in a manner conducive to the welfare of such a community and to the free interchange of information and ideas without which that community cannot exist. The nourishment of that sense of community bestows certain rights and responsibilities upon the members of that community.

(The latest editions of the *USC Catalogue*, [catalogue.usc.edu](http://catalogue.usc.edu), *Schedule of Classes* [classes.usc.edu](http://classes.usc.edu), and the *Faculty Handbook*, [policy.usc.edu/faculty](http://policy.usc.edu/faculty), contain many current academic policies and procedures.)

a. Rights

- i. *Protection of Freedom of Expression* Students shall be free to take reasoned exception to the data or view offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion.

- ii. *The Importance of Teaching* Teaching plays a primary role in the advancement of learning. Therefore, students have a legitimate concern about the nature and quality of instruction, and their evaluation of teaching shall be a criterion considered in faculty promotion and tenure. Students should know that faculty are required to meet with their classes as part of their academic responsibility (see Faculty Handbook, [policy.usc.edu/faculty/](http://policy.usc.edu/faculty/)). Freedom to teach and to learn implies that faculty members have the right to determine the specific content of their courses, within the established course definitions, and the responsibility not to depart significantly from their areas of competence or to divert significant time to material extraneous to the subject matter of their courses.
  - iii. *Protection Against Improper Evaluation* Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation. The method of grading by professors shall be made known to students. Students can expect that faculty will be willing to explain and discuss any grade, and students have the right to appeal any grade. (See Section C.2. Disputed Academic Evaluation Procedures, and the Faculty Handbook online at [policy.usc.edu/faculty/](http://policy.usc.edu/faculty/) )
  - iv. *Protection Against Improper Disclosure* Information about students' views, beliefs, political associations, performance and character, which professors and administrators acquire in the course of their work as instructors, advisers and counselors shall be held in confidence.
  - v. *Assurance of Accessibility* Because the interchange of ideas between student and professor is of the utmost importance, and because such interchanges are often most productive informally, the university shall provide for student access to members of the faculty in appropriate settings outside the classroom.
- b. Responsibilities
- i. *Freedom of Expression* As students are free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study, so students are expected to respect the intellectual views of faculty and the reasoned process of academic debate.
  - ii. *The Importance of Teaching* As faculty are required to meet with their classes, students are expected to attend classes and to observe courtesy toward their instructors and their fellow students.
  - iii. *Standard of Performance* Students share responsibility for maintaining standards of academic performance and classroom conduct conducive to the learning process. It is the responsibility of the student to uphold the academic integrity of the university. Cheating on examinations, plagiarism, improper acknowledgment of sources in essays, and the use of a single essay in more than one course are considered very serious offenses and shall be grounds for disciplinary action. (See Part B. University Student Conduct Code)

- iv. *Student Participation in Faculty Evaluation* In faculty evaluation, students have the responsibility to perform such evaluation according to academic criteria and not on the basis of opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic performance.

### III. Student Affairs

As members of the academic community, students bring to the campus a variety of interests. They shall be free to organize and join campus associations to promote their common interests.

#### a. Freedom of Inquiry and Expression

- i. Students and student organizations shall be free to examine and discuss all questions of interest to them and to express opinions publicly and privately. They shall be free to support causes by all orderly means, which do not disrupt or substantially interfere with the regular and essential operations and activities of the university, since such disruption or substantial interference violates the responsible exercise of free inquiry and expression. Students and organizations shall make it clear to the academic and larger communities that in their public expressions they speak only for themselves.
- ii. Students believing that their right to freedom of inquiry and expression has been abridged may present the issue to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. (See Part D. Free Expression and Dissent.)
- iii. The distribution of literature is an integral part of expression and of support for a cause. Rules governing such distribution shall ensure the maximum degree of freedom, which is consistent with the regular and orderly operations of the university and the rights of students. (See Section D.5 Literature and Publications Distribution.)

#### b. Student Participation in Student Governments

The Undergraduate Student Government and the Graduate Student Government are the official representative student governments of the University of Southern California with power to make studies, reports and recommendations to the President of the university in any and all matters pertaining to the well-being of the student body. The role of the student government within the areas of its jurisdiction shall be reviewed by the university administration only through orderly procedures and channels.

#### c. Student Publications

The university shall provide editorial freedom for student publications to maintain their integrity as vehicles for free inquiry and free expression in the academic community. The editorial freedom of student editors and managers entails a responsibility to abide by the canons of responsible journalism. Libel, indecency, undocumented allegations, attacks on personal integrity and the

techniques of harassment and innuendo shall be considered violation of those canons. As safeguards for the editorial freedom of student publications, the following provisions are guaranteed:

- i. The student press shall be free of censorship and advance copy approval, and its editors and managers shall be free to develop their own editorial policies and patterns of news coverage.
  - ii. All university-published and/or -financed student publications shall state explicitly on the editorial page that the opinions expressed are not those of the university or its student body as a whole.
  - iii. Editors and managers of student publications shall be protected from arbitrary suspension and removal because of student, faculty, administrative or public disapproval of editorial policy or content. Only for proper and stated causes can editors be subject to removal, and then by orderly and prescribed procedures.
- d. Freedom of Association
- i. The university has the right to recognize student organizations and to withdraw recognition for failure to abide by campus regulations and federal, state and municipal laws and regulations.
  - ii. Student organizations shall be allowed to invite and to hear any person of their choosing in accordance with recognized university speaker procedures, required by the university before the guest speaker is invited to appear on campus. Such procedures shall be designed only to ensure that there is orderly scheduling of facilities and adequate preparation for the event. Control of campus facilities shall not be used as a device of censorship. Sponsoring organizations shall make clear to the academic and larger communities that sponsorship of guest speakers does not imply approval or endorsement of the views presented, either by the sponsoring group or the university.
  - iii. The membership, policies and action of a student organization shall generally be determined by a vote of only those persons who are bona fide members of the university community and of that organization.
  - iv. Affiliation with an extramural organization shall not of itself disqualify a student organization from university recognition.
  - v. When student organizations are encouraged to have advisers, or when campus advisers are required, each organization shall be free to choose its own adviser. Institutional recognition shall not be withheld or withdrawn solely because of the inability of a student organization to obtain an adviser. Campus advisers may advise organizations in carrying out their responsibilities, but they shall not have the authority to control the policies or finances of such organizations.
  - vi. Student organizations, including those affiliated with an extramural organization, shall be open to all students without respect to race, color,

national origin, ancestry, religion (except for those religious qualifications which may be specified by organizations whose aims are primarily sectarian), sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations,. (Consult the Office of the Vice President, Student Affairs, for the provisions of Title VI and IX.)

- vii. Student organizations capable of maintaining financial autonomy shall be allowed to do so. Provision by the university for handling budgets and accounts, banking and other financial services shall in no way indicate a prerogative on the part of the university to control funds, except through prescribed procedures designed to redress justified grievances or uphold university regulations.
- viii. Student organizations, in consultation and coordination with the university, may publicize their events and solicit participation in them from the university and outside community. (See Part G. Student Organizations.)

(Portions of this section excerpted from the AAUP's Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students)

Adopted by the Board of Trustees, subject to the resolution on Power of the Board. It has been updated to reflect current policies.

#### 4. Notice of Non-Discrimination

##### I. Policy

The University of Southern California prohibits discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, religion (including religious dress and grooming practices), creed, sex, age (40 years and over in the employment context), marital status, national origin, citizenship status, employment status, income status, shared ancestry and ethnic characteristics, partnership status, medical condition (including cancer and genetic characteristics), pregnancy (including childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions), disability, political belief or affiliation, domestic violence victim status, military or veteran status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, and any other class of individuals protected from discrimination under federal, state, or local law, regulation, or ordinance in any of the University's educational programs and activities, and in the employment (including application for employment) and admissions (including application for admission) context, as required by: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations, 20 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq.; Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended in 2008; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; the Age Discrimination Act of 1967; the California Fair Employment and Housing Act; and other federal, state, and local laws, regulations, or ordinances that prohibit discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation.

The University prohibits unlawful harassment of students, employees and third parties on the basis of any protected characteristic as identified above.

The University also prohibits retaliation against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by University policy or law, or because the individual makes a good faith report or formal complaint, testifies, assists, participates, or refuses to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under the University [Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#).

## II. Equal Access for Students with Disabilities

Otherwise qualified individuals must not be denied admissions, participation in educational programs and activities, or employment due to their disability. University policies and procedures ensure that students and student applicants with disabilities will be provided full and equal access to and enjoyment of academic and co-curricular programs or activities, regardless of disability status, in an environment free from discrimination or harassment.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is the campus unit that reviews requests for and determines reasonable student accommodations and auxiliary aids and services for any student or student applicant with a disability.

## III. Resources

Questions regarding the application of the various rules and regulations including but not limited to equal employment opportunity, affirmative action and non-discrimination, and Title IX should be addressed to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX). The Vice President for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX is also the university's Title IX Coordinator.

### **Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX)**

3720 S. Flower Street 2nd floor  
Credit Union Building, 200  
Los Angeles, California 90089-0704  
(213) 740-5086  
eotix@usc.edu  
<https://eotix.usc.edu/>

### **Affirmative Action and EEO Coordinator**

Contact EEO-TIX  
(213) 740-5086  
eotix@usc.edu

### **ADA/504 Coordinator**

(213) 821-4658  
ability@usc.edu

### **Disability Accommodation Coordinator**

Contact USC Human Resources  
(213) 821-8100  
uschr@usc.edu

**Office of Student Accessibility Services**

(213) 740-0776  
ability@usc.edu

**USC Human Resources**

(213) 821-8100  
[uschr@usc.edu](mailto:uschr@usc.edu)

IV. External Reporting Options

Any individual may file reports and/or complaints about the university's handling of prohibited conduct to the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) with the U.S. Department of Education at [www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html) or [ocr@ed.gov](mailto:ocr@ed.gov) or 1-800-421-3481. OCR complaints should be filed within 180 days of the last date of alleged discrimination. OCR may extend this deadline in a variety of circumstances.

Employees may file reports and/or complaints with the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) at [contact.center@dfeh.ca.gov](mailto:contact.center@dfeh.ca.gov) or [www.dfeh.ca.gov](http://www.dfeh.ca.gov), or the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) at (800) 669-4000 (TTY (800) 669-6820) or [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov). In employment cases, complaints must be filed with the DFEH no later than three years from the date of the alleged unlawful conduct. In most other cases, a complaint must be filed with the DFEH within one year of the date of the alleged unlawful conduct. If the DFEH believes that a complaint is valid and settlement efforts fail, the DFEH may seek an administrative hearing before the California Fair Employment and Housing Commission (FEHC) or file a lawsuit in court. Both the FEHC and the courts have the authority to award monetary and non-monetary relief in meritorious cases.

Any person who believes that the university as a federal contractor has violated nondiscrimination or affirmative action obligations may contact the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) at (800) 397-6251 (TTY: 1-877-889-5267).

5. Principles of Community

USC is a multicultural community of people from diverse racial, ethnic, gender, and class backgrounds, national origins, faith backgrounds, political beliefs, abilities, and sexual orientations. Our activities, programs, classes, workshops, lectures, and everyday interactions are enriched by our acceptance of one another, and we strive to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect.

We want to make explicit our expectations regarding the behavior of each member of our community. As adults, we are responsible for our behavior and are fully accountable for our actions. We each must take responsibility for our awareness of racism, sexism, ageism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, ableism and other forms of discrimination.

Bigotry will not go unchallenged within this community. No one has the right to denigrate another human being on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, national origins, and other identities. We will not tolerate verbal or written abuse, threats, harassment, intimidation, or violence against person or property. In this context, we do not accept alcohol or substance abuse as an excuse, reason, or rationale for such abuse, harassment, intimidation or violence. Ignorance or "it was just a joke" is also not an excuse for such behavior.

All who work, live, study, and teach in the USC community are here by choice, and as part of that choice should be committed to these principles which are an integral part of the USC's focus, goals, and mission.

6. Code of Ethics at the University of Southern California

See Code of Ethics of USC at [policy.usc.edu/ethics](http://policy.usc.edu/ethics)

7. Department of Education Compliance

The Department of Education requires each state to have an external agency responsible for handling complaints related to the university's compliance with applicable laws. In California, this external agency is the Bureau for Private Post-Secondary Education. Complaints that suggest the university may not be in compliance with applicable laws may be directed to:

Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education  
2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 400  
Sacramento, CA 95833  
Telephone: (916) 431-6959  
[bppe.ca.gov/enforcement/complaint.shtml](http://bppe.ca.gov/enforcement/complaint.shtml)

See [www2.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html) for a list of all other state departments of higher education.

Additionally, the university is accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission. Complaints demonstrating a possible violation of the Commission's Standards of Accreditation and Commission policies and procedures should be directed to:

WASC Senior College and University Commission  
985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100  
Alameda, CA 94501  
Phone: (510) 748-9001  
[wascsenior.org/comments](http://wascsenior.org/comments)

8. Reporting Wrongdoing

USC requires faculty, staff, students, volunteers and others affiliated with the university to report suspicion of wrongdoing promptly to the proper authorities for investigation.

It is not your responsibility to determine if a situation indeed constitutes wrongdoing, but it is your personal responsibility to report those concerns. By refusing to turn a blind eye, we stay true to the requirements of the law, our ethical commitments, and the highest values of USC.

A list of offices that accept reports of particular kinds of wrongdoing is available online at [policy.usc.edu/reporting-wrongdoing/](http://policy.usc.edu/reporting-wrongdoing/).

If you are unsure where to report a concern, you may contact the Office of Professionalism & Ethics (OPE) by calling the USC Help and Hotline at [213-740-2500](tel:213-740-2500). *This number is staffed by live operators 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.* You can also submit a confidential report using OPE's online secure form available at [app.mycompliancereport.com/report.aspx?cid=uosc](http://app.mycompliancereport.com/report.aspx?cid=uosc).