



**USF Board of Trustees  
Strategic Initiatives Committee Workshop**

Wednesday, May 26, 2021  
Time: 12:00 – 3:00 PM  
Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

*Trustees:* Michael Carrere, Chair; Mike Griffin, Les Muma, Shilen Patel, Melissa Seixas

**A G E N D A**

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|-----|---|-----------------------|
| I.  | Call to Order and Comments                    | Chair Michael Carrere |
| II. | <a href="#">USF Strategic Plan</a> Discussion | Chair Carrere         |
| V.  | Adjournment                                   | Chair Carrere         |

# A BLUEPRINT FOR A BOLD FUTURE

*where excellence and opportunity converge*



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA  
STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2031



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## A Letter from President Curral

Dear members of the Board of Governors, USF Board of Trustees, and USF community,

Upon my arrival at the University of South Florida, my leadership team and I began to envision a process to develop a vision to steer this great university into its greatest era yet.

We have continued to advance a rigorous and inclusive process to develop a framework for strategic renewal, while simultaneously responding to the Covid-19 global health crisis.

Our work has been guided by our shared Principles of Community and grounded in a commitment to inclusion, civility, open expression, evidence-based deliberations, and vigorous debate.

The result – which I’m pleased to share with you today – is a strategic plan that aligns with the priorities of the state’s Board of Governors and supports USF’s vision, mission and goals. These, of course, include an enduring commitment to faculty and student success, world-class research, as well as the pursuit of bold aspirations to be a top-25 university and on a trajectory toward eligibility for AAU membership.

Importantly, our strategic plan positions USF – as Florida’s top urban research university with branch campuses across our region – as a powerful engine of prosperity for the new increasingly urbanized American frontier.

Consider that the number of people living in urban settings around the world has grown by over 300 percent just in the past 60 years. In 30 years, two out of three people will live in cities. In Florida, the population has been increasing for most of the last century, and our state now ranks as the third largest in the nation (behind California and Texas), according to 2020 U.S. Census numbers.

Meanwhile, the U.S. is at a tipping point in its historical global domination of innovation and economic growth fueled by research and development. At risk is our nation’s ability to respond to increasing threats and to pursue long-term, sustainable development.

In today’s fast-changing world, urban research universities rich with human capital, intellect and expertise are best positioned to respond. More important than ever before, research universities – especially those anchored in increasingly urbanized communities – must renew with vigor our commitment to serve our communities.

For public research universities, this compact with the communities we serve promises to provide upward social and economic mobility for individuals while transforming the economies of our region or state and improving the quality of life for society.

The future success of our nation will be determined by the ability of metropolitan hubs including our vibrant Tampa Bay region to address the global challenges – and leverage the opportunities – of the new urban frontier.

USF's strategic plan reinforces this commitment to strengthen and apply our innovation and research to address the urban challenges emerging around us while advancing our vision, mission and goals.

In December 2020, I appointed the USF Strategic Planning Advisory Task Force to help craft a strategic plan for the university. Largely comprised of USF faculty, the 19-member Task Force was charged with:

1. Soliciting feedback from faculty, staff, and students regarding the content of the new strategic plan for the university. Mandatory consultations included, for example, engaging with deans, regional chancellors and vice presidents, shared governance organizations (e.g., Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Administrative Advisory Council, Student Government), Presidential Advisory Councils, all three campuses (including, for example, campus faculty councils and campus advisory boards for St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee), Tampa Bay regional stakeholders (e.g., corporations, governmental officials, K-12 administrators, economic development organizations), alumni and donors, and USF affiliated unions.
2. Developing formal vision and strategy statements, while also ensuring that the university maintains a flexible and agile posture.
3. Articulating a list of the university's core commitments and/or values.
4. Assessing USF's existing strengths and current gaps relative to our aspirations.
5. Describing the university's opportunities, sources of differentiation and sustainable advantage, and contemporary societal dynamics that might shape USF's success in the context of the competitive landscape of higher education.

6. Articulating an aspirational strategy for the entire institution, not for individual colleges, units, or campuses.

As we emerge from the complexities resulting from the concomitant conditions of deep social unrest and the COVID-19 global public health crisis, we recognize and emphasize the ongoing tension between pursuing our aspirational goals and the resources available to achieve them. This strategic plan, nevertheless, presents a roadmap for realizing the goals set forth by university leadership, USF's Accountability Plan, and our Board of Trustees.

The plan also addresses USF's responsibility to respond with new urgency to the challenges of the increasingly urbanized world. Through its implementation, our plan will continue to fuel USF's fast-rising trajectory as the region's creative, intellectual and economic engine as well as our commitment to both excellence and opportunity for all.

I am grateful to the State University System of Florida's leadership, the USF Board of Trustees, university administration and our colleagues and stakeholders across our region and campuses for your support and contributions to this plan. I look forward to our work together to shape USF's bold and exciting future.



**Steven C. Currall**  
USF President and Professor



## Executive Summary

The University of South Florida (USF) has emerged as one of the nation's fastest-rising universities with respect to research productivity, student success, and positive impact on the communities it serves. This document provides a blueprint for continuing USF's ascent in global and national visibility during the next ten years.

Based on USF's current upward trajectory, and consolidation during 2020 of our three campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Sarasota-Manatee, we commenced a process of strategic renewal—distinct from more common strategic planning initiatives—with an already strong shared sense of institutional identity, mission, and values. USF's current trajectory has been presaged in strategic plans since the 1980s, which inform our modern aspirations that are also well-known and well-defined such as our aim to become a top-25 public research university and eligibility for membership in the Association of American Universities (AAU). The present strategic plan presents a blueprint for pursuing the university's goals and aspirations by capitalizing on our metropolitan setting and unique academic assets.

Today's phenomenon of global urbanization, unprecedented in human history, presents a durable strategic framework for USF's maturing role as an urban research university. The plan articulates seven signature initiatives (such as global and national security; environmental, oceanographic, and sustainability sciences; and health, society, and biomedical science) and identifies twelve core institutional commitments (including faculty excellence, research infrastructure, and student success) that collectively present a pathway to achieving our aspirations in the coming decade. The signature initiatives amplify USF's current disciplinary excellence by delineating integrative research and instructional programs that are sources of sustainable competitive advantage in the fast-paced and fluid landscape of higher education. The institutional commitments may themselves also be sources of differentiation, but crucially are compulsory enablers of activities the university is pursuing.

Taken together, this blueprint is intended to provide a vision for the university's future trajectory that will inform deliberations by deans and academic and administrative unit leaders as they establish and implement their unit-based strategic priorities and implementation plans. Moreover, the present strategic plan is designed to be inclusive of all faculty, students, and staff, based on their own research, academic, and professional interests. Perhaps most importantly, in addition to proposing what USF aims to accomplish in the future, this plan proposes a reciprocal "USF Compact" between the university and the communities it serves: For USF to reach its aspirations, it must be fueled by renewed support from alumni, business and community partners, philanthropists, and state leaders.

# The Strategic Renewal Process: Building on a Foundation

Our process for strategic renewal, as distinct from a completely new strategic planning initiative, was built on a sound substratum of work that defined USF's identity, direction and values. Working from this existing foundation promoted efficiency in our planning process as numerous substantial inclusive initiatives had already been completed across our campuses during the past few years. These initiatives include:

1. The 2025 System Strategic Plan, as approved by the Board of Governors in October 2019, which focuses on three critical points of emphasis for the targeted State University System 2025 Goals—Excellence, Productivity, and Strategic Priorities for a Knowledge Economy—and recognizes the universities' teaching, research, and public service priorities.
2. 2017-18 Campus Strategic Plans that—although interrupted by Consolidation—already put us down the path of examining our sources of sustainable competitive differentiation, our opportunities, and our strategic priorities.
3. USF's current Mission Statement and Goals each of which involved many hours of engagement and consensus building across our campuses, and necessarily represent the foundation of any effective strategic plan.
4. Consolidation, another inclusive process that resulted in the USF community collectively defining what it means to be One USF.
5. SACSCOC Accreditation Requirements in support of our consolidated university give clear direction for USF to operate relative to its stated Mission.
6. President Currall's listening tours during 2019 and 2020 have involved visits to many academic and administrative units before COVID-19 precautions temporarily paused those efforts. Also, the President's 2020-21 Annual Goals, also approved by the Board of Trustees, articulate explicit targets and metrics that are aligned with other university goals and targets.
7. USF's 2020 Accountability Plan, which was approved by the Board of Trustees in April 2020, and the Board of Governors in July 2020, sets very clear operational targets and goals for the university that each unit on each campus plays a role in achieving.

# Principles of Community

The bedrock of our strategic renewal process is a commitment to community principles that reinforce inclusion, civility, open expression, evidence-based deliberations and vigorous debate. These dynamics are crucial to our success in forging a future and building a solid culture and climate for USF. During 2019 and 2020, the university community coalesced around a set of Principles of Community, which have provided valuable guidance for how we can most productively deliberate about the future of the university. These Principles guided our strategic deliberations and discussions, yielding evidence-based analysis and recommendations.

## EXCELLENCE WITH EQUITY

We affirm the value of excellence. Our essential pursuit of truth and wisdom depends upon fairness and equity. We recognize that individual and collective excellence entails a responsibility to ensure that every member of our community has the opportunity to succeed.

## DIVERSITY WITH INCLUSION

We affirm the value of diversity, individual dignity, equity, and our common humanity. Diversity of lived experiences, thought, and values enriches our lives and our whole university community. We seek the intentional inclusion of the broadest possible range of these perspectives essential to a university with local, state, national, and global impact.

## FREEDOM WITH RESPONSIBILITY

We affirm the value of academic freedom and the inherent value of people's right to express themselves respectfully, freely, safely, and with civility. We reject the demeaning acts of bullying, violence, prejudice, and discrimination as they undermine the community we aspire to be.

## DIALOGUE WITH RESPECT

We affirm the value of evidence and seek perspectives to foster productive communication, dialogue, and constructive disagreement. We listen respectfully and reject language that demeans any member of the community. We embrace differences by learning through open debate in a spirit of curiosity.

## TRANSPARENCY WITH ACCOUNTABILITY

We affirm the value of a clear and transparent working and learning environment that promotes honesty, fairness, and trust. We commit our time, talents, and resources to building a culture of caring that promotes the integrity of our relationships and the sustainable well-being of the entire community. We are personally responsible, across every level, for treating each other with respect, candor, and accountability.



The Task Force spent time gathering and collecting feedback and ideas from various university representatives and community partners. A variety of mechanisms for individual stakeholders to provide feedback into the strategic renewal process were created, including:



Hosting five virtual townhall listening forums



Creating several stakeholder specific surveys for all faculty, staff, and students; department chairs, directors, and deans; and external community stakeholders



Conducted interviews, meetings, and listening tours with a wide array of internal and external stakeholder groups



Establishing a Strategic Renewal website



Creating an anonymous comment submission form located on the strategic renewal website



Creating a Strategic Renewal email address

### Internal Stakeholders Consulted:

Academic Department Chairs  
Athletics  
Deans  
Faculty Senate  
Information Technology  
Libraries  
Office of Corporate Partnerships  
Office of Decision Support  
Office of Research and Innovation  
Office of Student Success  
Sarasota-Manatee campus community and Campus Advisory Board  
Sarasota-Manatee campus Regional Chancellor  
Sarasota-Manatee Faculty Council  
St. Petersburg campus Regional Chancellor  
St. Petersburg Faculty Council  
Student Leaders  
University Communications and Marketing  
USF Foundation Office  
Veterans Affairs

### External Stakeholders Consulted:

Alumni and Key Donors  
Elected Officials include the Florida Legislature, Mayors, and City Councils  
Florida State College Presidents  
Hillsborough County Department of Health  
James Haley VA  
Joint Special Operations University  
K-12 Administrators  
Moffitt Cancer Center  
Pinellas County Department of Health  
St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership  
St. Petersburg Innovation District  
Tampa Bay Partnership  
Tampa Bay Times  
Tampa General Hospital  
Tampa Innovation Partnership (Tampa !P)  
University Area Community Development Corp.  
U.S. Central Command  
U.S. Special Operations Command  
Various Tampa Bay corporate leaders

Our Strategic Renewal process relied on input and data gathering from all members of the university community including students, faculty, staff, donors, alumni, business and community leaders, and local elected officials. The Task Force and university leadership team engaged in approximately 190+ hours of meetings, interviews, listening sessions, and many more hours in research conversations in smaller, informal groups to discuss and refine the recommendations.

**Approximately 190+\* hours of meetings, collecting and synthesizing ideas, and receiving feedback**

*\*Does not include the conversations and meetings in an informal manner to discuss and refine the recommendations*





## A Blueprint for a Bold Future

Founded in 1956, USF was originally conceived as a progressive, modern university that would be forever tied to the development of the community around it.

Situated in the heart of a growing metropolis, USF is an urban research university bringing perspective in times of conflict and hope in the face of the uncertainties, creating new knowledge and advancing our standard of living. By harnessing the power of nature and data even as we listen closely to our community needs, we design tools to optimize human performance and improve the way we live, work, travel, think, and play—fueling our communities with energy and ideas and wherewithal to address grand challenges.

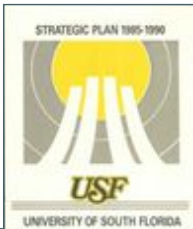
*USF is an engine of economic prosperity where both academic excellence and opportunity converge – where knowledge creation in addition to knowledge dissemination bring about position change for the communities we serve.*



# USF's Trajectory: A Historical Perspective

As we look forward to a strategic renewal for the university, we reflect on our achievements and trajectory. The roadmap the university has followed since its inception has inexorably led to these achievements, framed by the strategic planning that has intentionally been a part of the fabric of USF.

Aspirations of national prominence began to formally appear in the planning of the university in the 1985-1990 Strategic Plan. This was the beginning of a theme that became foundational to the trajectory of the university.



## Strategic Plan 1985-1990

"The Strategic Directions and the Cornerstones, with their accompanying goals and objectives, represent an ambitious and comprehensive set of plans designed to move USF toward its **aspirations of becoming a university of national prominence....**"



## Strategic Plan 2002-2007

"The first is the goal of becoming a **Research I University nationally** as well as within the State of Florida..."



## Strategic Plan 2007-2012

"The University of South Florida envisions itself as a premier research university with **state, national, and global impact**, and positioned for membership in the Association of American Universities (AAU)."

# 1956

At inception, USF became "Florida's first major state university planned, built and opened in the 20th century, as well as Florida's first university located in a major metropolitan area."



1950s Tampa Campus Main Entrance

# 1969

USF expands its regional reach through the designation of USF St. Petersburg as a branch campus by the Florida Legislature.



1960s St. Petersburg Campus

# 1975

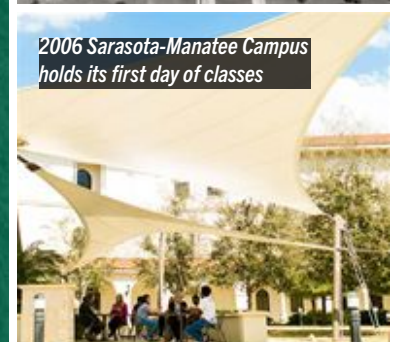
USF expands its regional reach through the designation of USF Sarasota-Manatee as a branch campus by the Florida Legislature.



1970 Tampa Campus Aerial

# 1998

USF is named by the Florida Board of Regents as a "Research I" university, along with the University of Florida and Florida State University.



2006 Sarasota-Manatee Campus holds its first day of classes

# 2006

The National Science Foundation announces that USF ranks 63rd among the nation's top research universities, according to a survey of federally financed research and development expenditures at universities and colleges.



In the early 2000's, national prominence continued in the forefront of strategic planning with an emphasis on the research portfolio of the university. Towards the latter part of the 2002-2007 Strategic Plan, and into the next five-year strategic plan (2007-2012), USF's research trajectory was being realized and acknowledged by the National Science Foundation. As the university entered another five-year strategic plan, the heightened aspirations beyond state and national prominence are evident by the focus on global impact and being positioned for membership in the Association of American Universities (AAU). The university trajectory gained momentum during this time, underscored by tremendous achievements in student success. While USF has had a long-standing commitment to student success, in late 2009, USF launched the Student Success Task Force which developed a ten-year plan to radically transform student success in our



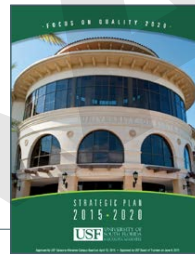
*Strategic Plan 2013-2018*

"The University of South Florida is a **global research university** dedicated to student success and positioned for membership in the Association of American Universities (AAU)."



*Strategic Plan 2014-2019*

"...the **University of South Florida St. Petersburg** will work shoulder-to-shoulder with students and community partners to build a better world."



*Strategic Plan 2015-2020*

"...the **University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee** will be nationally recognized as a student-centered, research-focused, community-engaged university with significant economic and cultural impact to the region."

## 2009

*The Chronicle of Higher Education names USF the nation's fastest growing university for federal research funds.*

## 2014

*USF is ranked 14th as an 'up and coming' university among the country's national universities by USNWR.*

## 2017

*The Chronicle of Higher Education recognizes USF Tampa as the nation's leader among public universities in showing the greatest improvements in six-year graduation rates, from 2011 to 2015.*

## 2018

*The university achieves Preeminent State Research University Status, as designated by the Florida Board of Governors.*

## 2019

*USF breaks the top 50 on U.S. News & World Report's list of best public universities in America, climbing 14 spots from last year to reach no. 44. Since 2015, USF has climbed 44 spots from No. 88 to No. 44, an unparalleled trajectory among public or private universities in the United States.*



*2009 Magnolia Residence Hall at Tampa Campus*



*2011 Interdisciplinary Sciences Building at Tampa Campus*



*2012 University Student Center at St. Petersburg Campus*



*2020 USF Health in Downtown Tampa*

university. At that time, the six-year graduation rate was only 48% and four-year rate was about 24%. During this timeframe, the strategic planning and momentum of the campuses was instrumental to the university's trajectory, evident by the foresight of expanding regional and national prominence with global impacts found in the USF St. Petersburg 2014-2020 Strategic Plan and in the USF Sarasota-Manatee 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.



As of July 1, 2020, and pursuant to the Florida Excellence in Higher Education Act of 2018, the University of South Florida successfully consolidated into a single university with a fully accredited, aligned, and integrated curriculum that is governed by a single set of academic policies and procedures. With campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee, as well as clinical and biomedical research facilities in downtown Tampa, this consolidated structure comprises One USF.

One USF offers opportunities to leverage the unique identity of each campus while continuing to provide a world-class education as one geographically distributed university. The consolidation process invigorated the institution's commitment to greater student success, better institutional performance outcomes, more empowered faculty, improved research capacity, and deeper community partnerships to better serve the Tampa Bay region and the State of Florida.

Today, the university serves more than 50,000 students pursuing undergraduate, graduate, specialist and professional degrees across 13 colleges; undergraduates choose from more than 200 majors, minors and concentrations, from business and engineering to journalism and the arts to aging and health sciences.

The academic value of USF is without question. As the fastest-rising university in America according to U.S. News and World Report's (U.S. News) 2021 Best Colleges rankings, USF's trajectory cannot be disputed. Over the past 10 years, USF has risen 78 spots among all universities and 54 spots among public universities, more than any other university in the country. This is the second consecutive year USF is among the top 50 public universities in the nation, according to U.S. News.



High-impact global research is central to USF's mission as one of only three Preeminent Research Universities, as designated by the Florida Board of Governors. The Preeminence program rewards high-achieving universities based on 12 metrics, including graduation rates, student retention rates, research expenditures and the number of patents awarded.

USF adds to the vibrancy and strength of the regional economy, while simultaneously serving as a research and innovation powerhouse. By strategically leveraging our rising status as a world-class public urban research university, USF provides maximum social and economic impact throughout the Tampa Bay region and the State of Florida. Serving more than 50,000 students, USF had an annual budget of \$2.15 billion and an annual economic impact of \$6.02 billion in the State of Florida in the 2019-20 fiscal year.

As an urban research university with a strong culture of applied research and innovation, USF has become a vital catalyst for the larger social and economic ecosystem – engendering extraordinary opportunity for the Tampa Bay region and the State of Florida. USF's research, clinical, commercialization, and workforce development activities drive employment in high-wage occupations across the region and state. This in turn creates an environment that attracts new companies and a growing pool of highly skilled professionals to sustain our diversifying economy.

The university's contribution to the public good can be measured, with tangible positive results. USF generates direct economic impact through its spending on wages and purchases from Florida-based vendors, as well as indirect and induced impacts when local suppliers hire employees and make purchases from other local vendors, while USF students, employees, and suppliers themselves spend money on goods and services, and generate tax revenue.

According to a recent economic impact study, in 2020 USF directly produced 68,704 jobs, \$3.82 billion in GDP, and \$6.02 billion in total economic impact. The university also converts the state's public appropriations into amplified returns: for every dollar Florida invests in USF, the university returns \$5.99 in labor income, \$1.41 in state tax revenue, and \$14.07 in total economic output. In addition, as an academic health center, USF Health offers patient care equaling more than 1.08 million patient visits annually.

USF had an  
annual budget of

**\$2.15  
BILLION**

and an  
annual economic  
impact of

**\$6.02  
BILLION**

in the State  
of Florida

*(2019-20 fiscal year)*

At USF, we are focused on the confluence of excellence in faculty research and student success. With engagement and acclaim in the region, the state, the nation and across the globe, the University of South Florida is making an impact. Here are just a few of the distinctive attributes that make our vibrant and dynamic university a leading institution of higher education.

2018 USF achieves  
**Preeminent State Research University**  
 status, as designated by the Florida Board of Governors

**4th worldwide** among organizations with the most Fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) elected in 2019

Classified as a Doctoral University with  
**“Highest Research Activity R1”**  
 Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

USF is the founder and home of the  
**National Academy of Inventors (NAI)**

**8th** among public universities for U.S. patents (2019 Intellectual Property Owners Association/NAI)

Recipient of the Jesse L. Moore  
**Supplier 2021 Diversity Award**  
 from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine

**1 of 3**

institutions in the State University System of Florida identified as a Preeminent Research University

**1st**

in the State University System of Florida for the Percentage of Bachelor's and Graduate Degrees Awarded within Programs of Strategic Emphasis

**46**

2021 U.S. News & World Report Rankings of National Universities

**3rd / 30th**

in the U.S. / in the world  
 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings based on UN SDGs

**34**

2019 Kiplinger's Best Value in Public Colleges

**48**

2020 Washington Monthly National University Rankings

**37**

2020 Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)

USF College of Public Health's public health degree program

**#1 / Top 20**  
 in Florida / nationally

Morsani College of Medicine

**Top 50**  
 Best Medical Schools in Research U.S. News & World Report



## STUDENT SUCCESS

**46th**  
among public universities and  
**103rd nationally**  
*U.S. News and World Report  
2021 National University Rankings*

USF Tampa  
**#1**  
for Greatest Improvements  
in 6-year Graduation Rates  
among 4-year public colleges  
and universities  
*2017 The Chronicle of Higher Education*

**6th in the nation**  
for eliminating the completion gap  
between Black and white students,  
**4th in the nation**  
for Latino student success  
*2017 The Educational Trust*

USF is home to a student body of  
**50,830**  
students representing over  
**140**  
different countries

**Top 100**  
of all public institutions  
*2018 Forbes' America's Top Colleges*

Among  
**Top 40**  
of U.S. public colleges  
*2020 Academic Ranking of  
World Universities (ARWU)*

**3rd**  
among the 50 Most Affordable  
In-State Public Universities  
*2020 AffordableColleges.com*

**1st in Top 50**  
U.S. Financial Aid  
Counseling Programs  
*2018 LendEDU*

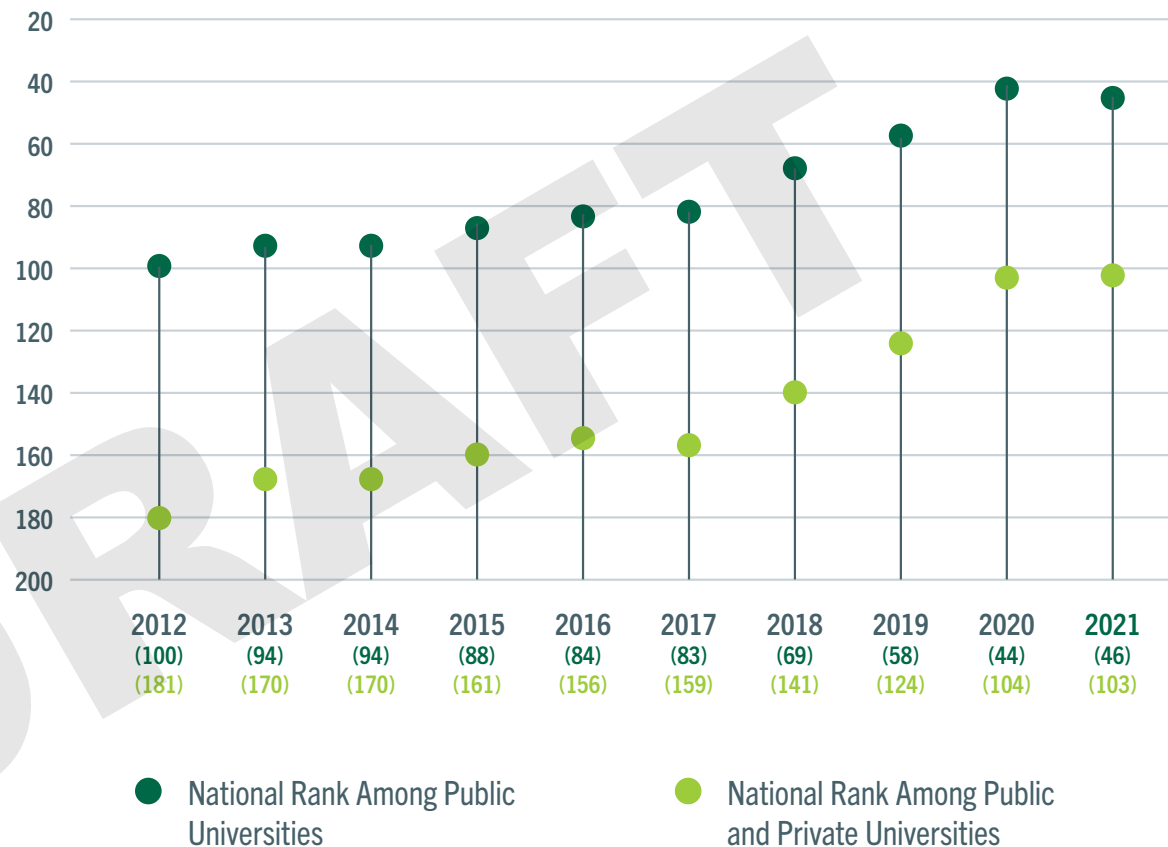
**38%**  
of students are  
Pell eligible

Exceeding Preeminence benchmarks,  
USF's fall 2020 Freshman academic profile posts an  
average SAT score of  
**1312**  
and a high school GPA of  
**4.18**

USF Tampa is a  
**Top 50**  
university among all  
national institutions  
*2019 Top American Research  
Universities (TARU)*

## U.S. News & World Report Ranking

As we chart our path forward, USF must build upon the culture of courage and innovation that have emerged as institutional lodestars. With our remarkable trajectory, USF is squarely positioned in the midst of a tremendous set of national peers. Guided by this strategic renewal process and Top-25 aspirations, USF is well positioned to reach the levels of performance of its aspirational peers. What a journey it has been for USF, a remarkable future beckons!





## Global Urbanization and the Urban Research University

In 1970, Tokyo and New York were the only megacities on the planet—places where more than 10 million people call home. Today, there are 23 megacities across the globe: 13 in Asia, four in Latin America, and two each in Africa, Europe and Northern America.

Drawn by greater access to opportunity, amenities and services, people are seeking the offerings and connectedness of the urban environment in greater numbers than ever before. In the United States, this has attracted more than 80% of Americans to major metropolitan areas, where more than two-thirds of the jobs are based, and more than 75% of the nation's economic output is generated.

This epochal shift, a relatively new phenomenon in human history, is changing the way we live, work, play, eat, and travel. Our dense lifestyle is creating increasingly complex challenges regarding poverty and public health, food and water security, racial and economic equality, and environmental and infrastructure stress.

Increased urbanization also presents urgent and exciting opportunities for innovation, creativity, economic opportunity, advanced health services, transportation, and education. With thoughtfulness and intention, we can create more inclusive and equitable cities capable of ensuring health and prosperity for all.

Urbanization has impacted the Tampa Bay region as well. Over the past decade, our diverse community has emerged as one of the top ten fastest growing metropolitan areas in the country—attracting Fortune 500 companies, major athletic and cultural institutions, and top talent from around the world.

Tampa Bay is now one of the **top 20 largest metropolitan areas**

in the U.S., within the nation's third most populous state

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Tampa Bay sustains the **largest and most diversified port** in Florida (by size and tonnage)

It is no coincidence that Tampa Bay's growth has happened in parallel with the region's only Research 1 public research university, the University of South Florida.

From its inception, USF was conceived as a progressive, modern university that would be integrally connected to the development of the community around it. It embraced diversity early on with the first enrolled student being a woman and enrolling Black students shortly after that. Its degree offerings were designed to both meet professional workforce needs and enable practical innovation for economic progress.



USF continues to demonstrate a commitment to support upward economic mobility. One in four students is the first in their families to attend college. And the fact that there is no achievement gap for USF students based on race or socio-economic status is a defining achievement for the university, but more importantly, gives Tampa Bay a competitive advantage as the United States moves toward a majority-minority demographic.

The university's health focus is also deeply tied to the urban region. It was a push by Tampa-area chambers of commerce,

civic leaders, local and state elected officials, and physicians that helped establish USF's medical and nursing schools. Justification clearly stood on USF's location – within a thriving young city and proximity to a burgeoning population in need of the quality health care offered only at an academic medical center.

Clearly, USF's urban location—represented by three campuses in growing and densifying urban population settings—provides a natural laboratory to address grand challenges in collaboration with external partners and in ways that will provide new theoretical understandings relevant for researchers and practitioners across the nation.

## Population Annual Growth Rate

through 2025  
projected at

**1.39%**

vs. 1.33% (FL)  
and 0.72% (US)

## Business Establishment Start Rate

(number of new business as a share  
of existing businesses prior year)

**11.18% exceeded top  
U.S. markets**

(US = 9.15%)



The future of our nation will be determined by the strength and health of our urban centers. And the strength of our urban centers will be enabled by interconnectedness with strong urban research universities.

The infrastructure of these new urban centers will be one of creativity, innovation, bold optimism and boundless curiosity—an intellectual power grid to generate higher levels of progress and prosperity than we have ever known.

It is the generative mission of a research university, coupled with the mission of knowledge transmission, that separates USF from most other institutions of higher education. And it is its urban setting and commitment to community engagement that differentiates USF from most other research universities and provides the greatest opportunity for contribution to a bold future.

## **Net Migration Rate**

from 2018-2019

**1.72%**  
**exceeded top**  
**U.S. markets**

(US = 0.18%)

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**Top 10 market**  
for millennial in-migration

## Mission, Vision, Aspirations, and Goals

USF is dedicated to meeting the needs of our diverse student population through a high-quality and highly relevant curriculum and a steadfast spirit of service to the surrounding community through the development of strategic partnerships and highly relevant applied research. Our mission, vision, aspirations, and goals inform all aspects of both the strategic planning process and its implementation—reaffirming our commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, research and scholarly activity, community engagement, and equity in diversity and inclusion. Taken together, they serve as our blueprint for driving strategic initiatives and institutional commitments.

### Mission

Led by outstanding faculty and professional staff, the University of South Florida conducts innovative scholarship, creative activity, and basic and translational research, and delivers a world-class educational experience promoting the success of our talented and diverse undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. As a public metropolitan research university, USF, in partnership with our communities, serves the people of Florida, the nation, and the world by fostering intellectual inquiry and outcomes that positively shape the future—regionally, nationally, and globally.

### Vision

The University of South Florida is driven by a commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, research and scholarship, and creative works and innovation. Changing the world through educating leaders in a diverse, inclusive environment and developing knowledge and practice to address critical challenges, USF will be recognized within the ranks of the nation's top public research universities.



## Aspirations

Propel USF on a trajectory toward a USNWR Top 25 public ranking.

Advance USF towards AAU eligibility.

Improve student success outcomes and students' educational experiences.

Nurture faculty success through the identification and promulgation of best practices across the institution.

Increase institutional impact as an engine for innovation and economic growth.

## Goals

To promote the lifelong success of well-educated, highly skilled, and adaptable alumnae/alumni who lead enriched lives, are engaged citizens, and thrive in a dynamic global market.

To conduct high-impact research and innovation to advance frontiers of knowledge, solve global problems, and improve lives.

To be a major social and economic engine creating robust global, national, and regional partnerships to build a prosperous and sustainable future for our regional communities and the State of Florida.

To provide a safe, inclusive, and vibrant community for learning, discovery, creative activities, and transformative experiences enabled through adaptive design of physical, social, and digital environments.

To practice continuous visionary planning and sound management throughout USF to ensure a strong and sustainable financial base, and to adapt proactively to emerging opportunities in a dynamic environment.

# Signature Initiatives

CLICK ICON BELOW TO LINK DIRECTLY TO PAGE



**Global and  
National Security**



**Environmental,  
Oceanographic,  
and Sustainability  
Sciences**



**Health, Society  
and Biomedical  
Science**



**Social Justice  
and Human  
Rights**



**Design, Arts, and  
Performance**



**Analytics and  
Data Science**



**Biology  
2.0**

Representing converging themes applicable across all levels of teaching, research, and innovation across all three campuses, the Strategic Initiatives are intended to complement, not substitute for, disciplinary excellence at college, department, and faculty levels.

Designed to amplify USF's current disciplinary excellence, each initiative capitalizes on existing strengths and provides opportunity to advance our standing in research and national reputation—whether directly through investing in a particular area or indirectly by catalyzing existing efforts throughout the university. These signature initiatives allow for USF to further innovate its curriculum and offerings and better leverage its nationally recognized student success efforts in preparing graduates for high-demand and high-paying jobs in today's competitive landscape while also engaging local communities in life-long learning and attracting potential high-profile employers to the Tampa Bay area.

Each of the signature initiatives is broad enough to invite participation across multiple colleges of USF and virtually any faculty, staff, or student. Successful implementation of the signature initiatives will require designation of responsibility and accountability for the coordinated effort through respective networks of participants cutting across existing organizational structures. Without supplanting existing approaches to project development, the strategic initiatives will help integrate and add strategic coherence to USF's investments.

In developing and vetting each signature initiative, considerations included enrollment and workforce trends, the competitive landscape and unique sources of competitive advantage, durable sources of funding, influential external dynamics, and strategic fit – all while aligning to our mission, vision and aspirations. Each signature initiative was determined to leverage existing strengths while presenting opportunities for unique funding sources and competitive advantage.





## Global and National Security

Today's national security concerns include whole-of-society problems such as extremism, biothreats, climate change, disinformation, and cybercrime. National leaders have underscored the complex nature of contemporary security problems, both foreign and domestic. Our increasingly complex, globalized, and digitized/networked world demands robust and interdisciplinary analyses of large scale global and national security problems. The Global and National Security signature initiative combines research, community partnerships, academic programs, and federal funding opportunities to advance USF's ranking and national visibility. Given Tampa Bay is home to many prominent cultural institutions, a thriving port and hub for global trade, a vast tourism industry, MacDill Air Force Base, and cutting-edge scientific and medical centers, USF is uniquely positioned to be a global leader in areas of global and national security.

Security challenges of the 21st century will require and involve diverse expertise from the humanities and social sciences to STEM. By fostering relationships with military and government agencies, USF can differentiate and establish itself as a leader and in disciplines that support the Department of Defense's National Defense Strategy. Furthermore, leveraging USF's proximity to MacDill and other regional and statewide assets, such as Cyber Florida, will aide in building nationally ranked academic programs and centers of unique competitive advantage to address some of the world's most pressing issues.

By leveraging USF's unique academic assets, USF is positioned to provide innovative solutions to new security threats. Examples of current differentiation include the Institute of Applied Engineering's contract with the U.S. Special Operations Command at MacDill Air Force Base to provide new discoveries in areas including autonomous systems, and transportation, and infrastructure. Further, the School of Information delivers the Strategic and Cyber Intelligence Program, a federally designated Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence which is administered by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Various other relevant USF centers and institutes such as the Center for Analytics and Creativity, the Institute on Russia, the Center for Entrepreneurship and Counter Extremism, the Institute for the Study of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Institute on Black Life, the Center for Strategic and Diplomatic Studies, and Cyber Florida provide means to respond to global and national security challenges.



## Environmental, Oceanographic, and Sustainability Sciences

The issues of coastal degradation, climate change, declining natural resources, and sustainable urban development represent some of the great challenges facing our local communities and the world today. Research to understand and mitigate the potentially catastrophic economic losses from projected sea level rises and the effects on the marine ecosystems that constitute a cornerstone of Florida's economy require a concerted research and educational focus. Beach erosion, red tides, depletion of fish stocks, effects of aquaculture and inland farming, ocean acidification, environmental disasters (oil spills, failing wastewater infrastructure, environmentally detrimental energy sources), and other damages will have to be continuously studied to enable expeditious response to changing conditions.

The Environmental, Oceanographic, and Sustainability Sciences signature initiative combines AAU quality research with addressing critical state issues, most notably coastal environmental degradation, red tides, river, lake, and ocean pollution, expanding carbon footprints, and sea level rise, in order to protect our environment and tourism resources. By interconnecting research, business, academics, entrepreneurship, and partnerships, USF is positioned to provide cutting-edge research discovery and solutions to coastal degradation, climate change, and our sustainable future through various academic disciplines.

USF's location in a metropolitan city on the Gulf Coast of Florida, nearby consortia such as the St. Petersburg Ocean Team and the Florida Institute of Oceanography, proximity to state and federal agencies (e.g., National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Fish and Wildlife Commission, United States Geological Survey), a vibrant tourist industry, and other environmental and cultural features make USF the ideal university to host a signature initiative on Environmental, Oceanographic, and Sustainability Sciences. Existing campus resources such as the Center for Integrated Modeling and Analysis of Gulf Ecosystems, which has conducted unprecedented studies on the impacts of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, coupled with new initiatives such as the Hub for Flood Research and Innovation provide a unique competitive advantage for research and education in an applied environment. Moreover, partnerships with interdisciplinary research centers such as the Center for Ocean Technology, Clean Energy Research Center, Center for Urban Transportation, Center for Ocean Mapping and Innovation, and Sustainability Innovation Center provide for further opportunities for achieving national prominence.





## Health, Society, and Biomedical Science

USF seeks to maintain and improve health and well-being for all individuals while promoting equity of access to quality affordable care, emerging treatments, innovation, and better quality of life, particularly among diverse communities in the Tampa Bay region, the state of Florida and beyond. Building on existing strengths in areas spanning the biomedical sphere, including medical innovation, drug delivery and discovery, translation, treatment, disease discovery and prevention, and biomedical engineering, the Health, Society, and Biomedical Science signature initiative will leverage affiliations with a broad, diverse array of providers, researchers, educators, and partners specific to the Tampa Bay region who embrace the vision of an integrative health community to promote social justice, produce world class research, and educate a resilient, culturally conscious workforce. Additionally, strengths in other spheres include health promotion and disease prevention, behavioral health, social work and aging, health economics, informatics, and communication, migration, food security, water quality, and health humanities allow for interdigitation throughout the university – providing opportunities for unique differentiation.

The health research and education portfolio at USF is represented across colleges, community partners, multiple programs, centers, and institutes. Health construed more broadly engages a wide range of colleges and programs including USF Health, the Colleges of Arts & Sciences, Behavioral & Community Sciences, and Engineering. USF's downtown Morsani College of Medicine and Center for Advanced Medical Learning and Simulation brings students and faculty closer to the college's primary teaching hospital, Tampa General Hospital (TGH) – with USF's incoming MD students boasting the highest median MCAT scores of any medical school in Florida, and new physician scientists recruited for the Heart Institute have helped USF's National Institutes of Health research rankings rise to the top 50.

The economic potential and demographic profile of the Tampa Bay metro area, the state of Florida, and USF's institutional and community partnerships are also key to USF's upward trajectory. Central to this is the university's enhanced affiliation agreement with TGH which establishes the first clinically integrated academic medical center on the west coast of Florida. This center is strengthened by an integrated office of clinical research to enhance collaborations and efficiency and will bring the benefits of academic medicine to patients and support world-class healthcare research and education.

The Health, Society, and Biomedical Science signature initiative sub-focus areas include Emerging Infectious Diseases in the Anthropocene; Genomics and Precision Medicine; Emerging Biomedical Technologies; Drug Discovery & Therapeutic Delivery; Neurosciences & Behavioral Health; Cardiovascular Sciences; and Health in Society. Analysis of the health enterprise at USF, located near world-class hospitals and health facilities, reveals a tremendous number of opportunities to connect existing strengths with areas of unique competitive advantage through research, education, and patient care. A key enabler here is the university's longstanding relationship with the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute (MCC), a National Cancer Institute-designated cancer center located on the USF Tampa campus. This relationship includes joint faculty appointments to enhance opportunities for collaboration and shared research infrastructure to create efficiencies. USF also serves as MCC's degree-granting entity, which includes a highly regarded PhD program in cancer biology.



## Social Justice and Human Rights

Growing attention to social justice and human rights reflects escalating concerns related to racism, discrimination, immigration, criminal justice, and violence. USF's competitive advantage in social justice and human rights rests in the confluence of several unique considerations including several existing and community-engaged centers and institutes already providing support for social justice and human rights across all colleges; our urban location (natural laboratory for researching social problems); our Carnegie-classification (evidence of our robust community engagement); our public K-12 school district size and diversity (among the most racially and ethnically diverse in the country); and our geographic/demographic considerations (access to Latin America and the Caribbean and increasingly diverse population). As demographic shifts in the U.S. predict that the country is becoming more urban, USF faculty research and engagement within the already existing urban and diverse Tampa Bay region allows USF to provide thought leadership and solution-oriented research that can guide researchers and practitioners across the nation.

The Social Justice and Human Rights signature initiative builds on national priorities and our ability to cultivate business partnerships and research engagement to address urban development. USF has been a key partner in the emergence of a burgeoning community innovation ecosystem that is rooted in a concern for social justice and human rights - providing an opportunity to collaborate with faculty to ensure that the revitalization of urban communities of color is equitable. Further support for an infrastructure to promote faculty and student research that is solution-focused and would increase workforce readiness, thereby contributing to our institutional and regional competitiveness.

Overall, our strategic location and competitive advantages in the area of social justice and human rights fully leverage existing academic programs and broaden the contours of how we conceptualize social justice to include questions of identity, culture, and history. Furthermore, the Institute on Black Life, the Institute for the Study of Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Humanities Center, as well as USF Libraries, which has rich African American life and LGBTQ+ collections and the Holocaust and Genocide Studies Collections, illustrates how to further support interdisciplinary global and social justice education.



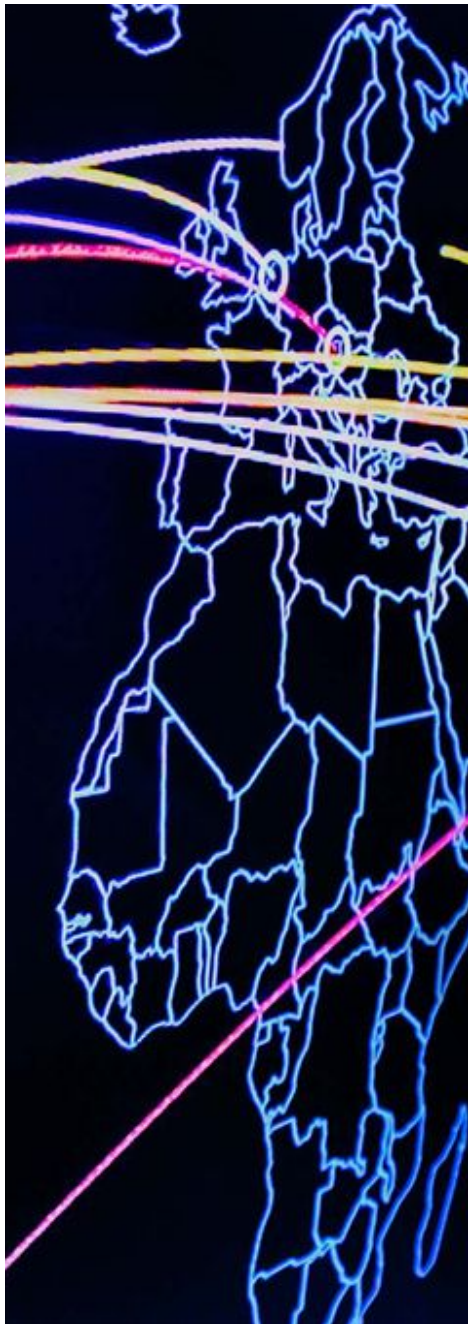
## Design, Arts, and Performance

Creativity and ingenuity are at the very heart of advancing communication, industries, environments, performance, and systems designs and critical for all aspects of industry and community. By crosscutting research with the arts, humanities and social sciences, the Design, Arts, and Performance signature initiative is intended to be orthogonal: where overlap exists, this initiative is complementary, catalyzing, or both.

Design includes concepts such as universal design involving that of buildings, products, or environments to make them accessible to all or others such as design for manufacturing which is a general engineering practice to design products so that that they are more efficiently and easily manufacturable. Arts and performance cover the visual arts, music, dance and theatre, mass communication involving new media or social media, and sports performance and management. Each of these design areas is unique, but they are collectively undergirded by an education steeped in creative exploration and experimentation. The interdisciplinary nature of art and design addresses issues of equity and representation through the growing fields of user experience, information technology, multimedia exploration and the interactive experience, which help to tell a broad range of stories. This particular initiative makes clear the vital role of the arts supporting several of the other signature initiatives including, but not limited to, social justice, climate change, and the creation of livable/sustainable communities.

Given the prominence of the Tampa Bay region's economic activity, affinity for sports, destination for entertainment venues, its numerous museums, and institutions infused with arts, creativity, and innovation, this signature initiative draws upon existing strengths that are unique to USF's communities in Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Sarasota-Manatee. Through contributions to the revitalized arts and culture scene throughout the Tampa Bay area, specifically through Graphicstudio and the School of Music's multiple ensembles, USF can leverage existing strengths to achieve national prominence. The Florida Center for Community Design and Research-- an integral part of USF's School of Architecture and Community Design is a statewide research center working with over 100 communities in Florida. Further, the Center for Analytics and Creativity, the Institute for Artificial Intelligence + X, the Florida Center for Community Design and Research, and the Center for Urban Transportation Research demonstrate how design, art, and performance channel curiosity and the embody boundary-breaking collaborations. Moreover, USF's campuses in St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee have centered the thriving and expanding arts communities as anchors in their engagement and enhancement initiatives as ways of embedding USF into their respective design districts.





## Analytics and Data Science: Integrating USF Digitally

Information technology is one of the most transformative forces in our society today. Globally, governments and organizations spend close to \$4 trillion on information technology, and technological changes such as artificial intelligence and machine learning are transforming a swathe of industries raising new questions for how we learn, teach, work, research, fight wars and epidemics, and engage with each other. Further, the State of Florida is #3 in the nation for cyberstate innovation and tech businesses. The current information revolution will challenge our students to acquire new skills, such as digital intelligence - the ability to make sense of new and emerging technologies and tremendous amounts of data and information that are collected by millions of sensors in our environment.

The Analytics and Data Science signature initiative will produce graduates and researchers who are comfortable with data and different flavors of analytics to reimagine the future of their organizations, industries, or disciplines. Analytics and data science are central to many departments, degree programs, and interdisciplinary initiatives that rely on both traditional and emerging technology domains from big data, artificial intelligence, environmental science, cybersecurity, to health informatics. This initiative seeks to attract and retain top talent to advance research in analytics and data science while training a new generation.

By leveraging research, coupled with degree programs or alternative credentials that employer's value, USF has unique assets in the areas of integrated and transformative analytics and data science. For example, the Health Informatics Institute leverages biomedical science, statistics, clinical trial and study design and coordination, software and data engineering, big data and high-performance computing, and integrative bioinformatics. In addition, the Institute for Data Analytics and Visualization provides consulting services in the areas of data analytics and data visualization and the Center for Analytics and Creativity facilitate the discovery and dissemination of insights through the power of analytical and creative thinking including fostering a climate of innovation and analytics throughout academics and research.



## Biology 2.0

Advances in biological sciences coupled with technological innovations in computing, data sciences, automation, and artificial intelligence are together ushering in a new era of biological research. This new paradigm, Biology 2.0 (BIO 2.0), is poised to leverage the confluence of these areas to fundamentally shift how to understand and harness biology by enabling computation-driven, rule-free biological exploration and engineered, design-oriented solutions that harness biology. As biology underpins health, biomedical research, and many other disciplines, the BIO 2.0 signature initiative provides tremendous opportunity to exploit advances to better understand the processes that sustain life and enable biological innovation. Promoting campus-wide collaboration and strengthening programs allows for improved national standing and opportunity for areas traditionally outside biology to widen research applications.

From the environment and climate change, energy, food supply and agriculture to healthcare, ethics, and policy, biology's central role in the human condition places it in unique standing as an integral component of grand challenges facing humankind. Through the BIO 2.0, USF will play a leading role in developing biological innovations to address these needs and better understand the living world. By leveraging its existing strengths and infrastructure, the university is well positioned to act and capture the benefits of the biological revolution while simultaneously contributing to the advancement of biological sciences, dissemination of fundamental knowledge, increasing collaboration and diversity, and training the next generation of leaders in this field.

The BIO 2.0 signature initiative will place USF at the forefront of this biological revolution by creating networks and leveraging existing pockets of excellence in different colleges and units such as the College of Engineering, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Morsani College of Medicine, the College of Marine Science, the College of Public Health, the Patel College of Global Sustainability, the Taneja College of Pharmacy, and the Muma College of Business. The development and commercialization of technologies resulting from research through centers and institutes such as Institute of Applied Engineering, Institute for Artificial Intelligence + X, Center for Entrepreneurship, Center for Molecular Diversity in Drug Design, Discovery and Development, Nanotechnology Research and Education Center, among others, will serve to strengthen USF and Florida's role in the national and global economy. Our strategic location and partnerships with organizations such as the Tampa I/P, the Florida High Tech Corridor Council, St. Pete Innovation District, and BioFlorida allow for advanced research of the confluence of biology and technology.

## Institutional Core Commitments

The following institutional commitments are foundational to driving signature initiatives as well as achieving our institutional goals. While they are themselves sources of sustainable differentiation, they are also essential and powerful enablers of any activity the university elects to pursue.

 Faculty Excellence	 Athletics
 Student Experience	 Research Infrastructure
 Staff Distinction	 Institutional Infrastructures: Libraries and Information Technologies
 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	 The Value of the Arts
 Global Engagement	 Sustainability
 Operational Excellence	 Community Engagement

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## FACULTY EXCELLENCE

Every great university is built on a strong foundation of faculty excellence, and USF is no different in this regard. The rationale and institutional relevance of pursuing faculty excellence originates in the basic truth that everything we value as an organization is directly influenced by our faculty. This includes teaching and learning in the classroom to inspire our students and ensure their retention, graduation and career progression, as well as research and innovation leading to the generation of new knowledge and economic impact in the region and beyond.

Faculty play a critical role in university administration and shared governance. They engage our community partners and build national and global partnerships. Ultimately, they are responsible for ensuring our institutional reputation. In each of these aspects of multi-faceted faculty excellence there is an intimate link to key performance indicators that drive USF's success. Collectively, faculty excellence is key to our institutional aspirations of Top-25 ranking among public universities and membership in AAU.



## STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Having gained national recognition for its use of predictive analytics and the development of a care management system, USF will continue to advance a student success movement built on the principle that every student admitted to USF will succeed. By creating an institutional culture of care, USF achieved unprecedented gains in graduation rates while reducing and in many cases eliminating achievement gaps by race, ethnicity, and income. USF will maintain its position as an innovator in both thought and practices designed to improve student learning outcomes, accelerate completion rates, minimize debt, and prepare students for lifelong success in their chosen careers.

As USF continues its upward trajectory, students will benefit from the fact that USF is a comprehensive multi-campus research university. While the curriculum necessarily remains the province of the faculty, our Principles of Community enjoin us to provide an environment contributing to student learning and development within and beyond the classroom. This will include an emphasis on critical thinking, freedom of expression, communication skills, ethical standards and their application, community engagement and participation in a democracy.

At the same time, the care management approach will be expanded and enhanced to ensure the delivery of the right support, to the right student, at the right time. Through the development and delivery of more high impact programs and practices, USF will ensure that more students have opportunities to engage in internships, scientific field and laboratory work, research experiences, service learning, education abroad, and other experiential learning opportunities.

Each of USF's campuses has its own unique academic and cultural strengths, and students are able to select their own learning, research and campus life experiences based on which one they attend. Moreover, students have access to a broader array of degree programs by discipline, level, and mode of delivery.

No matter which campus they attend, students will be expected to engage in intramural clubs, student organizations, living learning communities, art exhibitions, musical performances, multicultural events, homecoming, intercollegiate athletic events, recreational activities, and other co-curricular opportunities that enrich the undergraduate experience. Through rigorous and relevant academic and co-curricular activities, USF students will graduate with the skills, experiences and resilience required to succeed in an increasingly competitive and diverse global market.



## STAFF DISTINCTION

USF's people are at the heart of the university's competitive advantage. We are committed to excellence in our students, faculty, and staff, reinforced by an inclusive environment where innovation and freedom of intellectual curiosity can flourish. We drive sustainable results through a high-performing, inclusively diverse, and engaged workforce while integrating a culture USF can leverage as a competitive advantage. Our commitment to people creates a value proposition where USF is an employer of choice with a top workplace brand and best in industry talent.

USF must continue to differentiate itself by attracting, retaining, engaging, and developing the best talent for the institution. To sustain this momentum, we must:

- Prioritize unification of strategic and cultural success by aligning the organizational situation and people trends to meet the future needs of USF
- Close gaps to growth for current and future talent to achieve the “multiplier effect” we need to drive performance standards
- Focus investments to build internal bench strength and leader effectiveness achieved through understanding people trends such as turnover, talent availability, and changing demographics in USF's internal and external communities
- Create organizational leadership drivers—the foundation for engineering workforce competency standards—to accelerate and reward a growth mindset
- Connect and communicate behaviors that build organizational effectiveness while aligning standards for readiness, potential, and proficiency in our people performance
- Embrace innovative workplace practices appropriate for the nature of work, including technology-enabled flexibility





## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The University of South Florida values ‘diversity with inclusion’ and ‘excellence with equity’ as core elements of our Principles of Community. These values are embedded in each of the signature initiatives in recognition that the success of each requires meaningful engagement with diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Beyond its presence in our academic endeavors, these values must also be embedded in our organizational infrastructure and should further drive not just who we attract and who we hire, but also how we develop relationships and in what ways we invest in the success and advancement of diverse populations in our broader communities.

At USF, diversity exists along numerous axes, including gender identity, race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, sexual identity, veteran status, disability, among many other considerations. With our core values in mind, racism, sexual violence, discrimination, and other acts of intolerance are rejected and treated with accountability to create a safe and welcoming environment where students, faculty, and staff can flourish both professionally and academically. Our success with eliminating the student achievement gap across race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status, indicates that we have a strong foundation upon which to build a model that is based on equity rather than diversity alone. We endeavor to develop sustainable initiatives, policies, and programs to engage and amplify the voices of diverse students, faculty, and staff in order to ensure that all members feel a sense of belonging, are represented in leadership, and have an opportunity to succeed. Closer attention to the recruitment, retention, and advancement of diverse students, faculty, and staff, as well as increased utilization of diverse suppliers, are key aspects of the intentional efforts necessary to concretize these values.





## GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

Internationalization is essential to world-class research and educational delivery in our globally connected world. Set in both an urban and global context, USF's mission as a public research university includes a deep commitment to addressing challenges facing communities locally, nationally, and across the world that prioritizes intercultural awareness and global literacy.

Our programs emphasize pervasive and sustainable internationalization programs that prioritize globally informed knowledge generation, innovation through research and scholarship, mutually beneficial international partnerships, inbound and outbound student and faculty global mobility, and events and programs that bridge geographical, cultural, and political boundaries. To promote an international culture at USF, globalize student success, enhance international initiatives within the university realm, and deepen global engagement with the Tampa Bay community, we must remain committed to:

- Facilitating and fostering international research collaboration that contributes to the betterment of society
- Intentional integration of global content into academic learning and enhanced access to global experiences, on campus and abroad, by all students
- Partnerships that provide avenues for student and faculty collaboration in support of high-impact research and learning outcomes
- Supporting and recognition for faculty, student, and staff international activities that enhance USF's identity and reputation
- Building and strengthening global operations systems that support the university international activities



## OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Our continued trajectory in pursuit of excellence requires a set of shared, courageous aspirations as well as a clear-eyed understanding of our operational reality. To achieve our superordinate goals, USF's historical lack of complacency must also turn inward with a careful look at resources, internal processes, and our institutional risk management posture.

This begins with efforts to mature our university business systems and infrastructure, revisit and revise our policies and procedures to improve operational efficiencies, and generally become more planful rather than reactive. In addition, we will prioritize transparent financial stewardship that supports strategic investments while maintaining focus on further strengthening USF's commitment to academic excellence. Operational excellence will also be reflected in our ongoing commitment to (and national recognition in) supplier diversity.

Accelerating our rate of progress will also inevitably necessitate taking additional risk. Approaching risk proactively from an enterprise perspective enables not only responsible risk management, but even provides for embracing risk as opportunity. Enterprise Risk Management is increasingly understood (and wielded) as both a necessary and a strategic tool for identifying, assessing, and managing risks in higher education.

USF already enjoys a low energy barrier to internal collaboration—amongst faculty and our academic leaders, and across organizations and disciplines. However, refining how we work in supporting our core mission should result in a virtuous cycle where innovation enables operational efficiencies and engenders a healthy work culture.



## ATHLETICS

USF Athletics serves as an additional marketing arm by generating widespread national, regional, and local exposure to the university. A strengthened brand and increased recognition of USF Athletics will benefit student enrollment, alumni relations, campus-wide fundraising efforts, school spirit for students, faculty and staff, and help build a connection with the local and regional communities.

Moreover, Athletics can be tied to the creation of a sense of community and shared experience among the students, staff, alumni, supporters, and faculty. Both spectator and participatory sports should continue to be integrated into the life of the student as a means of dealing with potential isolation and other negative social factors that may cause alienation and poor academic performance. A proper balance of study and healthy social activities must be promoted by USF. Sports can be an important partner in this community-building process.



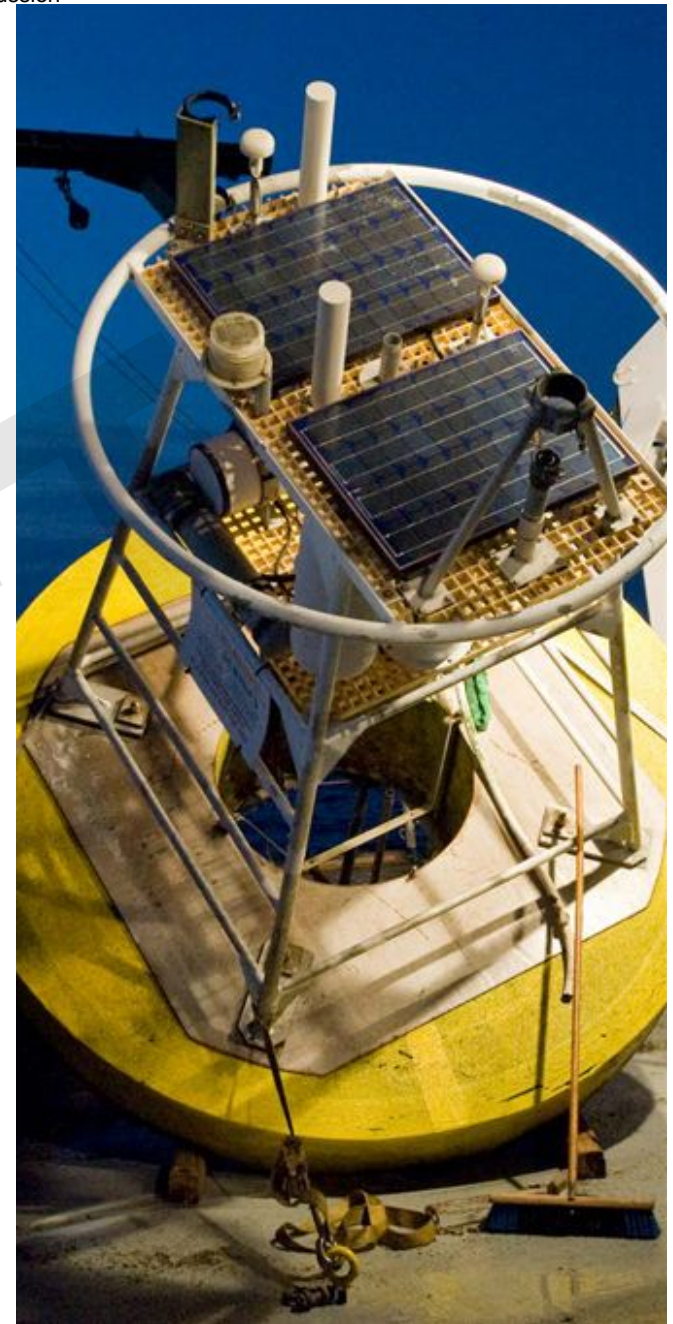


## RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

Research infrastructure is a critical factor in enabling transformative research and innovation, catalyzing local and regional economic development, and in providing state-of-the-art learning opportunities for current and future generations of students and researchers alike. As a Carnegie R1 university, USF has developed a robust research infrastructure that supports high impact transdisciplinary research and scholarship across the institution as well as providing resources for external research partners.

Institutional research infrastructure can be broadly defined as resources required by the research community to conduct high-impact, top-level research and scholarship and includes administrative support (e.g., regulatory compliance, contract and award management, data management); major scientific equipment; knowledge-based resources (collections, archives, or information structures); high-performance computing and information technology; and advanced research buildings and laboratories.

As USF continues on a trajectory of research portfolio growth, as well as innovation and entrepreneurship, continuous resource investment in institutional research facilities and administration is critical.



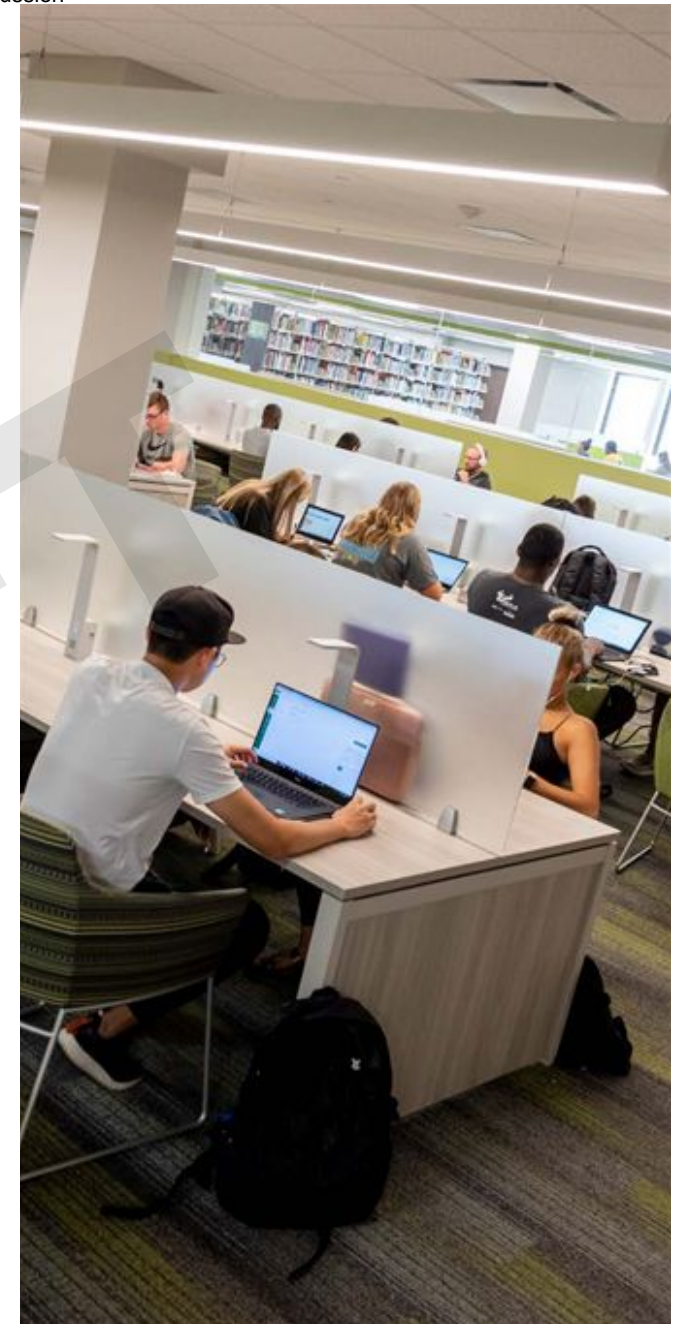


## INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURES: LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

Over the past 20 years, USF has been very successful in improving its research portfolio, vaulting it from a commuter school to the fastest rising university in the country. While the university has been quite successful in growing its research programs over the past two decades, reaching the elite level of the AAU will require USF to support the architecture of academic excellence by improving its underlying research infrastructure.

The Libraries and USF Information Technology (IT) focus on providing the support infrastructure for these expanding research initiatives and their constituent faculties. Both the Libraries and IT must be increasingly incorporated into the pursuit of the university's aspirations—indeed, they are together an existential sine qua non for a contemporary, competitive urban research university. Operationally, this requires modernizing our Libraries infrastructure, as well as HR, Finance, and student information systems. Moreover, myriad operational efficiencies may be found across the university by further examining where we can leverage technology to automate processes, and utilize the Libraries for centralized data management, curation, and dissemination.

USF Libraries and IT should be seen as both essential operational support units and, increasingly, institutional assets that provide sources of sustainable differentiation. Leveraging the Libraries enhanced service models and data management capabilities can lay the foundation for Association of Research Libraries membership; and the integration of strategic analytics into USF's operational culture will deliver not only organizational efficiency and effectiveness, but a persistent competitive advantage.



***Libraries:***

To deepen the support for USF's mission, the Libraries layer service innovation on top of traditional excellence in knowledge curation. This service-oriented culture helps solidify the infrastructure for research and learning by moving beyond the traditional role of knowledge service provider and engaging in the full lifecycle and activity range of knowledge creation. The Libraries undergird all aspects of the university and provide crucial support to both individual and institutional projects, aspirations, and goals. Whether it is through physical collections, electronic collections, data management and metadata support, support for textbook affordability, data literacy, research support, data visualizations, or statistical analyses, the Libraries are truly foundational to USF's signature initiatives.

By utilizing enhanced service models called Research Platform Teams, faculty and students will be provided with expertise in library and information science and deep subject-area proficiency. Further, these teams work with faculty on digital scholarship initiatives, collection creation, bibliometrics and altmetrics to assist faculty's impact management and support their tenure and promotion, intellectual property and copyright expertise. Research Platform Teams also can set faculty and students up with individuals who have functional expertise in areas like data management, GIS services, statistical analysis, writing and publication support, and possess the subject expertise sufficient to teach credit bearing courses, supervise interns, and engage actively in departmental research in order to obtain external funding.



### *Information Technology:*

While IT already provides operational support to our employees and technology support for delivering the university's educational mission, this central unit possesses both infrastructure and subject matter expertise that could be better utilized to support research and scholarship. There are three key ways to realize this:

1. Provide IT with resources to directly support faculty and other researchers with training and help in taking advantage of AI and machine learning, analytical tools, high performance computing infrastructure, and other data science resources, rather than leaving faculty to learn about and utilize these resources on their own.
2. Work with faculty to incorporate IT resources and personnel into research proposals and projects. These direct costs would help offset IT expenses and provide additional resources to invest in USF's computing, data visualization, and related "big data" capabilities.
3. Recognizing that companies increasingly prefer to license data over patents or other forms of intellectual property, IT can become an internal partner to help build and maintain clean, accurate, and unique datasets that would confer competitive advantage in proposals while helping to attract new faculty and graduate students.

Beyond these pragmatic shifts, there is an opportunity for USF to take a new approach to the way it employs analytics by moving from being driven by single events and tactical requests to a sophisticated and proactive posture. Using IT to advance strategic analytics would help ensure that we are not only able to successfully implement our strategic plan, but that we are habitually strategic due to intentional decision-making that is based on actionable intelligence. Crucially, strategic analytics not only plans for data and analytics that are created based on the needs and critical questions the university is grappling with, but also recognizes the value of coupling internal knowledge with external information—namely, competitive intelligence and market analysis—in order to deliver truly decision ready information to leadership.





## THE VALUE OF THE ARTS

USF recognizes and celebrates how creativity and exposure to the richness of the arts are essential elements to the liberal arts experience. The study and appreciation of the arts through performance, practice, and research is vital for cultural understanding, enrichment, and awareness. USF is uniquely situated to integrate multiple contributions toward the Creative Economy and Built Environment throughout the Tampa Bay region and beyond.



## SUSTAINABILITY

USF recognizes the importance of meeting the needs of our metropolitan institution while minimizing our environmental impact. USF maintains its pursuit of environmental stewardship and sustainability through improving the environment by means of building green, improving our energy efficiency, saving water, planting native species, using green cleaning, recycling, funding renewable energy projects, and educating students, staff, and the community.





## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is a purposeful means to advance learning and knowledge for social change and is a fundamental component of an urban research university. Intentional engagement with the public and private sectors enhances the quality of research, teaching, and service; delivers meaningful experience and skills to students; and prepares them to enter the job market or pursue graduate level studies. It also fosters collaborations among units across USF and strengthens the relationships that the university has with its external stakeholders by providing a platform that enables faculty and students to work together with community partners in efforts to find solutions to pressing problems.

*According to the Carnegie Foundation, “Community engagement describes the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.*

*The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.”*

## Key Performance Indicators and Accountability

Strategic plans are designed as instruments that inform leadership decision making about prioritizing and deploying resources to achieve institutional aspirations. This plan is intended to serve as USF's institution-wide vision by capturing our mission, 10-year aspirations, core commitments, and sources of sustainable competitive advantage. Presented here as a blueprint, this document is not intended to serve as a tactical investment or implementation plan for colleges or administrative units. However, by establishing institutional expectations and standards, each college and administrative unit is positioned to create their own unique strategy to pursue disciplinary academic excellence.



Nevertheless, we recognize that what gets measured is what gets managed, improved, and ultimately accomplished.

USF's remarkable rise in recognition and standing is reflected in state, national, and international rankings. This trajectory has been set through deliberate actions stemming from the development of multi-year university work plans, various annual reports, and focused performance monitoring. These measures, as captured in our annual Accountability Plan, performance-based funding and Preeminence metrics, key AAU indicators, and USNWR rankings, help inform strategic planning, budgeting, and other policy decisions.

We remain committed to accountability through the highest levels of academic excellence and high-impact research. While this plan is not a budgeting or implementation document, it will remain central in guiding how we approach and achieve high levels of success.

## Conclusion: The USF Compact

Precursors to the modern American research university can be traced back to the Morrill Act of 1862, which codified the notion that access to public education could change the citizenry of the United States by embedding it in the community. Particularly since WWII, the United States has flourished in an unprecedented productive and enduring partnership between the federal government and the country's research universities. For public research universities, there also exists a social compact that promises to provide upward social and economic mobility for individuals even while these institutions transform the economies of their region or state and improve the quality of life for society.

As a growing metropolis and cosmopolitan city, Tampa Bay's demographics and geographic location provide us with a distinct competitive advantage, and opportunity to cultivate a prosperous and equity-minded ecosystem that leverages the University of South Florida as an anchor institution in this urban setting. Indeed, USF's core mission is in direct attendance to and service of its communities as well as our regional and national challenges. That mission drives us to pursue academic excellence and economic development with an equity lens, and position us to achieve a significant impact in the community with more sustained and intentional investments and interactions.

Thus, this strategic plan presents a blueprint for realizing the university's goals and aspirations by capitalizing on our unique metropolitan setting and regional assets. It is designed to resonate with and be accessible to any member of the USF community—faculty, staff, and students.

But it is also a call for engagement, because it recognizes and honors the reciprocal nature of the relationship between the university and the communities we serve. Just as USF's medical and nursing schools were established with direct support from Tampa-area chambers of commerce, civic leaders, local and state elected officials, and physicians, so too does USF's future turn on the involvement of its community partners. For excellence to capitalize on opportunity, we will need continual support from alumni, business and community partners, philanthropists, and state leaders.

At its core, this strategic blueprint is as much commitment as plan—an institutional compact with our community, the state, the nation. It is intended to help the University of South Florida deliver on this compact and find ways to continuously become a better version of itself, so that we may in turn continuously contribute to our community, society and the world at large.



# UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2031

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