



MEMORANDUM

To: USC Community

From: John A. Silvester, President, Academic Senate
Jennifer Gerson, President, Staff Assembly
Andrew Menard, President, Undergraduate Student Government
Yohey Tokumitsu, President, Graduate Student Government

Date: September 30, 2014

Subject: Mindful USC

Wellness and the promotion of mental and physical health are longstanding priorities of the faculty, staff, and student communities at USC. A new interdisciplinary initiative is now being launched, *Mindful USC*, that will focus on positive health outcomes and innovative learning experiences for our campus community, especially in terms of stress reduction, workplace happiness, emotional intelligence, and creative expression. As a university initiative, *Mindful USC* will include mindfulness courses, practice groups, research opportunities, faculty workshops, media resources, public programs, and special events.

Our university community is an inspiring place to teach and learn but, amid the constant whirlwind of activity and information, it can be challenging to feel fully present in our lives and in our work. Proponents of mindfulness explain it is “an accepting awareness of and enhanced attention to the constant stream of lived experience. Being mindful increases engagement with the present moment and allows for a clearer understanding of how thoughts and emotions can impact our health and quality of life.” (Mindfulness Research Guide)

The pedagogical component of *Mindful USC* will feature regular interdisciplinary workshops hosted by the Center for Excellence in Teaching to support faculty members who use contemplative teaching approaches in the classroom. There will be free mindfulness courses at both UPC and HSC open to students, faculty, and staff interested in developing a mindfulness practice of their own. The initiative will also showcase research being conducted at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, supported by federal and foundation funding, on the science behind mindfulness. While a number of other colleges and universities have mindfulness programs, *Mindful USC* is unique in its comprehensive approach to research, teaching, and practice.

Mindful USC's inaugural event will take place at USC on October 22nd and will feature Chade-Meng Tan, Chief Happiness Officer at Google and author of the acclaimed mindfulness book *Search Inside Yourself*. For more information about this event, and to sign up for mindfulness courses, please visit mindful.usc.edu.

The Steering Committee for *Mindful USC* is co-chaired by Dean Varun Soni and Professor Allen Weiss, and includes leaders from the Center for Excellence in Teaching, Center for Work and Family Life, Institute for Integrative Health, Levan Institute for Humanities and Ethics, Engemann Health Center, Office of Talent Management, and the Office of Religious Life. The Steering Committee also includes faculty members from the Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts, and Science, the Marshall School of Business, the Keck School of Medicine, the Gould School of Law, the School of Cinematic Arts, and the School of Social Work.