

**State of the University – Sept 9, 2009:**

Welcome to all of you here in the Marshall Student Center, and welcome to everyone listening online.

As I do every year in this address, I invite you to imagine the next steps as we build an optimistic and visionary future for the University of South Florida System. This year our task is even more important. We know that as a premier public research university we're being asked to help the state, the nation and the world build a healthy and sustainable future.

At this point, I want to recognize one of the key people who will shape our strategic direction. This summer we conducted a national search to select the provost and executive vice president for the University of South Florida. The search was led by our Vice President for Research and Innovation, Karen Holbrook, and by our past chair of the Faculty Senate, Michael Barber.

Today, I'm delighted to announce that I've appointed one of USF's greatest advocates, the architect of our strategic plan, Dr. Ralph Wilcox, as Provost and Executive Vice President. Please rise and congratulate Provost Wilcox and please welcome his wife Barbara and his children Rachael, Rebecca and Brian.

During the search, a member of our Board of Trustees commented that Dr. Wilcox is not just a great citizen of the university, he is an asset for this entire community. Provost Wilcox has guided the team of our great deans, chairs, faculty and staff who have put heart and soul into the success of our students. We've seen dramatic advances in student SAT scores, ACT scores, GPAs and in the number of national merit scholars. We've seen the success of the Honors College. We've seen deep commitment from our students to undergraduate research.

In the last year, this team developed the innovative new PhDs in government, history and sociology, each linked to one another. Provost Wilcox then shepherded these through the Board of Governors, along with the Doctorate in Pharmacy. And this Fall the team hired 100 new faculty for the Tampa campus, despite the cuts to our budget.

Thank you to the search committee, and again, congratulations Dr. Wilcox.

Now, I want to tell you why I began by saying that the nation has challenged us.

This year I am the Chair of the American Council on Education, the largest higher education association in America. I know that people are looking to higher education, to advanced research, and to our talented graduates, to make life

better. What we do in a major metropolitan region will make a difference for the world. What happens at USF matters.

I was recently speaking with Colleen Chappell, who is one of our most loyal alumni, and managing partner of a superb communications firm in Tampa. Colleen knows USF. She employs our graduates. She is a proud bull.

Colleen told me: "I hope all of USF knows what it's like to see my university standing strong as a beacon in the storm."

Colleen went on to say: "What USF is doing in difficult times makes a huge difference to everyone else."

This message from our alum is for all of you listening today. Thank you all for working hard every day as this university went through one of the most dire financial crises it has faced. And thank you for being a beacon for higher education.

While we still have a lean budget ahead, let me offer an observation of what it takes to lead during tough times.

I believe USF has been fiscally conservative and visionary at the same time. Two years ago when we saw the cuts coming, we took the time to plan strategically. We cut expenses without cutting faculty. In my office alone we cut one-million-dollars. And we ensured that every hire met our strategic plan.

Unfortunately, our predictions for state budget cuts were right on target. Over two years, we absorbed the tremendous cut of almost 29-percent of our state support, nearly 100-million-dollars. And we know it's not over.

We begin this year knowing that one-time money from federal stabilization funds will end in 18 months. That means we must refine and streamline our financial systems. Last year we hired Jim Hyatt as Vice President for Business and Finance. He has begun perhaps the most difficult task facing the USF System. Along with Pappas Consulting, he is untangling our history of cost allocation and establishing a clear, transparent process for understanding how our funding supports our missions.

We also have to make USF as user-friendly as possible. As vice president for information technology, Michael Pearce has been reducing the confusion of multiple passwords for every computerized system at USF. For that alone, he deserves our thanks. To implement the new technology fee, Vice President Pearce listened to students, faculty and administrators. He has made sure that fee is dedicated to enhancing modern learning technology.

There are many more examples of how we've dealt with the recession over the past two years. This Fall we want to check in with you and ask you how it's

going. To do that, we'll conduct an online climate survey. This survey includes our attention to fairness, diversity, equity and inclusivity. USF now ranks seventh among our national peers with 23-percent minority faculty members. This is a significant accomplishment. We could not have claimed this a decade ago, although all major research universities have room to improve. We don't want budget pressures to force us backwards, and that's why the climate survey will be critical.

We're also committed to initiating domestic partner benefits at USF. WE believe it's the right thing to do, and we'll work to make it happen this year.

Now let me talk about being optimistic and visionary.

We have the vision to define the USF System in innovative ways to meet the needs of our region.

We have the vision to integrate research across our university.

We have the vision to lead the world in creating healthy and sustainable communities.

We have the vision to build student success into everything we do, including research, student life, and athletics.

And we have the vision to say that a modern university must be a global university.

I know our strategic plan is ambitious. I know it is even more ambitious during a recession. But every indicator says we are right on target. Look at the terrific class of students we accepted this Fall. Look at the speed with which our investigators have gained new research grants. This is a university system that continues to surprise anyone who's not paying attention.

When we built our strategic plan, we added a series of goals that guide our actions. I've discussed our goal of student success. Now I want to touch on the other goals and priorities.

The University of South Florida has launched a vision for a system of regional campuses and institutions that will all be separately accredited under the USF banner. We know that this region, encompassing Tampa Bay, can be the state's powerhouse. We have 25-percent of Florida's legislators here. USF can be the glue that brings this region together.

USF AND USF-St. Petersburg are accredited by SACS within the USF System. Now USF Sarasota-Manatee has applied for accreditation, and USF Polytechnic will submit its application in December.

That will complete the USF System constellation of institutions, each with strength and depth, and each with a different mission. Through a retreat this Fall, we will more clearly define the workings of our USF system.

I'm appreciative of regional chancellor Margaret Sullivan's accomplishment in renewing full accreditation for USF-St. Petersburg. She's given us strong advice in shaping the total USF System. USF-St. Petersburg has successfully filled its residence hall and opened USF's first green building. The new 10-million-dollar Science and Technology Building meets the strict standards for certification in energy and environmental design.

Vice-president Arthur Guilford has built new depth of learning in USF Sarasota-Manatee, and developed a huge teaching site even further south in Venice. During the year, USF Sarasota-Manatee has held community conversations on citizenship and democracy, and created its Institute on Public Policy and Leadership.

Vice-president Marshall Goodman has hired the world's most famous architect to build a visionary campus at USF Polytechnic. This architect, Santiago Calatrava, completely understands the vision of a unique polytechnic institution, and how it can transform both the region and the state.

Lastly, I want to thank our general counsel Steve Prevaux and his team. I know the workload for the office of General Counsel has been intense. They are clarifying almost every policy of our Board of Trustees to reflect the USF System. They support every venture of our campuses and institutions. And they help us maintain the highest standards of ethics and law.

Next, I'd like to turn to our vision for integrated research.

I join with vice-president Karen Holbrook in announcing that USF has set a record for research grants and contracts, once again.

In fiscal year 2008 - 2009, USF researchers earned 380.4-million dollars. That's a 20-million-dollar increase in awards over the year before.

This success by our faculty is truly remarkable because as you know last year was difficult for research funding across the nation. In many cases, our faculty jumped on urgent national priorities. We've had major new grants to support returning veterans in the College of Nursing, and in the College of Behavioral and Community Sciences. And the Anchin Center helped the Hillsborough County School System win a 100-million-dollar Gates Foundation grant.

Last month, the Chronicle of Higher Education published its yearly almanac, with a comparison of federal research expenditures at major research universities. Between 2000 and 2007, no university in the nation increased its research funding as fast as the University of south Florida. Just think about what this

meant: Our faculty earned 213-percent more by 2007. USF is number one in the country as the fastest gainer in federal research for the first seven years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

What that success means is that it's not just pockets of excellence any more. Our scientists are deeply engaged with investigators across the university in our signature research programs, which are diabetes, neurosciences and sustainable communities.

We have major new funding coming to the first signature research program, diabetes and auto-immune disorders. As you know, the world's best funded team is here at USF, and Jeff Krischer is about to receive another multi-million-dollar grant to track and cure rare diseases. At the same time, USF is rebuilding its diabetes center to offer evidence-based care, and family-based education.

Our second signature research program is integrated neurosciences, where faculty members around the university have stepped forward to join a true interdisciplinary program. After USF assumed ownership of the Byrd Alzheimer's Institute, we invested in new research cores in that building. In the first six months scientists in the Alzheimer's Center earned 1-million-dollars in new research.

I encourage all of you to join Dr. Holbrook for our celebration of innovation and invention during the first week of October. The research of this university will be on display during the *ResearchOne* events that week. We will be inducting the first 100 members of the USF Academy of Inventors, all of whom have been awarded U.S. patents for their inventions.

That week will end with the Campus & Community Sustainability Conference right here at the Marshall Student Center. This is the first time we've hosted this important statewide event and it will showcase how USF is creating modern sustainable systems.

The idea of healthy and sustainable communities has caught fire since we made it our third signature research initiative. We did this 18 months ago, when I signed the American University Presidents Commitment to sustainability.

I can imagine a world where every house, every grocery store, and every major facility helps produce energy thanks to USF technology. Researchers at USF's Power Center are building one of the nation's largest comprehensive Smart Grids to do exactly that.

I can see a world where not a drop of water goes to waste. For example, you've seen the beautiful bronze sculptures of bulls running through the fountain in the Marshall Student Center Plaza. Well, all the water in those fountains comes from condensation from air conditioning units in this building.

I can see a world where a tiny fish farm can help feed hungry people. That's what we're doing in our new partnership with the Mote Marine Laboratory's fish farm in Sarasota.

And we're not just fighting for sustainability in America. A team of faculty is excited about launching the USF School of Global Sustainability.

Lastly, a healthy community must have the quality of life that we get from the Arts. That's why we began construction of our new Visual and Performing Arts Center. And it's noteworthy that one of the biggest national awards received by faculty this year went to Chuck Owens, our jazz star and conductor, who received a Guggenheim fellowship. The biggest international award went to Pat Rogers, our expert on British literature. Dr. Rogers was inducted into the British Academy, a rare honor.

Next, USF has the vision to transform healthcare in America. Our vice president for USF Health and dean of the medical school, Stephen Klasko, and his team, love to create national precedent-setting models. They launched four huge initiatives this year:

First, USF Health is leading the nation's revolution in electronic prescriptions and health records. No more scribbled prescriptions that no one can read. The result will be safer, research-based healthcare.

Second, USF Health is planning a revolutionary center for chronic diseases. The nation is looking for ways to help people with lifespan illnesses – diseases like diabetes that affect a patient every single day for the rest of their lives. USF Health will do that.

Third, USF Health has teamed up with one of the best hospitals in America, in Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania. This new leadership track will change how the next generation of physicians practice health, not just medicine.

Fourth, USF Health will develop the curriculum for teams of health professionals to learn together so that they can work together. And we are developing the world's premier simulation center, to train surgeons in the latest robotic techniques.

By the way, the H1-N1 influenza has taught us that the future of health care depends on public health. At USF, we're tracking the threat to our students, faculty and staff. We've told people to stay home when sick. And we've developed a unique emergency plan for academic continuity. USF wants to ensure classes continue even if large numbers of people are out. The teams working on flu preparation include Student Health, USF Health, Public Safety, Academic Affairs, and each part of the USF System.

One of the great advocates of teams in healthcare has been Pat Burns, who is stepping down after 12 years of leading the College of Nursing. Under Dean Burns's leadership, the college has become the best in Florida and one of the best in the nation. I'd like to thank Dr. Burns for her incredible leadership.

I believe a modern university is a global university. We can make a difference around the world. That's why I was excited to appoint Donna Petersen, our dean of public health, to build the USF World initiative. Part of Dean Petersen's role will be to ensure that the Patel Center for Global Solutions is a true gateway for students and researchers to solve problems around the globe. Construction on the new Patel Center has begun near the entrance to the Tampa campus. One of our strategic goals is to bring international students here and to give them a superlative educational experience. In order to do this quickly, we're currently searching for partners to speed our outreach to international students and to make sure they're ready for a USF education and degree.

Next, we have the vision to integrate student life, athletics, and student success.

Perhaps one of the most important developments this year was the opening of the Juniper-Poplar residence halls, and our implementation of the mandatory first year requirement to live on the Tampa campus. Our Vice President for Student Affairs, Jennifer Meningall, has developed our residence halls into true learning centers. The Student Affairs team has brought to fruition our spectacular Marshall Student Center. They have implemented the mandatory living requirements. They have increased student volunteer hours. And we are now seeing many more planned activities for evenings and weekends.

The success of our students makes USF successful. I was delighted to join Student Government for its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary last week, with Student Body President Juan Soltero and Vice President Bruno Portigliatti.

We've worked very closely with Student Government during this recession. One of my highest principles is to care for people during these tough times. You remember that last year we created the "Don't Stop Don't Drop" program to help students who were in danger of stopping out of school or completely dropping their dreams due to financial difficulty. We didn't stop with that program. This year we streamlined our financial aid process, and helped students to apply. It has paid off. This year I'm pleased to announce we gave a 47-percent increase in total financial aid to students in the disbursement for Fall 2009. In Fall 2008, we awarded 86 million dollars in assistance to students. This year, we awarded the remarkable total of 127 million dollars in total financial aid to our students.

We even launched a new program called Alumni CareerQuest to expand career counseling to alumni as well as our students.

When we measure student success, we include Athletics. I now sit on the Executive Committee of the Board of the NCAA, which includes only 16 presidents and chancellors from across the country. The NCAA is especially concerned that academics come first. I'm very impressed that Athletic Director Doug Woolard, and his team, achieved this year's most important record – our student-athletes earned their highest average GPA ever. Baseball had the highest GPA in the Big East. 26 student-athletes earned a 4.0 GPA in Spring 2009, and one was the Big East Scholar-Athlete of the Year.

It was exciting on the field too. Men's soccer and Men's Tennis each won the Big East Championship. Women's basketball won the WNIT Championship.

And of course, after our opening win last Saturday, we're looking forward to a successful season from our great football team.

I've summarized ways in which we've been fiscally conservative and visionary at the same time. We've also been successful.

That's why the theme of Unstoppable is so absolutely right for this university. When people visit us and meet our students, our faculty and staff, they catch this spirit. We are striving to be the best.

In October, the USF Foundation will hold a series of events to unveil and to celebrate the progress of our Unstoppable comprehensive campaign. The October events will be the first public announcement of this campaign. Each campus and institution will hold its own event.

Joel Momberg is our new vice president for advancement. He has already begun to ensure that philanthropists understand that a gift to USF is a gift to generations to come.

At the same time, I want to thank all of you for your gifts to the Faculty Staff Campaign last year. Every gift is a sign of your dedication, and we deeply appreciate it.

This university is not a secret any more. Our Vice President for Communications is Michael Hoad, who is making sure tell our own story and not wait for anyone else. USF will be known as the fastest growing research university, and it will be known for its student success.

You should check out the USF Facebook page. University Communications created a main Facebook page for USF in June. Within three weeks, it had 11,000 fans. That shows you how many people are hungry for news about USF.

In conclusion, I'm proud of everyone who works here, everyone who teaches here, everyone who learns here, everyone who conducts research here. It is very

clear to me that USF is fulfilling our commitment to the nation to make life and our economy better.

I began by saying that USF has been fiscally conservative and visionary at the same time. The heart of that is remembering that we have the greatest economic engine of all, we have the intellectual capital. We are committed to using our intellectual capital to help others during this recession.

This is a promise that is beyond my words. It's beyond what I do. It's what YOU do. This promise is about what you have accomplished.

I cannot thank enough the staff, students and faculty of this great university system, all of our campuses, our institutions, our colleges. I can tell you that I hear it on a daily basis from our community. YOU are the rallying cry of this community and I'm deeply proud of everything YOU do.

Thank you.

For those of you at the Marshall Center, we have refreshments and a chance to chat. For those of you watching online, please share your ideas through email or whenever you see me. It's the quality of our ideas that make the difference.