



where excellence and opportunity converge

President Steven C. Currall
2019-2020 Accomplishments Report

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
Tampa St. Petersburg Sarasote-Manatee



As we reflect on our past and look forward to our future, it's the convergence of academic excellence and opportunity that will be the hallmark of our next era at USF.

*President
Steve Currall*

Steven C. Currall became the seventh president of the University of South Florida on July 1, 2019, bringing three decades of leadership and academic expertise from top research universities, both public and private, in the U.S. and abroad. President Currall's mission is to build on USF's tremendous momentum and foster a campus environment for innovation where USF will relentlessly push forward on both excellence and opportunity.

This report highlights President Currall's accomplishments during his first year at USF. The support of the USF Board of Trustees has been vital to the achievements of USF during the past year. It is with gratitude to the Board that President Currall presents this report.



A MOMENTOUS YEAR

The challenges of leading a top research university have never been more complex than they are today.

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, President Currall led successful consolidation of USF's three campuses, articulated new Principles of Community that now serve as the bedrock for One USF, and raised nearly \$120 million in philanthropy. He continues to lead through the complexities resulting from the COVID-19 global public health crisis combined with deep social unrest, making Currall's first year in office one of the most eventful time periods since USF was established in 1956.

Currall dedicated his [first 100 days in office](#) to meeting with students, faculty and leaders across USF's three campuses. He toured various facilities, such as the [USF Health Morsani College of Medicine and Heart Institute](#) in downtown Tampa while it was still under construction.

He immersed himself in surrounding communities to help the university forge an even stronger reciprocal relationship with the region. Shortly after taking office, President Currall led his first commencement ceremony, conferring more than 3,200 degrees to the summer graduating class. He returned to the Yuengling Center on Nov. 14, 2019, where President Currall was [inaugurated as USF's seventh president](#).

During a formal investiture ceremony, he outlined his vision for the university to become a top-25 public research university and become eligible to join the Association of American Universities (AAU), an elite group of 65 North American research institutions.

Upon his arrival at USF in June of 2019, President Currall moved into the Lifsey House with his wife of nearly 30 years, Cheyenne.



COMMITMENT TO ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

In 2019, President Currall welcomed [USF's most academically accomplished and largest incoming freshman class](#) of 3,773 students, up 15 percent from the previous year. The group of first-time-in-college students carried an average ACT score of 29 (91st percentile), a 1286 SAT score (85th percentile) and average high school GPA of 4.13. The incoming class included approximately 100 high school valedictorians and salutatorians, along with 34 National Merit Scholars. Total enrollment in fall 2019 was nearly 51,000 students. A commitment to support and enhance academic excellence for all students is among President Currall's highest priorities.

USF Tampa graduate level programs continue to be ranked among the best according to the *U.S. News and World Report* Graduate School Rankings with 10 programs in the top 50. And USF Tampa is ranked #8 in the nation and #3 among all public institutions in the 2020 Princeton Review's Best Graduate Entrepreneurship program rankings.

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FTIC students:
ACT 29 **SAT 1286** **HS GPA 4.13**

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National Merit
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515
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USF ON THE RISE

In President Currall's first year, USF broke into the top 50 in U.S. News & World Report for the first time. It ranked No. 44 among public universities, a 14-spot climb from the previous year, reaffirming USF's unparalleled trajectory in higher education. Since 2015, USF has jumped 44 spots, coinciding with record-breaking gains in student success.

USF also made its debut in the top five nationally among all private and public "Golden Age Universities," according to U.K.-based *Times Higher Education*. The university is now No. 4, up from No. 7 last year, in the rankings that compare the performance of institutions founded between 1945 and 1966. Relative to all institutions around the world, USF climbed 11 places to No. 27, the most improved of any university in the U.S.

President Currall has prioritized faculty excellence and the support of inventive researchers across the university. With \$405 million in total research expenditures, USF continues to advance on its goal of becoming a top 25 public university for research spending. This long-standing commitment to research, coupled with an emphasis on its societal application and economic impact, has led to USF being ranked 12th worldwide, 5th in the nation and 1st in Florida among public universities for granted U.S. patents according to the Intellectual Property Owner Association. The ranking places USF as a leader among the more than 1,000 academic institutions generating new, novel and useful inventions granted intellectual property protection by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office with 108 new U.S. utility patents granted in 2019.

USF also placed first in the state compared to other public universities in a series of 10 student success-based metrics established by the Florida Board of Governors. The metrics focus on affordable access, graduating students at a high rate, with minimal debt, and preparing them for high-skilled, high-paying jobs in high-demand fields.





FACULTY EXCELLENCE

Support for USF faculty as the intellectual lifeblood of the university is a top priority for President Currall. He has built a strong and productive partnership with the Faculty Senate by attending regular meetings and engaging in dialogue.

In 2019, USF faculty received 148 national and international awards. This is the highest recorded number to date, representing a 30% increase from the previous year, and caps a decade of significantly increasing honors recognizing USF faculty excellence in research, teaching, career achievement, and impact on society. Among the awards in calendar year 2019, nine USF faculty were elected Fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), placing USF 4th worldwide (for the fifth year in a row) for organizations with the most Fellows elected in a single year. Additionally, 16 USF Faculty were elected Fellows of other professional organizations – an honor reserved for the top scholars in their fields; and early-career and mid-career faculty were also recognized with many awards.

These faculty awards reflect President Currall's high standard of excellence for the university. Going forward, the president is supporting the development of a plan for faculty success to complement USF's successful programming for student success.



FUNDRAISING MOMENTUM

During 2019, President Currall led efforts to raise nearly \$120 million – exceeding an original goal of \$100 million. In spring 2020, he helped establish the [United Support Fund](#), launched in response to COVID-19. Giving related to COVID -19 through the end of the Bulls United in Action campaign was over \$1.1 million.

The president advocated for USF and garnered support from new donors. One of the most significant gifts was a \$10 million donation from the Taneja Family Foundation to name the USF Health Taneja College of Pharmacy, the largest philanthropic gift to a pharmacy school in the State of Florida. As a result, the college will move into the new USF Health Morsani College of Medicine and Heart Institute facility in downtown Tampa. Pharmacy students are expected to start classes there in fall 2021.

President Currall also announced a [\\$1 million partnership](#) between USF and Jabil to establish the USF Jabil Innovation Institute. The institute will catalyze new collaborative efforts in innovative research, community engagement and talent development within the College of Engineering and Muma College of Business. Jabil leased space at the Tampa Bay Technology Incubator in USF's Research Park. The partnership includes \$200,000 in research support and a philanthropic gift of \$800,000 given to the USF Foundation.

Fundraising efforts also included \$5 million toward USF Football's new practice facility, which will be transformational to USF's competitive future.

INVESTING IN GROWTH

The USF Health Morsani College of Medicine and Heart Institute [officially opened](#) in Water Street Tampa. The 13-story, 395,000-square-foot building is designed to function as a hub for Tampa's downtown medical professionals. Students, researchers and faculty members will benefit from the world-class facility, which includes the latest technology in medical education. The building is also in close proximity to the [USF Health Center for Advanced Medical Learning and Simulation](#) and Tampa General Hospital, USF's primary teaching hospital.



Exterior construction wrapped up on a [new residence hall on the St. Petersburg campus](#). The \$33 million project will expand on-campus housing by 70 percent and provide space for 375 additional students. Completed for fall 2020, the 120,000-square-foot building stands six stories high. A full-service dining hall is expected to open in 2021.

Construction was launched to build a [new state-of-the-art facility in USF's Research Park](#). The 120,000-square-foot building will increase the park's footprint by 34 percent and will bring together researchers, patent officers, entrepreneurs,

financial investors and corporations to enhance technology commercialization and the Tampa Bay region's growing innovation and knowledge economy. President Currall guided the building's design team to ensure the space will meet the demands of contemporary innovation enterprises. The building is targeted to be completed in fall 2021.

USF's Institute of Applied Engineering secured an [\\$85 million, five-year contract with U.S. Special Operations Command](#). The institute will assist the federal government in such fields as autonomous systems, human performance, transportation, cybersecurity, data analytics and sensor technologies. Partnerships such as this advance President Currall's vision for USF's future, where the university helps to address national imperatives, while also providing real-world experience to students.



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

President Currall made early and important efforts to solidify key existing relationships with local, state and federal elected officials and begin to build new ones. This is a top priority and essential component for USF's continued growth. During his first year, the president made nine trips to Tallahassee, meeting with state leadership and advocated for USF's legislative priorities. He met with Gov. Ron DeSantis, Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nunez, the leadership of both the Senate and House, members of the Tampa Bay Legislative Delegation and of both chambers' higher

education committees to discuss USF's meteoric rise in the national rankings and how the state legislature can help support USF's aspirations.

Last fall, the president also joined more than 200 students for the annual USF Day at the Capitol where students travel to Tallahassee to learn about Florida's state government and advocate for the university. During the USF Day reception, the president honored USF alumni serving in the Legislature, including state Sen. Joe Gruters, House Speaker-Designate Chris Sprowls and state Reps. James Buchanan, Jackie Toledo and Jennifer Webb.

These advocacy efforts paid off as the Fiscal Year 2020-21 state budget included \$6.45 million to continue the important work being done by Cyber Florida at USF, \$5.5 million in new funding to support the development of the St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee campuses under One USF and over \$7 million for new and improved student health and wellness and other student life facilities across all three campuses and USF Health.

For the first time in many years, the president hosted on-campus events for both of Florida's U.S. Senators, Sen. Marco Rubio and Sen. Rick Scott. The president also traveled to Washington, DC to meet with lawmakers from the Tampa Bay area delegation as well as USF alumni serving in Congress. Those meetings included time spent with Sen. Scott and Reps. Bilirakis, Castor, Crist, Diaz-Balart (USF alumnus), Meadows (USF alumnus and now Chief of Staff to President Trump), Steube, Spano (USF alumnus) and Webster. The visits provided a great opportunity to reiterate USF's past successes and to further collaborate to grow USF's national stature.



Photo source: www.facebook.com/USFWSOC

EXCELLENCE AMONG STUDENT-ATHLETES

President Currall's first year included great strides for USF Athletics in competition and in the classroom. Although many sports seasons were altered or canceled because of the pandemic, our talented athletes benefited from experiences on the fields and courts of play. Of note, the USF women's soccer team won the American Athletic Conference championship and then proceeded to advance to the Sweet Sixteen of the NCAA championships for the first time in program history. The USF men's soccer team also qualified for the NCAA championship.



Photo source: UT_TP; USF Athletics

In the classroom, USF student-athletes generated a combined annual GPA over 3.0 for a record fifth straight year and 11 straight semesters. The department registered an 85 percent Graduation Success Rate (GSR) in 2019, just one point shy of the program record and marking the Bulls' sixth straight year with a GSR of 82 percent or better. During the 2020 spring semester, USF student-athletes posted an overall department record GPA of 3.41 as 13 sports set records and a record 285 student-athletes earned Athletics Honor Roll recognition and a record 237 were named to the AAC All-Academic team in 2019-20.

NEW LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENTS

With a commitment to attracting and retaining top talent at USF, President Currall filled several high-profile positions during his first year. Notably, President Currall approved the reappointment of Provost and Executive Vice President Ralph Wilcox. Provost Wilcox joined USF in 2003 and has been in his current position since 2009. This strategic leadership reappointment will ensure USF's continued trajectory in academic excellence and faculty success.

In another critical appointment, President Currall named [Jay Stroman Senior Vice President of Advancement and Alumni Affairs and CEO of the USF Foundation](#).

Stroman came to USF as the result of a national search and with a strong track record of fundraising from the University of Georgia where he served as senior associate vice president for development and alumni relations.

Other key appointments were Brian Ten Eyck, vice president of Executive Affairs and chief of staff, Chris Garvin, dean of the College of the Arts, Thomas Frazer, dean of the College of Marine Science, Allison Crume, associate vice president and dean of Undergraduate Studies, and Mike McConnell as the executive director of Cyber Florida. As former U.S. Navy vice admiral and former director of the National Security Agency, McConnell brings an extensive military and intelligence background that will help further Cyber Florida's mission of positioning the state as a national leader in cybersecurity.

Jeff Scott signed a five-year contract as USF's new head football coach after serving at Clemson University, one of the nation's most dominant football programs and two-time College Football Playoff National Champions, where he was co-offensive coordinator and a wide receiver coach.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Throughout his first year, President Currall began to engage with Tampa Bay's community of students, alumni, business partners and leaders by representing USF at many local events. He threw out the first pitch during USF Day with the Tampa Bay Rays. He and his wife Cheyenne joined the USF marching band at the annual Gasparilla Parade of Pirates, a Tampa Bay tradition since 1904. They also rode the Zamboni during the annual USF Lightning Night at Amalie Arena.



As a thought leader in the field of organizational innovation, President Currall delivered an address to thousands of entrepreneurs and investors at the 2020 Synapse Summit held in downtown Tampa where he emphasized the importance of innovation and regional partnerships for job growth and patent production. The first USF president to speak at the summit, the president outlined a platform of ideas that would strengthen the university's economic impact in the region, which is currently estimated at \$5 billion.

Currall's leadership is being felt throughout Tampa Bay, serving on boards for Moffitt Cancer Center, Tampa Bay Partnership and the Tampa Innovation Partnership.

In his first year, President Currall was recognized with a number of honors and awards:

- ▶ Fellow, Royal Society of the Arts of the United Kingdom (Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce)
- ▶ Commissioner, National Commission on Innovation and Competitiveness Frontiers, U.S. Council on Competitiveness
- ▶ Honorary Member, National Academy of Inventors
- ▶ Editorial Board, "Technology and Innovation"
- ▶ Honorary Fellow, International Academy of Nanobiotechnology
- ▶ Co-Chair, Florida High Tech Corridor Council



USF students and faculty represent a microcosm of our global society: a fascinating fabric of individuals with an innumerable range of experiences, perspectives and ideas.

President Steve Currall

PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY

One of President Currall's first-year initiatives was to develop [USF's Principles of Community](#). He formed a task force chaired by Dean Charles Adams comprising a broad cross-section of university faculty, staff, and students to craft the principles. They outline the university's commitment to inclusion, civility, open expression, evidence-based deliberations and vigorous debate. These values reinforce the leadership and responsibility of USF to create a compassionate society in which all members of the community are treated with respect.

The Principles of Community have guided the university in addressing several critical areas in 2019-2020, including the pandemic and its related financial impact and efforts to address systemic racism and civil justice. Further, they reflect a climate of belongingness at USF that fosters student well-being and academic success.



LEADING THROUGH CRISIS

It would have been hard to imagine the extraordinary challenges we would face this year as a university community, state and nation. President Curral has navigated the historic conditions created by a global health crisis and periods of intense social unrest in communities across the nation.

As the threat of the new coronavirus intensified, President Curral transitioned USF to remote instruction following spring break in March 2020. He then worked with more than 100 university leaders and public health experts to develop a cohesive plan to return to campus. Curral appointed Dean Donna Petersen as the chair of the university's Covid-19 Task Force.



On June 23, 2020, the Florida Board of Governors approved [USF's plan for a careful and phased return to campus](#). The four-phase plan prioritized the health and well-being of the USF community and allowed USF to continue to deliver high-quality academic programs and services.



Responding to community needs, dozens of coronavirus-related research projects by USF faculty received funding through a newly established [USF COVID-19 Rapid Response Grant Program](#).

President Curral's leadership and support throughout the COVID-19 crisis have been wide-reaching. Early on, he visited USF Health-run coronavirus testing sites and advocated for students and faculty volunteering their time to produce personal protective equipment. He also hosted several virtual town hall discussions,

reassuring the USF community that his leadership is present at every step of the way. He has worked with community partners to emphasize a campaign of personal responsibility, especially among students.

The president continues to lead USF through the effects of the pandemic with an evidence-based approach to decision-making. Public health data are reviewed regularly in consultation with members of his Executive Policy Group, his COVID-19 Task Force and his leadership team.

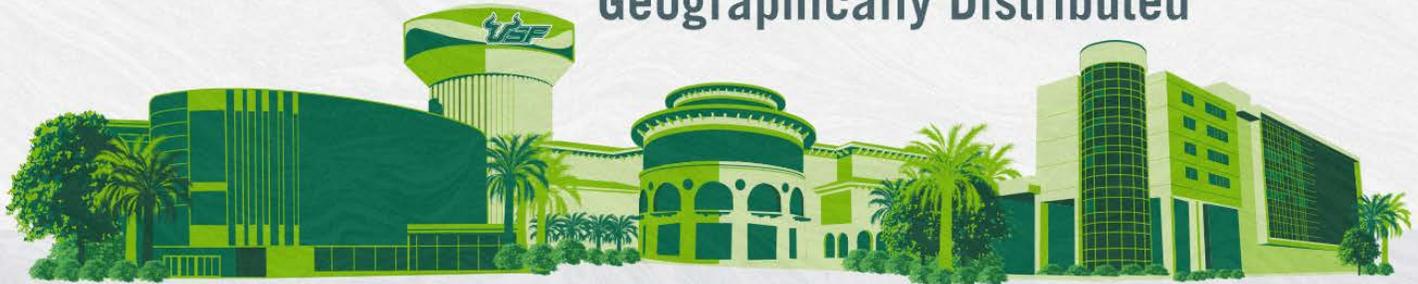
Beginning in May 2020, President Currall responded to events happening across the nation reflecting systemic racism by urging the USF community to pause and consider the university's role in being a force for positive change. Again guided by the Principles of Community, President Currall followed up with a commitment to take action to address anti-racism.

To that end, President Currall is working diligently to help develop programs that raise awareness of how race impacts attitudes and behaviors. He is developing innovative avenues to enhance diversity in recruitment, development, retention and rewards. He's also supported the USF Office of Supplier Diversity in promoting the participation of Black-owned businesses as vendors to the university.



ONE UNIVERSITY

Geographically Distributed



TAMPA CAMPUS /// SARASOTA-MANATEE CAMPUS /// ST. PETERSBURG CAMPUS

HISTORIC CONSOLIDATION TAKES EFFECT

On July 1, 2020, the [University of South Florida's three campuses consolidated into one, accredited university](#). This followed the plan's approval from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, the regional accrediting agency that oversees higher education in the southern United States.

The intent of the president's listening tour in his first 100 days was to more deeply understand the unique features of the Tampa, St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee campuses. President Currall oversaw multiple campuses in two of his previous university leadership positions. Thus, he grasped the importance of understanding and promoting the differentiated features of each campus, how they contribute to their specific geographical regions, and how they can be aligned to advance the strategic vision of a unified university.

Consolidation has united USF's campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee into one integrated curriculum with a single set of academic policies and procedures.

The president sees One USF as a unique opportunity to leverage our geographical location and distinct alignment across Tampa, St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee. Students from across all three campuses will benefit from a wider selection of courses and advanced degree programs and access to renowned faculty, resources, and scholarships. Faculty will benefit from greater opportunities to collaborate on research across campuses and traditional disciplines.

And being One USF under President Currall's leadership makes USF a strong candidate for additional state investment, which will provide a dramatic return on investment to the state, nation, and importantly, across the entirety of the Tampa Bay region.



STRATEGIC RENEWAL AND FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

President Currall has begun the process of mapping out a fresh vision and plan for USF's strategic renewal. In his second year, President Currall will reveal the details of his plan, which will include steps to ensure sound financial stewardship such as steps to rebalance financial allocations to enhance support for academic excellence and to strengthen both faculty and student success. Although work to address USF's financial model began in 2019 – before the pandemic emerged – the financial and economic ramifications of COVID-19 on the university, the region and our state have been significant.



As President Currall wrote to the campus, "Rising to meet a challenge is not new to USF. We have worked together through the enormous complexities of consolidation to deliver on a state mandate for reunification of our campuses. We emerged as One USF – the nation's fastest rising university over the past decade according to *U.S. News and World Report* – with a focus on greater opportunities for our campuses and community and a clear mission to support the success of all students. And, through a spirit of partnership, we will redouble our efforts to invest in new and impactful ways to be of service to our region and state as a university where excellence and opportunity converge."





PRINCIPLES *of* COMMUNITY

Established March 24, 2020

We the students, alumni, faculty, staff, and administrators of the University of South Florida unite as a community to propel the success of “One USF.”

We celebrate our accomplishments and respect our complex differences. We commit ourselves to shaping the future in a community that cherishes justice, accessibility, and meaningful participation by all of its members. USF starts with US.

In this spirit, we state the following Principles of Community.

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.

President Steven C. Currall created the Principles of Community Task Force to develop essential aspirational principles collaboratively and with input from students, alumni, faculty, staff and administrators across the USF community. The President appointed Dean Charles Adams as Chair of the Task Force and USF Ombuds Steven Prevoux as Facilitator.

These Principles of Community have been endorsed on this the 24th day of March 2020, by the following:

- Dr. Steven C. Currall, President and Professor
- Dr. Ralph Wilcox, Provost and Executive Vice President
- Dr. Charles Adams, Dean, Judy Genshaft Honors College, Chair
- Dr. Raymond Arsenault, USF St. Petersburg Faculty Senate President
- Dr. Timothy Boaz, USF Tampa Faculty Senate President
- Ms. Roberta "Bobby" Collins, President of the Administrative Advisory Council
- Dr. Deirdre Cobb-Roberts, Associate Professor and Program Coordinator, Social Foundations of Education
- Dr. Michael Cross, Director of Undergraduate Research
- Ms. Britney Deas, USF Tampa Student Government President



- Dr. Jacob Diaz, Regional Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Success and Dean of Students
- Ms. Jazzia "Jazzy" Duarte, USF St. Petersburg Student Government President
- Dr. Alfred "Tom" Frontera, USF Morsani College of Medicine Faculty Council President
- Dr. Michael Gillespie, USF Sarasota-Manatee Faculty Senate President
- Mr. Bill McCausland, Vice President and Executive Director, USF Alumni Association
- Mr. Corey Posey, USF Sarasota-Manatee Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer
- Dr. Diane Price Herndl, Professor and Chair, Women's & Gender Studies and Professor, English
- Ms. Meredith Scerba, Senior Associate Athletic Director
- Dr. Dwayne Smith, Senior Vice Provost and Dean, Office of Graduate Studies
- Ms. Isabelle Starner, USF Sarasota-Manatee Student Government President
- Dr. Maya Trotz, Professor, Civil and Environmental Engineering



*The USF Principles of Community set forth aspirational ideals and expectations for campus interactions both in person and in virtual formats. Members of our community should treat each other with respect and dignity, refrain from displays of inappropriate anger or intimidating conduct, shun epithets or abusive language, and find effective means to

disagree, to persuade and to inform through rational discussion. The Principles of Community are not official University of South Florida Regulation or Policy; nor do they alter the terms and conditions of existing collective bargaining agreements, the Student Code of Conduct, or departmental or professional codes of conduct.