



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA  
Office of the President

3 August 2020

Ms. Terrie Daniel, Assistant Vice President  
University of South Florida Office of Supplier Diversity  
4202 E. Fowler Avenue, ALN 137  
Tampa, FL 33620

Dear Terrie,

During the past several months we have had comprehensive and strategic conversations with community-based advocacy organizations, legislators and local business owners across the Tampa Bay region about the USF supplier diversity program. We have explored how we can further implement solutions to ultimately extinguish racial and ethnic disparities and achieve equity as it relates to our contracting opportunities across all sectors of the University of South Florida.

As a preeminent university committed to achieving excellence in all areas, I write this letter to you in support of the University of South Florida Office of Supplier Diversity (OSD). I am aiming to further support the outstanding work by you and your team.

I offer my full support and encouragement as you continue to work closely with all USF purchasing agents, departmental buyers, and facilities in order to monitor, implement, track progress and make adjustments to the university's diverse business utilization strategic plan. Later in this letter, I will explain changes that I am authorizing to position your Office for further success.

In addition, I urge you and your team to work with University Communications and Marketing to develop internal and external communication about the university's supplier diversity program denoting the items included in this correspondence.

The University of South Florida is one of the largest economic drivers in the Tampa Bay region and we have a responsibility to support the diverse business community. We have aimed to lead, and we now seek to also further elevate supplier diversity. According to the federal Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) housed in the U.S. Department of Commerce, over the last 10 years, minority business enterprises accounted for more than 50 percent of the two million new businesses started in the United States and have created 4.7 million jobs. There are now more than four million minority-owned companies in the United States, with annual sales totaling close to \$700 billion. Yet, despite this growth, there is still a wide disparity when it comes to access to capital, contracting opportunities and other entrepreneurial development opportunities for minority-owned firms.

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I wish to ensure our approach across USF addresses the numerous factors that may impede diverse businesses' access to USF contracting opportunities. We seek to increase the University's spending with diverse suppliers because it is the "right thing to do" and because it is a proactive business strategy that provides the best combination of value, quality, and service by diverse suppliers (i.e., women-, veteran-, service disabled veteran-, and minority-owned business enterprises). USF will set a positive example of access to sourcing and purchasing opportunities throughout the Tampa Bay region.

I expect that all USF faculty, administration and staff assist in advancing supplier diversity by exercising the following:

- Keep in mind that diverse businesses may offer more competitive pricing.
- Commit to building relationships with prospective business owners.
- Notify the OSD about upcoming opportunities in advance.
- It often pays to persevere; don't give up on diverse businesses.
- Look for strategic growth opportunities for smaller suppliers.
- Don't underestimate the value of strategic partnerships.
- Don't get discouraged. Be patient with suppliers. There may not be a current need for their offering now, but keep them in mind for future opportunities.
- Use the available resources to learn more about USF's Supplier Diversity program at: [www.usf.edu/osd](http://www.usf.edu/osd)

Keeping in mind that these are beginning steps in what will be a broader initiative moving forward, in addition to the aforementioned strategies, I am implementing the following policy changes and initiatives to assist in minimizing disparities in the utilization of diverse suppliers in USF contracting.

*Near-term actions to be taken by August 2020:*

I will issue University-wide communication conveying my expectations (see above) and supporting supplier diversity as a strategic initiative of the University of South Florida. I will address a code of conduct in my communication to all employees who have purchasing authority on behalf of the University of South Florida. This code of conduct will establish vision and a clear understanding of expectations for faculty, staff and administration surrounding supplier diversity. Additionally, my communication will include the following information:

- I have stipulated the requirement to include a member of OSD as an equal ranking voting member on all selection procurement committees of  $\geq$ \$75,000.
- To all employees who have purchasing authority on behalf of the University of South Florida, including but not limited to those who hold Purchasing Cards (PCards), I strongly urge that they consider utilizing diverse suppliers when seeking quotes and making vendor selections for all purchases small and large.
- In order to achieve significant diverse business utilization in second-tier contracting during both design and construction phases, USF will require direct project contractors to submit a Diverse Business Utilization Plan outlining their commitment to utilize diverse suppliers on major construction projects (those in excess of \$4 million). This plan shall include an outline of the scopes of services and estimated utilization by category for each project phase. Major contractors' progress will be tracked and they will be asked to report their progress on diverse

business utilization directly to the University of South Florida president and Board of Trustees (BOT).

- USF will report our diverse spend utilization by race, ethnicity and gender.

*Medium-term actions to be taken by October 2020:*

All colleges and administrative departments within the University of South Florida will be required to report all spending with diverse businesses to the OSD monthly.

- Each of USF's thirteen colleges, and all administrative units (e.g., Facilities and Construction), will identify one administrator to liaise with OSD to identify diverse suppliers and record diverse utilization spend data, which will be collated, archived, and reported by the OSD on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. If the department administrator's contact information changes, that information should be updated and sent to the OSD at [OSD@usf.edu](mailto:OSD@usf.edu).
- OSD will share diverse spending data by unit (e.g., college, department) with heads of units (e.g., deans, vice presidents) who will be held accountable in their annual performance appraisals by their supervisors (e.g., President, Provost) for additional progress on supplier diversity. All deans and vice presidents will be required to sign and adhere to measurable and accountable performance agreements as part of their expected performance standards on which professional advancement is based. To streamline data reporting, the approved spend report form is currently available at [www.usf.edu/osd](http://www.usf.edu/osd). A video tutorial is currently under development in conjunction with USF Information Technology to assist users.

*Longer-term actions to be taken by January 2021:*

- I will review the membership of USF faculty, staff and administration from all campuses who serve on the Supplier Diversity Council. The charge to the Council will be revisited and refreshed. Members will be asked to identify strategic contracting areas for which diverse suppliers can compete.
- Although additional areas will be explored, starting areas for strategic contracting consideration will include Information Technology, Janitorial Services, and Landscaping, among others.
- In consultation with the General Counsel, I will consider an executive order, implementing new components of the current *USF Supplier Diversity Policy 5-030*.

Diversity is one of this university's greatest strengths, and diverse business ownership is essential to further our community's economic growth and success. I look forward to our continued work together and thank you for your advocacy and commitment to USF and the diverse business community.

Sincerely,



Steven C. Currall, Ph.D.  
President and Professor