



October 5, 2021

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

As we near the mid-point of the fall semester, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for getting us off to a good start to the academic year in spite of the continuing uncertainties we have faced stemming from the global pandemic. I continue to be inspired by the time and dedication that our faculty commit to assuring our students' success and to advancing USF's stature as a national research university. I'd also like to provide a few important updates and clarifications in response to recent questions received by the Provost's Office.

Faculty Success and Important Mid-Semester Reminders

I encourage you to visit our newly launched [faculty success website](#) for information on [upcoming workshops and events](#) to support professional development and research productivity. As the *Faculty Success Initiative* continues to evolve, I look forward to sharing further updates on the progress of our implementation groups.

With October upon us, I also wanted to highlight some timely reminders related to the [academic calendar](#):

- October 19, deadline for faculty to submit Fall midterm grades
- November 27 - December 3, Test Free Week
- December 4 - 9, Final Exam Week
- December 14, final Fall grades are due

Please note: Unlike last year, at this time **we do not plan** to transition to remote instruction following Thanksgiving.

As you know, these deadlines are important and provide our students with feedback on how they are performing in class while helping them prepare for the end of the semester.

Updates on Covid-19 mitigation protocols

Our university continues to host weekly vaccine clinics for those who wish to receive any dose of the vaccine. Also, as you might have read late last month, USF is now authorized to provide free [Covid-19 booster shots to all eligible individuals](#), including eligible family members of USF faculty, staff, and students. While public health conditions on and off campus appear to be improving, I encourage you to continue following the [university's recommendation](#) to wear a mask on campus, to always report possible exposures to assessCOVID@usf.edu and utilize our free, voluntary COVID-19 testing available on all of our campuses. You are also encouraged to schedule your annual flu shot this month.

Extension of Employee Leave

We have also been receiving questions from faculty concerned about balancing their professional obligations should they have a child and/or family member impacted by Covid-19 (due to a local quarantine order or for other Covid related reasons). To accommodate this concern, USF leadership has once again [extended Emergency Paid Sick Leave](#) through 12/31/2021. You can visit the [USF Division of Human Resources](#) for information and to request accommodation forms. Please remember, you will need to work closely with your department chair to ensure continuity of course delivery.

USF's Strategic Plan Next Steps

As President Law [communicated in her September 7th message](#), we continue to develop USF's strategic plan with the appointment of a *Strategic Plan Steering Committee* co-chaired by Drs. Pritish Mukherjee and Terry Chisolm. In the coming weeks, [the committee](#) will work collaboratively to develop objectives, measurable outcomes and timelines through engaging university stakeholders, including deans, faculty, staff, students, and alumni to ensure a successful path forward that incorporates our many stakeholders' voices. The Plan will be presented to the Florida Board of Governors (FLBOG) in January 2022.

Update on the search for a Vice President for Research

President Law has re-launched the search for the USF's next Vice President for Research from a diverse and qualified pool of internal USF applicants. The search process will be complete within the next 30-45 days with the appointment being for a two-year term with the possibility of renewal.

In closing, I am excited to share that President Law has announced an [extended winter break](#) in recognition of your tireless hard work and dedication over the past 18 months. This extended holiday will also include USF's observance of Juneteenth National Independence Day.

Finally, I would like to thank you all once again for your continuing commitment to student learning, and your own research, scholarly and creative activity. If you have any questions, please reach out to me at provost@usf.edu.

Best regards,

Ralph C. Wilcox

Provost & Executive Vice President
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