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Chancellor: Karen A. White

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## Regional Chancellor Message : 2008 : 03 : 27 : USF -- A Multi- Campus System for the Future of Our Region

University of South Florida St. Petersburg. Office of the Regional Chancellor.; White, Karen A.; Genshaft, Judy; Wilcox, Ralph C.

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to: "White, Karen A." <Kawhite@spadmin.usf.edu>  
date: Thu, Mar 27, 2008 at 9:36 AM  
subject: Regional Chancellor's message

Friends,

I wanted to share with you an essay written by President Genshaft and Provost Wilcox that has been submitted to the media. In this, they affirm their belief in the multi-campus system of the University of South Florida, and support the importance of the regional campuses and the distinctive role we play in the region.

Karen White

Regional Chancellor

### **USF - A Multi-Campus System for the Future of Our Region**

The importance of a university degree is becoming painfully apparent as Florida seeks to rebound from its current economic decline in the face of increasing global competition. With only 22% of adults in Florida holding a bachelors degree, we fall short of both the national average and the other fifteen states in the southeast region. As the state's population grows at a higher rate than both the nation and region over the next decade, Florida will be challenged to build a solid economic foundation for the future.

USF accepts this challenge as its mandate. As one of this nation's largest top-tier public research institutions, the University of South Florida is deeply committed to serving the broad and diverse higher education needs of west-central Florida. Anchored by a doctoral-granting, nationally ranked research campus in Tampa that offers excellence in both undergraduate and graduate education, USF includes three regional campuses that deliver a complementary array of higher education opportunities across the region. In addition to bachelor's and master's degrees, these campuses offer distinctive programs that strengthen the communities they serve (including journalism in St. Petersburg, hotel and restaurant management in Sarasota-Manatee, and information technology in Lakeland). In this way, the USF system balances the statewide, national and global impact of a high profile research enterprise (from engineering, to marine science and medicine) with affordable access to different settings shaped to address diverse educational needs. For example, USF can meet the needs of the freshman seeking small classes in a residential waterfront setting, the needs of the place bound student who is eager to reap the benefits of a university degree after transferring from one of our community college partners, and the needs of the young scientist who wants to become immersed in a nationally recognized undergraduate research experience. These opportunities pay off - for the graduate, and for Florida. Earning an average salary of \$56,700, today's university graduates bring home a paycheck that is 79% larger than their friends' who hold only a high school diploma (\$31,700), and they can widen the gap by completing a masters (\$68,300), or doctoral degree (\$93,600).

While new to Florida, the model of a multi-campus system is a proven success at the universities of Michigan, Minnesota, Pittsburgh, and Washington among others. These allow globally competitive research institutions to be complemented by distinctive regional campuses that flourish. Avoiding expensive and duplicative administrative costs, USF embraces a single system of governance, oversight and accountability through its President and the Board of Trustees, and delivers centralized services to all campuses in such areas as athletics, financial aid, fund-raising, government affairs, and purchasing. This modern multi-campus, single university system is unified by the USF brand, yet distinguished by campus missions, curricula, student selection, faculty profiles, tuition, performance outcomes, and the need for differential investment. It ensures that USF can best serve public and private good by providing affordable access while concurrently addressing Florida's need for economic growth borne of innovation, emerging technologies and the application and commercialization of new knowledge.

It is time to think about how Florida must respond differently to ensure a healthy economic future, and to build a university system that ensures our graduates will compete successfully in the global marketplace. This is critical as students at Florida's public universities find themselves in larger classes than in any other state; when our talented faculty are being recruited away in growing numbers; when four of our universities are among the largest in the nation; and when we are faced by funding cuts resulting from a souring economy. Unwilling to compromise on the quality of education, and committed to providing access to a growing number of future university graduates, USF believes that one solution to the "unnatural disaster" facing higher education in Florida today is to better align its delivery model to simultaneously pursue an ambitious research vision in Tampa while extending access to a university education in St. Petersburg, Sarasota-Manatee, and Lakeland. Yet this action alone will not ensure success. Last year, in Florida, state university funding per student was 5% less than in 2001 when adjusted for inflation. This year, more than \$130 million has already been slashed from the state universities' budgets with even greater cuts anticipated before the beginning of the next academic year; and while students continue to pay the lowest tuition rates in the nation, the quality, value and availability of a Florida public university degree is severely threatened - suggesting a dire scenario for Florida's future economic strength.

All of this makes our challenge more acute. USF must approach its funding cuts based on its comprehensive and ambitious strategic planning. And USF must assist Florida's economic rebound by offering diverse educational and research programs of distinction. Our students deserve it. Florida needs it.

*Judy Genshaft is the President and Ralph C. Wilcox is the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of South Florida.*