

Counselor News

Quarterly Updates for Guidance Counselors Summer 2006

Where Breadth Meets Depth USC's Renaissance Scholars

Q&A with David Glasgow, Director of Undergraduate Programs



USC provides multiple opportunities for students to pursue and be recognized for academic excellence. The flagship of such excellence at USC is the Renaissance Scholar program. When the program was launched in 2000, USC President Steven B. Sample explained its goal: "Our ideal is to help students develop the kind of intellectual flexibility needed for life in the 21st century that the best thinkers of the European Renaissance displayed." Inspired by this mission, the program has gained in popularity each year. In its initial year, there were 79 students

certified as Renaissance Scholars; this Spring, nearly 200 students will graduate with that distinction, and a select number will take with them a cash prize of \$10,000. In his role as Director of Undergraduate Programs, David Glasgow supervises the Renaissance Scholars, and told us more about the program, as well as other unique academic opportunities for undergraduates at USC.

What exactly is the Renaissance Scholars program and why is it becoming so popular?

First, it's important to realize that Renaissance Scholars is not a separate program. It's a designation, based on certain students having diverse majors and minors, or diverse double majors. Renaissance Scholar is an academic distinction, not a society. People do it for the feeling of accomplishing an academic challenge at the highest level. For this kind of student, the best thing is the freedom to be intellectually engaged in disparate areas, in an atmosphere that encourages and rewards it.

Many universities are currently emphasizing inter-disciplinary work. Would you call the Renaissance Scholar designation inter-disciplinary? If not, then how is it different?

Other schools promote double majors as being interdisciplinary, with convergence on a general area. USC's perspective, in fact, is to encourage and reward divergence – pursuing separate and unrelated areas. If one's majors are too similar, then the student wouldn't qualify.

Do you have some examples of students who have combined divergent majors and minors and been certified as Renaissance Scholars?

Four favorites come to mind:

- One student had a double major in Biochemistry and Psychology with minors in gender studies and musical studies.
- Another is a student with a double major in Violin Performance and English, with a minor in international relations.
- A third is a student with a double major in Biology and Religion.
- Finally, one student has a double major in Chemistry and Music.

Are these diverse skills something that USC students have when they arrive on campus or do these tend to be newly developed areas of expertise or interest?

This is a good question. I believe that it's a little of both.

When do students apply to become Renaissance Scholars?

Students usually apply sometime between sophomore year and the end of junior year. Students can elect to receive the academic honor and/or apply for the prize competition, assuming that they earned a 3.5 GPA in each of their certified major and/or minor fields of study at the time of graduation. Students can decide to apply as late as their senior year, though if they wait until that point, they may miss their opportunity to be considered for the monetary award.

There's still time for students to sign up for our high school summer programs!

We have a great summer planned, with 2, 3 and 4 week on-campus seminars for a wide spectrum of interests, plus a week-long science camp on Catalina Island. Spaces are going fast, so don't wait! Call us at 213 740 5679 or e-mail summer@usc.edu.

Important Dates

July 3 – 30: High school summer seminar program

July 27 – August 3: Catalina Summer Camp

Weekdays throughout the summer: Campus tours available

Mid-July: Online applications available

USC's 123rd Commencement is May 12

Congratulations Class of 2006! This year 4,000 seniors will cross the stage, ready to make a difference in the world. We congratulate them, their friends, families and the high schools that prepared them so well for a successful college experience.

David Glasgow, Director of Undergraduate Programs

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Are a fixed number of prizes awarded each year?

As the program has developed, we decided it doesn't make sense to have a set number of the Renaissance Scholar prizes. Therefore, the number of prizes awarded varies each year. Last year, there were nine Scholars found worthy of this special academic distinction, while in other years there have been a different number who produce outstanding work.

Are there any restrictions on how the prize money may be used? Do the funds need to be designated for tuition, or may students use it for travel or for independent study?

Since 2002, the policy has been that prizes are designated for tuition towards a post-graduate study program, based on the idea that high ability students will continue their education. As such, students who are nominated for the awards must provide evidence of enrollment in a graduate program in order to receive the prizes. Their immediate plans do not have to be concrete, however; after their undergraduate degree has been posted, they have up to five years to provide evidence of enrollment in a graduate program.

How about some of the other special programs offered at USC for undergraduates – can you tell us more about the Undergraduate Research Program?

The program, which is open to all currently enrolled USC undergraduates, allows professors to apply for grants to pursue their research using undergraduate students as hired research assistants. Presently, 38 faculty proposals will be provided with funding. As such, approximately 100-120 students will have the opportunity to conduct research with our outstanding faculty in academic year 2006-07.

What is the "Undergraduate Symposium for Scholarly and Creative Work"?

It's an event where students who have obtained a faculty sponsor get the opportunity to showcase their work with that sponsor. Cash prizes are given to the most impressive results in the following categories: Arts, Humanities, Life Sciences, Physical Science/Engineering/Math and Social Sciences.

What has most surprised you most about running these programs?

Students are increasingly declaring two or more major and/or minor fields of study in areas that are truly disparate and yet are still finding ways to graduate within four or five years while conducting research, taking on leadership roles in clubs, and also a number of other extracurricular activities. It's truly amazing.

For more information:

Renaissance Scholars: <http://www.usc.edu/programs/ugprograms/renaissance/>

Undergraduate Research Program: <http://www.usc.edu/programs/ugprograms/ugresearch>

Undergraduate Symposium for Scholarly and Creative Work:

<http://www.usc.edu/programs/ugprograms/ugsymposium/>

"More than anything else, being an educated person in the 21st century will mean being able to see connections that allow one to make sense of the world and act within it in creative ways."

William Cronon,
noted historian,
University of Wisconsin

We believe that talent knows no boundaries – which is why over 60% of our students receive merit or need-based financial support from the University.

A Word From Our Students – *The Rewards of Reaching Higher*

USC actively encourages students to explore new realms and challenge themselves academically by becoming Renaissance Scholars, undertaking joint research projects with faculty members, and more. Though recognition may take the form of special designations or even a monetary prize, students agree that the biggest reward is how these experiences shape their lives.

Christina To, Senior from San Marino, California; Chemistry major with a minor in Sociology; Renaissance Scholar and Prize Winner.

Without the USC Renaissance Scholars program, I may not have minored in sociology, a subject far away from my scientific interests; without this emphasis on breadth with depth, I would not have been introduced to a world I never knew, a world in which children are not shielded by the dynamics of the adult world. While conducting participant observation in sociology, I became friends with children, mostly Latino, who taught me about life – their lives – while I taught them more mundane subjects such as math or social studies. I felt their anguish as they told me their experiences, monumental though sporadic, of differential treatment that they have faced. My exposure to the deep feelings of these children has made me a better person and will make me a better doctor, for it is important to understand the point of view of the person behind the disease. As a physician, I will remember the stories of these children and reach out to people of all walks of life, seeing the world from their perspective. If I could give any advice to high school students, it would be to not try to stretch yourself too thin over too many activities, but to focus on the things you really care about – meaningful experiences that will contribute to who you are.

Hal Mecke, Senior from Montpelier, Vermont; dual degree BS/Masters program in Computer Engineering, with a minor in French - Renaissance Scholar and Prize Winner.

As a matter of personal interest I like things that are multidisciplinary – I get bored if I have to focus on one thing too much. I first heard about the Renaissance Scholars program through my engineering advisor, which is very representative of the whole attitude of USC – the people here are always trying to make sure you get the most out of what the university has to offer. The Renaissance Scholars program made it easier for me to get involved in two of my areas of interest, and to follow up on a theme I have been talking about since high school: finding the common ground between the cultures of science and liberal arts. While people often think of different disciplines as being separate, when you solve problems in the real world you have to draw on different skills, and if you are going to be a leader you have to know how to use diverse knowledge and interact with different types of people. I've already seen the value in my own life – last summer a friend started a business and wanted to connect with a French business partner. The company flew in their CEO and one of their engineers, and I was able to handle both the translation and technical communication! So my advice to high school students is, no matter what you had to do to get into college, once you're here, put your focus on what you really like to do, not what you feel obligated to do – ultimately it's all about getting something that will benefit your life.

Stephanie Bughi, Senior from Burbank, California, major in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Undergraduate Student Symposium Prize Winner.

I've grown up around the medical profession – my father is a doctor and I plan to go on to medical school and pursue a career in health. As a pre-med student, I can say that, by far, the Undergraduate Student Symposium has been my most fulfilling experience at USC. I've participated for three years, working with faculty and other student researchers. What has made it especially rewarding for me is that I have actually been able to contribute to my chosen profession while still a student – it's like getting a head start. I've had a chance to conduct three different studies on various forms of stress – encompassing high school, college and medical school students. The experience has helped me in so many ways – one benefit I didn't expect was that the process of conducting the surveys was a great way to interact with other students from different majors. It really surprised me how many students I could relate to, and how common some forms of stress-related disorders are. It was also great to receive a check for \$500 when our study won first place in the Life Science category!

What did I learn from my research that can help high school students? Definitely, get involved in activities within your community. One never knows where their true passions lie until they experience them first hand, but also strive to enjoy every moment. If you start feeling overwhelmed, take some time off, use breathing techniques or do walking meditation – it really does help.

Do AP's Make a Difference?

At USC, we take a holistic look at a student's record in determining whom to admit, so Advanced Placement (AP) classes, and the test scores achieved by the students who take them, are part of our consideration process. As a highly selective university, USC encourages students to sign up for AP, or International Baccalaureate (IB), courses whenever possible. If their school offers them, these courses provide students with an excellent preparation for the rigors of college work. And the student who takes them indicates an ambition to engage with college level challenges.

We also understand that many schools do not offer AP classes. Applicants should not be concerned by an inability to take such courses when they're simply not available. Our admission office becomes aware of this on a school-by-school basis as it examines each high school's profile, and students should note this on their applications.

Which AP scores does the admission office want to see? We request that students report on their admission application AP scores

for all tests taken before senior year. Also, we ask applicants to inform us of the AP courses that they plan to take while a senior. In addition, we request score reports for senior year AP tests so that departments may use the results of AP examinations for placement purposes or to waive degree requirements.

Once students are admitted to USC, the Registrar will award unit credit for most AP examinations with a score of 3, 4, or 5. The exception is AP Computer Science, which requires a 4 or 5. A score of 4 or 5 on selected exams (Art History, Biology, Chemistry, European History, and Physics) is required to receive general education credit, so that students may bypass some of the core course requirements. In total, a maximum of 32 units will be granted for AP exam credit, or approximately one year of college.

At USC, we don't view specific AP courses and tests more favorably than others, but it is the case that, depending on the major, certain APs are more valuable.

How to choose between Liberal Arts and Professional programs?

At USC, you don't have to!

With approximately 3,000 colleges and universities in the United States, nearly all students ask themselves how to think about making the best choice – and it's certainly one of the most frequently asked questions for high school counselors. There are lots of factors, but we'd like to share one facet of USC that often leads students to consider us: *the ability to pursue both a liberal arts and pre-professional degree during their undergraduate career.*

USC offers many strong professional programs in a wide variety of fields, as well as a comprehensive array of traditional liberal arts majors. **It's this unusual combination – a school equally strong in the liberal arts and pre-professional study** – that seems to attract students who are interested in developing a broad intellectual background, while preparing for a career in a specific field. And USC strives to not only offer outstanding options in both spheres, but also seeks to build a bridge between them. This allows students to enjoy subjects that fascinate them and will stand them in good stead no matter what their profession may turn out to be, as well as receive pre-professional training that will let them leave their college years with a good idea of the career they're headed for.

Embracing USC's philosophy of intellectual diversity, many students here choose to do so as double, or even triple, majors, with at least one area of study in the liberal arts and the other at a particular professional school.

How broad are the options? For starters, the USC College of Letters, Arts and Sciences offers nearly 80 majors and more than 50 minors. (For a complete listing, see <http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/academics/majors>). Along with traditional liberal arts and humanities areas, there are such subjects as international relations, professional writing, kinesiology, and even a major called "interdisciplinary studies" that encourages the student to create his or her unique approach to college.

On the professional side, USC has over 30 pre-professional programs for undergraduates, ranging across a variety of subjects (*see box*). Most of these areas of study are also connected to a graduate school, so undergraduates receive the benefit of cutting-edge developments in their field.

How does all this impact a student's undergraduate career? Perhaps the most important benefit is that it allows undergraduates to either single-mindedly pursue the course of study that they first came to college to follow, or to change their minds and find a full course of study for their evolving areas of interest – all within the same university.

And of course, a big value of attending any university is the company you keep. Students at USC have rich opportunities to study side by side with people of widely disparate interests and backgrounds. Is it possible for a National Merit Scholar to be best friends with a Heisman Trophy winner? At USC, the answer is yes!

USC's Undergraduate Programs

Liberal Arts programs:

- **College of Letters, Arts & Sciences**
offers 80 majors

Professional programs:

- **Architecture** (*Landscape or Building*)
- **Business and Accounting** (*including possible emphasis in Cinema-Television, East Asian Studies, and International Relations*)
- **Cinema-Television** (*including emphasis in traditional or digital media, and dramatic writing*)
- **Communication and Journalism**
- **Dental Hygiene**
- **Engineering** (*Aerospace, Astronautics, Biomedical, Chemical, Civil, Computer Science, Electrical, Industrial and Systems, Mechanical, and Petroleum*)
- **Fine Arts**
- **Gerontology**
- **Health Promotion and Disease Prevention**
- **Music** (*composition, performance or study*)
- **Policy, Planning, and Development**
- **Occupational Therapy**
- **Theatre** (*acting, design, stage management, technical direction*).

Plus, USC offers more than 120 minors – the broadest array of any US university!

Brand New and Very "KIUEL" – the Kline Institute for Undergraduate Engineering Life

USC Engineering students about to get even more out of life

Engineering is a challenging major and even the most creative and technically oriented students can find it difficult to balance the rigors of studying engineering with their desire to take advantage of the multitude of learning and enrichment opportunities of campus life. Yet, many students at USC's top-ranked Viterbi School of Engineering successfully manage to expand their horizons. And on March 30, the school announced the creation of a new institute to give engineering students at USC an even more holistic college experience.

The new Klein Institute for Undergraduate Engineering Life (KIUEL) will support a unique community of engineering students

– with a focus on cross disciplinary studies, service learning and leadership development. Students will have opportunities to participate in joint arts and cultural programs as well as national competitions and leading edge multidisciplinary research. They will apply their knowledge and make a difference in communities both across the street and on the other side of the world. And through mentorship and training, they will forge the skills and relationships that will prepare them to be global engineering leaders.

It all adds up to make engineering one of the most satisfying paths a student can follow – at USC and beyond.

Have a great summer!

It's been a busy but very gratifying year – and we thank you for all the terrific students you have sent our way.

As the cycle begins again, please encourage your rising seniors to get to know us better during the summer, using the contact information listed below for our individual departments and Office of Admission. Then look for the updated Admission Directory – including contact information for your school's designated USC Admission Officer – in the September issue of *Counselor News*.

We'd also like to point out that we have recently redesigned our undergraduate admission and financial aid website to make information easier to find for you and your students. Our new site includes a section specifically designed for counselors so our contact information, application guidelines, recent profiles and catalog are all at your

fingertips. Please take a look at <http://usc.edu/admission/counselors> and let us know if there is anything else you would find helpful.

If you have any questions or thoughts, please feel free to contact us at our special e-mail address just for guidance counselors: scounsel@usc.edu.

Finally, as a school counselor, we value your role in this process and appreciate the contributions you make to our profession. You are an essential partner in helping students find the best match for continuing their education and their lives. To help identify those students who would thrive at USC, we've briefly summarized below what USC stands for today – and hope that we can be part of the futures of some of the talented students you know.

Thanks again for all you do, and have a great summer!

USC Office of Admission

Office of Admission and Financial Aid Counseling Center *phone* (213) 740-1111 *fax* (213) 821-0200

Admission Interns *for scheduling Meet USC and transfer sessions* (213) 740-6616

Tour Guides *for campus tour scheduling only; all other types of visit requests should be directed to the Admission Interns* (213) 740-6605

USC Undergraduate Programs Directory

USC College	(213) 740-5930	http://college.usc.edu/admission/
School of Architecture	(800) 281-8616	http://arch.usc.edu
Marshall School of Business	(213) 740-8885, (800) 352-5719 outside of CA	http://marshall.usc.edu
School of Cinema-Television	(213) 740-8358	http://usc.edu/cntv
Annenberg School for Communication	(213) 821-0770	http://annenberg.usc.edu
School of Dentistry	(213) 740-2841	http://usc.edu/dental
Viterbi School of Engineering	(800) 526-3347	http://viterbi.usc.edu/admission
Roski School of Fine Arts	(213) 740-2787	http://roski.usc.edu
Health Promotion and Disease Prevention	(213) 740-1060	http://usc.edu/medicine/hp
Thornton School of Music	(213) 740-8986	http://usc.edu/music
School of Policy, Planning, and Development	(213) 740-0550	http://www.usc.edu/schools/sppd/programs/undergraduate/
Occupational Therapy	(866) 385-4250	http://usc.edu/schools/ihp/ot/
School of Theatre	(213) 740-1286	http://theatre.usc.edu

USC in a nutshell...


As a highly selective private research university, the University of Southern California strives to maintain an undergraduate population that is diverse in all measures – ethnicity, socioeconomic, geography, life experience, and academic interests – because we believe such diversity is a necessary component of an exciting and stimulating learning environment.

Add to this USC's long-standing traditions and our strength in intercollegiate athletics and students can find the best of both worlds – a challenging intellectual environment paired with a spirited undergraduate campus community. The quality of students attending USC has risen dramatically over the last decade – for example, SAT scores of

incoming freshmen have risen by 250 points. However, it's not just about test scores. USC's definition of excellence is broad, and our incoming classes consist of students who are gifted academically, creatively, and emotionally – who are looking to prepare themselves for a lifetime of leadership and success in whatever they choose to do.

Counselor News

Quarterly News for Guidance Counselors Summer 2006

Do we have your correct information? 
If not, please e-mail us at scounsel@usc.edu

Counselor News *Quarterly Updates for Guidance Counselors*

Admission Reflections 2006



We asked Tim Brunold, Director of Admission, to reflect on the admission process this year. Here's what he told us:

This year's admission cycle has been the most successful in USC's history. *We received more freshman applications than ever (about 34,000) and our admitted class is the most accomplished in our history.* Because of our commitment

to keep our freshman class at its current size, it also inevitably translated to our lowest admission rate ever – about 25%. We saw strong growth in interest from the East Coast, with substantial increases in students applying from the Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, Atlanta and Miami areas. The best news is that we were also able to expand our merit scholarship offers, adding almost fifty additional half-tuition Presidential Scholarships – a fact that will help us to make it easier for many more highly qualified students to attend the university.

Students might also be interested to learn that if they come to USC, they will be part of a truly global community. Being a world education leader is part of USC's stated mission, and the University continues to enroll more international students than

any other American university. This year's largest application increases came from Canada, China, India, Mexico and Saudi Arabia. All in all, it's a great time to be at a place where some of the best young minds in the world are coming together.

What's the real value of studying with students from other countries?

According to Jim Ellis, USC's Senior Executive Director for Global Initiatives, as much education in college takes place outside as inside the classroom, and an international college community provides a forum for learning first hand about other cultures. Which also means that students are likely to leave USC with a great network of friends from around the world - an invaluable advantage for a future in which many will be doing business with one another!

"It's no accident that USC's undergraduate student body has unparalleled diversity – not only in terms of geographic, ethnic, cultural and economic backgrounds, but also in terms of life experiences and interests. In fact, our students directly mirror the diversity of the educational opportunities we offer."

– Katharine Harrington, Dean of Admission and Financial Aid