



His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama shared words of wisdom with nearly 5,000 students on a visit to USC hosted by the Interfaith Council this May.

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## Quarterly Updates for College Counselors *Winter 2012*

### A day to remember!

January 10 is the application deadline for regular fall admission. Apply today via [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)

### USC remains at the top of the rankings

■ We're still ranked #23 in the nation by *US News & World Report*. And we're gratified that USC was voted by other college administrators as one of the "Top 10 Up & Coming Schools" for the most promising innovations in academics, faculty and student life.

■ Students from all backgrounds succeed at USC: *The Chronicle of Higher Education* tracks the number of minority students who earn advanced degrees in the US and reports that in the past five years USC has graduated some of the highest numbers of Hispanic, Asian and African American PhDs.

### Congratulations to our Viterbi professors

Professors Jernej Barbic and Bhaskar Krishnamachari have been recognized as two of the world's top innovators under the age of 35 by *Technology Review* magazine. Barbic is an assistant professor of computer science. Krishnamachari is an associate professor of electrical engineering systems.

# Counselor News

## Making College Good for the Soul

*USC's vibrant and diverse spiritual community supports all students*

"College has always been the time when young people wrestle with questions of identity, what they stand for and where they are headed. The generational change for today's students is that two-thirds now identify themselves as being more spiritual than religious, and their questions are oriented, not only around the concept of 'God,' but also around the search for meaning and purpose," states Varun Soni, dean of Religious Life.

That view informs how USC supports and nurtures religious life: As a secular, non-denominational institution, the University values all traditions equally, does not impose any one view or set of beliefs, and strives to ensure that whatever form of spiritual connection students seek, they can find. Those goals are facilitated by the tremendous diversity of the Trojan community. Students from around the country mingle with the largest population of international students at any US university, representing almost every major religious tradition, from atheism to Zoroastrianism.

Under the leadership of Dean Soni, the first Hindu to hold such a post in the US, the Office of Religious Life takes a prominent role in providing resources and experiences that support spiritual growth, as well as fostering students' interaction with and understanding of different faiths. The office sponsors dozens of student-run religious groups, who come together for stimulating and thought-provoking discussions at the Interfaith Council. A hugely popular speaker series gives them a chance to learn from some of the most inspiring contemporary thinkers, from former English prime minister Tony Blair to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In recognition of our commitment to community service, we were invited to send a student delegation to the White House for the announcement of the president's Interfaith Community Service and Campus Challenge. And we hope to be invited back next summer as a school making a profound difference in our community.

But as Dean Soni sees it, his office's most important work is providing support and counseling to young people facing life's ups and downs on their own for the first time. And with the office's dedicated staff of chaplains from across the religious spectrum, students can find someone who truly understands where they are coming from, as well as a spiritual home away from home.

### How diverse is our spiritual community? Our Office of Religious Life reports that USC has:

- Ninety student-run religious groups
- Forty campus chaplains
- More Jewish students than Brandeis University
- More Catholic students than Notre Dame
- More Hindu students than any university in the country

## Campus Pride awards USC a perfect score

*Trojan campus provides one of the nation's best college experiences for LGBT students*

The University's values have set the foundation for a vibrant and diverse community where all religions, cultures and ethnic backgrounds are welcomed. In recent years that commitment has extended to creating a climate of openness and respect for students of all sexual orientations. So we were delighted to be one of only 33 schools in the country to receive perfect marks from Campus Pride, a national nonprofit organization, on their annual index of colleges that offer the best experience for gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual students. The scores are based on a review of eight categories of campus life, from the availability of LGBT-friendly housing to non-discrimination policies that include LGBT students. To view the rankings, please visit [campusclimateindex.org](http://campusclimateindex.org)



As LGBT Resource Center Director Vincent Vigil reports, "This is the fifth year running that we have achieved this distinction, as well as being named in the top 20 'Best of the Best' by the *Advocate College Guide for LGBT Students*. Over the last 10 years USC has really changed in terms of student demographics, and with that change has come a more tolerant and open atmosphere." The center has been at the forefront of the transformation. In addition to sponsoring a full schedule of campus programs, it organizes numerous support and informational activities for high school students, sending trained USC students as consultants to local high school gay and straight alliances, hosting prospective students on campus visits that include a stay on a Rainbow Floor, and preparing an informative online guidebook that helps students in their college search. Vigil describes one of the best indicators of how support for this community has grown: "When I first came to campus in 2002 the LGBT Welcome Event had 15 students. This year, it drew over 400 attendees, whose presence on campus will enrich everyone's life."

- The online handbook is available at [sait.usc.edu/lgbt/files/FinalRecruitmentGuide.pdf](http://sait.usc.edu/lgbt/files/FinalRecruitmentGuide.pdf)
- For more information visit [sait.usc.edu/lgbt](http://sait.usc.edu/lgbt)

## Financial Aid Info

### "Planning for USC": Our Net Price Calculator is now online

Prospective undergraduate students can now use USC's Net Price Calculator to help them plan for the cost of attending USC. This tool will estimate a median "net price" and the need-based gift aid a family may receive. It also estimates a family's remaining costs and includes a section to enter other resources the family may have to assist with expenses. The Financial Aid Office hopes this tool will help families plan for their educational expenses and realize the cost of attending USC may be less than expected.

#### Families should remember the following:

- The need-based aid estimated by the Calculator is only an approximation of the amount of aid a family may receive. Unique family circumstances reviewed in our full evaluation of financial aid applications are not considered by the Calculator and may affect final awards.
- USC participates in various programs to help families manage their family contribution, including a payment plan, prepayment plan and the Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan.

- For more information about financial aid at USC, please visit our website at [www.usc.edu/financialaid](http://www.usc.edu/financialaid). To access the USC Net Price Calculator, click on "Applying for and Receiving Financial Aid," "Undergraduate," then "Planning for USC."

## Tools and Information for Counselors

### New admission blog provides an insider's view

Do you want to know more about USC Admission? We invite you to check out our new blog, where our staff members provide insights into a variety of topics including the admission process, campus life, and life in Los Angeles. The blog is updated twice a week throughout the academic year.

- To learn more, visit: [admissionblog.usc.edu](http://admissionblog.usc.edu)

### Financial Aid webinar walks students through the process

To help students, parents and counselors better understand how to finance a college education, we've put together an informative tutorial on how it works at USC: our philosophy, the various types of financial aid available, how financial aid eligibility is determined and how to apply. Students can watch and listen to this fifteen-minute presentation at their own pace, from their own computer. We predict it will be time well spent!

- To learn more, visit: [www.usc.edu/financialaid/webinar/FinancingUSCProspectStu.html](http://www.usc.edu/financialaid/webinar/FinancingUSCProspectStu.html)

### Spirituality you can sink your teeth into

*The Good Karma Café brings new genre of soul food to campus*

Breaking bread together is a time-honored way to build community. And now a search by Hindu students for healthy vegetarian cuisine, prepared according to their religion's dietary requirements, has inspired one of USC's most innovative and popular new dining options. The Good Karma Café is open for lunch two days a week in the courtyard of the United University Church, serving delicious all-vegetarian food prepared according to the traditions of Vaishnava Hinduism. The café draws faculty and students from every culture to enjoy a delicious al fresco lunch and relax in the communal garden setting.



## LA Expo Line to head west!

Ground has just been broken on the second phase of LA's newest light-rail line linking USC with points west, including a terminus only a couple blocks from the famed Santa Monica Pier. The north-south Downtown segment of the Expo Line is slated to open soon, allowing students to board at one of three new campus stations and arrive at the heart of Downtown LA in about 10 minutes.

It is in our lives,  
and not from our words,  
that our religion  
must be read.

Thomas Jefferson



## TROJAN VOICES

We asked three students who have participated in campus religious programs: "What has your involvement in a spiritual or religious community added to your college experience?"

### New USC Caruso Catholic Center to open in fall 2012

Students of all faiths will be welcomed next fall at the beautiful new Catholic church and community center, located just a block from campus. The Center will host a full complement of activities and provide meeting and conference spaces. Designed by award-winning Boston architects Elkus-Manfredi, the buildings will be LEED Gold Certified for top environmental efficiency.

■ For more information visit [www.catholictrojan.org](http://www.catholictrojan.org)

### What is the president's Interfaith Community Service and Campus Challenge?

Today's college students were in elementary school on September 11, 2001, but the world in which they have grown up has in many ways been defined by that day. This year, in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks, President Obama has called on institutions of higher learning to make the vision for interfaith cooperation a reality on campuses across the country. During the course of the 2011-12 academic year, students from a variety of religious and secular backgrounds will undertake community challenges together. More than 300 colleges and universities have submitted action plans for helping those in need; the best examples will be recognized by the White House in the summer of 2012.

■ For more information visit: [www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ofbnp/interfaithservice](http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ofbnp/interfaithservice)

**Mary Ellen Jebbia**  
*Senior triple majoring in religion, business and Japanese*  
**President, Interfaith Council**

USC is an incredibly diverse campus, with students from every religious background. I was raised Catholic and still love going to church, but also spent time in Japan and found that the Buddhist philosophy and way of life really speak to me. My involvement with the spiritual community at USC started on a whim – I was intrigued by an article in the *Daily Trojan* about the appointment of Dean Soni, the first Hindu in that position. So I sent him an e-mail, and he invited me to the Interfaith Council meeting. I went and was blown away, which is a common response. I found a community unlike any other, a platform where you can talk about your beliefs, have deep discussions, learn about other traditions. Everyone comes with questions, which makes it so exciting. We've got some phenomenal programs in the works as part of the Interfaith Challenge. For example, one of our students created a twenty-session curriculum about the world's religions that we will be teaching in our neighborhood schools.

After I graduate I plan to apply to divinity school and become a professor of religion. And I know that someday I will be a better teacher because I didn't just study other faiths, I experienced them.

**Alex Fullman**  
*Junior majoring in political science*  
**Past president, USC Hillel**

When I began my college search, it was important to me to find a university with a vibrant Jewish community. At USC, I discovered that Hillel and Chabad offered me a place to meet Jewish students from a wide range of backgrounds. I found many new friends while attending FreshFest and dozens of Shabbat dinners. I took a leadership position on the Hillel Student Board, which has been a formative experience. One highlight was planning and leading a fantastic two-day retreat at USC's Wrigley Institute on Catalina Island. I was also fortunate to travel to Israel on the USC Hillel Birthright trip following my freshman year.

I have found that USC truly respects all faiths, and actively helps connect students from different backgrounds through the Interfaith Council, which brought the Dalai Lama to USC last year, and events such as the annual Catholic-Jewish Shabbat dinners. It's easy to make friends from all cultures, religions and ethnicities, because we're all part of the Trojan Family.

College is a time to explore your beliefs. USC is unique because of the number of religious and spiritual organizations at the University. My advice to prospective students is to explore the extracurricular options available at USC in addition to the academic opportunities, and to realize that college is a chance to enrich one's soul and challenge one's mind.

**Nabeel Alam**  
*Senior majoring in public policy, urban planning and management*  
**USC Ansar Service Partnership**

Although my parents are from India and are devout Muslims, I wasn't involved in my religious community during high school; I was busy doing all the things you need to do to get into a competitive college. It wasn't until I transferred to USC junior year that I started attending events through USC's Muslim Student Union for the holy month of Ramadan.

One of the core ways that I identify with my religion is by helping those around me — which led me to create an organization named the Ansar Service Partnership. This community service organization conducts service projects that include delivering food to the homeless on Skid Row to adopting a beach in Malibu. Aligning with my own faith also opened me up to learn about other faiths, and got me involved in interfaith activities.

I came to USC because it was the only place that offered the major I wanted, but as an ambassador for my faith, I have also grown as a leader and learned to work with and appreciate other cultures. That's what college is about – expanding your horizons, taking risks and walking away with new ideas.

# Counselor News

*Quarterly News for College Counselors*  
*Winter 2012*

**A college isn't a trophy; it's a match.**



*The University of Southern California admits students of any race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical disability or mental disability. The University's full non-discrimination policy can be found on the Web at [policies.usc.edu](http://policies.usc.edu).*

**FOLLOW US ON TWITTER:** [www.twitter.com/USCAdmission](http://www.twitter.com/USCAdmission)  
**JOIN US ON FACEBOOK:** [www.facebook.com/usc](http://www.facebook.com/usc)  
**WATCH US ON YOUTUBE:** [www.youtube.com/usc](http://www.youtube.com/usc)

## Important Dates & Deadlines

**January 10:** Final First-Year Application Deadline.

**January – February:** Auditions for Thornton School of Music and the School of Theatre.

**February 2:** FAFSA and CSS/PROFILE filing deadline for priority financial aid consideration.

**March 2:** Deadline to submit student and parent tax information to the Financial Aid Office, to ensure timely processing of financial aid award.

**April 1:** All first-year applicants notified of admission decision.

**May 1:** National Candidates Reply Date.

## How to find your Admission Counselor

Visit [usc.edu/uga](http://usc.edu/uga), click on "Contact Us," then enter your high school's name in the "Find your Admission Counselor" box. Counselors can also call or e-mail us anytime at (213) 740-1111, or [scounsel@usc.edu](mailto:scounsel@usc.edu)

## *Quick note from the dean...*

We're delighted to report that our conversion to the Common Application is going very smoothly, and hope it has streamlined the process for both you and your students.

We're now reading and reviewing applications that were received in time for merit scholarship consideration, and are very excited about the quality of the students who are applying. Our notification procedures will remain the same as last year: finalists for some merit scholarships (Trustee, Presidential and our new Mork Family Scholars) will hear from us at the end of January, and may be invited to interview on campus.

There will be a single mailing date for all other freshman decisions, which will be in late March. And because we still believe in the thrill of "the big envelope," applicants will find out via postal mail. We'll be accepting applications for admission until January 10, so please let your students know that we would love to hear from them!

We wish you all the best in getting through the rigors of application season, and hope you and your students can also find time to enjoy their senior year.

Tim Brunold, Dean of Admission

## USC's Codes

Submit ACT test scores to **ACT Code 0470**.

Submit SAT scores and CSS/PROFILE Application to **CEEB Code 4852**.

Submit FAFSA information to **Federal School Code 001328**.