GUIDING VALUES

We will work toward our mission guided by a set of values which we believe to be imperative to improving urban education.

Results Oriented: We are problem solvers. We identify challenges in urban education and will work to ensure improvement. Identifying problems is not enough. Achieving excellence means maintaining a shared culture of high expectations for ourselves and for our students — a culture in which attaining specific goals and benchmarks must be the starting point for identifying new ones.

Collaborative Inquiry: Educational challenges are multifaceted; therefore, they must be addressed from both disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives; using the expertise of researchers and practitioners from the community, academy, and the private sector. We are committed to developing partnerships that enhance the condition of urban education and work with the community.

Combine Research and Practice: Urban education needs the best ideas from theory and practice, and the Rossier School embraces and combines both. This requires critical reflection of the practices, programs, and institutions of schooling, standing outside the framework of conventional norms and assumptions.

Innovation: Excellence in urban education means thinking outside of common problem/solution identification. We are an institution committed to innovative solutions that often emerge outside of traditional structures and cultures.

Commitment to Diversity: Meeting the mission of excellence in urban education means believing all people can learn, and striving to improve the education of all. We also believe in a diverse scholarly community (race, ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, epistemological differences, among others) in which multiple points of view are nourished.

GUIDING ACADEMIC THEMES

The USC Rossier School of Education is committed to four academic themes that guide all academic, research, and service efforts within our school and service as a guide for meeting the school’s mission. These themes are Leadership, Diversity, Learning and Accountability.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Our strategic plan is guided by four primary goals that we intend to accomplish in the next five years. These goals are designed to help us achieve our mission of strengthening urban education. We selected these goals because they represent key areas of faculty expertise; they reflect priorities that are both compelling and achievable; and when we achieve them, we will have made a significant contribution to urban education locally, nationally and internationally as a premier and distinctive urban research university school of education.

We seek to distinguish USC from its peer institutions through innovative efforts in teaching, research and service that will serve as a national exemplar.

Within five years, we will transform the school into the “go to” school for: (a) research that anticipates and responds to urban social needs; (b) professional preparation programs that set the standard for content, delivery and impact around leadership, learning, diversity and accountability in urban communities; and (c) a work environment that supports intellectual freedom, academic rigor, and respect for diversity.

The ways we work together on the goals in this strategic plan will be characterized by:

- **Use of data driven processes**: we will collect the necessary data, conduct comprehensive analyses of these data, and use those results to inform decision-making;
- **“High touch” service orientation**: aside from the reality that we are a costly choice for future educators, we recognize that learning is facilitated through a balance of challenge and support. We will structure our academic programs and prioritize services such that the supports necessary to being a successful faculty, staff member, or student are provided.
- **Development of communities**: we know that people need to feel a sense of place to do excellent work. We will focus our activities and practices on providing numerous opportunities for meaningful connections and creating dialogues.
- **Shared governance**: where possible, we will share our data and rationales with key stakeholders and will encourage dialogue and feedback prior to making decisions that affect the school. We recognize, though, that collaboration and leadership are not synonymous and therefore expect our leaders to make decisions for the school when called upon.

GOAL 1

To prepare and/or graduate educational leaders who are change agents who contribute effectively to the urban education experience through their understanding of and competencies for working with urban educational environments.

We expect our graduates to be at the forefront of urban