September 30, 2014

Dear USC community,

I am writing to share the news that USC’s provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, Elizabeth Garrett, has been named the thirteenth president of Cornell University, effective July 1, 2015. While this is a tremendous loss for our university, I am personally thrilled for Provost Garrett, who has served the USC community with exceptional dedication since 2003. She has been on my senior leadership team since 2005, when I appointed her vice provost and then vice president for academic planning and budget. She became our provost and senior vice president for academic affairs in 2010. In these various roles, she has proven to be a remarkably dynamic leader, showing boundless energy in advancing the university’s initiatives, and a singular gift for innovative and tactical thinking. She will be deeply missed at USC.

During her distinguished tenure as provost, Provost Garrett has overseen spectacular successes in the area of faculty recruitment, especially in the convergent sciences, the medical sciences, quantitative social sciences, and the humanities. She has recruited excellent administrators, and with her team, she has brought in strong and diverse undergraduate classes, and expanded our professional master’s degrees, both residential and online. She has helped enhance the residential experience for our students, and strengthened opportunities for them to learn and grow outside the classroom.

Provost Garrett has also helped maintain the university’s volume and quality of externally funded research, and expanded the university’s postdoctoral programs, strategically focusing on priorities such as the humanities, diversity in the digital realm, and clinical fellows. She played a central role in programming new academic buildings, and has left an indelible imprint on Dauterive Hall, as well as our Raulston Memorial Research Building, Michelson Center for Convergent Bioscience, Kaufman International Dance Center, and Wallis Annenberg Hall.

I know you will join me in warmly congratulating Provost Garrett, as we collectively wish her continued success and joy. In assuming this vital new role at Cornell, Provost Garrett will build on her already-singular legacy in higher education, while advancing work that will benefit generations of scholars and students.

Sincerely,

C. L. Max Nikias
President

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