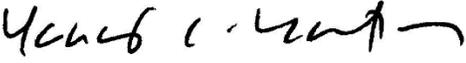


MEMORANDUM

To: Viterbi Community

From: Yannis C. Yortsos, Dean 

Date: June 1, 2020

Subject: Commitment to Engineer a Better World

As we live and work at USC Viterbi, our overarching mission is to help engineer a better world for all humanity. This drives all that we do: the education and growth of our students, the constant development of new programs, the thought leadership of our faculty and students, the and impact to society and the community.

This effort is often rewarding, and is often exhilarating. Consider yesterday's historic space launch, where Viterbi engineers played an important role. And then, there are times, such as the ones we've lived the last few days, where our ambition for a better world collides with an environment—stemming from dreadful historical roots—where racist and socially divisive practices try to tear us apart. It makes us grieve with our colleagues, particularly our African American colleagues—faculty, staff, and students—who are, and have long been, the recipients of such injustice. This realization makes us question the impact we can have, makes us rethink whether our commitment to engineering a better world is strong enough, and if it is impactful enough. I share this anguish profoundly. In these trying times, compounded with a pandemic that hits harder those most vulnerable among us, it is difficult not to feel upset, and not to feel discouraged.

However, even at – better yet, because of – these unsettling events, I want to call upon all of us to reaffirm today, in the strongest possible terms, to redouble the commitment to our vision: a commitment to inclusiveness, to humanity, to the complete and unconditional respect of everyone among us. I call upon us all to sustain and further improve an inclusive culture that respects, treasures, and helps reach the unlimited potential of every individual in our extended Viterbi family, in our society, and in our world, regardless of one's race, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. I call upon us to listen to, empathize, and support all who seek solace and human understanding. And I further call upon us to continue to strengthen a culture that helps the development of character, equally important with the development of technological competence.

I know that all of us at USC Viterbi have the strength of character to meet these new challenges. We have the strength to help lead such efforts, to create and implement new opportunities for lasting change. I believe that it is *these times* that motivate us and make us stronger in our resolve to continue to *engineer a better world for all humanity*—a goal that is more pressing now than ever before.