The USC Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

An eclectic collection of fascinating and historic facts that define the heart of USC (in no particular order).

The USC Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences
Did you know we have professors who create a makeshift rocket from a skateboard and fire extinguisher, and walk across hot coals to demonstrate the basic principles of physics? Did you know that in 1918 President Lincoln’s boyhood pal, Amy Winship, attended our College at age 87 and was affectionately dubbed, “the world’s oldest co-ed”? Did you know that the College of Liberal Arts was founded along with the University of Southern California in 1880 with 53 students and 10 teachers and now has grown to nearly 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students, and more than 750 faculty members?

These are just a few of 100 intriguing facts you may investigate in the following pages. The USC Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences is the largest, oldest and most diverse of the university’s 19 schools, with more than 30 academic departments and programs, and dozens of research centers and institutes. Here are 100 reasons that make us smile in saying, “We are USC Dornsife.”
The Los Angeles University of International Relations is founded in 1924 to train statesmen for consular and diplomatic service. Now called the School of International Relations, it is the second oldest international relations school in the U.S. and the third oldest in the world. International relations majors are led by Dan Schnur, director of the Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics based in USC Dornsife. The course originated with Stanley Gold, a member of the USC Board of Trustees. Schnur established a curriculum based on Gold’s concept of a class that would best prepare students to think about the obstacles facing the state, such as lack of jobs and the crisis in the public educational system. “We wanted to create a course that gives USC students not just an opportunity to learn about the challenges facing California but gives them the opportunity in a very practical real-world way to explore possible solutions,” Schnur said.

A course, “The Future of California,” gives undergraduates a foundation in the state’s policy, cultural and structural challenges. Offered to students in schools across USC, the course is led by Dan Schnur, director of the Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics based in USC Dornsife. The course originated with Stanley Gold, a member of the USC Board of Trustees. Schnur established a curriculum based on Gold’s concept of a class that would best prepare students to think about the obstacles facing the state, such as lack of jobs and the crisis in the public educational system. “We wanted to create a course that gives USC students not just an opportunity to learn about the challenges facing California but gives them the opportunity in a very practical real-world way to explore possible solutions,” Schnur said.

A pioneer in computational biology, a revolutionary field combining biological sciences, mathematics and computer science, Waterman helps build USC Dornsife’s world-renowned program in molecular and computational biology. Waterman’s work focuses on applying mathematics, statistics and computer science techniques to various problems in molecular biology. His work has contributed to some of the most widely used tools in the field and forms one of the theoretical cornerstones for many DNA mapping and sequencing projects.

Top Geobiology Program
In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Department of Earth Sciences expanded its interdisciplinary interests greatly in addition to its strengths in geophysics. A key part of this expansion was the founding of a geobiology program that now ranks among the top programs in the world.

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In 1880, the College of Liberal Arts is founded along with the university by a Protestant horticulturist, an Irish Catholic pharmacist, and a German Jewish banker. USC opened its doors with 53 students and 10 teachers in a city that still lacked paved streets, electric lights, telephones, and a reliable fire alarm system. From the start, these visionary founders knew that the foundational work of inquiry and discovery takes place within the disciplines of the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. USC’s College of Liberal Arts has since been known through the years as LAS, USC College and in 2011 embraced a new name: the USC Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences. The largest single gift in USC’s history — $200 million — from longtime supporters and international philanthropists Dana and David Dornsife provides unrestricted endowment support. A gift of this magnitude is rare in higher education as is the naming of a college of letters, arts and sciences.
Two-time All-American Troy Polamalu (B.A., history, ’11), named the Most Inspirational Player by his USC Trojans teammates, is a strong safety for the Pittsburgh Steelers. Polamalu was selected in the first round of the 2003 NFL Draft by the Steelers.

Faculty

2011

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2012

The Dornsife Scholars

The Dornsife Scholars program offers university-wide recognition to outstanding graduating seniors whose major course of study is in USC Dornsife. Dornsife Scholars are students whose academic achievements underscore the relationship between excellence in the core disciplines of the humanities, social sciences or natural sciences and the aspiration to have a positive impact on the world. Scholars have an overall 3.5 GPA or better in upper-division major coursework, have undertaken independent research involving close collaboration with a USC Dornsife faculty member in a laboratory or field project, or engagement in archival or library research, and have global study or internship experience. Each recipient receives $10,000 toward graduate or professional school studies. Dornsife Scholars demonstrate a commitment to educational excellence and the advances that allow for improving the lives of people and addressing pressing global challenges. In turn, by building and supporting an enduring community of visionaries, USC Dornsife continues its commitment to expanding the scholarly experience well beyond the campus and undergraduate years.

Friend of Lincoln’s Becomes ‘World’s Oldest Co-ed’ at 87

Mrs. Amy Winship, friend of Abraham Lincoln, attends the College (at age 87) and is fondly nicknamed “the oldest co-ed in the world.” The former school teacher, abolitionist and suffragist says, “I find that by study I am growing younger instead of older and I am determined never to grow old in mind, whatever my body may do in my advancing years.”

USC Shoah Foundation — The Institute for Visual History and Education

USC Shoah Foundation — The Institute for Visual History and Education becomes part of USC Dornsife in 2006. The institute, founded in 1994 by filmmaker Steven Spielberg after his experience working on the movie Schindler’s List, is dedicated to making audio-visual interviews with Holocaust survivors and other eyewitnesses of genocide a compelling voice for education and action. The institute’s current collection of 51,696 eyewitness testimonies contained within its Visual History Archive preserves history as told by the people who lived it and lived through it. Working within the university and with partners across the world to share the insights contained within the Visual History Archive through education, research and access, the institute provides unique and essential content through the dissemination of its testimonies. It develops innovative learning tools and teacher education programs, and is working to incorporate additional testimonies of survivors and eyewitnesses of genocide into the collection.
Located near Los Angeles’ Koreatown — the largest grouping of ethnic Koreans outside Korea itself — USC has long had an interest in Korean studies. Korean language courses were first offered at USC in 1942, and since then a number of notable Korean studies scholars have taught at the university. The Korean Studies Institute, housed in USC Dornsife, was established in 1995 to further spur the development of education and research about Korea at USC. Led by Professor of International Relations David Kang, 10 affiliated faculty members make their academic home at the Korean Studies Institute, along with numerous visiting scholars and postdoctoral fellows. Aiming to become the world’s leading research institute focusing on contemporary political, economic and social issues confronting modern Korea, the institute offers a minor in Korean studies and supports undergraduate, graduate and professional students in a variety of disciplines dealing with Korea.

2012

Top Ten Majors

- Economics: 835
- Biological Sciences: 787
- International Relations: 783
- Psychology: 767
- Political Science: 467
- Neuroscience: 461
- English: 400
- Philosophy: 258
- Chemistry: 256
- Kinesiology: 255

Notable Alumni:
- Steve Johnson ’80 (B.A., Economics) founded Johnson-Grace Company, which developed the patented compression technology to allow for the fast, easy, distribution of images, sound and video on the Internet. He is currently the founder and chief executive officer of ChoiceStream, Inc.

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1940

The Great Zamperini

Louis Zamperini’s (B.S., physical education, ’40) amazing life inspired the best-selling biography, Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience and Redemption (2010) by Laura Hillenbrand. As a world-record high school runner, he came to USC on a scholarship. He was a top American finisher at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, Germany, where Adolph Hitler insisted on meeting him. When war broke out, Zamperini became a WWII bombardier, spending 47 days in a life raft after his plane crashed into the sea during a rescue mission. After finally reaching land, he was captured by Japanese soldiers. Even after being tortured by prison guards for two and a half years “Lucky Louie” later became an inspirational speaker on forgiveness.

1990

Notable Alumni:
- David Bach ’90

After personal finance expert and best-selling author David Bach (B.A., social sciences and communication, ’90) first appeared on The Oprah Show in 2004, The Automatic Millionaire became an instant New York Times No. 1 best-seller. Popular before, he became a phenomenon. To date, Bach has authored 12 international bestsellers, including Start Late, Finish Rich (2006) and Debt Free for Life (2010). More than 7 million copies of his books are in print in 19 different languages worldwide. He is also a regular contributor to NBC’s Today Show.

Teaching Poetry in Paris

Over the month-long Maymester term Cecilia Woloch, acclaimed poet and USC Dornsife lecturer in English, leads an undergraduate course in poetry writing in Paris. Students participate in intensive workshops, afternoon craft talks and discussions with French and expatriate poets living and working in Paris. They read extensively from French poetry as well as the work of American poets whose time in Paris influenced their creative work.

2011

Notable Alumni:
- David Bach ’90

1990

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- David Bach ’90
Doctoral Program in Literature and Creative Writing

USC Dornsife is home to one of the first Ph.D. programs in literature and creative writing. Students, who are themselves accomplished writers, work with some of the brightest literary minds writing today. The program’s faculty — including Aimee Bender, T. Coraghessan Boyle, Percival Everett, Mark Irwin, Carol Muske-Dukes, David St. John, and Marianne Wiggins — are award-winning writers who are recipients of the PEN/Faulkner Award, Pushcart Prize, Guggenheim Fellowship and finalists for the National Book Award. Launched in 1999, the Ph.D. program provides a dual emphasis in literature and creative writing, culminating in a dissertation that combines critical analysis with creative originality. Doctoral candidates not only read and write texts as finished products of scholarship, but also consider the text as writers create it. Then they compose texts as writers, a process that goes to the source of the study of literature and of literature itself.
Hal Dornsife Arrives at USC with 18¢ in His Pocket

Delivering a car for the Studebaker company in 1934 was Harold Dornsife's ticket to Los Angeles, where he had earned a basketball scholarship to USC. During his senior year, Harold met Ester Peterson at a dance after a USC-Cal football game. Harold and Ester later married and had two children. Always grateful to USC for giving them their start, they were lead donors for the HEDCO Neurosciences Building and supported a variety of USC science programs. Their son, David, a 1965 USC graduate, and his wife Dana have continued the Dornsife legacy through their remarkable philanthropy to the university and their namesake college, USC Dornsife.

In 1994, Donal Manahan, professor of biological sciences and vice dean for students, founds the National Science Foundation-sponsored International Graduate Training Course in Antarctic Biology, the first of its kind. The month-long course focuses on biological adaptation to environmental change with an emphasis on integrative biology — the study of organisms from their genes to the functioning of the whole organism. Participants are also exposed to an array of Antarctic disciplines: atmospheric sciences, glaciology, chemistry and geology. “I want to bring students out of classrooms and laboratories,” Manahan said, “and take them on expeditions literally to the end of the world.” He added a new dimension to the work of early polar explorers who roughed the gigantic continent the size of Canada, North America and Central America combined. Manahan Peak in Antarctica is named in his honor.

The USC Dornsife 100

Writers in the Community

In the course “The Writer in the Community,” USC Dornsife undergraduates learn to teach fiction and poetry to elementary and middle school students. Aimee Bender and Cecilia Woloch of English have taught the course since 2001, funded and administered by USC Dornsife’s joint Educational Project (JEP) and the USC Center for Excellence in Teaching. The course begins with classroom instruction at USC before undergrads develop their own curricula, then venture out to local schools and observe Bender and Woloch instructing the children. Then the undergrads try their hand at teaching. “The kids get to take a step back and look at poetry through a purely creative lens, rather than from an academic angle,” said Sarah Bruno, a seventh grade teacher at Jond Street Elementary School near USC. “Later, when we did eventually have to talk stanzas, hyperboles, personification, etc., the kids had a context.” The poem at left, “Broken Dreams,” was written by then fourth grader Delvy Garcia.

SURF and Research

SURF (Summer Undergraduate Research Fund) gives students an opportunity to pursue in-depth research projects either on campus or under the direction of USC Dornsife faculty across the United States and around the globe. A significant stipend can be used to pay for travel, equipment, living expenses, fees, or other costs related to the research effort. Students participating in Problems Without Passports research courses can even use the funds for tuition. Projects can include internships or team research — such as the eight undergraduates from majors as diverse as literature and neuroscience who spent several weeks in Ghana studying a range of issues.

Comics books are not solely about superheroes anymore. Nor are they reserved for children. Rather, they have become a younger generation’s vehicle for expressing social consciousness. Since 2005, a course offered by the Freshman Seminar Program, housed in USC Dornsife, delves into the world of comic books, strips and graphic novels, allowing students to tell stories through pictures and graphics as well as text. Students create comic books, exploring subjects that go far beyond tales of caped crusaders fighting super villains. For example, one student group produced a comic book about child abuse. In it, a foster child named Aslan must come to terms with disturbing memories of life with his biological parents. The course also teaches students how to process and critique images and how to merge the study of text and image together.

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When you listen to the Na’vi speak in the movie *Avatar*, you’re hearing the words of Paul Frommer (Ph.D., linguistics, ’81), who created the otherworldly language for the science-fiction epic. Frommer built the 1,000-word lexicon on a sound palette of 20 consonants, seven vowels, and four diphthongs. He was also on call to go to the set when director James Cameron needed him to create new words for the film. Now a professor of clinical management communication in the USC Marshall School of Business, Frommer hopes *Avatar* sparks a passion for language throughout the world.

1981

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1983

Notable Alumni: Ann Muscat ’83

For Ann Muscat (Ph.D., Biological Sciences, ’83), a day at the office sometimes means a hike in the mountains. As president and CEO of the Catalina Island Conservancy, she is the steward of 42,000 acres of wilderness 20 miles off the coast of Los Angeles. Her responsibilities range from managing endangered species and volunteer programs to co-chairing the California Council of Land Trusts. She is also leading the strategy for a 25-year improvement plan called Imagine Catalina. Muscat’s mission now is to sustain the increasingly vital balance between nature and humankind.

1992

Notable Alumni: Brad Thor ’92

Brad Thor (B.A., English, ’92) spends a lot of time in danger and on best-seller lists. His novels feature counterterrorism agent (and fictional USC alumnus) Scot Harvath. Thor has been part of Homeland Security’s Analytic Red Cell program, which brought together intelligence experts, writers and others to predict how future terror attacks might unfold.

2004

Industry Change Agents

Founded in 2004, the Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West supports the study of the history and culture of California and the American West. Directed by Professor of History William Deverell, the institute trains rising historians, explores new fields of history, and works on collections and preservation. For example, with the support of the National Science Foundation, a team of scholars is preserving thousands of papers and photographs detailing the glory days of Southern California’s aerospace industry. The Aerospace History Project is creating a model for future research into other industries that have been change agents.

2008

Reframing Immigration

The Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration, directed by Professor of Sociology and American Studies and Ethnicity Manuel Pastor and Associate Professor of Political Science and Gender Studies Ange-Marie Hancock and housed in USC Dornsife, provides support to build a new understanding and a new dialogue about immigrant integration. Since 2008, the center has become a major convening place for academics, community and public policy leaders to conduct and discuss research on the changing landscape of Los Angeles and the nation.

2012

American Association for the Advancement of Science Fellows

The USC Dornsife 100

2012

+30
Exploring the Future of Energy

Hydrocarbons derived from petroleum, natural gas or coal are essential in many ways to modern life and its quality. The bulk of the world’s hydrocarbons is used for fuels, electrical power generation and heating as well as the chemical, petrochemical, plastics and rubber industries. With an ever increasing world population and energy consumption and finite non-renewable fossil fuel resources even if technologies to generate energy from other sources are further developed, a concentrated research effort is required to find long range solutions for future hydrocarbon needs. Since 1977, USC Dornsife’s Loker Hydrocarbon Research Institute, led by founding director and Nobel laureate George A. Olah and director G.K. Surya Prakash, has been at the forefront of the effort to develop alternative hydrocarbon sources, to search for new chemistry directed toward exploitation of renewable fuels, and to create more efficient ways of utilizing and recycling our present resources. A generous donation from Katherine Loker (B.A., English, ’40) and her husband Donald helped build an outstanding facility for the institute that opened its doors in 1979. The university renamed the institute in their honor in 1984.
The first true library at USC was housed in the College of Liberal Arts Building (“Old College”), which was designed to hold the entire USC student body — 55 students. Dedicated Jan. 9, 1887, and designed by architect John C. Austin, the original building’s cornerstone was laid in 1884 and construction was completed in the fall of 1886. Two wings were added to the original building in 1905 at the cost of $50,000. The Old College building was torn down in 1949 after being found seismically unfit.

1884

1950

Shakespeare on T.V.

English professor and distance-learning pioneer Frank Baxter is named one of America’s eight finest college professors by Life magazine in 1950. His show, Shakespeare on TV, received two Emmy awards. Baxter may be best known as Dr. Research, the host of all of the Bell Laboratory Science Series produced for television in the late ‘50s, which became a staple in American classrooms from the ’60s through the ’80s. The Bell Laboratory Science Series made Baxter a science icon among baby boomers. Several of Baxter’s science films are now on DVD.

1957

Notable Alumni: Jerry Buss ’57

Jerry Buss (Ph.D., chemistry, ’57), owner of the Los Angeles Lakers, was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 2012. By age 24, Buss had earned an M.S. and a Ph.D. in physical chemistry in USC Dornsife. In 1979, Buss purchased the Lakers, the Los Angeles Kings of the National Hockey League, the Forum, and a large ranch from Jack Kent Cooke for $67.5 million, which made the deal the largest transaction in sports history at that time. For basketball fans everywhere, it was fortuitous that Buss and the Lakers came together. Applying an innovative style of ownership and an intuitive sense of marketing and promotion, Buss has changed the face of the league and been the indomitable force behind the Lakers’ 10 NBA championships.

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USC Dornsife is composed of more than 30 academic departments and programs, and offers more than 30 majors and minors as well as a range of innovative interdisciplinary programs.
Mock interviews, résumé critiques and handshake tutorials — this is not a typical gang intervention. Stan Huey, associate professor of psychology, and American studies and ethnicity, and his research team are investigating whether opening career paths can change the lives of gang-involved Los Angeles youth. The Behavioral Employment Program (BEP), founded at USC Dornsife by Huey and then-graduate student Dawn McDaniel in 2007, is a pilot intervention program combining counseling with job-seeking strategies.

The program examines the relationship between employment and gang involvement with a small group of gang-affiliated youth in L.A. The use of employment strategies in youth gang intervention is not new, but in the course of his research, Huey found little scientific data to back up the effectiveness of the various intervention methods. His goal is to provide this data by running a controlled clinical trial and analyzing the results to determine which methods work, and which do not.

Notable Alumni:
Ray R. Irani ’57
USC Trustee Ray R. Irani (Ph.D., chemistry, ’57) is executive chairman of the Occidental Petroleum Corp and namesake of USC’s Ray R. Irani Hall. He was chief executive officer at Occidental from 1990 to 2011. He has published more than 50 technical papers and holds more than 150 U.S. and foreign patents. Irani is an honorary fellow of the American Institute of Chemists and a member of the National Academy of Engineering and the Council on Foreign Relations. Irani was appointed Judge Widney Professor of Chemical Engineering and Chemistry at USC in 2012.

The USC Dornsife/Los Angeles Times Poll is a series of statewide public opinion polls in California, designed to survey voter attitudes on a wide range of political, policy, social and cultural issues. Started in 2009, the poll is now conducted at regular intervals throughout the year. It is one of the largest polls of registered voters in the state and has been consistently and widely cited, helping to inform the public and to encourage discourse on key political and policy issues.
The Comparative Studies in Literature and Culture (CSLC) doctoral program redefines advanced thinking in the humanities for a more global 21st century. CSLC unites USC Dornsife faculty members in comparative literature, French and Italian, Slavic languages and literatures, and Spanish and Portuguese to remap the boundaries of these fields while preserving their traditions. The goal is to cultivate a common ground in Ph.D. education as well as to foster specialized research. CSLC students not only benefit from rigorous training in their chosen areas, but also from a shared core cross-disciplinary curriculum and professional development courses.
By the time they graduate, USC Dornsife undergraduates have participated on average in three to four internships. In 2012, the first USC Dornsife summer internship program combined paid internships with a course focused on leadership themes and mentorships with distinguished professionals to prepare students for the workforce. In addition, many students have had the opportunity to study, conduct research or work through programs in more than 25 countries and to select from more than a dozen language courses. They have launched organizations such as the ‘SC Homelessness Initiative, which develops and presents preventive health workshops for homeless women in Los Angeles. They have been published in academic journals and presented their findings to top scholars in their fields. USC Dornsife graduates are also part of a 300,000 global Trojan Family of ‘Trojans Hiring Trojans.‘

The Master of Professional Writing (MPW) Program, directed by Brighde Mullins, is the nation’s first and foremost multi-genre creative writing program. MPW’s unique approach unites multiple disciplines — fiction, nonfiction, poetry, writing for stage and screen, and new media — through writing workshops, seminars, one-on-one conferences, and professional development panels. The program, which also addresses the writer’s capacity to make his or her living through writing, has a proven track record of launching careers — under the guidance of our esteemed faculty of working writers.

1977
Notable Alumni: Michael Donley ‘77, ‘78
Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley (B.A., international relations, ’77; M.A., international relations, ’78) is responsible for more than 334,000 men and women on active duty, 110,000 Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve members, and 170,000 civilians. He began his public service in the Army, then was accepted to the USC School of International Relations. He was a Senate staffer, director of defense programs at the National Security Council, and deputy executive secretary overseeing the White House Situation Room under President Reagan. In 1993, he became a private consultant, but answered the call of duty again in 2005.

1985
Tackling the Causes of Memory Loss
Margaret Gatz, professor and chair of psychology, is a pioneer in Alzheimer’s research. She is director of a study of more than 12,000 Swedish twins to investigate genetic and environmental sources of risk for dementia. Gatz saw the potential for long-term research in 1985, when she was invited to join a large-scale Swedish study of cognition. Her findings, including that up to 80 percent of the risk for Alzheimer’s may be due to genetic factors, have led to millions of dollars in grants, more than 100 papers, and awards, including an honorary doctorate in 2011 from Karolinska Institutet, which selects the Nobel laureates in physiology or medicine.

2012
40% of USC Doctoral Students at Dornsife
USC Dornsife offers more than 35 Ph.D. programs across a spectrum of disciplines, including the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. Approximately 40 percent of the doctoral scholars at USC are enrolled in USC Dornsife.

2012
Academic Departments and Programs
The USC Dornsife 100

Bright Futures through Real-World Experiences
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In 1965, USC established a marine laboratory on Santa Catalina Island at Big Fisherman’s Cove, made possible by successive gifts of land from Philip K. Wrigley. In 1995, the Wrigley family, led by William and Julie Wrigley, continued their family legacy by providing USC with the capital to initiate the USC Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies, now directed by Dr. Roberta Marinelli. From ocean acidification to harmful algal blooms to biofuels and sustainable seafood supplies, the institute’s faculty experts are working on cutting-edge globally significant solutions. And because increasingly, environmental problems must incorporate foundational research in the natural sciences and social sciences, the institute is perfectly situated within USC Dornsife to train students and early career scientists to work across disciplinary boundaries to address complex problems.
A multidisciplinary degree program, the Master of Liberal Studies (MLS) is designed for motivated, college-educated individuals who wish to further their intellectual growth at the graduate level. The degree can be completed on a part-time or full-time basis. Small seminar courses taught by distinguished faculty are offered in the evenings. The program aims to help individuals develop the intellectual tools to engage in contemporary debates, to find connections among different areas of human thought, to conduct original research, and, most of all, to pursue a life of ideas. Its underlying premise is that interdisciplinary study leads to intellectual independence and satisfaction not always found in discipline-based programs of study. The program culminates in a summative master's project—an opportunity for students to work closely with a faculty adviser and committee of MLS faculty, chosen by the student, to apply interdisciplinary research frameworks to a subject of intense personal interest.
Matthew Michael Carnahan (B.A., international relations, ’95) learned about the world as an international relations major in USC Dornsife. Now he scripts stories about global intrigue, action, and politics as a Hollywood screenwriter. His works include *Lions for Lambs*, *The Kingdom* and *State of Play*.

After graduation, Carnahan was a legal researcher in San Francisco before heading to Washington, D.C., to serve as a public speaker for The Advisory Board Company. But he was always writing. Most recently, he adapted the popular zombie-outbreak novel *World War Z*, blending reality and fantasy to reflect on how society copes with disaster.

**Notable Alumni:** Matthew Michael Carnahan ’95

In 2004, the USC Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies, Quiksilver, Inc. and the Quiksilver Foundation established the QuikSCience Challenge, a competition designed to spark the interest of middle and high school students in marine and environmental science. Participants work with USC under- and graduate students on research and community service projects. Winners spend a week at the institute’s Wrigley Marine Science Center on Catalina Island, where they conduct research, and snorkel and kayak in the surrounding marine protected area.

In 2010, USC Dornsife scientists developed a photometer that collects atmospheric data that is transmitted back to Earth via radio signal. It is the first direct study of Jupiter’s atmosphere.

Problems such as climate change, pandemics or the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are global challenges that do not belong to a single country. Each year, USC Dornsife students choose from more than a dozen courses that focus on such “problems without passports.” The courses combine problem-based or inquiry learning research with study in a foreign country, Washington D.C., or Los Angeles.

In 2011, nearly 75 percent of the USC Associates Awards for Excellence in Teaching go to USC Dornsife faculty.

In 2012, Matthew Michael Carnahan was honored as a Notable Alumni for his contributions to the entertainment industry and for his success as a screenwriter.

In 2010, the notability of alumni was quantified by a percentage to better understand the impact of USC Dornsife graduates.

The Best Teachers

- 2012: Matthew Michael Carnahan (B.A., international relations, ’95)

Problems Without Passports

- 2008: Matthew Michael Carnahan (B.A., international relations, ’95)

Studying Jupiter’s Atmosphere

- 1972: USC Dornsife scientists developed a photometer that collects atmospheric data that is transmitted back to Earth via radio signal. It is the first direct study of Jupiter’s atmosphere.
USC Dornsife’s Joint Educational Project (JEP) is one of the oldest and largest service-learning programs in the country. JEP offers students opportunities to combine academic coursework with experiences in the community surrounding the campus. More than 70,000 students, logging more than one million service hours, have participated in JEP since its inception in 1972. Each year, approximately 2,000 students from numerous courses earn academic credit for their participation in JEP. In addition, about 400 students serve as noncredit volunteers and share their time and special talents with their neighbors.
Quite simply, it was the greatest Olympic Games in USC history. USC’s overall medal count of 25 — 12 gold, nine silver and four bronze medals — marks the most ever won by the university in a single Olympics.

Forty-one USC athletes competed in London, representing 18 countries and participating in seven sporting events. Of the 41 Trojans who participated in the games, 24 were either past, current or incoming USC Dornsife students, including French swimmer Clement Lefert (B.A., economics, ’11) who nabbed a gold in the 400-meter freestyle relay; Felix Sanchez (B.A., psychology, ’01) who captured a gold for the Dominican Republic in the men’s 400-meter intermediate hurdles; Kami Craig (B.A., sociology, ’10) who along with her United States women’s water polo team won a gold; and Amy Rodriguez (B.A., psychology, ’08) who joined the U.S. women’s soccer team in claiming a gold.

2012

Home of Olympians
Quite simply, it was the greatest Olympic Games in USC history. USC’s overall medal count of 25 — 12 gold, nine silver and four bronze medals — marks the most ever won by the university in a single Olympics. Forty-one USC athletes competed in London, representing 18 countries and participating in seven sporting events. Of the 41 Trojans who participated in the games, 24 were either past, current or incoming USC Dornsife students, including French swimmer Clement Lefert (B.A., economics, ’11) who nabbed a gold in the 400-meter freestyle relay; Felix Sanchez (B.A., psychology, ’01) who captured a gold for the Dominican Republic in the men’s 400-meter intermediate hurdles; Kami Craig (B.A., sociology, ’10) who along with her United States women’s water polo team won a gold; and Amy Rodriguez (B.A., psychology, ’08) who joined the U.S. women’s soccer team in claiming a gold.
The USC-Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute (EMSI), directed by Peter C. Mancall, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of the Humanities, vice dean of the humanities, and professor of history and anthropology, supports advanced research and scholarship on human societies between 1450 and 1850. Founded in 2003, the institute is a partnership between USC and the Huntington Library to advance knowledge of the diverse societies in and around the Atlantic and Pacific basins. EMSI strives to provide a suitable setting for nourishing intellectual achievement, advancing interdisciplinary research, and sharing pathbreaking discoveries. While promoting new avenues for research in the humanities and social sciences, the institute’s programs contribute to the development of a range of traditional disciplines (primarily but not exclusively history, literature and the history of art) by bringing together the insights and techniques of scholars who share an interest in early modern peoples and cultures.

Notable Alumni: Matt Leinart ’05
Matt Leinart (B.A., sociology, ’05) is USC’s all-time leader in career touchdowns passes and completion percentage, and is second in completions and yards. After winning the Heisman Trophy and leading the USC Trojans to a national championship, he was a top prospect in the 2006 NFL draft. He is currently the quarterback for the Oakland Raiders and previously played for the Arizona Cardinals and Houston Texans. Leinart created the Matt Leinart Foundation, which focuses on helping children in need.

In 1994, USC Dornsife’s George Olah is the sole winner of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his research in the field of hydrocarbons. Olah is Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering and Materials Science, Donald P. and Katherine B. Loker Chair in Organic Chemistry, and founding director of the Loker Hydrocarbon Research Institute. While global oil and gas reserves are expected to run dry this century, Olah and his fellow researchers including the institute’s director and George A. and Judith A. Olah Nobel Laureate Chair in Hydrocarbon Chemistry G.K. Surya Prakash, have developed a replacement. Methanol can be made with water and carbon dioxide and it burns cleanly, without creating harmful greenhouse gas emissions. It could be a renewable substitute for fossil fuels in fuel, chemical and plastic products and even protein for animal feed.

The USC Wrigley Marine Science Center Sails off to Catalina Island
USC creates a marine lab on Catalina Island in 1965, now known as the USC Wrigley Marine Science Center. Located on the “quiet end” of the island, which is 20 miles offshore from Los Angeles, the center gives USC faculty and students, researchers from other universities, and educational groups close proximity to a marine reserve and deep ocean waters. The center houses eight laboratories that accommodate up to 24 researchers and 60 students, a full-service waterfront for research and education, conference facilities, and housing for 120.
The Learning about World Issues outreach project of the School of International Studies (CALIS) is an international relations dedicated to advancing teaching excellence in social sciences since 2000. CALIS creates service-learning opportunities for USC students to team-teach complex and controversial issues in local high schools. Trojan undergrads help CALIS promote curriculum reform to improve college readiness and close achievement gaps. Through development of strategies and materials that apply classic theories and new research, students are directly engaged in high-level analysis to prepare them to think critically about personal and policy choices in an increasingly globalized world. Through the Teaching International Relations Program (TIRP), the High School Leadership Conference and the Teaching Ethics Program (TEP), the center has guided more than 3,500 USC students to serve as mentors for 40,000 local high school youth.

1908

The Torches

In heraldic tradition, the torch symbolizes learning, and the three torches first introduced at the center of USC’s official university seal in 1908, represent learning in the arts, the sciences and philosophy.

1964

The Ahmanson Center for Biological Research is founded and includes research projects in bacteriology, biology, chemistry, biochemistry and molecular evolution. In 2003, the same year ground is broke for the building’s construction, the Center of Excellence in Genomic Science (CEGS) at USC is formed with a $18.7 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) — a grant that was renewed in 2005 with an additional $13.1 million from the NIH. The center seeks to create a unified picture of how different genetic variants interact with the environment to influence aspects of human disease.

2003

Ground Broken for Ray R. Irani Hall

Ray R. Irani Hall, a 105,000 square foot structure, brings powerful technologies to three highly successful life sciences programs, including bioinformatics, molecular and computational biology and experimental genomics. Irani Hall houses faculty and students in the Department of Biological Sciences Resident scientists — including both molecular and computational investigators — bring cutting-edge approaches to the fields of genomics, molecular biology, genetics, bioinformatics, biochemistry and molecular evolution. In 2003, the same year ground is broke for the building’s construction, the Center of Excellence in Genomic Science (CEGS) at USC is formed with a $18.7 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) — a grant that was renewed in 2005 with an additional $13.1 million from the NIH. The center seeks to create a unified picture of how different genetic variants interact with the environment to influence aspects of human disease.

2005

Emotional Economics

The relatively new field of neuroeconomics seeks to explain why people make the decisions they do and how they process information. Building on the research of University Professors Antonio Damasio and manna Damasio, and Antoine Bechara, professor of psychology, USC Dornsife economists are using neuroscience and NIH data as tools to create new economic models. Isabella Bricas, associate professor of economics, and Juan Camilo, professor of economics, direct Theoretical Research in Neuroeconomic Decision-making (TREND), the country’s first institute dedicated to the study of neuroeconomic theory. Camilo, Bricas and Giorgio Coricelli, assistant professor of economics and psychology, have opened a new experimental economics laboratory, where they work with graduate students researching individual decision-making and game theory.

2010

USC Dornsife Research Clusters

USC Dornsife 2020 encourages USC Dornsife faculty to work across existing departments and programs to identify a set of themes that will be of great societal relevance and importance in years to come. This initiative provides nearly $14 million in funding over four years for research and creation of new courses, undergraduate majors and minors, graduate certificates, interdisciplinary seminars, and postdoctoral, predocctoral and undergraduate fellowships.

2011

Funding on the Rise

USC Dornsife’s external research funding has increased 41% in 4 years to $134.5 million in 2011. USC Dornsife’s research funding from the National Institutes of Health has increased by 52% in three years while the NIH Extramural Budget Allocations have remained flat for the same time period.

2012

Very International

For a decade, USC has topped the annual Open Doors study of American institutions enrolling more international students than any other U.S. college or university. More than 100 countries are represented within USC Dornsise and the university’s other professional schools, with the largest numbers of students coming from India, China, Taiwan, South Korea, Canada, Japan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, the United Kingdom, and Thailand. International students choose to study at USC because of its renowned faculty, the multidisciplinary emphasis of its academic programs, its state-of-the-art facilities and the extraordinary caliber of its student body. The university’s location in the vibrant multicultural city of Los Angeles, a major gateway to the Pacific Rim, is also a strong lure for students from around the world.
The USC Brain and Creativity Institute (BCI), is directed by University Professor and David Dornsife Professor of Neurosciences Antonio Damasio. Since 2006, BCI researchers have been investigating the elusive origins of creativity, the interplay of memory and emotion, the wellsprings of the intellect, and the nature of consciousness itself. The work of the BCI opens the possibility of dealing more effectively with problems that range from medical conditions to social conflict, as well as decision-making, and the ability to create art and invent technology. The Institute is unique in its program. In 2009, Yo-Yo Ma performed composer Bruce Adolphe’s “Self Comes to Mind,” a 30-minute work for cello and two percussionists, based on texts by Damasio. The piece is accompanied by video images such as the one featured at left. Ioana Uricaru and Diego Miralles created the imagery from the research of Hanna Damasio, University Professor, Dana Dornsife Professor of Neuroscience and director of the Dana and David Dornsife Cognitive Neuroscience Imaging Center. Her cutting-edge brain imaging methods are used to investigate diseases that affect the brain.