We Are
USC
Dornsife.

The USC Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences
We Are
USC Dornsife.
We Are the Heart of the University.

Ashley Lukashevsky ’15, international relations major
USC Dornsife’s School of International Relations is the second oldest in the United States and the third oldest in the world.
Robert Maclay Widney stood on a patch of land that no one wanted. With the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, Los Angeles was growing rapidly. He had been told that the dusty field in a then-remote area of L.A. was not ideal for agriculture or most commercial use.

But Widney had something more sublime in mind. Something that would move humanity forward. Something visionary. This is where he would build a great university.

In 1880, he and a dozen men and women began constructing the University of Southern California. And at the heart of the university lay the College of Liberal Arts.

From the start, our Trojan ancestors ensured that the sciences, mathematics, literature, history, art, philosophy, and languages, formed the bedrock of a USC education, a humanistic education. For they knew that at every renowned research university the foundational work of inquiry and discovery takes place within this community, 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.
Like Robert Maclay Widney, internationally renowned humanitarians Dana and David Dornsife understand that a firm grounding in the core academic disciplines is central to the advancement of our world. The Dornsifes’ commitment represents an unprecedented show of confidence in our community of letters, arts and sciences as the centerpiece of USC’s mission to develop society as a whole through the cultivation and enrichment of the human mind and spirit.

"Given the importance of the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences — and given the diversity of disciplines that the College has — I am not exaggerating when I say that naming the College is like naming the university.... Dana and David Dornsife have, in essence, named the core of our entire university."

C. L. Max Nikias, USC President, March 23, 2011

Mudd Hall is home to USC Dornsife’s School of Philosophy and the James Harmon Hoose Library of Philosophy. The School of Philosophy offers world-class programs in the philosophy of language and linguistic semantics as well as law and philosophy with the USC Gould School of Law.
Daniel Campo Falgueras, postdoctoral researcher, biological sciences

Professor of Biological Sciences Sergey Nuzhdin’s laboratory focuses on quantitative genetics, population genetics and the genetics of speciation of Drosophila.
At the University of Southern California, it is USC Dornsife that combines the ancient disciplines of philosophy and mathematics with the great engines of modernity — the physical, biological and social sciences — while embracing the study of language, literature, art, history, religion and culture — in short, all that makes us human.

For millennia our world of letters, arts and sciences has been the driving force for progress and enlightenment. As we confront today’s most urgent problems — such as energy and the environment, affordable health care, national security, world hunger and social equity — we know these will not be solved by experts working within a single discipline.

Rather, these issues require the insights of our USC Dornsife scholars from fields as divergent as biological sciences and economics, art history and neuroscience, English and political science, philosophy and physics.

USC Dornsife experts in marine, environmental and social sciences are building a new vision by synthesizing the scientific aspects of rapid coastal climate change with the equally dynamic changes in human cultural and political institutions. Faculty from neuroscience, the social sciences, the humanities and several of USC’s professional schools are using emerging insights from brain science to investigate medical conditions, social conflicts,
decision-making, and the ability to create art and invent technology.

Faculty from across the humanities are investigating the relationship between seeing and believing to explore the nature of visual evidence across disciplines and in society as a whole. USC Dornsife scientists are working with their colleagues at the USC Viterbi School of Engineering and the Keck School of Medicine of USC to create cutting-edge diagnostic technologies that combat human disease as well as to improve the efficiency of solar cells and nanotechnology.

Daniela Bleichmar, associate professor of art history and history, teaches the Thematic Option honors program course “The Process of Change in Science.” Her class explores the connections between art and science from 1400 to 1800.
USC Dornsife is comprised of more than 30 academic departments and programs offering more than 150 majors and minors as well as a range of innovative Ph.D. and master’s degree programs.
We Are the Next Generation of Scholars and Leaders.

Vineet Prasad '12, economics and psychology major
Each year hundreds of USC Dornsife undergraduates receive special funding to work with faculty researchers.
At USC Dornsife, we cultivate critical thinking beyond the Ivory Tower. Questions about human values, the nature of social organization and the mysteries of the universe are not just matters of fleeting distraction; for us they are central to living a life of integrity and purpose.

To prepare our undergraduates for the challenges of the 21st century, we engage them in a deep examination of global perspectives, writing, civilizations, cultures, social and political structures, mathematics, religions, and the natural sciences. This is coupled with authentic opportunities to participate in the creation of knowledge through hands-on research experiences with our distinguished faculty.

Beyond the classroom, USC Dornsife students examine everything from the vibrant, complex ecosystems of Guam and Palau’s oceans; to issues of nonproliferation and weapons of mass destruction while in Washington, D.C.; to poetry-writing in France. They also participate in unique service-learning programs that combine academic coursework with meaningful experiences in the community surrounding campus.

Home to nearly half of USC’s graduate students, USC Dornsife is at the center of the university’s mission to train the next generation of scholars and researchers. And it is the close mentoring of USC Dornsife’s renowned faculty from across the disciplines with

“I still remember the day when I realized that I could double major in biology and French, and still finish in four years. Studying French gave me insight into another way of thinking, which is important as a physician.”

Sarrah Shahawy ’11, USC valedictorian and biological sciences and French major
extraordinary graduate students that makes this possible.

USC Dornsife’s diverse and outstanding master’s and Ph.D. programs provide world-class training in traditional and innovative fields, a strong sense of worldly engagement and a rich array of professional development services. In addition, students are supported by a wide variety of research centers and programs as well as opportunities to focus on teaching.

Whether they pursue careers in business, healthcare, government, research, the academe or beyond, USC Dornsife’s undergraduate and graduate students are prepared to address basic questions of human value and vital social challenges facing the nation and the world.
We Are
Los Angeles and Southern California.

Southern California’s moderate climate allows for year-round recreation including biking. USC is an anchor institution in Los Angeles, a global center for arts, technology and international trade.
When USC was founded in 1880, Los Angeles was a town of 11,183 people. Today this second largest United States metropolis of nearly 4 million is an international magnet for art, culture, industry and commerce.

Inextricably linked to L.A. and Southern California for more than a century, USC is renowned for innovative partnerships that blur the boundaries between campus and community.

USC Dornsife is home to one of the oldest service learning programs in the country — the Joint Educational Project (JEP). Since 1972, more than 70,000 USC students have logged more than 1 million service hours in JEP’s neighborhood projects helping in local schools, nonprofits, social service agencies, hospitals and clinics.

Our faculty members lead students to teach international relations and writing lessons in local high schools and to investigate whether opening career paths can change the lives of gang-involved L.A. youth. They also bring local inner-city students to USC Dornsife to conduct hands-on research under their guidance and train the area’s high school teachers on best practices in science education. From studying how harmful algal blooms can increase toxins in California’s shellfish to encouraging schoolchildren to meet some of the animal and

"Through JEP's Young Scientists Program, we can create the next generation of inquisitive young minds. I want to share with them my love for science and I hope that my passion inspires them to excel in not only school, but in life.”

Dieuwertje “D.J.” Kast ’11, progressive master’s marine environmental biology and biological sciences major

"I wanted to develop a program that would challenge L.A. students to think about their city in the larger picture while also challenging USC students to apply their international relations studies to their current environment.”

Travis Glynn ’13, international relations major and Harry S. Truman Scholar, on creating the IR Explore program through the Joint Educational Project
plant life that is endemic to local waters, USC Dornsife is a hub for environmental research, education and outreach in the Southland. USC Dornsife has also established a center in which members of the academe and the community regularly engage in remaking the framework for understanding immigrant integration in L.A., California and the United States.

“Through the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration, we are creating a space that will support solid research, but also a place where community organizers and civic leaders can have open discussions about what it means to be a changing Los Angeles and how we understand our changing world.”

-Manuel Pastor, director of the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration and the Program for Regional and Environmental Equity, and professor of American studies and ethnicity

Cory Scholl-Spencer ’12, an English and public relations major, guides a fourth grader at 32nd Street Elementary School through a revision of his short story. With the support of USC Dornsife’s Joint Educational Project, professor Aimee Bender and Cecilia Woloch of English created “The Writer in the Community” course in which undergraduates teach poetry and fiction to local children.
Conflict Resolution and Peace Research in Cambodia is a course that allows USC Dornsife students to study the 1975–79 Khmer Rouge genocide. Students visit important sites, collect survivor testimonies and meet with members of the United Nations tribunal.
USC Dornsife prepares students to be global citizens and leaders through increasing awareness, understanding and appreciation of cultural differences. This begins in Los Angeles, the creative capital of the Pacific Rim and the world’s primary gateway between East and West. Here USC enrolls more international students than any other institution of higher education in America.

As the academic heart of the university, USC Dornsife is uniquely positioned to develop and refine global awareness among its students through more than 60 majors and nearly 80 minors, study abroad opportunities in 50 programs in 28 countries, and internationally themed curricula. In addition, USC Dornsife offers language courses in Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Persian (Farsi), Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.

The Dornsife Scholars program provides support for graduate studies to graduating seniors who are committed to educational excellence and the advances that allow for improving the lives of people and addressing pressing global problems.

USC Dornsife has educated countless generations of civic, business and professional leaders, providing our community, nation and world with the physicians, attorneys, writers, scientists, teachers, politicians, artists, and entrepreneurs who have helped shape our shared future.

“We trust and have complete confidence in the university’s leadership, stellar faculty and outstanding students to not just make a difference, but to effect real and far-reaching change in the world.”

Dana and David Dornsife, international philanthropists and humanitarians

“The world would be a better place if everyone was required to spend time in a radically different country than their own.”

Robert Rosencrans ’13, comparative literature and psychology major
Our alumni also include distinguished Fulbright fellows who have studied trade relations in Brazil, carbon emissions in the Arctic, cultural attributions of schizophrenia in Taiwan, and more. Other graduates have gone on to found their own nonprofits in countries such as Uganda and Ghana or to lead efforts to construct a bridge for villagers in Sikoro, Mali, and provide medical care in Cuba, Peru and Vietnam.

At USC Dornsife, we open doors to the way students view the world, live in the world and change the world.

Divinity Matovu ’08, a political science and African American studies major, co-founded the Amagezi Gemaanyi Youth Association (AGYA). AGYA provides a free community center where youth from the densely populated slums surrounding Kampala, Uganda, can gather in a nurturing and educational environment.