



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

Office of the President

April 25, 2023

Dear University Leadership Council,

Following a demonstration at the University of South Florida's Tampa campus on March 6, 2023, which resulted in a disruption to our normal operations and several arrests, I asked for a review of the incident with the goal of avoiding a similar outcome in the future. This review was conducted by USF's Central Human Resources department and the final report is available [here](#).

It's important for me to reaffirm that USF strongly supports the right to free speech and the hosting of peaceful demonstrations on our campuses. The review of the events on March 6 offers a series of recommendations and provides an opportunity for our university to improve how we handle these activities.

We should always strive to enhance our operations, policies and procedures. In an effort to encourage civil discourse and as part of our responsibility to provide safe learning and working environments on our campuses, we have developed an action plan that includes the following steps and initiatives:

- **Enhanced training:** We will be introducing additional and more consistent training for university police and other USF employees, such as building managers and those working in high-traffic areas, on best practices for responding to on-campus protests and demonstrations. An effective tiered approach for handling demonstrations is already being utilized by some university employees, but it needs to be formalized and shared more widely with employees across the university who may encounter a situation and should be trained.
- **Increased awareness and communication:** Several educational resources on free expression are already available to students, such as through first-year student orientation, university websites and printed materials in some buildings. However, these items will be made more visible, more consistently communicated and more easily accessible to all members of the USF community.
- **Additional educational resources:** USF's Student Success division will work in partnership with USF Student Government on additional measures to further educate and raise awareness among students on university policies and guidance for civil expression and activism on campus.

- **Increased community engagement:** The USF Police Department will strengthen its strategies to further bolster its ties with the university community, creating even stronger partnerships and outreach activities.
- **Officer-worn body cameras:** The university is issuing officer-worn body cameras for all university police officers. This initiative, which has been planned since before the March 6 incident, is fully supported by the USF Police Department and will enhance transparency and accountability.

While these actions are a start, moving forward I fully expect departments across the university to continue to discuss and implement best practices on these key issues. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation as we work together to maintain a safe and respectful environment for everyone in our university community.

Sincerely,



Rhea F. Law
President

cc: USF Board of Trustees