Welcome to USC and the Sol Price School of Public Policy!

Our mission is to improve the quality of life for people and their communities through education and research that yield innovative solutions to society’s most pressing issues.

In pursuing this mission, we focus on three broad themes that reach across the programs of the school:
Democratic governance: How to improve the institutions, laws, leadership and administration of government and society

Urban development: How to plan and develop better sustainable buildings, communities and cities for the future

Social policy: How to improve the health and well-being of children, families and communities

The Price School Experience

Students who come to USC Price are interested in becoming tomorrow’s leaders and making a difference in the world. Your education here will prepare you to do just that — whether in urban planning and real estate, public policy, public administration or health administration and policy.
Our school’s professional brochure is subtitled, “Reaching Across Boundaries to Solve Public Problems.” For the next few minutes I’d like to touch on three important ways that “reaching across boundaries” will uniquely characterize your student experience at USC Price.

Number 1: Collaboration

The first “reaching across boundaries” concerns collaboration. Eli Broad, billionaire head of the Broad Foundation and founder of three Fortune Five Hundred companies, has written recently: “The days of the Lone Ranger approach to problem solving are over. In today’s interconnected world, the best ideas and most effective implementation come down to when collaboration is at the core.”
**Teamwork.** Teamwork is the first form of collaboration. It is learning to work together and make decisions collectively in the classroom and workplace. Collaborative engagement fosters not only effective communication, but also critical thinking, as you open yourself up to the ideas and perspectives of others. Andrew Carnegie observed that, "Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision… It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.

**Interdisciplinary.** A second form of collaboration is interdisciplinary. The Price School houses diverse academic degree programs which all contribute to solving the critical problems our communities face. Today’s complex societal challenges require the collaboration of leaders in policy, planning, administration, and health care. All fields, all
sectors, gain by working together to produce effective, long-lasting solutions.

The Price School offers diverse areas of interest to broaden your understanding by taking courses in other fields and doing research projects and study that cut across governance, policy, and urban development.

**Cross Sector.** A third form of collaboration is across sectors. USC Price affords students the opportunity to learn about and interact with the public, nonprofit and private sectors in addressing social and economic issues. David Osborne, well-known author of Reinventing Government argues that, “In today’s world collaboration across organizational boundaries is imperative—not only within the public sector but between the private and nonprofit sectors.”
Number 2: Connections

The second way the school fosters collaboration is through the informal network of connections you will build. Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche famously said, “Invisible threads are the strongest ties.” At the Price School, our threads connect us to key people and places here in LA, across the country, and around the world.

Connections to the community of practice.

- The Career Services Office facilitates professional connections through internships, externships and residencies in all sectors.
- Capstone and practicum projects apply your knowledge to real problems for high-profile clients.
- Our 13 research institutes and initiatives are well-connected to industries and professional groups.
Global connections. LA is truly a dynamic hub for culture, business, and entertainment. But just know that your education at Price doesn’t end here in LA; it just begins here.

The Price School connects students to tremendous global experiences. Last year, for example, students traveled to China, Brazil, and India to take part in our international labs and planning studios. Many of our alumni live and work abroad. Take advantage of these opportunities.

Number 3: Community

The third way that USC Price reaches across boundaries is through a strong sense of community.

Student community. Among our students, you’ll find that USC Price fosters an exceptional sense of community. Our
school has 21 different student associations and a very a diverse student body.

**Intellectual community.** At Price, you’ll also find a vibrant intellectual community, offering seminar series, distinguished lectures, and major conferences that other schools can’t match. And of course, you have direct access to our renowned faculty, who care enormously about you as a person, not just your grades.

I remember what it was like to be sitting in your seat. Your master’s program, in many ways, is like beginning a new adventure.

But I do want to emphasize that you’re not alone in this adventure. We are here to help you learn, grow, and – ultimately – succeed. Because we know you can, and will.
All of us, especially the faculty and our Academic Programs Office staff, are fully dedicated and fully committed to helping you make the most out of your graduate school experience.

I wish each of you well as you pursue your master’s degrees, and I look forward to hearing of your many achievements throughout the year.

Welcome, once again, to the Price School and USC!