2013 Undergraduate Orientation

Thursday, August 22, 2013

Welcome to the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy!

I would like to especially thank Professor LaVonna Lewis

and Undergraduate Program Manager Nam Ung for

organizing today’s orientation luncheon

Please also join me in welcoming Professor Lewis as the new

academic director of undergraduate programs.
Prof. Lewis is an exemplary scholar and educator, who is very highly regarded by faculty and students alike. I have every confidence that, under her leadership, the undergraduate program will continue to grow and excel.

And of course, I want to thank the faculty for attending. All of us, especially the faculty and our Undergraduate Academic Program Office staff, are fully dedicated and fully committed to helping you make the most out of your undergraduate school experience.

Our mission at USC Price is a simple one: to improve the quality of life for people and their communities through education and research that produce innovative solutions to today’s most pressing issues.
To pursue this mission we rely on the interdisciplinary yet interconnected fields of urban planning and real estate development, public policy, public and nonprofit administration, and health policy and management. So we deal with the critical and intersecting areas that influence society, policy and urban development.

What it means to be USC Price

As our newest class of students, all of you are now part of the vibrant community here at USC Price. You also now share in our school’s distinguished legacy.

I want to take just a few minutes to explain what it means to be USC Price.
Our school is named after the late Sol Price, a great business entrepreneur who revolutionized the retail industry. He founded Price Club, which later merged with Costco. However, his legacy and impact extend far beyond those successes. He was also a person of great conviction, who cared deeply about social justice and community advocacy.

He was the son of immigrants who were involved in the early efforts to unionize garment workers, and was deeply influenced by their efforts to promote workers’ rights.

As a business leader, he implemented company policies to ensure equality and integration among his employees in places where segregation was still common.

Throughout his life, Sol Price invested in philanthropic efforts that supported those in need. He worked both
nationally and locally to develop policies and plans to improve the quality of life for marginalized groups, especially in urban areas.

Much of his work locally focused on innovative urban planning, real estate, and community redevelopment programs to revitalize the low-income area of City Heights in San Diego.

Indeed, there are many lessons we can learn from Sol Price and his story. Three of which seem incredibly relevant for today, as you embark upon your undergraduate journey at USC.

First: Find your passion, and follow it.

- This is a time for you of enormous intellectual and personal growth and exploration. You will be exposed
to a wealth of new ideas, theories and perspectives both inside the classroom and outside it. I encourage you to be open to but also discerning about these learning experiences.

- They will help you broaden your interests and discover your passion.
- Nothing great has ever been accomplished without passion.

Second: Be creative.

- This lesson applies most especially to problem solving. The challenges our communities face today are not only critical but also very complex.

- And so we need innovative solutions, now more than ever.

- But it’s when you competently apply your creativity and innovative thinking to a problem, only then may you
have the actual opportunity to produce a positive impact for yourself and others.

- To paraphrase a line from Thomas Edison, *an idea is only valuable if you use it.*

**Third: Strive to develop personal character**

- Students who come to USC Price are interested in making a difference in the world.

- It is our goal to prepare you to become tomorrow’s prominent professionals and leaders in government, business, and nonprofits.

- Prominent professionals and leaders, however, do not succeed only through being smart or by gaining expertise and knowledge at university.

- It is also important to know who you are as a person, show compassion for others; develop the important values of integrity, conviction, courage, and
perseverance; to learn how to overcome setbacks; and to interact and build relationships with others.

○ At USC Price, to help develop your own personal abilities, you will have many opportunities to study and ask questions, to learn about remarkable individuals, such as Sol Price, and to engage with practicing professionals and community leaders.

In closing, I hope you remember that as you progress in your academic careers, you have our full support — faculty and staff. We are here to help you learn, grow, and ultimately succeed (which we know you will).

As students, you have access to tremendous on-campus resources, like the undergraduate program office and student and career services, which are committed to helping you get the most out of your undergraduate experience.
I wish each of you well as we kick off this new school year.

Welcome once again to the USC Price School!