

Date

Dr. Judy Genshaft
President, University of South Florida
4202 E. Fowler Avenue, CHS 401
Tampa, FL 33620

Dear Dr. Genshaft,

As the University of South Florida (USF) moves forward with its consolidation plans, we'd like to offer our thoughts and suggestions about the future of USF St. Petersburg (USFSP). We know this merger will take time, but the groundwork being laid now will dictate whether this effort will be a long-term success for USFSP students, faculty, and our community.

While we have expressed our concerns with the way in which this decision came about, we recognize that it is in the best interests of the student body and the St. Petersburg community to reach consensus on the campus' future configuration. As local leaders and residents, we'd like to offer our thoughts on programs that would strengthen the institution, attract new talent to our city, and produce the workforce needed for Florida and our region's future.

First, St. Petersburg is home to the largest marine and environmental science community in the Southeastern United States. USF's College of Marine Science anchors the community, but downtown St. Petersburg is also home to NOAA's Southeast Fisheries Regional Office, USGS's Coastal and Marine Science Center, the Florida Institute of Oceanography, Florida's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, as well as private companies such as SRI International. Taken together, the marine sciences provide a total economic impact of more than \$250 million in gross county product. In the vein of continuing St. Pete's preeminence in marine science, we believe USF's St. Pete Campus would be well suited to house both graduate and undergraduate programs in marine science, environment, and sustainability programs.

Second, St. Pete is a thriving and widely-recognized center for the arts. Between our world-famous museums, scores of independent galleries, and well-established arts districts, it makes for an easy conclusion that an arts major should be added to the St. Petersburg Campus curriculum – be it digital, graphic, fine, or a combination of the three.

Third, as you know, the jobs of the future are in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). Students with a STEM degree go on to earn higher salaries and have higher rates of graduation and subsequent employment. To maintain USFSP's competitive edge, we strongly recommend offering STEM majors, broadening the campus' appeal and building off St. Petersburg's thriving Innovation District.

Fourth, the Kate Tiedemann College of Business (KTCOB) has been an incredible addition to the curriculum and campus at USFSP. The new facility is an architectural jewel designed to equip students to become part of the booming business community in St. Pete and beyond. We strongly recommend that the KTCOB and its course offerings remain intact at USFSP, continuing the focus on entrepreneurship and finance.

Lastly, we want to express our hope that USFSP remains accessible for Pinellas County high school graduates. We share the desire to boost USF's standing, and the benefits those rankings bring, but would emphasize that USFSP remain attainable for the diverse array of students that call Pinellas County home.

We appreciate your taking the time to hear our views on a topic of great importance to our community. We are hopeful that this next chapter in USF's history includes a thriving and successful campus at USFSP, furthering USF's status as a world-class institution. We look forward to continuing this discussion with you, as well as inviting Tampa, Sarasota, and the entire USF community to participate in the process. When all of us work together, the future truly is brighter.

Sincerely,