Dear USC Roski School Community,

On August 17th, we have the honor to welcome both new and returning students who are attending USC Roski School of Art and Design to develop practices in the art and design fields. On behalf of the entire faculty and staff, I can say we are thrilled to begin classes and see the creative process thrive again. We are committed to providing the best education possible in such challenging times and know that you will be hearing from your faculty as we navigate these difficult times.

A few weeks ago, we sent a letter laying out our plans for a hybrid course structure at USC Roski to allow for some on-site classes that are best taught in studios and labs with substantially reduced density for everyone’s safety. That process involved an incredible amount of planning with campus, city and county officials. But as I am sure you are all aware, the COVID-19 virus continues its spread in the Southern California region.

As stated in the Provost’s recent email, the University will be starting the fall term remotely. Once the state and county will allow us to move to Phase 3, we will be able to move on plans to provide monitored access to our studios. Current plans for output labs in a "service bureau" model will continue as outlined below and your professors will provide more details during the first week of the term. It is not ideal by any stretch of the imagination, but it is the safest route at this time and that is absolutely paramount for the well-being of the USC Roski community.

We recognize this change brings real challenges for our students, but I can reassure you that we are singularly focused on providing a world-class arts education. Over the past five months our dedicated faculty has worked with educators, artists and designers in the creative and academic communities from around the world; developing and sharing interesting techniques adapted from traditional teaching methods and discovering exciting methodologies available through digital technologies; offering new advantages to our students.

**Exceptions to Online-Only Activities**
Students will continue to have access to the tools, machinery, and other equipment on campus that is essential for the production of artwork. Through a “service-bureau” model, students may drop off their projects at USC Roski School labs – such as the Galen Ceramics Studio or Handtmann Photography Lab – where lab technicians will process the work and then place it for student pick
up; minimizing person-to-person contact. Additionally, lab techs will be available remotely to answer questions.

**International Students**

In response to mounting pressure from universities across the country (including from USC), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security reversed its earlier guidance and will now permit international students who are currently in the U.S. to stay, even if all of their coursework will be presented online. Based on this latest guidance, we are advising our USC Roski School international students as follows:

- If you are currently in the U.S., you may remain in the country and pursue all of your fall semester courses online without jeopardizing your visa status.
- If you are currently outside the U.S., you should remain outside the U.S. and pursue all of your fall semester courses online from your location abroad.

The University continues to develop online opportunities to simulate the sought after ‘college experience.’ These new activities, along with groundbreaking teaching techniques will become part of our permanent offerings going forward. USC is also offering new sources of support for our students by expanding a program to provide financial and technical support for domestic and international students who have connectivity or hardware issues; as well as a new scholarship opportunity for this year only that invites students to apply for a scholarship for up to two free online classes in the 2021 summer session.

The spread of COVID-19 and the difficulties it has caused is unprecedented and many decisions that are normally made within the school are now dependent on restrictions from health officials. We continue to work closely with state and county public health officials and will pivot as soon as possible to in-person courses, but only when we can, to the best of our ability to ensure a safe, healthy and secure environment for our students, faculty and staff.

I know that this news is received with a level of disappointment, and it is certainly delivered with deep regret. I strongly encourage you to stay in touch with your faculty mentors as well as the USC Roski School Student Affairs office with any questions you may have.

**The fall semester will begin August 17 and conclude on November 24. Additional information can be found on the USC Roski School Re-Start website page.**

And please watch for further communications from my office as our city, county and state health officials alter their guidelines, informing our plans for your 2020-2021 academic year. In the meantime, we will continue to show USC and the greater region that artists and designers are made for these types of challenges. We will come out of this stronger and with new and exciting directions in education, artistic practices, while building healthier communities.

Sincerely,
Haven Lin-Kirk
Dean
USC Gayle Garner Roski School of Art and Design

**University of Southern California**