STAFF ACTION: Approve the University of Southern California for a two-year registration renewal term that begins retroactively on October 21, 2015 through October 21, 2017.

Registration Purpose
Iowa Code Sections 261B.2 (definitions) and 261B.3 require a school to register with the Commission if a person compensated by the school conducts any portion of a course of instruction, including by in-person, distance education, or correspondence method in this State or if the school otherwise has a presence in this State. Presence means a location in Iowa at which a student participates in any structured activity related to a school’s distance education course of instruction. Presence also means an address, location, telephone number, or internet protocol address in Iowa from which a school conducts any aspect of its operations.

University of Southern California (USC or the University) applied for registration to offer distance education programs. Staff required the University to register because the school offers distance education programs to Iowa residents that contain field work that an Iowa resident student may participate in at an Iowa location.

Institutional Information
University of Southern California is a private non-profit institution that maintains a main campus at 3601 Watt Way, GFS 315, Los Angeles, California 90089. The University’s Chief Executive Officer is President Dr. C.L. Max Nikias, at the same location. The University of Southern California is registered with the Iowa Secretary of State as a foreign non-profit corporation #383884. Its Iowa registered agent is Corporation Service Company, 505 5th Avenue, Suite 729, Des Moines, Iowa 50309.

Physical Facilities: Not applicable for a distance education program provider.

Accreditation: The University is institutionally accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, a regional accrediting agency recognized by the federal Department of Education. The University’s Master of Social Work program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, which is an educational requirement of the Iowa Board of Social Work for the successful licensure of an Iowa Social Worker with a masters degree in the field.

Federal Stafford Loan Cohort Default Rate (FFY 2013): 1.7%. For comparison purposes, the FFY 2013 national average cohort default rate is 11.3%.

Graduation Rate: This is the percentage of first-time, full-time undergraduate students who graduated within 150% of the normal time for program completion, as reported to the federal Department of Education in 2015. The graduation rate for University of Southern California is 92%.
Average Loan Debt upon Graduation: At this time, the University has no mechanism to determine aggregate loan debt of its graduate students. The average loan debt of undergraduate graduates of the University in 2015 was $27,925, as reported by The Institute for College Access & Success Project on Student Debt.

Record Preservation: USC utilizes the Student Information System (SIS) for the reviewing, updating, and reporting of student records. The University ensures that the security and confidentiality of student records is a matter of concern for all USC employees. Only select employees have access to student records. When USC employees request access to the SIS, they must fill out and sign a SIS Access Request Form. All student records are maintained through the SIS computer system.

USC follows guidelines for student records retention established by the California Postsecondary Education Commissions and the best practices adopted by the American Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers. In the highly unlikely event that the University was to cease operations, student records would be transferred to another California institution of high education selected in consultation with California’s Postsecondary Education Commission.

USC Information Technology Services (ITS) offers backup services to USC’s various departments that need to back up server data. ITS provides a managed backup service that automatically and transparently moves files between fast storage on disk and slower storage within a robotic tape library. The ITS Network Operations Center monitors the backup process 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, year round. ITS provides the USC department with NetBackup software to install on the department’s servers (or workstations) in order to back up server data. Data backup occurs on an ongoing, automated, schedule that ITS establishes based on the department’s needs.

USC also maintains a state-of-the-art data center that houses computer hardware. This facility is located in an earthquake-resistant, protected USC campus building controlled by multiple layers of security, including 24/7 Department of Public Safety security guard patrol, multiple electronic-controlled doorways, highly resilient and available power, and regulated cooling systems. Final access to rooms that house computer hardware is controlled by biometric (fingerprint) screening.

Transcript Requests: Any current or former student may request a transcript by contacting:

University of Southern California
Transcript Department
University Park Campus
615 Childs Way
JHH Room 106
Los Angeles, California 90089
(213) 740 – 7445
gtv@usc.edu
http://arr.usc.edu/services/transcripts/generalinfo.html

Instructional Methodology: The University of Southern California online program format is comprised of a learning environment that is self-paced and combines asynchronous course
content with synchronous online class sessions. Coursework in the Rossier School of Education and Master of Social Work programs is delivered using an advanced online learning platform that includes original broadcast-quality video, self-paced lectures, interactive case studies, and collaborative activities that foster teamwork.

**Student Learning Resources:** The University offers its students a number of learning resources and services. Some of those include:

- **Library:** The USC Libraries [https://libraries.usc.edu/libraries-overview](https://libraries.usc.edu/libraries-overview) is a conglomerate of individual libraries maintained by various academic departments within the University, such as the Accounting Library, the Architecture and Arts Library, the Gerontology Library, the Law Library, the Social Work Information Center, the Wilson Dental Library, and the Wrigley Marine Science Center. The USC Libraries provide access to many electronic databases and journals for the use of USC faculty, staff, and students. Most electronic resources are accessible remotely. The Library also provides resources, services, and tutorials that are specifically designed for the distance education student [https://libraries.usc.edu/faculty-students/distance-learners](https://libraries.usc.edu/faculty-students/distance-learners). There are 1305 databases available through the USC Libraries, including Credo Reference, Google Scholar, JSTOR, LexisNexis Academic, the Oxford English Dictionary, ProQuest, PsycINFO, PubMed@USC, Web of Science, and WorldCat. Library tutorials [https://libraries.usc.edu/research/reference-tutorials](https://libraries.usc.edu/research/reference-tutorials) include high-level topics such as avoiding plagiarism, academic dishonesty, knowing where to search, knowing how to search using keywords, evaluating sources, and crafting good research questions. An online Users Guide [http://libguides.usc.edu/mainsearch](http://libguides.usc.edu/mainsearch) includes search help and tips, an overview of features, and resources for requesting and receiving assistance. The USC Libraries also provides how-to guides on researching specific databases at [http://libguides.usc.edu/c.php?g=235068&p=1560114](http://libguides.usc.edu/c.php?g=235068&p=1560114). The Libraries’ document delivery service [http://libguides.usc.edu/idd/idd-docdel](http://libguides.usc.edu/idd/idd-docdel) offers home delivery of physical items to students who are currently enrolled in an official distance-based academic program. Students are responsible for return postage. Subject matter librarians [https://libraries.usc.edu/subject-librarians](https://libraries.usc.edu/subject-librarians) are available via email or telephone (not toll-free). Research assistance may be obtained through the Ask-A-Librarian service via chat and email [https://libraries.usc.edu/ask-a-librarian](https://libraries.usc.edu/ask-a-librarian).

- **Academic Advising:** Upon admission, each student will be assigned an academic advisor who will guide the student through the academic requirements of the program, facilitate registration issues, assist with securing course materials, monitor academic progress and collaborate with the faculty advisor to assist any student determined to be in academic difficulty.

- **Counseling and Health Services:** For a fee, which is explained on the USC website at [https://engemannshc.usc.edu/medical/services-and-fees/](https://engemannshc.usc.edu/medical/services-and-fees/), the USC Engemann Student Health Center offers online students an initial phone conversation and an assessment during which the student is provided with appropriate resources and recommendations. The Health Center may refer an online student to services within the Center or resources within other USC departments or a community provider. All USC online degree program students who are taking 6 units or more are automatically enrolled in the USC Student Health Insurance Plan. This is a PPO plan with mental and medical benefits. An online student who is taking less than 6 units has the option of actively enrolling in the USC
Student Health Plan for Online Students. More information is located on the Engemann Student Health Center website at https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/making-an-appointment/online-students/. The Health Center also offers a “Virtual Clinic” https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/virtual-clinic/ that offers an online mental health screening, a list of links to USC and other community-based, national resources, and self-help information about alcohol use and abuse, grief and loss, and sleep disturbances.

- Technical Support: Enrolled students have 24/7 access to technical support. The students may call technical support any time they need assistance with the learning management system. Each student is assigned to a student support advisor and is encouraged to keep in touch with their student support advisor throughout the program. Additionally, career services assistance is available to all distance education students.

**Curriculum Evaluation and Development:** The faculty’s role in curriculum development is established in the University Bylaws and published in the University’s Faculty Handbook. The University maintains a Curriculum Management System (CMS) that facilitates a cohesive, University-wide, online interface between faculty and academic administrators and allows courses, programs, and minors to be proposed, created, assessed, revised, approved and implemented, or terminated. The University’s Curriculum Coordination Office (CCO) provides technical and procedural support during this process.

Proposals are created by a Department Curriculum Coordinator (DCC) or a Faculty Proposer. The DCC routes the proposed course, program, or minor to the Department Chair. If there is a Faculty Proposer, he or she routes the proposal to the DCC, who forwards the proposal to the appropriate Department Chair.

The Department Chair assesses the proposed course, program, or minor, then routes it back for revision or, if it is approved, forwards it to the appropriate Dean. The Dean assesses the proposed course, program, or minor, and then either routes it back for revision or approves it and routes it to the Curriculum Coordination Office (CCO) for consideration by the Department Curriculum Subcommittee. For a new program, the Dean must refer the proposal to the Provost, who then routes it to the CCO.

The Curriculum Coordination Office (CCO) reviews proposals for technical elements, for example, to ensure that units and contact hours follow established guidelines; grading adds up to 100%; program requirements are clearly stated and meet University standards. The COO may return a proposal to appropriate University department for further clarification, administratively approve the proposal, or forward it to the appropriate department’s Curriculum Subcommittee for review.

The various departments’ Curriculum Subcommittee chairs (and members) review curriculum proposals. If questions/concerns arise, the CCO coordinates a dialogue between the parties, and if necessary, schedules a Curriculum Subcommittee meeting, at times with a Department representative invited. After Curriculum Subcommittee approval, online programs require accrediting agency approval. Proposals that pose larger questions and require greater input as they deal with University policy and procedures in regard to curriculum are brought before the University Committee on Curriculum (UCOC). Approved courses are routed for publication in Catalog.
**Student Complaints Process:** USC maintains a specific complaint filing procedure. The University has designated offices specific to the nature of the complaint. Those are:

- Office for the Protection of Research Subjects: oprs@usc.edu
- USC Office of Compliance: compliant@usc.edu
- University Park: upirb@usc.edu
- Health Sciences: irb@usc.edu
- Anonymous Complaints: USC Help and Hotline - [http://ooc.usc.edu/help-hotline](http://ooc.usc.edu/help-hotline)
- Office of the Vice President for Research: (213) 740 – 6709

The University maintains a list of states that require the University to be licensed or registered in that state, discloses the list to students on its website [http://online.usc.edu/complaint-resolution/](http://online.usc.edu/complaint-resolution/), and encourages students to contact the state agency in which the student resides if the student’s complaint cannot be handled internally.

**Distance Education Programs Offered in Iowa**

Please see the separate attachment for a list of the fully distance education programs the University offers and the total, estimated cost of each program.

*First-Time Educator Licensure Program:* The University of Southern California offers a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program via distance education that prepares students for first-time licensure as a teacher. However, an Iowan who completes this program does not qualify for initial licensure in the State of Iowa. An Iowa-based graduate of this program must first obtain a teacher’s license in the State of California and may then apply to the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners for an Iowa license.

As required under Iowa Code Section 261B.3A, subsection 2, the Iowa Board of Education approved the University to offer the program to Iowans. Iowa Board of Education approval of the MAT program includes a stipulation that the school provide certain disclosures to students about 1) the fact that completion of this program does not result in initial licensure in Iowa; 2) the requirements of licensure in the state in which the school is located and 3) the importance of consulting with the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners about Iowa licensure requirements. USC provides these disclosures on its website in the following locations:

- On the USC Online website at [https://online.usc.edu/state disclosures/](https://online.usc.edu/state disclosures/)
- On the USC Rossier Online website at [https://rossieronline.usc.edu/legal/required-state disclosures/](https://rossieronline.usc.edu/legal/required-state disclosures/)

*Field Experiences:* The University has integrated a form of field experience into a number of programs available through distance education. The field experiences are either an individual course or a combination of courses that may require the student to complete work on site. The courses may involve an internship, a co-op, or a Capstone course. The following distance education programs include some form of field experience:

- **Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT):** From the beginning of the program, students are placed in local classrooms to observe and practice the applications of theories and instructional methods from mentor teachers. Students will complete a comprehensive summative portfolio. The Program Placement Specialist will determine if the on-site placement meets USC’s needs. Upon placement, students will start by observing in the first week. Students will work four full days per week and will deliver three full-period lessons.
• Master of Arts in Teaching, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages: Students will be enrolled in field-based experiences throughout the duration of their program. From the second term, students will observe and practice instructional methods both virtually and in a classroom with English language learners in their area. Students will complete a Capstone project at the end of their experience. The Program Placement Specialist will determine if the on-site placement meets the University’s needs. Students will work four full days per week, and will deliver three full-period lessons.

• Master of Public Health: Students enrolled in this program are required to complete a practicum component. The practicum will be completed in a public health agency at the choice of the student. USC’s services staff is at the student’s disposal for assistance in locating and securing a placement.

• Master of Science in Applied Psychology: During the internship semester, students register for an Internship course (4 units) in which they share their experiences with their peers, while processing their internship through structured assignments. Additionally, some students plan to collect data or conduct a study or project during their internship which is then incorporated into the capstone treatise.

• Master of Social Work: In this program students are required to complete on-site field work. The field placements will be chosen and overseen by the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work. Students will complete four-semesters’ of field work, earning a minimum of 1,000 field practicum hours.

Registration Compliance
As required by Iowa Code Section 261B.4, the University discloses its institutional policy for refunding tuition charges to students who withdraw from its programs at http://www.usc.edu/academics/classes/term_20061/tuition/tuition_refund.html. Iowa registration law and rule do not govern the University’s tuition refund policy because it is not a for-profit institution.

Administrative rules specifically require the school to comply with the requirements of Chapter 261.9(1) “e” through “h”.

• Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(e) requires a school to maintain and disseminate a drug and alcohol abuse policy that includes sanctions for violation of the school’s policy and information about the availability of drug or alcohol counseling or rehabilitation. Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(f) requires a school to maintain and disseminate a sexual abuse policy that includes information about counseling opportunities and reporting instances of sexual abuse to school officials and law enforcement. These requirements duplicate policies and disclosures required by the federal Department of Education for a school that participates in the federal student aid programs. The University complies with the requirements of Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(e) and (f), and discloses these policies to students in various locations and documents posted on its website, those locations are:
  ✓ https://policy.usc.edu/drug-free/
  ✓ https://policy.usc.edu/student-misconduct/
  ✓ https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-h/
  ✓ https://sarc.usc.edu/reporting-options/
  ✓ https://sarc.usc.edu/first-steps/
  ✓ https://sarc.usc.edu/resources/.

• Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(g) requires a school to maintain a special policy for refunding tuition and mandatory fee charges to members of the Iowa National Guard or reserve
members of the U.S. Armed Forces, or the spouse of such a member if the member has a dependent child, when the service member or spouse must withdraw from the school because the service member has been called to active state or federal military duty or service. The University discloses this policy on its USC Online website at https://online.usc.edu/state-disclosures/.

- Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(h) requires a school to develop and implement a policy requiring employee who, in the course of their employment, attend, examine, counsel, or treat a child and who suspect the physical or sexual abuse of that child. By cross-reference to existing administrative rules for registration [283-21.2(261B), subsection 7], this policy applies to schools that offer distance education programs and that have Iowa-resident employees or contractors (including online program faculty). Since the University has no Iowa residents conducting operational or instructional activity for the University in Iowa at this time, the University is not required to implement this policy.

**Student Consumer Information:** In its registration application, the University affirms its willingness to comply with the requirements of Iowa Code Chapter 261.9, as stipulated by Iowa Code Section 261B.4(8). Chapter 261.9 requires a school to disclose to students information about the school’s programs, charges, tuition refund policies, whether a certificate or diploma awarded by the school is applicable toward a degree program the school offers, and the identity of the school’s accrediting agency. The University provides these disclosures on its online program pages http://online.usc.edu/programs/ and at other locations on its website, as follows:

- https://accreditation.usc.edu/
- https://msw.usc.edu/about/faq/general/

University of Southern California affirms on the application that it will comply with the provisions of Iowa Code Section 261B.7. These provisions of Iowa Code require that, provided the school does not claim “approval” or “accreditation,” the school must disclose to students that it is registered by the Commission and provide Commission contact information for students who have questions or complaints about the school. The University will provide this information to Iowa-resident students on its USC Online pages at http://online.usc.edu/state-disclosures/ and http://online.usc.edu/complaint-resolution/.

**Financial Responsibility:** The University maintains a copy of an independent audit conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP, dated October 14, 2015 for the institutional fiscal years ending June 30, 2015 and 2014 on its website. The auditing firm expressed its opinion that the financial statements of the University present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the University.

- A private non-profit institution that participates in the federal student aid programs must maintain a composite score, based on a three factor financial responsibility ratio, of at least 1.5 in order to be determined “financially responsible” without additional oversight. The most recent composite score verified by the federal Department of Education for the University of Southern California is 3.0 out of a possible 3.0 for the University’s fiscal year ending June 30, 2014.
• The University is not required to calculate the percentage of revenue derived from federal student aid funds since the University is not a for-profit institution.

*Full-Time Iowa Resident Faculty Member or Program Coordinator:* Iowa administrative rules exempt schools from any requirement to employ a full-time, Iowa-based faculty member or program coordinator if the school applies for authorization to offer only distance education programs. The University of Southern California does not employ any Iowa residents who provide the University with operational or instructional support.

*Instructional/Supervisory Staff Qualifications:* The University maintains the profiles for its faculty members who provide instruction to the University’s students. Each school within the University has its own designated webpage where the credentials for those faculty members are disclosed. Staff reviewed the credentials for each School within the University that supports online programs offered to Iowans.

*Leventhal School of Accounting/ Marshall School of Business:* The University’s Leventhal School of Accounting and Marshall School of Business are joined together. Staff reviewed 20 faculty profiles at random. One faculty member holds a Master of Business Administration degree. This instructor specializes in corporate finance, portfolio management, financial analysis and valuation, and microeconomics. The remaining 19 faculty members hold a doctoral degree in fields such as accounting, business administration, economics, electrical engineering, industrial relations, linguistics, law, management, and public policy. Expertise among these instructors includes areas such as data mining, business intelligence, data warehousing, estate planning, intelligent systems and technologies, intercultural business communication, marketing management, probates, small-group decision making, strategic management, and taxation. Research interests include corporate governance, effect of statutory requirements on income tax disclosures, financial statement analysis, the impact of psychology on economic outcomes, labor economics, and macroeconomics.

*Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism:* The University maintains the profiles of a large number of faculty members in this School on its website. Therefore, staff reviewed 20 faculty profiles at random. Eight out of the 20 faculty members reviewed hold a masters degree in fields such as broadcast journalism, business administration, computer science, English, information technology, and journalism. One of these instructors is the Senior Strategic Advisor for the Huffington Post. Another of these faculty members is a former correspondent for The New York Times and a former reporter and columnist for The Wall Street Journal. Out of the 20 profiles, 12 faculty members hold a doctoral degree in fields that include communication, higher education leadership, human science, journalism, law, and sociology. One of these instructors holds a dual doctorate in human sciences and sociology. This instructor has given over 300 lectures in 46 countries, is the author of 26 academic books, co-author and editor of an additional 23 books, and has published over 100 articles in academic journals. Another of these faculty members was a staff-writer at the Los Angeles Times for 17 years and is the co-author of two New York Times bestsellers.

*Viterbi School of Engineering:* The University maintains a large number of faculty profiles on the School’s website. Therefore, staff reviewed 20 faculty profiles at random. Of the 20 profiles reviewed, three faculty members hold a masters degree in areas that include aerospace engineering, engineering, and management. The remaining 17 faculty members hold a doctoral degree in fields such as applied physics, computer science, electrical
engineering, industrial engineering, linguistics, management science and engineering, mathematics, mechanical engineering, and project management and information systems. Research interests among these faculty members include applied probability and statistical modeling, compositional semantics below the word level, earthquake resistant design of structural systems, inelastic dynamic behavior of systems subjected to dynamic loads and correlation with measured response, real time simulation, systems architecting, and systems engineering. All 20 faculty members have extensive professional experience and publications.

Davis School of Gerontology: Due to a large number of faculty who are profiled on the University website, staff selected 20 faculty at random. All 20 faculty members reviewed hold a doctoral degree – and some have postdoctoral training – in fields such as biochemistry, demography, genetic and cellular biology, medicine, neuro-molecular biology, psychology, social and health psychology, and sociology. The research interests of those faculties include processes related to aging, socioeconomic differences in health, evolutionary conserved mechanisms that regulate cellular and organism survival and longevity, metabolic regulation of aging and age-related diseases, signaling pathways regulating neuronal apoptosis and neuroprotection, Alzheimer’s disease, oxidative stress and signal transduction, and the emerging science of mitochondrial-derived peptides.

Gould School of Law: Of 20 faculty profiles reviewed, all 20 faculty members have a doctoral degree in law or education. Three faculty members hold dual doctorates in American culture, history, and religious studies. Expertise among these faculty members includes areas such as corporate law, criminal defense and appeals, environmental ethics, gender discrimination, intellectual property, international environmental law, legal research, library administration, securities, and three-strike law and the death penalty. A number of these faculty members have experience as a clerk for various judges of the United States Supreme Court and the United States Court of Appeals. These instructors have extensive publication histories and have been recipients for numerous awards and honors.

School of Pharmacy: Of 20 faculty profiles reviewed, all 20 faculty members hold a doctoral degree in fields that include biochemistry, biomedical sciences, chemistry, clinical psychology, neuropsychology, pharmacy, pharmacology and toxicology, and psychobiology. These instructors’ research interests include analytical methodology applications, cystic fibrosis, development of new bioorganic approaches using protein splicing and synthetic protein chemistry, medication therapy management, pediatric nutrition, probiotics, and the roles of ligand-gated ion channels and how ethanol affects these channels leading to changes in behavioral responses.

Sol Price School of Public Policy: Staff reviewed the credentials for 20 faculty members at random. Two out of 20 faculty members hold one or more masters degrees in health policy and management, or real estate development and architecture. The remaining 18 faculty members hold a doctorate in agricultural and resource economics, business economics, city and regional planning, economics, management science and engineering, politics, public administration, public affairs, social ethics, sociology, and urban studies and planning. These instructors’ research interests include access to social security benefits, data based decision making, decision analysis, design and planning of the building environment and the related human and social consequences, economic development, intersection between health and labor markets, multi-attribute utility theory, pension reform, risk analysis, and urban economics.
Rossier School of Education: The University submitted the academic credentials for 68 faculty members. Out of the 68 faculty members, two hold a masters degree and the remaining 66 faculty members hold a doctoral degree in fields such as applied linguistics, curriculum, education, education administration and policy, educational psychology, electrical engineering, instruction and curriculum, and sociology.

Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work: The University submitted the academic credentials for 198 faculty members, 124 of which hold a masters degree in business administration, clinical social work, community planning, education, educational psychology, health care administration, health services administration, nursing, public health, social service, social welfare, and social work. A number of these instructors hold multiple masters degrees. The remaining 74 faculty members hold a doctoral degree in clinical psychology, counseling psychology, education, higher education, human services, law, psychology, public health, social welfare, social work, and sociology.

Commitment to Iowa Students and Teach-Out: By executing his signature on the application, Dr. Mark Todd, Vice Provost for Academic Operations committed to the delivery of programs the University offers and agreed to provide alternatives for students to complete programs at the University or another school if the University closes a program, or if the University closes before students have completed their courses of study.

Student Complaints: None.

Compliance with Iowa Code Chapter 714

Section 714.18 – Evidence of Financial Responsibility
The University filed satisfactory evidence of financial responsibility, including a current bond payable to the State of Iowa in the amount of $50,000 issued by Travelers Casualty and Surety Company of America.

Section 714.23 – State Tuition Refund Policy
The Iowa tuition refund policy does not apply to University of Southern California because it is not a for-profit institution.