When Max Nikias spoke here soon after his appointment as USC President, he told us:

“The leading universities will be those with medical and health science schools that perform translational research and deliver world-class patient care—by quickly translating new ideas from the laboratory to the clinic.”

To do this, USC must achieve these milestones:

- **We must be a place where patients are attracted** not just because we have excellent doctors, nurses, and staff who know how to provide outstanding care, but also because USC offers **innovative care** that cannot be found elsewhere.

- **We must be a university that advances the health sciences through the creation and dissemination of new knowledge**, providing the basis for life extending and life improving changes in the practice of medicine and other health sciences both here and around the world.

- **We must be a university that offers a culture of collaboration**, whereby scientists and engineers work with doctors, nurses and other health professionals to find solutions for the patients we serve today and the patients of the future.

How do we do this? Through achieving these aims:

(1) **We must recruit exceptional people**, including our “transformational hires”, these including directors of our major research centers, such as Norris, Zilkha and Broad, and our academic departments. We must have an environment that attracts and nurtures the clinician/scientist and the translational scientist in particular, people like Art Toga and Paul Thompson, who recently came to USC to establish a brain imaging institute here because of our capacity for innovation.

(2) **We must master our own destiny.** This was demonstrated through our acquisition of what is now the Keck Medical Center at USC and the integration of practice plans. We cannot be dependent on a third party to ensure that we achieve excellence.
(3) **We must attract the resources to support our Academic Health Center.** As President Nikias stated in 2009, we must raise no less than $1 million/day to support our health enterprise, a centerpiece of USC’s $6 billion campaign. These resources include major gifts, such as funding from the Keck Foundation to establish the Keck Medical Center at USC and from Ming Hsieh, to create the Ming Hsieh Institute for Engineering Medicine for Cancer, as well as federal grants, such as the Clinical and Translational Science Institute.

(4) **We must have the infrastructure to enable excellence.** This includes providing software that will expedite research administration, such as the TARA project; IT resources that directly support research, including our High Performance Computing Center and the Bioinformatics services offered by the Norris Library; **outstanding core resources**, such as the new neuro-imaging center, the super-resolution optical microscope at the Center for Electron-Microscopy, and the Beckman-Coulter cell sorter; and training to prepare our faculty and research coordinators to conduct state-of-the-art clinical research.

And to support all of these aims, we must have an outstanding clinical trials office. The clinical trials office will do these things:

(1) Expedite the execution of agreements with sponsors, so that we can be first in-line to participate in clinical studies and enroll patients. We must do this by empowering negotiators and creating master agreements, cutting time to agreement by at least 50%.

(2) Implement practices for sound financial management, that clearly align responsibility and authority for all clinical research.

(3) Encourage guidance from experts, including a faculty advisory committee.

(4) Link across the entire health enterprise at USC, most importantly including our partners at LA County, and also including the IRB, CTSI, CISO and other units within USC that collectively support clinical research.

(5) Become a customer-focused resource for investigators and their staff, sponsors, and patients who are seeking care that will improve their lives.

On July 1, the new CTO begins operation. As the next speakers will explain, our immediate goals are to transfer all existing trials into the university, clear the backlog of agreements awaiting execution, and to
establish policies and procedures that support the CTO’s aims. This fall we will begin a new training program for clinical investigators. Over the next year, we will implement new software systems and reporting tools, including a specialized system for managing clinical trials.