

# Traversing University of Southern California



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# Opening Message

## Authors

“Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time” - Thomas A. Edison



Darin Gray, Ed.D.  
Director  
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"Challenges are what makes life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful" - Joshua J Marine



Cameron Green, Undergraduate Student  
studying Computer Science/Business  
Administration and a Student Worker at the K-  
12 Stem Center

I hope this handbook gives you useful tools that will be beneficial to you during your time at SC! Fight on! 🕊️

# Chapter 1: Navigating USC Campus

## 1.1 USC Campus

Stepping foot on USC's campus without a guide for the first time can be terrifying. Without anyone there to guide you, it can truly be confusing trying to navigate campus whether it be you're trying to simply find your dorm/apartment, find a classroom, go to office hours for a class, meet friends, go to a school club meeting or find a particular building. With this map layout, hopefully, it will make it easier in terms of figuring out where everything is. Below is a map that highlights all the buildings on campus and here is a link to the building directory: [Building Directory](#)



[Picture of USC sign near the Village,](#)



Map of the USC Campus displaying the Athletics, Dining Halls, Residential Buildings, Parking, Libraries, Academic Buildings and Galleries

## Some Common Buildings Student Commute To



Taper Hall (TTH)



Joseph Medicine Crow Center for International and Public Affairs (DMC)



Seeley G. Mudd Building (SGM)



USC Ronald Tutor Campus Center



Ronald Tutor Hall (RTH)



Jill & Frank Fertitta Hall  
(JFF)



Leavey Library



Dohney Library



Kaprielian Hall (KAP)



USC Bookstore



Every student who comes to the USC campus may find it to be very daunting to try to navigate around campus. However, as you spend more time on campus, you realize that the campus isn't that big and is very easy to navigate!

Before you know it, you'll be navigating the campus easily in no time!



Bovard Auditorium

# 1.2 Building Relationships with Professors

While entering the new space of college calls for a newcomer to start building their identity and taking on many challenges on their lonesome, it doesn't mean eliminating any type of resources and support on campus! When starting any new class for a semester, it is important to build a relationship with one's professor to build oneself professionally and foster a relationship that can benefit you in many ways. You can start by introducing yourself to your professor at the end of the first class section and then frequently go to office hours to ask for help on content and assignments for the class and to grow closer to your professor. That relationship could potentially help in the long run by allowing you to boost your grade through extra assignments or, if you don't do well on an exam, potentially allow you to retake it. They also could be in your corner when you need a letter of recommendation for a full-time job, a scholarship, a fellowship, or any position that requires a letter of recommendation. Professors will also notice when a student goes out of their way to foster a relationship with them because at the end of the day if you don't show initiative about caring for your grade or self in the college space, why should they care about you or your grade? Always take the initiative not only with your professor but with any position in life when it comes to building relationships!



USC Price students talking to professor

It is also important to build relationships with classmates as well as it allows one to form study groups with classmates, network with them, and possibly even make long-time friends. Making friends in the classroom can go a long way as all the possibilities of how you can help one another out is endless.



USC Students studying



USC NSBE Students  
participating in the Student  
Club Fair

## 1.3 Balancing a Social Life and a Academic Life

While one's number one priority should be academics and securing a job post-graduation, it is also important to have a life outside of academics. The most important thing to have is to have a balance between academics and social life. Constantly pouring all your energy into academics can hinder you in the long run by affecting your mental health, leading to anxiety, depression, and academic burnout. Being in Los Angeles and going to school at USC, there are many opportunities to engage in social events! There will be events and sources discussed further in Chapter 3.



USC Football



USC Students going hiking

# Chapter 2: Navigating the College System

## 2.1 Sense of Belonging

College is a time to figure out what one wants to pursue in life and what type of career one wants in life. Below is a list of different resources available to you as a student to propel yourself professionally and academically.

### Resources

- Career Center
  - Helps aid in developing your professional identity, and opportunities to explore different industries, networking, Trojan Talks (chances to meet representatives from companies)
- Individual school career centers
  - Look up the career center about your field of study to see the career center resources, the Viterbi Career Center, for example, is the career center for Engineering Students

The USC Career Center is located at the Student Union building at 3601 Trousdale Pkwy, which is nearby Ronald Tutor Campus Center



Front Doors of the Career Center

The Career Center also offers beneficial resources such as mock interviews that will help prepare you for internship, job, and fellowship interviews in the real world. Check out their website to see all the resources they have available to USC students!



Students in front of the Career Center

## 2.2 Housing

USC provides housing for students who are primarily freshmen and sophomores. USC Housing has housing all around campus ranging from dorms to apartments to suites and it all ultimately depends on which building students are placed in.



USC Parkside Apartments

After sophomore year, particularly for juniors and beyond, it becomes very difficult for any students to obtain USC student housing. Once a student starts their sophomore year, they must start looking for off-campus housing for students because of the likelihood of getting housing. You can start looking at places around the campus for listings as well as speaking to friends who may have opportunities for possible places to look at. However, there are some opportunities during the school year and summer to become a Residential Assistant (R.A.), where you are provided housing and a meal plan while fulfilling duties for a student leadership position.

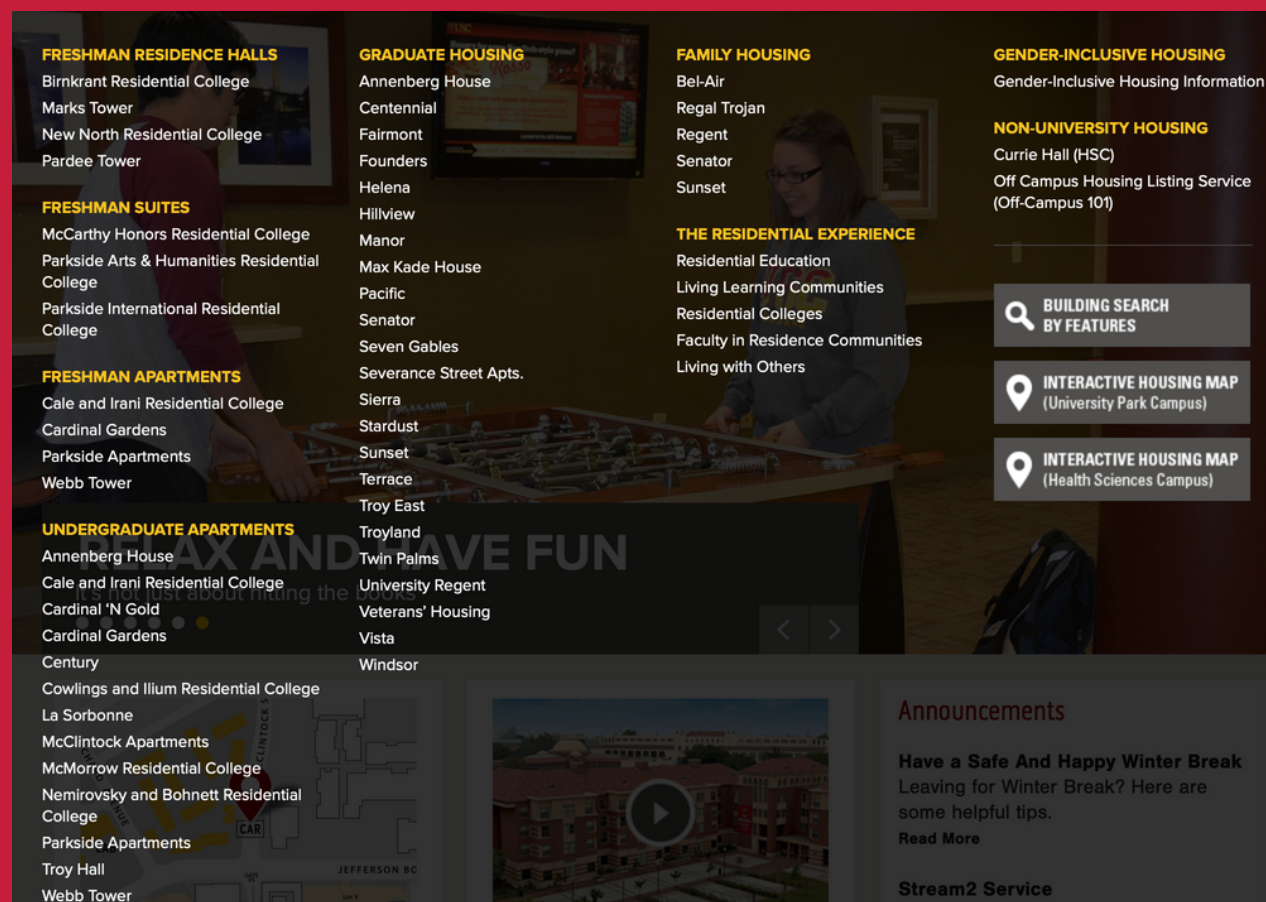


Cale and Irani Residential College



Some good recommendations to start a search for off campus housing is to start with

- [USC Housing Reddit Forums](#) to gather information
- Asking friends/students who live off campus and their experiences
- Googling “USC Off-Campus Housing” and looking at the results
- [Off-Campus Housing Listings](#)
- [Trojan Shelter](#)
- [Link For Student Resources](#)
- [Resource List](#)



[A list of all the undergraduate and Graduated living spaces for students on the USC Campus](#)

Another important thing to understand with applying for off-campus housing is utilizing one's credit. Everyone's financial stance is different so having an understanding of your credit is important when searching for off-campus housing because that could impact whether or not you get approved for off-campus housing. In the case that one's credit isn't high enough for a property, you may also need a cosigner as well to give you credibility for renting an off-campus property.



Diagram of a Credit Score:

Resources for Credit Cards (if applicable) and YouTube videos for explaining credit as well

- [Capital One](#)
- [Discover Card](#)
- [Chase Credit Card](#)
- [Credit Card 101 \(YouTube video showing how credit works\)](#)
- [Renting an Apartment for the First Time](#)

## 2.3 Food

USC has 3 dining halls on campus: Everybody's Kitchen (EVK), USC Village Dining Hall, and Parkside Restaurant & Grill. These dining halls are mainly available for freshmen and sophomores or anyone living on campus enrolled in a dining hall plan. For freshmen, more than likely, students will have unlimited swipes for each dining hall through their normal operating hours. For sophomores or people living on the Apartment plan, they will have 40 swipes per semester. For both freshmen and sophomores and students living on campus, they will also have \$150 dining dollars for any restaurants on campus. For the dining halls, there is also a website that shows the food that will be served each day and it is constantly updated as well. For using dining dollars, all the available restaurants are also on the same site as the dining menus

### Residential Dining Hall Menus



Everybody's Kitchen (EVK)



USC Village Dining Hall



Parkside Restaurant & Grill

Even if you're not enrolled in a dining hall plan, you're able to pay to enter a dining hall as well. The price varies depending on the time of the day, but the range is normally between \$12 to \$16 to enter the dining hall and enjoy the food from the dining hall menu! If you're not feeling the dining hall food, you can also venture to restaurants on campus and near the campus as well! Here are some that are pretty popular!



CAVA (Mediterranean restaurant)



Dulce (Cafe)



Honeybird (Chicken Restaurant)

## Off Campus Restaurants



Chick-fil-A (Fast Food Restaurant)



Hart House (Fast Food Restaurant)



Chipotle (Mexican Restaurant)



Ono Hawaiian BBQ (Hawaiian Restaurant)

## Off Campus Restaurants



Northern Cafe (Chinese Restaurant)



California Hot Chicken (Chicken Restaurant)



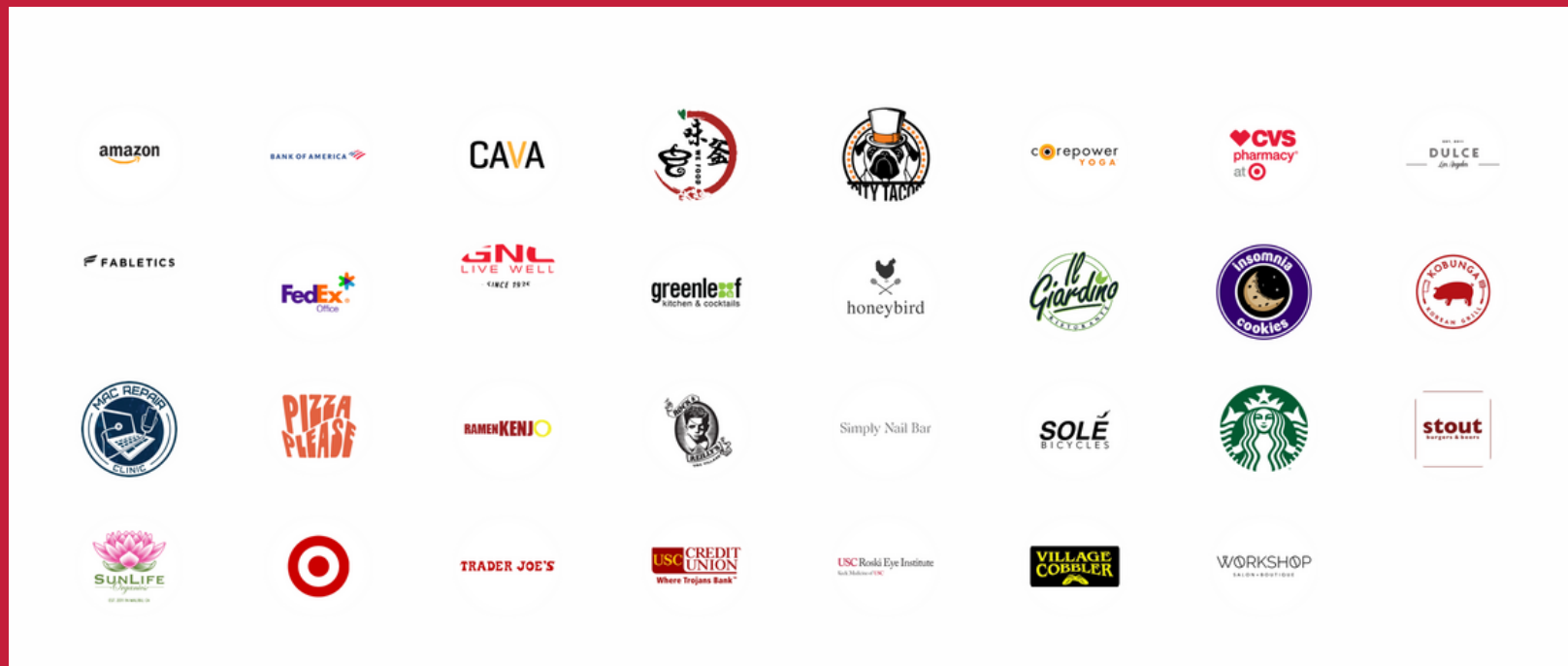
Cup O' Joy (Boba)



Yogurtland (Frozen Yogurt)

There are numerous restaurants off campus as well and when you get a chance, explore the restaurants nearby with friends to see what's all out there!

Also, know when it comes to shopping for groceries or items you need for your dorm or apartment, there is a Target and Trader Joe's in the USC Village and there is also a Ralph's (for those who don't know, which is a grocery store) that is a mile away from campus that many students commute to for their needs



A display of the restaurants and stores in the USC Villages

Students not enrolled in a dining hall plan can find it difficult to eat food if 1.) they live off campus and 2.) they don't have a work-study job or any source of income for that matter. However, some available resources can help out with that.



Food

## Resources

- [CalFresh \(EBT\)](#)
- [Jubilee Co-op Cafe serves food every TuesdayTrojan](#)
- [Food Pantry](#)

CalFresh is an EBT card that distributes money to cardholders each month that can be used for food at any grocery store.

Jubilee is a organization that distribute food for free to students every Tuesday at the Religious Center

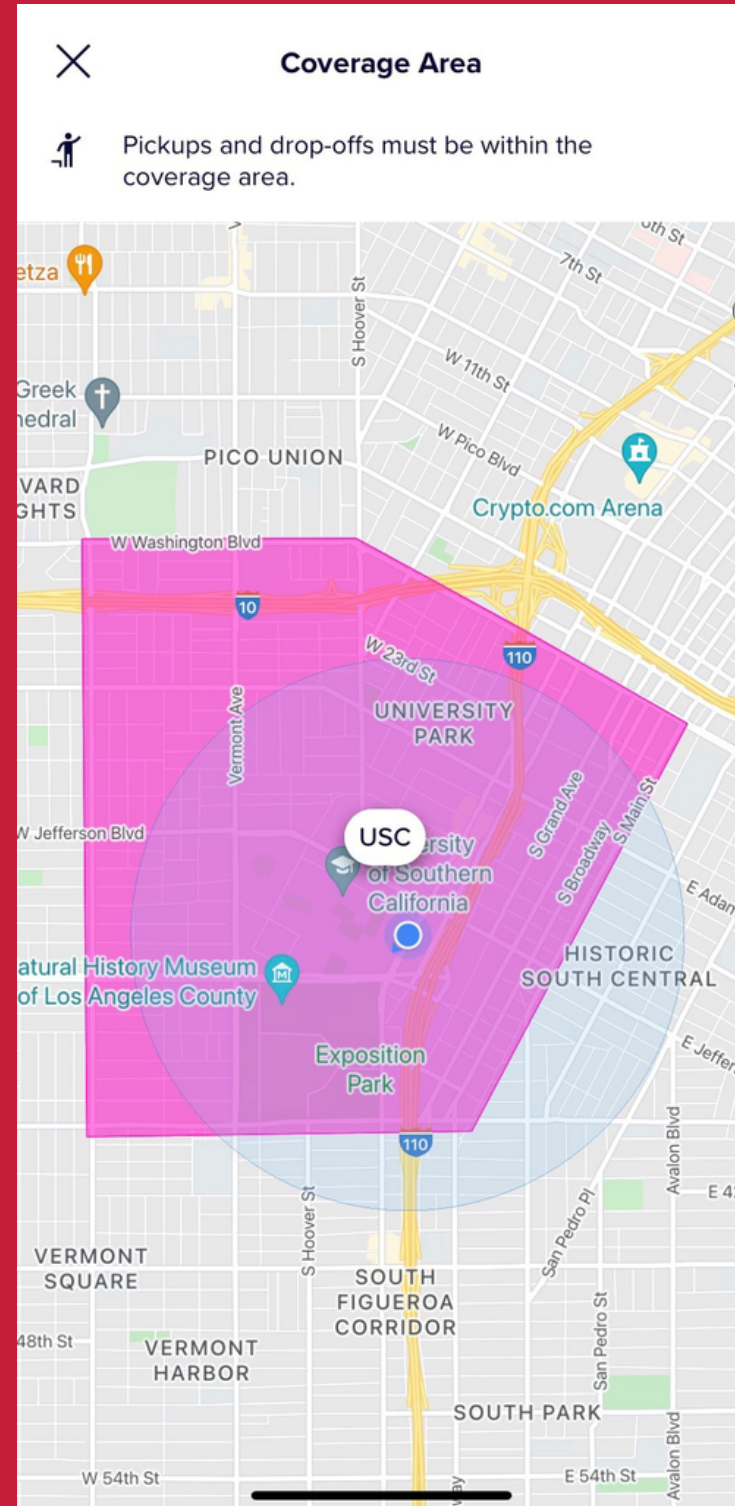


## 2.4 Transportation

Living on campus can sometimes make you feel like you live in a bubble because most of what you need is on campus but what if you need to traverse off campus and you don't have a car? Well, some things can be of use to help.

For all USC Students, from 6 am to 2 pm every day through the week during the school year, students can Lyft anywhere in a 2-mile radius of campus for FREE! So if you want to grab a late-night snack, go to the library if you live off campus, meet friends, etc, this will be very useful and you have access to this. As a USC student, you will also have access to a U Pass which gives you access to public transit and buses like the Metro for free each semester

- [USC Lyft Program](#)
- [USC U Pass for Transit and Bus \(have to apply each semester for it\)](#)



Map of the Lyft Range of USC

For students who do have a car, you can purchase a parking pass that would allow them to be able to park or students who commute to campus, you can either pay a rate to park for a day or purchase a parking permit to park on campus. Below is a link that also shows more information on the Lyft program, the USC buses



[USC University Park Campus](#)

## 2.5 Academic Preparation

No matter one's major, being academically prepared for classes can be a very daunting challenge; however, there are many resources available on campus to help with this. For engineering students, there is a center in Ronald Tutor Hall that does one-on-one tutoring sessions after you schedule them through the “Viterbi Learning Program” Link below. Remember to always go and seek help when necessary because you can only do so much on your own.



RTH

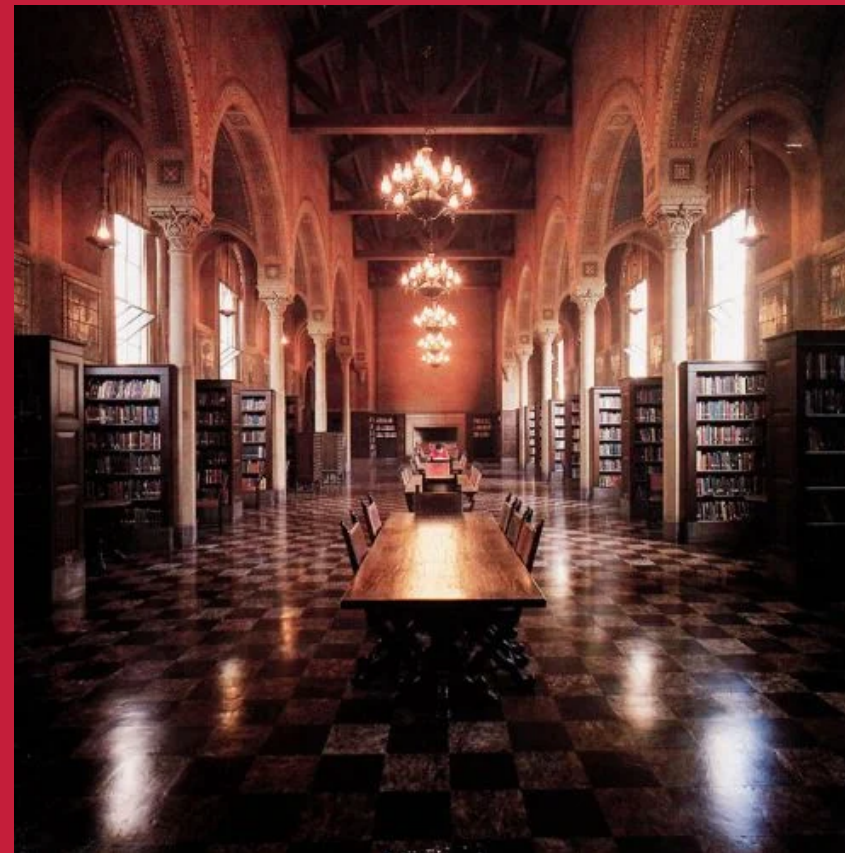
- [Viterbi Learning Program](#)
- [List of Undergrad Academic Resources](#)

## 2.6 Library

Many libraries on campus can be used on campus, but which one you wish to use is completely up to you and your preference, here is a general rundown of the more popular ones.

- **Leavey Library:** The main library students go to, collaborative study rooms throughout the whole building that can be booked online: [Leavey Library Reservation](#)
- **Doheny Library:** The second most popular library on campus that students go to; has many open spaces in the library that students can use, and also has some collaborative study spaces
- **Science & Engineering Library:** The engineering library has study spaces and a smaller amount of collaborative study spaces
- [Overview of the Other Libraries](#)

\*You can also use the “Leavey Library” link to book rooms in Doheny Library and the Science and Engineering Library as well!



[USC Philophsy Library](#)

# Chapter 3: Finding the Right Space

### 3.1 Communal Spaces

Going to college at USC opens the door to many different types of communities one can become a part of through student groups/organizations on campus, religious groups, friend groups, and even work groups. There are even a vast amount of events and community spaces that are available for students to build community, but it ultimately comes down to the student’s preferences. Here are some spaces that students that one can potentially join:

- [BeeHive by Sola Impact](#)
- [CBCSA](#), [APASS](#), [FG+SC](#), [LA CASA](#), [LGBTQ+ Center](#), [Veteran Resource Center](#)
- [Engage SC \(Find events and clubs on campus\)](#)
- [WalkGoodLA](#)
- [MakersSpace](#)
- [CED](#)



[USC Campus at Night](#)

## 3.2 Study Spaces

- Earlier, we touched on study spaces on campus, primarily in libraries. There, however, are numerous different study spots available on campus. Finding the right study spot on campus can prove difficult at times depending on the time of the year and what they're studying. Another factor may be that you're studying with many people or studying by oneself
- **1st Gen Center Space:** It is a space to sit down and take a breather from classes or the day, but it is also a good quality study spot



1st Gen Center, located at Ronald Tutor  
Campus Center (TCC) 224

- E-Quad: depending on if an event is being held in the vicinity, typically a good spot to study that's outside



E-Quad

- The USC Village is a much louder area as it's one of the busiest atmospheres on campus, however, there are many open tables for a person to use to study. It's first come, first serve!



USC Village

- USC Annenberg → an area that has a decent size amount of people coming in and out of the building, there are tables and chairs to study throughout the building



USC Annenberg

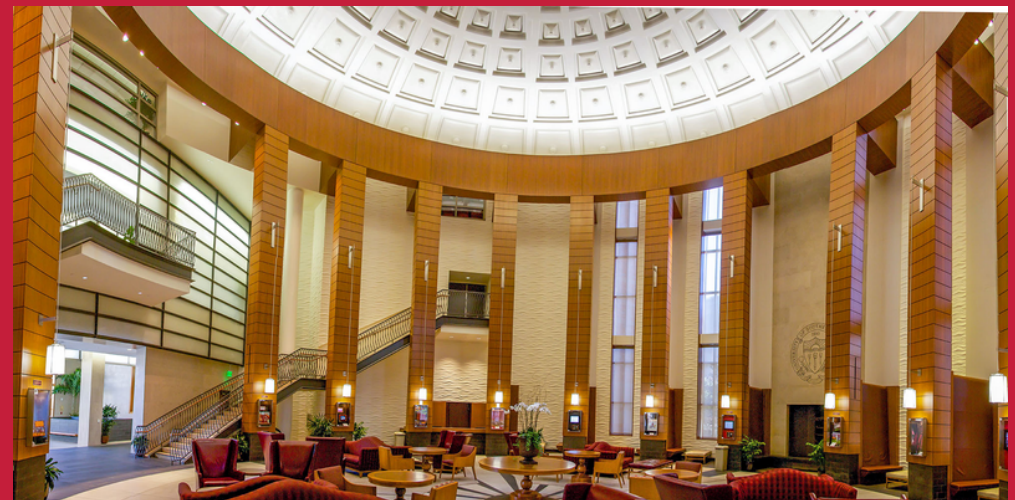


- Salvatori Computer Science Center (SAL)  
 → A area commonly used for Viterbi majors, but is open to all, and also commonly used for office hours for courses, discussion sections, and class sections.



SAL

- Ronald Tutor Campus Center:  
 Very quiet study spot, but on a first-come, first-served basis for finding seats to study at



Ronald Tutor Campus Center (TCC)

There are also many study spaces available in student housing, so take advantage of that whenever you have the chance! Some people also can easily study within their room, but everyone is different, so do what is best for you!



USC Village

### 3.3 Building Social Capital

Building Social Capital on Campus can be very easy or difficult depending on which clubs you join and everyone's journey is different. There are many different routes for joining clubs and getting involved on campus such as exploring clubs on EngageSC, joining Greek Life on Campus, volunteering, and many other routes. Doing this can pave the way for possible job opportunities, and networking and building a network that can benefit you while in and out of college.



**Social Capital**  
 [sō-shal 'ka-pə-tə!]

The potential to obtain resources, favors, or information through personal connections.

Investopedia

### Social Capital

# Chapter 4: Building A Social Network

## 4.1 Resources for Networking

Here are some additional sources for networking that can be off great use

- Trojan Network
- Handshake (This is a great source for applying to internships, but through internships, also can network as well
  - Also going directly to a company’s site and researching internships is a good method for finding internships and possible job opportunities
  - Trojan Talk (Have the ability to meet companies in a more intimate setting)



## 4.2 Additional Items to Know

- Finding scholarships: [USC Scholarship Verse](#) (a source for finding scholarships through the school and outside of the school)
- [Fellowships and Awards Database](#)
- Applying for Grad school: [Grad School Application](#)
- LinkedIn: [LinkedIn Learning through USC](#)/This link allows USC students to access LinkedIn courses that provide many courses that offer nearly 1000 tutorials on computer skills. LinkedIn is also a great tool to use for networking and building relationships for a potential job as well

## Closing Statement

As a STEM student at USC over 4 decades ago, I came to a crossroads after failing academically for the first time in my life. My choices were to quit, try something else, or go all in. Even though I faced many obstacles/barriers that STEM students of color around the country were (and still are) facing, I decided to go all in. I committed myself to breaking through those obstacles/barriers. However, as I succeeded, I bumped into new obstacles/barriers; some I had never encountered before. To psyche myself up, I'd conjure up an image of me taking a few steps back and then charging ahead with all my strength to break through. With each new obstacle, I stepped further back to gain enough momentum to get through.

At the beginning of my junior year, as I was preparing to overcome yet another obstacle/barrier, in my mind's eye, as I was moving further back for the next charge, I noticed a path around the obstacle/barrier in front of me. I had never seen it before because I always went charging full ahead whenever an obstacle/barrier appeared. Still using my mind's eye, I looked back at all the obstacles/barriers I had broken through previously. Around almost all of the ones I smashed through, there was a path around them as well.

It then dawned on me that my MEP community could help me find the path around when one existed (MEP was the predecessor to MESA University and CED). I still had to charge through some barriers/obstacles. However, having the MEP support system of classmates, staff, faculty, and industry partners, enabled me to graduate with degrees in Biomedical and Electrical Engineering, and Math and with eight engineering job offers.

This guide is meant to help you navigate your way to support here at USC. By using it, you can build your community to find your path to success.

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