

**Instructors:**

**Dr. Jed Fuhrman**

Office Hours: TBA

Location: AHF 211

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**Dr. Karla Heidelberg**

Office Hours: TBA

Location: CAS 203

Email: [kheidelb@usc.edu](mailto:kheidelb@usc.edu)

**Day and Time:** Thursday, 2:00-4:00pm

**Location:** TBD

**Required textbook:**

*Writing Science: How to Write Papers That Get Cited and Proposals That Get Funded* by Joshua Schimel ([link](#))

**Suggested reading:**

*The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White (any version) Amazon [link](#)

**Course Overview**

This graduate-level scientific writing course is designed to equip primarily Marine and Environmental Biology or Ocean Sciences graduate students with the essential skills necessary to craft a comprehensive funding proposal related to ocean or environmental science. As a scientist, your career is built on successful proposals and papers. This class is built on the premise that successful science writing tells a story. We will discuss and undertake assignments that let you learn how to write more effectively and how to present your own research ideas in a way that is clear and that will maximize reader comprehension. Through a structured curriculum, participants will delve into the intricacies of the development of a strong proposal, mastering key components such as formulating compelling research questions, constructing robust methodologies, and effectively communicating the significance of their scientific studies. By the end of this course, students will have honed scientific writing abilities, and the confidence to produce high-quality proposals capable of meeting the rigorous review standards. This class will be designed around the development of each student's own personal research proposal, but will also cover elements of writing proposals for large funding agencies.

**Expectations:** In this graduate class, the emphasis lies on independent work, where the more effort and dedication you invest, the greater the depth of understanding and knowledge you will gain. While the class provides guidance and resources, your individual input and commitment will significantly shape your learning experience and overall outcomes.

**General learning objectives of the course**

By the end of the course, students should be well-equipped to construct a polished and compelling NSF research proposal, integrating knowledge of their field with effective scientific writing techniques while complying with the specific requirements set by the National Science Foundation. The lectures, readings and writing activities will give you experience toward some of the general curricular goals of the university graduate program in an ocean sciences or environmental field:

1. **Research Proposal Development:** Students will learn to develop a scientifically sound research proposal following stated criteria, emphasizing clarity, innovation, and potential impact. This involves formulating research questions, hypotheses, and designing a comprehensive methodology.
2. **Effective Scientific Communication:** Through the practice of writing and peer review sessions, students will enhance their skills in communicating complex scientific concepts clearly, persuasively, and concisely, ensuring the proposal is accessible to a multidisciplinary audience.

3. **Critical Analysis and Evaluation:** Students will learn to critically evaluate and analyze existing NSF (or other) proposal and scientific literature, extracting essential components that contribute to a successful proposal, and honing their ability to identify strengths and weaknesses in proposal writing.
4. **Understanding RFP Guidelines:** Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of how to read and use detailed grant proposal guidelines including formatting and required elements for proposal submissions, enabling them to effectively navigate and adhere to these guidelines.
5. **Ethical and Professional Considerations:** Students will be guided in understanding the ethical considerations and professional standards associated with proposal writing, including proper citation, data management, and the responsible conduct of research.

### Description and Assessment of Assignments

Each assignment is aligned with the learning objectives described above. This section describes each assignment, how it maps onto learning objective(s), and how it will be graded. Rubrics for all graded assignments can be found on Blackboard.

### Learning Objectives

General objectives of the course:

Lectures, assignments and activities will give you experience toward general BISC/MEB curricular goals, including:

- 1) The ability to think logically, analytically, and independently;
- 2) The ability to communicate clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing;
- 3) The ability to learn independently and as part of a group; and
- 4) The ability to explain information related to science writing and proposal development.

Specific learning objectives:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Develop and present a formal grant proposal that clearly outlines their own research objectives, methodology, and significance, tailored to meet the expectations of a departmental review committee.
- 2) effectively locate and evaluate online resources to identify relevant funding opportunities and understand the details of associated application processes.
- 3) Read and critically assess in writing and by oral arguments proposals using specific criteria.
- 4) Understand an NSF-style grant proposal including the key components and how to align research objectives with NSF priorities.
- 5) Develop, justify, and present a comprehensive federal agency budget for their own proposal, demonstrating an understanding of fiscal policies, funding allocation, and regulatory compliance.
- 6) Understand the significance of providing and receiving effective mentorship in academic settings, developing skills to foster professional growth, collaboration, and career success

### Proposed Schedule (Some modifications may occur during the semester)

Day	Activity	Readings and Assignments
Jan 16	Organizational/Introductory meeting (short planning meeting); Review syllabus Course expectations/ethics/ course overview	<u>Assignments:</u> 1) Practice proposal assigned 2) Read Schimel Chpts 1 & 2 3) <b>REQUIRED:</b> Review an adopted <a href="#">policy</a> on use of AI in this course.
Jan 30	<b>Overview of the proposal development process</b> 1) Discussion of the grant proposal development process 2) Writing strategies for different audiences (Federal/State agencies vs. foundations) 3) Grant writing for agencies - Finding the right funding agency program (differences between NSF, NOAA, DOE, EPA, etc.)	1) Schimel 'Message Box' (Schimel pages 198-201) 2) Find and read a typical request for proposal (RFP) in your field 3) Explore NSF Award Search database to see typical awards related to your research.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do you shop your idea?</li> <li>- Overall summary of the peer-review process</li> <li>- External reviews vs. panel reviews</li> <li>- Ethical considerations</li> </ul>	
Feb 6	<p><b>Demonstrations of the Federal Government Submission Portal (Grants.gov) and overview of proposal components</b></p> <p>1) Introduction to NSF proposal submission process The nuts and bolts of NSF proposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Criterion 1 (<i>Intellectual Merit</i>) planning a project (scope, focus)</li> <li>- Criterion 2 (<i>Broader Impacts</i>) issues and options (how to make it work)</li> <li>- Other required proposal elements</li> </ul>	<p><u>Due:</u> Schimel 'Message Box'.</p> <p>Start developing an outline for your research project</p>
Feb 13	<p>1) In class discussion of Schimel Message Boxes</p> <p>2) Discussion of strategies in choosing the best (most appropriate) papers to support your work</p> <p>3) Budget development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of budget strategies</li> <li>• Realities of budget limitations</li> <li>• Inclusion of fringe benefit costs on salaries plus indirect (overhead) costs</li> <li>• The Proposal submission process and timeline within a University, like USC</li> </ul>	<p><u>Due:</u> Practice proposal reviews due</p> <p>Budget Template provided to assist your development of a budget for your project</p>
Feb 20	<p><b>Practice Proposal Panel</b></p> <p>Conduct in-person panel review</p> <p>Evaluation of the review process from the mock panel</p>	<p><b>Assignment:</b> Watch: Top 5 reasons your Research Grant Didn't get funded <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jMNaiVX-68&amp;t=428s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jMNaiVX-68&amp;t=428s</a></p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Cited methods section</p>
Feb 27	<p><b>Research Teams and Leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Group vs. single investigator projects</li> <li>- Collaborators &amp; Subcontracts</li> <li>- Leadership and Project Management (What's the difference?)</li> <li>- Project Management Issues and Tools</li> <li>- How to handle simple and complex (interinstitutional) groups</li> <li>- Top-down vs. bottom up management styles</li> <li>- How to manage conflicts</li> </ul>	<p><u>Due:</u> Dissertation Proposal Outlines</p>
Mar 6	<p><b>How to hire, who to hire, when to hire</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The process and timeline</li> <li>- Personnel management and the system</li> <li>- Resources (and hurdles) to hiring within the university</li> <li>- How to handle problems - what to avoid - what to manage</li> </ul>	<p><u>Due:</u> Methods section with appropriate citations</p>

Mar 13	<b>Project Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to read a budget (cash flow and annual account balances)</li> <li>- How to track a budget (practical example from USC: ASR)</li> <li>- How to manage the purchasing process</li> <li>- What to do if you have budget troubles or need a budget modification</li> <li>- Annual Project reporting (interactions with your PO)</li> </ul>	
Mar 20	SPRING BREAK	
Mar 27	NO CLASS	<u>Target Due Date:</u> Two Page NSF Biosketch, and Current and Pending form, budget and budget justification.
Apr 3	<b>The role of Mentorship</b>  <b>Review of student proposal progress</b> Open discussion session on issues arising in writing	
Apr 10	<b>Career Strategies</b> The question of authorship and working in collaborations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ego management and authorship issues</li> <li>- How to manage Pay to Play issues – who pays for publications?</li> </ul>	<u>Due before class:</u> Read Rashid. 2022. <i>Let's talk about authorship. Science, 377 (6614)</i> , <a href="https://doi.org/10.1126/science.adf0233">DOI: 10.1126/science.adf0233</a>
Apr 17	<b>Career Paths</b> Overview of the academic community and career paths in marine science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- professoriate, government, NGOs, other</li> <li>- academic hiring process</li> <li style="padding-left: 20px;">tenure process</li> <li style="padding-left: 20px;">post-tenure career options and paths</li> <li style="padding-left: 20px;">expectations for advancement in each</li> <li>- Career activity profile (research, education, service)</li> <li>- Questions, conceptions, misconceptions</li> </ul>	<u>Target Due date:</u> Data Management Plan; Post-doc mentoring plan; Letters of commitment; UNOLS ships request (if applicable); quotes (if applicable) (Sample templates and resource links on BB)
Apr 24	Begin peer reviews of proposals. Proposals will be available on Brightspace with a table indicating assigned reviewers for each proposal.	<u>Due:</u> Final proposal due in single PDF format
May 1	NO CLASS: Reviews will be assembled by proposal and assign primary, secondary and tertiary roles for panel	<u>Due:</u> Proposal Reviews
	Final Panel date – TBD after class input – <b>(USC designated final time for this class is May 8<sup>th</sup> 2-4p; We may need more time to do the panel reviews of all proposals).</b>	Final Panel Dates TBD

### Participation

Students are expected to attend all classes and turn in assignments on time. Each assignment builds on the last and students will be relying on class level on-time completion of assignments for peer feedback activities.

**Grading Breakdown (late assignments receive a 10% deduction for each day)**

<b>Assessment Tool (assignments)</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>% of Grade</b>
Practice Proposal 1 Review	35	6
Practice Panel 1	35	6
Schimmel 'Message Box'	25	4
Proposal outline	25	4
Proposal cited methods	25	4
Proposal budget and budget justification	25	4
Demonstration of understanding of how to develop a biosketch, C&P, DMP, Letter of Commitment, etc).	30	5
Full proposal (on time with all completed components)	100	17
Final Panel	200	33
Participation and class engagement in the process	100	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100</b>

**Dornsife Graduate Grade Requirements:** The final letter grade will be assigned at the end of the semester. USC Dornsife requires a minimum grade of C (2.0) to receive graduate credit, but at no time can the overall GPA drop below 3.0. The University will not deviate from policies governing the calculation of the grade point average through inclusion or exclusion of course work.

**USC required syllabus elements:**

**Assignment Submission Policy:** Unless otherwise specified, all assignments will be submitted through Brightspace, which will record the upload time and date. Late assignments will receive a deduction of 10% per day. All grades will be provided on Brightspace. This class has both graded and ungraded assignments. Graded assignments will be returned for student review.

**Academic Integrity**

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, improper citation and/or attribution, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

Academic dishonesty has a far-reaching impact and is considered a serious offense against the university. Confirmed violations will result in a grade penalty, such as a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and disciplinary action from the university itself, such as suspension or even expulsion.

For more information about academic integrity see the [student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#). Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment or what information.

### **Use of AI Generators in this course**

Each course at USC has a different AI policy. This course aims to develop creative, analytical, and critical thinking skills. Therefore, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated text, code, or other content is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

### **Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies:**

Students must obtain explicit permission from the instructor to record classes or labs using personal equipment. USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any course content outside of the learning environment. Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relation to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. Distributing course material without the instructor's permission will be presumed to be an intentional act to facilitate or enable academic dishonesty and is strictly prohibited. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

### **Course Evaluations**

This class will use course evaluations.

### **Statement on University Academic and Support Systems**

**Students and Disability Accommodations:** USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [osas.usc.edu](https://osas.usc.edu). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu).

**Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:** To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#) for [undergraduate-](#) and [graduate-level](#) SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

**Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required:** Students are encouraged to have and use a laptop computer. Laptops are available for loan through the university: [USC Computing Center Laptop Loaner Program](#). Course textbooks are also available for loan through the instructors. Other helpful USC Technology Support Links include: [Zoom information for students](#), [Brightspace help for students](#), [Software available to USC Campus](#).

**Support Systems:**

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call: Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call: The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call; Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086: Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-2500: Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776: OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411: Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101: Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call: Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call : Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC): A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or [otfp@med.usc.edu](mailto:otfp@med.usc.edu): Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

**USC Formal Policies:**

1. [Academic honesty and integrity](#) are paramount characteristics! Dishonesty in any form is not tolerated. This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). Plagiarism as defined by presenting someone else's ideas or AI generation of text as your own, either verbatim or recast

in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for each assignment. Any document associated with grading may be photocopied by the instructional staff. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>. Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

2. **Blackboard Website:** Postings on Blackboard (<https://blackboard.usc.edu>) will be an official source for announcements, course/lab materials, lecture notes, grade postings and general discussions. Students are responsible for checking the course website on a regular basis. Please notify Karla ASAP in the event of any mistakes.
3. **Classroom norms:** You will be expected to follow [USC Discussion Norms](#) during class activities. In this class, we prioritize fostering a supportive and inclusive environment where all individuals are encouraged to share diverse perspectives, and act mutually respectful to others’ contributions.
4. **Attendance and participation:** Students are required to attend all classes unless previous arrangements have been made. Please notify the teaching team of any planned absences (field cruises, religious holidays, etc.) by WEEK 2 of the semester. Students who will miss a class for observance of a religious holy day should be aware of the University’s policy on such absences, published at: <http://orl.usc.edu/religiouslife/holydays/absences.html>. If the absence is listed by the USC Office of Religious Life, a reasonable accommodation will be provided. Students who will miss a lecture or course activity for observance of a religious holy day or other reason should be aware of the University’s policy on such absences, published at: <http://orl.usc.edu/religiouslife/holydays/absences.html>. If the absence is approved by the instructional team, a reasonable accommodation will be provided. If you have any anticipated course conflicts see an instructor by WEEK 2 of the course.
5. **Late work:** Some assignments will need to be uploaded to *TurnItIn* by the specified due date or submitted as instructed in the assignment rubric. Late assignments are very problematic as the course relies on timely submission of work for group exercises. Late assignments will also be date stamped and receive penalized 5% of a grade for each day that the assignment is late.
6. **Final proposal deadline and panel:** The final proposal submission is the term project. A late submission of your final proposals or poor performance of the proposal will result in an “IN” or other designation for the class. Missing the final proposal review (panel) will result in an IN for the course.
7. **Other accommodations:** Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP). A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to instructors as early in the semester as possible.

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All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or “recycle” work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

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Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

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Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

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Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

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Non-emergency assistance or information.

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A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or [otfp@med.usc.edu](mailto:otfp@med.usc.edu)

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.