MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Deans, Faculty, and Staff

From: Elizabeth Garrett, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date: November 26, 2013

Subject: USC Pacific Asia Museum – next steps

We are delighted that the Pacific Asia Museum (USC PAM) in Pasadena has become part of our academic community. This new chapter will benefit the museum and USC in significant ways. The addition of the USC Pacific Asia Museum enlarges the university's remarkable strength in the arts and humanities, including our six arts schools, our Dornsife humanities departments, the USC Fisher Museum of Art, several Centers and Institutes, Visions and Voices, and much more. The museum’s addition further highlights USC’s global presence and our strong connections throughout the Pacific Rim.

As part of the university, the USC Pacific Asia Museum will be able to enhance its mission, build ties with our scholarly community and extend its cultural and artistic reach. For our students, our faculty and our Pasadena neighbors, this is a bright moment. For those of you who may have missed the announcement about USC PAM, it is attached to the end of this announcement.

We are moving quickly to integrate the USC Pacific Asia Museum into the fabric of the university. I want to share three important steps that have already been taken. First, I am pleased to announce that Selma Holo, Director of the USC Fisher Museum of Art, has agreed to serve as Interim Director of the USC Pacific Asia Museum during this transitional moment and as we search for a museum director. Second, a team has been constituted to advise me during the transition. The transition team includes members from the museum and from USC. The membership roster is attached to this announcement. Finally, a search committee has been formed to begin the process of identifying a new director for the museum. Like the transition team, the search committee will include members from the museum and USC. The roster of the search committee is also attached.

The search committee’s work will observe the following five rules of engagement, which have been observed in other searches led by my office: (1) All nominations will come before the advisory search committee without filtering. (2) During the entire process, there will be no votes by any group or constituency. (3) Those who are asked to interview the final candidates will be invited to send their comments regarding the strengths and possible weaknesses of the final candidates to me directly and confidentially. (4) There will be no final vote within the advisory search committee. (5) The final choice of the director will be made by me in consultation with the President. The search committee will meet with several groups and consult broadly with arts communities connected to the museum, USC and Pasadena to solicit input and advice. We will continue to keep you informed, as appropriate, of our progress in the search. A search consultant will be identified soon, allowing us to set up an email address for nominations. Meanwhile, please be assured that the successful completion of the search in a timely way is an extremely high priority for USC.
I hope you will join me in welcoming the USC Pacific Asia Museum as a proud new member of the Trojan Family. I hope you will visit the museum in Pasadena, as I have, to explore the informative exhibits and to appreciate its impressive collections.

cc: C. L. Max Nikias
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USC and Pasadena's Pacific Asia Museum to Form Alliance

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The University of Southern California and Pacific Asia Museum of Pasadena, Calif., one of the few U.S. museums dedicated to the arts and culture of Asia and the Pacific Islands, announced an affiliation today. The alliance between the museum and the university presents a wealth of collaborative opportunities for both institutions.

The new partnership will preserve the museum’s 1924 Chinese Qing Dynasty-inspired mansion in downtown Pasadena as an art museum, and will enhance the scholarship of the creative faculty and students at USC’s six arts schools and those in the departments of Art History, East Asian Language and Cultures, Religion and Archaeology. In addition, the alliance will provide a foundation for a renewed museum studies and curatorial training program at USC.

The new name of the museum will be the USC Pacific Asia Museum.

USC President C. L. Max Nikias said: “With its rich history and inspiring works of art, Pacific Asia Museum will be the perfect complement to many academic endeavors at USC. Both of our organizations work to enrich the educational experience, advance art history and preserve the past for future generations. USC is very proud to form a powerful partnership with a local organization that has international appeal and an enduring devotion to promoting the arts.”

Elizabeth Short, trustee and chair of the museum’s strategic planning committee, said: “Since its founding, Pacific Asia Museum has advanced intercultural understanding between East and West through the arts of Asia and the Pacific Islands. Devoted staff, board members and volunteers carry out this mission through exhibitions, tours, cultural and educational events and programs for the community. All of us are excited about the affiliation with USC and look forward to this rewarding relationship, which will provide synergies in the study of Asian arts and cultures and support the museum in Pasadena.”

Katherine Murray-Morse, chair of the museum’s board of trustees, said: “We are thrilled that the partnership with USC will enable the museum to enhance its mission and expand its reach as a cultural institution. Pacific Asia Museum, in concert with USC, a renowned Pacific Rim university, will be able to create even greater synergies with this new affiliation in Los Angeles, a global city of
USC Provost Elizabeth Garrett said that the new affiliation “will support the scholarship of our current faculty and graduate students, enhance our ability to recruit future faculty and students, and complement our very strong postdoctoral scholars program in the humanities.”

She continued: “This partnership also highlights USC’s deep connections to the Pacific Rim. What better way to exhibit those ties than through the breadth and beauty of the museum’s distinctive art collection.”

Pacific Asia Museum, founded in 1971 and accredited by the American Alliance of Museums in 2009, has a collection of more than 17,000 items from across Asia and the Pacific Islands, spanning more than 5,000 years. Prominent holdings include the Harari Collection of Japanese paintings and drawings from the Edo (1600-1868) and Meiji (1868-1912) periods, one of the largest collections of Japanese folk paintings outside Japan, a South Pacific bark cloth collection, collections of Chinese ceramics and textiles, and Buddhist art from throughout Asia.

The museum has organized several groundbreaking exhibitions, including the first North American exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art after the Cultural Revolution and one of the first exhibitions of contemporary Aboriginal art in the United States.

Built in the 1920s by art dealer Grace Nicholson, the museum is a California State Historic Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Museum officials approached USC officials in July about considering a partnership. Under terms of the alliance, USC will take over management of the museum.

USC has an unparalleled collection of arts schools at a research university, with more than 6,000 students pursuing degrees in the arts. All six arts schools include a significant number of students from Asia, and creative work by many faculty members in the schools is influenced by Asia. The university as a whole has a number of institutes that focus on the historic, cultural and social dynamics of the Pacific Rim and the Asian-American experience, including the East Asian Studies Center, the Korean Studies Institute, the USC Center for Japanese Religions and Culture, and the USC U.S.-China Institute.

USC recently has developed new graduate programs in arts management, which will be natural partners with the museum, as well as an interdisciplinary museum studies and curatorial training program that is being redesigned. The USC Pacific Asia Museum will complement USC Fisher’s permanent collection of some 1,800 objects, many of which are from the Americas and Europe.

Selma Holo, director of the USC Fisher Museum, said: “The collection of USC Pacific Asia Museum will be the starting point for a multitude of inquiries related to the culture, history and even future of the Pacific Rim. “

She continued: “Art is a starting point, but never an end point; art opens minds to issues around religion, history, beauty, politics and a host of possible connections and interactions in our global world. Our students and faculty will be able to gather around a specific piece or exhibition, and will find themselves entering into conversations that will be life enhancing and sometimes even life changing.”

The formal announcement of the alliance was made at an evening event Nov. 18 at the Pasadena museum with officials from USC, the museum and the City of Pasadena.
Carl Cooper, Pacific Asia Museum Trustee

Rob Cooper, Vice Provost for Academic Operations and Strategy, University of Southern California

Kathleen Gilmore, Pacific Asia Museum Trustee, Executive Committee Vice Chair

Brian Harper, Senior Executive Director for Provost Development Initiatives, University of Southern California

Selma Holo, Director, USC Fisher Museum of Art; Professor of Art History, USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, transition team chair

David Kang, Professor, International Relations, USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

Katherine Murray-Morse, Pacific Asia Museum Trustee, Executive Committee Chair

Elizabeth Short, Pacific Asia Museum Trustee

Dan Stimmmer, Associate Senior Vice President, Auxiliary Services, University of Southern California
Selma Holo, Director, USC Fisher Museum of Art; Professor of Art History, USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, search committee chair

Margaret Lazzari, Associate Dean of Faculty and Professor of Arts, USC Roski School of Fine Arts

Margaret Leong Checca, Pacific Asia Museum Trustee, Immediate Past Interim Executive Director

Sonya Lee, Associate Professor, Art History, USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

Katherine Murray-Morse, Pacific Asia Museum Trustee, Executive Committee Chair

Robin Romans, Associate Provost, University of Southern California, search committee vice chair

Duncan Williams, Associate Professor, Religion, USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences