



MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Deans, Faculty, and Staff  
From: C. L. Max Nikias *C. L. Nikias*  
Date: April 20, 2007  
Subject: New Dean of the USC Annenberg School for Communication

Office of the Provost

C. L. Max Nikias  
Provost and  
Senior Vice  
President for  
Academic Affairs

On behalf of President Sample, I am pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Ernest James Wilson III to succeed Dr. Geoffrey Cowan as dean of the USC Annenberg School for Communication, effective July 1, 2007. The appointment is for a five-year term. Dr. Wilson will also hold the Walter H. Annenberg Chair in Communications, which was established in 1984 in honor of the late Ambassador Walter H. Annenberg.

Under Dr. Wilson's leadership, with his record of accomplishment in the scholarship and practice of societal communications, we are confident the USC Annenberg School will accelerate its current momentum and expand its national and international influence. He is a recognized authority in communications convergence and its unfolding implications for our world.

Dr. Wilson has served with distinction on the faculties of the University of Maryland, University of Michigan, and University of Pennsylvania. Beyond academia, Wilson has worked at senior levels with a wide array of major organizations, including the White House, Council on Foreign Relations, the World Bank, United Nations, Ford Foundation, U.S. Information Agency, Congressional Black Caucus and the Global Information Infrastructure Commission.

A search advisory committee chaired by Karen Gallagher, dean of the USC Rossier School, identified and screened 240 applicants, nominees and prospects and interviewed 11 candidates. President Sample chose Dr. Wilson as the person who can advance the USC Annenberg School in a manner consistent with USC's strategic plan, which calls for: 1) research that addresses pressing societal issues, especially through creative, cross-disciplinary collaborations; 2) the extension of USC's academic presence globally; and 3) the promotion of lifelong, learner-centered educational approaches that represent the best of traditional and emerging forms of communication.

Dr. Wilson has seven years experience on the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the body that oversees all public radio and television broadcasting in the United States. He is the senior member on the board, first nominated by President Clinton

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and confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 2000; he was re-appointed by President George W. Bush in 2004. Wilson chairs the Board's Public Awareness Committee, which is launching a major new campaign to promote greater engagement with public broadcasting. He is also recognized as one of the top scholars in the area of the communications and information revolution in developing countries. In addition to his most recent books –*the Information Revolution in Developing Countries*, and *Negotiating the Net in Africa*, Wilson co-edits an MIT Press Series, *The Information Revolution and Global Politics*, and an MIT journal, *Information Technologies and International Development*.

Dr. Wilson's work traces the intersections of information and communications media and societal power, especially the ways contending groups negotiate to shape the diffusion of the Internet and other new media. His analysis of the role of 'information champions' in Brazil, China and Ghana has been called a model of social science scholarship.

Dr. Wilson is also senior adviser to the Global Infrastructure Information Commission, and co-director of the International Center for e-Leadership. From 1993-1995, Dr. Wilson served in several senior policy positions in the public and private sector as director of international programs and resources on the National Security Council, the White House (1993-1994); director of the Policy and Planning Unit, Office of the Director, U.S. Information Agency (1994); and as deputy director of the Global Information Infrastructure Commission (1994-1995), a private-sector body. While at the White House he oversaw the consolidation of Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and other international broadcasting units.

He has held a joint appointment as a professor in the Department of Government and Politics and in the Department of African-American Studies at the University of Maryland in College Park. Dr. Wilson is also a faculty associate of the School of Public Affairs there. He holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in political science from the University of California at Berkeley and a B.A. from Harvard College.

Dr. Wilson has been actively engaged in supporting institutions and governments concerned with privatization and democratic transitions to market economies. He has also been an advocate of improved access and equity, working toward increased participation by underrepresented groups in public policy and private enterprise within the U.S.

He was a visiting senior fellow for Africa at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York (1992-1993). Prior to joining the University of Maryland faculty in 1992, Dr. Wilson taught at the University of Michigan, serving as director of the Center for Research on Economic Development and as an associate professor of political science and an associate research scientist at the Institute for Public Policy Studies. From 1977 to 1981, Dr. Wilson was a member of the University of Pennsylvania faculty.

Dr. Wilson's current research remains at the cutting edge. As an adjunct fellow of the Pacific Council on International Policy he is completing a project entitled "Google's Foreign Policy: International Affairs in the Digital Age," and also leading a USC public diplomacy project on "Hard Power, Soft Power, Smart Power." His current book project is entitled *Sustainable Innovation in the Digital Age*. His forthcoming edited volume is on global IT governance.

Dr. Wilson has directed several major research projects concerned with the links between information infrastructure and society, including "The Impact of New Information Technologies on Conflict Management and Development in Africa," sponsored by the Agency for International Development (USAID). He has worked on related projects for the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development, the Ford Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation, among others. He has been a principal investigator for such projects as "Leadership in the Digital Age" (Markle Foundation).

His work on China led to his testimony before the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission (2006), and before a Congressional Committee, and he frequently consults and addresses senior professional audiences at United Nations agencies, in the private and public sectors in the U.S. and abroad.

Dr. Wilson has served in leading capacities on policy and research advisory bodies, including the Internet Policy Institute, the National Research Council's International Advisory Board, Chairman of the Y2K Information Technologies Advisory Board of the National Research Council/NAS; as chair of a joint project of the National Research Council and the Agency for International Development on "Evaluating the Possibilities for Conflict Prevention and Management"; and as study group director on "Information and Communications Advances and Investments in Africa" for the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. (1996-1997).

He also serves on advisory bodies for numerous organizations, including the Council on Foreign Relations, the Center for Global Communication (Tokyo), the China International Cultural Exchange Center, and others. He is currently advising the government of Nigeria on IT sector reform.

Dr. Wilson is the recipient of numerous research fellowships and awards including a Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellowship, postdoctoral fellowships at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and was named one of Outstanding Young Men of America. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the American Political Science Association, and the African Studies Association. Dr. Wilson is married to Francille Rusan Wilson, a labor and intellectual historian. They have two sons.

We are grateful for the hard work and wise counsel of all the members of the search advisory committee. We would especially like to thank the committee chair and co-chair, Dean Gallagher and Associate Vice Provost Howard Gillman, and the team at Edward W. Kelley & Partners. We are also grateful for the invaluable advice provided throughout the search by USC Trustees Wallis Annenberg and Linda Johnson Rice and USC Annenberg Board of Councilors Chair John Cooke.

I hope you will join President Sample and me in congratulating Dr. Wilson on his important new role within our Trojan Family.

cc: Steven B. Sample  
Todd R. Dickey  
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