



For USC LGBT, growth means awards from city

In a decade and a half, LGBT exponentially expands campus participation and prominence.

By TAYLOR FRIEDMAN

Daily Trojan

Back in 1995, with little administrative support and fear of mainstream backlash, a group that fluctuated between six and 15 USC students began gathering regularly to discuss issues pertaining to the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual community on campus. They held their meetings in a closet.

What a change a decade has made. The LGBT community, after those small-but-courageous beginnings, has become one of the most recognized and successful groups on campus.

This year, as part of the LGBT Pride Heritage Month Celebration, the City of Los Angeles issued four proclamations to the USC LGBT Resource Center, USC Lambda Gay and Lesbian Alumni Association, GLBT Student Assembly and the collective Trojan Family for USC's commitment to programs serving the LGBT community.

The organization plans to use the visibility it has gained and the trust it has earned to take on one of the most hotly contested and controversial issues facing California voters in the upcoming election.

"We will be spearheading 'No' on Proposition 8 leading up to November," said Vincent Vigil, a USC alumnus and director of the LGBT Resource Center since 2002.

Proposition 8 is an initiative that would erase same-sex couples' right

to marry.

"Other students are free to start a group that would encourage people to vote 'Yes,' but it's mainly only been conservative groups unaffiliated with the campus who have protested our cause," he said. "Last fall, an outside conservative group came onto campus with 'Jesus Hates Fags' and 'You're All Going to Hell' shirts. But among our students, there is a bigger push for equality and we've been able to peacefully engage in discussion. Nothing too negative."

This increasing support for marriage equality on campus reflects the emergence of a more strongly institutionalized LGBT community.

But support for gay marriage, even as USC's campus becomes progressively liberal, is not unanimous.

"I'm definitely for the constitutional ban because I think that marriage is between one man and one woman," said Ben Myers, chairman of the USC College Republicans. "I understand the argument: 'isn't it crazy to tell someone they can't marry someone they love? But what if one man and seven women want to get married because they love each other?'"

Myers also noted the religious nature of a marriage and said it is wrong to allow a religious ceremony to serve a purpose condemned by the religion.

But Myers said he recognizes and appreciates the LGBT community's progress over the last decade, and their efforts toward legalized gay marriage.

"I welcome the activism and I think it's very healthy," he said. "I understand where they are coming

| see **LGBT**, page 3 |

Drinking age issue gains traction

Sample considers signing letter in support of lowering the drinking age to 18 years.

By CATHERINE LYONS

Daily Trojan

As USC students look forward to Labor Day parties and the end of moratorium on The Row, university presidents across the nation are petitioning to make drinking alcohol legal for college-aged students.

The Amethyst Initiative, started in July 2008, is composed of university

presidents and chancellors who believe that a discussion should be held on lowering the drinking age from 21 years to 18.

John McCardell, president emeritus of Middlebury College and founder of Choose Responsibility, started the initiative after concluding, along with a number of other university presidents, that the current drinking age of 21 is not working needs to be debated once again.

The petition currently has 129 signatories from university presidents and chancellors across the

country, including prestigious colleges such as Dartmouth College, Duke University and Smith College. Southern California schools including Pomona College and Occidental College have also signed on.

USC Media Relations spokesperson Carl Marziali confirmed that USC President Steven B. Sample's office did receive the letter, but have not yet acted upon it.

While the initiative does not prescribe or suggest a specific policy approach, it does propose that a serious

| see **DRINKING**, page 14 |



Photo courtesy of the Democratic National Committee

The ticket • Sen. Barack Obama joined vice presidential nominee Sen. Joe Biden on stage after Biden's address to Democratic delegates Wednesday night. For more coverage of the Democratic National Convention, see **PAGE 4**.

That's not a typo: Forbes ranks USC 300th in ratings

Forbes' college rankings

1. Princeton University
2. California Institute of Technology
3. Harvard University
4. Swarthmore College
5. Williams College
6. United States Military Academy
7. Amherst College
8. Wellesley College
9. Yale University
10. Columbia University

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23. Stanford University
77. Notre Dame University
111. University of California Los Angeles
- 300. University of Southern California**
324. New York University

New rankings based on professor evaluations, student debt, prominents of students and faculty. Stanford is 23rd, UCLA 111th.

By DANIEL DOPERLSKI

Daily Trojan

USC administrators like to tout the school's rapid ascent up the U.S. News and World Report rankings — "rising farther and faster," one TV spot raves. But a new list released by Forbes magazine earlier this month could spell trouble for USC's public relations machine.

The rankings place USC in the 300th spot — a far cry from its steady position at 27 on the U.S. News and World Report list released Friday.

The rankings are not without controversy. The non-profit bases 50 percent of a school's total score on standard college ranking fodder such as the number of nationally competitive awards won by students and faculty, the institution's four-year graduation rate and the average debt of students upon graduation.

The organization also bases 25 percent of a school's score on percentage of alumni found in "Who's Who in America," an annual ranking of prominent and noteworthy Americans. The last 25 percent

uses the millions of student reviews logged at RateMyProfessor.com as a way to evaluate professors.

The Forbes top 10 starts off familiarly, with Princeton, Caltech and Harvard coming in Nos. 1, 2 and 3. Swarthmore College is fourth on the list, followed by Williams, the United States Military Academy, Amherst, Wellesley, Yale and Columbia.

USC rival Stanford is ranked 23rd, but UCLA checked in at 111th. Notre Dame was 77th.

Mark Pavelchak, academic integration officer at the Office of the Provost, said most USC administrators aren't taking the Forbes rankings seriously.

"My take and the take of most of the administrators is that the Forbes ranking have no validity," he said. "The measures they use, such as RateMyProfessor.com, to rank faculty quality do not make sense. There are certain rankings like this one where the people doing the rankings have a political agenda."

USC wasn't the only large university to score poorly. New York

| see **RANKINGS**, page 3 |

'SC holds steady in U.S. News rankings

In the latest U.S. News and World Report college rankings, USC ranked 27th, the same spot it held one year ago.

Rival UCLA moved up two spots to 25th. Notre Dame is 18th, and Stanford is 4th. For the first time, fewer than 50 percent of colleges participated in the survey.

Here's the U.S. News top 10:

1. Harvard University
2. Princeton University
3. Yale University
4. MIT
4. Stanford University
6. CalTech
6. UPenn
8. Columbia
8. Duke University
8. University of Chicago

INDEX

- 2 • News Digest
- 7 • Lifestyle
- 3 • Sudoku
- 12 • Classifieds
- 4 • Opinion
- 16 • Sports



Jurassic Park: Dinosaurs come alive (almost) in a Staples Center spectacle. **PAGE 7**

Common Ground: Coach Carroll and UVA coach Al Groh share similar backgrounds. **PAGE 16**

