

Approved by the
NTSAF Governing Board
on November 6th, 2020

Christopher McMorran
Governing Board Chair
2020-2021

Dr. Trista Beard
NTSAF Director

USC Norman Topping Student Aid Fund

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020



Since the 1970s, the USC Norman Topping Student Aid Fund (NTSAF) has been committed to empowering our students by providing mentorship and community. The conclusion of the restructuring process of the NTSAF over the past two years signifies our mission and goals to better serve our growing Topping family. Now that we have completed the Charter of 2019 and the Operating Guidelines, we will reimagine the future of Topping and find ways to build a more equitable Topping community.

This annual report highlights projects we have completed in the last academic year, and showcases the work of the Board and the NTSAF Office, all of which is focused on our mission to empower Topping students to reach their fullest potential. Each year we look back at what we've achieved, and reflect on how far we have come; at the same time, we plan for continued growth and improvement, looking to add new modes of support to help students achieve their goals at USC and beyond. Thank you to all our stakeholders, students, staff, faculty, and alumni, who support the mission of the Topping Fund.

Christopher McMorran
NTSAF Governing Board Chair, 2020-2021




Jenny Ha
NTSAF Governing Board Chair, 2019-2020



Dr. Trista Beard
NTSAF Director





"The central mission of the Norman Topping Student Aid Fund is to empower our Topping Scholars and Fellows to realize their full potential at USC, in their communities, and in life beyond the University. To achieve this mission, the Fund provides support and guidance, community-building programs, and financial assistance. The Fund advocates for equity in higher education by selecting students with high-financial need who exhibit an extraordinary commitment to community."

-NTSAF Charter of 2019

A STRONG FOUNDATION

weathering the storm



In 2019-2020, the NTSAF Governing Board completed our multi-year process to remake the core foundations of the Fund, building a solid future for decades to come.

- April 2019 - Completed Charter
- September 2019 - Charter Ratified by University
- April 2020 - Completed Guidelines
- May 2020 - New Director Hired

With these foundations in place, the Fund can now move our focus towards important details like increasing access and equity, ensuring strong programming, and boosting support and outreach.

Adapting to a Difficult Year

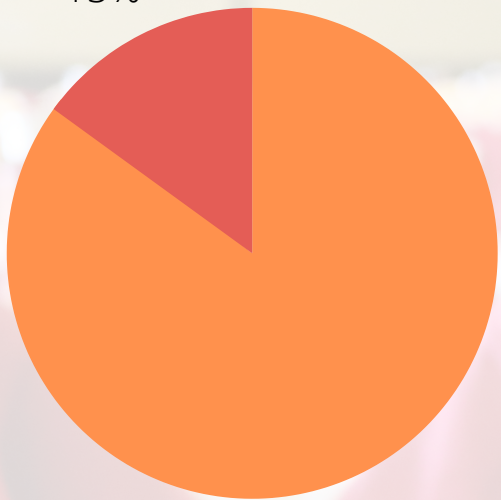
In March 2020, USC staff and students had to leave campus due to the LA County Stay at Home order. Community service hours were suspended, drop-in advising continued online, virtual lounges were organized to create a space for peer support and resource sharing, as well as socializing.

In May, the Recognition Banquet was hosted as an online celebration of the 2020 Topping graduates and was a great success. The Annual Topping Retreat is slated to move forward in August 2020 as an online conference, bringing together campus partners, resources, and community-building activities.

TOPPING FUND

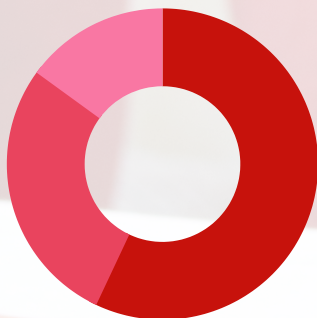
850k given in grants **140** fund recipients
representing **16** USC schools

Graduate
15%



Undergraduate
85%

Graduate Fellows
15%



Transfer Scholars
28%

Freshmen Scholars
57%

38 scholars and fellows graduated

53 scholars on dean's list

99%
FIRST-GEN

92%
BIPOC

40%
FROM SURROUNDING
COMMUNITY

100%
SIX-YEAR
GRADUATION RATE
FOR FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN

AT A GLANCE



Updates from the Topping Office:

- The Topping Mentor Program is now in its fifth year, and continues to build bonds of community that support Scholars' persistence and resilience.
- The Topping Program was highlighted in the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators' First-Gen Success Center News site
- Exceptional Funding awards were given to cover the costs of academic journals, honor society and professional association fees, graduate exam fees, graduate exam prep courses, and academic travel. Forty-four EF grants were approved. Three summer tuition grants were approved. Grants were given for 14 for graduate exam fees and prep courses, five Professional/Honor Society memberships, and 25 travel experiences (17 of those were cancelled due to COVID)

Signature Programs

- Faculty-Student Luncheons
- Academic Success Workshops
- Annual Topping Retreat
- New Student Welcome
- Recognition Banquet
- Mentor Program
- Safe Halloween Community Festival
- Volunteer Hours (20 per semester)



a new direction

Dr. Trista Beard assumed the Director role in May 2020, after serving the Fund for 4 years as lead advisor. She was a first-gen low-income student, who has two degrees in Literature and a Doctorate in Education, 20 years of teaching, research, and advising expertise, and a passion for supporting students to reach their academic and professional goals.





"The NTSAF Governing Board endeavors to accomplish the mission of the Fund, maintaining its integrity while ensuring longevity and resilience. It will do so by facilitating communication between Topping Scholars and Fellows and the larger USC community, creating and implementing long-term policy, and selecting Topping Scholars and Fellows."

-NTSAF Charter of 2019

THE GOVERNING BOARD

charting the path

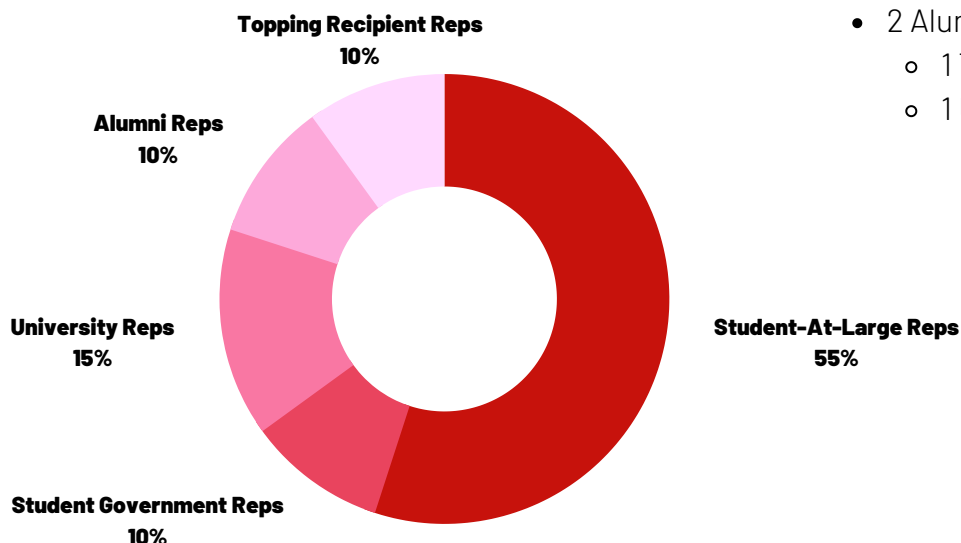
The Norman Topping Student Aid Fund is the first and only student-initiated, student-funded, and student administered student aid fund in the nation. The student-majority Governing Board sets policy for the Fund, determines long-term goals, approves the annual budget, selects scholars and fellows, and exercises oversight of the Fund and Staff.

Voting Members:

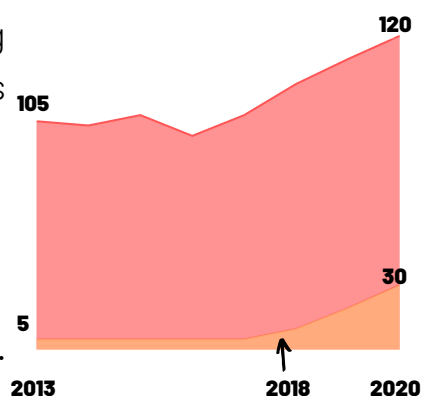
- 15 Students
 - 1 Chair
 - 10 Students At-Large
 - 1 USG Member
 - 1 GSG Member
 - 1 Topping Scholar
 - 1 Topping Fellow
- 3 University Reps
 - 1 Faculty Member
 - 1 Financial Aid Officer
 - 1 Admission Officer
- 2 Alumni Reps
 - 1 Topping Alumn
 - 1 USC At-Large Alumn

Non-Voting Members:

- 1 Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs' Designee
- 1 Member of the Fund's Professional Staff
- Anyone else appointed by the Board



In the 2019-2020 Academic Year, the Governing Board drafted and approved the new Guidelines for the Fund, completed a successful search process for a new Director, admitted a record number of new Fellows, and worked to improve our scholarship selection process, Fellow programming, and Progressive Degree policies.



In 2018, the Board voted to increase the number of awards given. 12 additional scholarship slots (in red) have been opened, and 10 additional fellowship slots (in orange) will be opened every year until the number of fellows exceeds 30% of the total awards given.

Pictured Opposite: The 2019-2020 NTSAF Governing Board. Top Row (L-R) - Owen Ramsby, Christopher McMorran, Dan Lamere, Xavier Hernandez, Professor Carlos Delgado, Chris Baccus. Middle Row (L-R) - John Mendoza, Dr. Andrea Hodge, Lisa Starr, Briana Liu, Lanie Yeung, Godfred Marfo, Arleth Cespedes, Dr. David Glasgow. Bottom Row (L-R) - Britta Purcell, Sully Bautista, Araksya Nordikyan, Dr. Trista Beard, Dr. Maria Rodriguez, Jenny Ha. Not Pictured: Brenda Burke, Phoebe Cook, Hannah Franco, Liam Tsao.

New Events in 2019-2020:

- Academic Success Workshop for Sophomores
- "Dress for Success Workshop" to promote the Professional Suit Fund
- Increased outreach by adding a Central and South LA High Schools mailer, including a wider range of LA-area community colleges
- Hosted first Fellows Forum, a half day retreat, with workshops and community-building activities



Long-Range Changes:

- Establishment of a Scholarship Selection Process Committee on the Board to review the use of local area ZIP-codes, the wording and weighting of questions, and other factors to ensure equity.
- Establishment of a Progressive Degree Program Committee on the Board which has been a leader in the University to develop specific policies for Progressive Degree students
- The Scholar and Fellow application essay portion was redeveloped to make it easier for candidates to highlight their strengths
- The Board voted to ensure broader student oversight of the Fund's budget development process
- The Board created robust performance evaluation metrics for the Director of the Fund



A BETTER FUND

LOOKING AHEAD

goals for the year to come

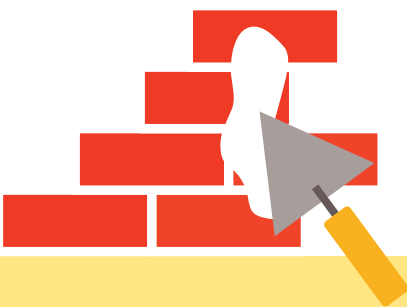
From the Office:

- Increase student leadership development opportunities
- Adjustment to signature programs to include multiple online sessions of events (i.e. the New Student Welcome and Faculty-Student Luncheons) to provide opportunity for smaller cohorts to interact
- Increase capacity for peer mentor program (tripled access to the Topping Buddy Program, utilizing near-peer mentor model)
- Increase social media messaging to celebrate students, alumni, and the history of NTSAF
- Create a digital promo kit for schools to use to promote the Scholarship
- Align evaluations to updated learning goals, for better program assessment

From the Board:

- Strengthen implicit bias training and implement other measures to ensure fair and equitable governance and Scholar and Fellow selection
- Ensure sound fiscal management and operational stability
- Continue to expand resources available to Scholars and Fellows
- Continue to increase the number of Fellowships given
- Develop targeted programming for increasing Fellow population
- Expand outreach for open meetings and increase Board transparency
- Increase fundraising and revenue generation from outside Student Fees and current resources

The foundations are solid - now it's time to build on that success to create a better future for Topping



USC NTSAF Annual Report 2019-2020

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