Homepage Image
Style Guide
The featured images on our homepage are an outside visitor’s first impression of our school. They take up more than a third of the real estate ‘above the fold’ and their quality has a huge impact on the success or failure of the homepage (success being click-through rates and increased time spent on the site).
WHAT YOU SUBMIT WITH YOUR STORY AND HOW IT IS USED

Large Image (710x363 px)
- Homepage primary feature image
- News listing thumbnails
- Various thumbnail uses across other CMS-based pages

Thumbnail (75x100 px)
- News listing
- Various use across other CMS-based pages
  (Ideal height is 100px, but it can be taller in certain instances)
Selecting an Image

An image featured on the homepage must have the following qualities:

» Well lit
» In focus
» At least 72 dpi at 710x363 px
» Follow the rule of thirds
» Faces fall in the upper third
» No blurriness
» No extremely heavy shadows
» No blown out white tones
» No excessive noise (grainy appearance)
» No low resolution images (pixelated appearance)
CANDID PEOPLE CAUGHT IN THE WILD

When people are the subject of a story, *use of candid photography of people at home in their labs or other relevant environments is preferred over professional portraiture or posed photos.* Use of the rule of thirds (subject is framed to the left or right) accommodates the overlay elements and creates more visual interest.
POSED PORTRAITS AND GROUP SHOTS

*If possible, a candid image is preferred to a posed shot.* When necessary, group shots and portraits should be carefully composed to accommodate cropping and overlay elements. *All faces should fall in the upper third of the image.* There should be comfortable margins on both the left and the right to allow for cropping in.

*Individual portraits should be a medium shot or wider* (torso included in the shot). The subject should be off center and balanced by ample negative space. Tight headshots create visual tension and are more likely to be overlapped by overlaid graphic elements.

Multiple portraits of mixed quality should be composited together to create a more uniform appearance. Attention to light source direction, color tone and relative scale are necessary. *Subjects should be placed over a bright background that complements the subject’s coloring and creates slight contrast against the white background of our website.*
RESEARCH IMAGERY

Tight, sometimes abstract detail shots of researcher work is visually engaging and serves the homepage well by helping to spark the curiosity of the reader. A chip detail rather than the whole circuit board, a dish over the entire satellite. This image treatment is significantly more visually dynamic than a point-and-shoot view, and acts as a teaser for the rest of the content.

GRAPHICS, SIMULATIONS AND DATA

Not all research is tangible. Use of graphics, models and data sets is permitted. **These must be closely cropped to be full bleed so that the image edges read on a white background.** The image need not show the full graphic or tell an entire story, but rather interest someone enough to click through the link.
GENERALIZED IMAGERY

If the story is about research, and good photographs of the actual tools and equipment aren’t available, using generalized images that help tell key parts of the story is encouraged. This is preferable to simply using the researcher’s headshot.

If the story is about detecting red tides in the Pacific, an image such a tide would be appropriate, even if it isn’t directly from our researchers. If the story is about digitizing and processing medical files, an image of overstuffed, antiquated paper files would work.

USC VITERBI IMAGERY

Use of images depicting the USC Viterbi campus may be appropriate for stories about campus activities or upcoming events that don’t have preexisting photography or artwork.
GRAPHICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Use of graphics and illustrations is encouraged to diversify the image set in rotation on the homepage. Graphics should be brightly colored, full bleed and high resolution.

Logotypes or typography should never be used as part of a feature image. Instead of using logos, find other relevant imagery that relates to the story.
OVERALL IMPACT

With time and effort, the collection should ultimately have broad variety of content, scales, colors textures and perspectives.