

THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

BAKERSFIELD

August 2006

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Open Letter to the CSUN community:

CHICO

During the spring 2006 term, the six-year review of Jolene Koester, President of California State University, Northridge (CSUN), was conducted. The review took the form of collecting and summarizing letters from a selection of the campus community, both internal and external, and bringing a visiting team to the campus in April 2006. The review concluded on July 18, 2006, with discussion of the review by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees and I appreciate the contributions of those who worked with us on this review.

DOMINGUEZ HILLS

EAST BAY

FRESNO

FULLERTON

HUMBOLDT

Criteria established by the Board of Trustees in 1984, and updated in 1994 and 2001, were used to assess the performance of President Koester and the progress of the institution. These measures included the overall management of the institution, relations on campus and within the system, educational leadership, community relations, major achievements of the campus and the president, and personal characteristics of the president. Faculty, staff, students, and community representatives were invited to submit written comments responding to the trustees' criteria.

LONG BEACH

LOS ANGELES

MARITIME ACADEMY

MONTEREY BAY

The visiting team consisted of Dr. Roy McTarnaghan, president-emeritus, Florida Gulf Coast University; Ms. Carol Chandler, member, Board of Trustees; Dr. Manuel A. Esteban, president-emeritus, California State University, Chico; and Dr. Roberto Haro, professor-emeritus, San Francisco State University. Following advance preparation with resource material, the team spent one full day on April 20, 2006, interviewing a selection of the campus community in one-on-one interviews.

NORTHRIDGE

POMONA

SACRAMENTO

SAN BERNARDINO

The team concluded that Dr. Jolene Koester is an outstanding university president. Dr. Jolene Koester is accessible and visible; she acts in a strategic and organized manner.

SAN DIEGO

SAN FRANCISCO

The following are the most frequently cited accomplishments:

SAN JOSÉ

- Improved morale on campus.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

- Increased the public profile of the university.

SAN MARCOS

- Appointed talented individuals to senior management positions, building an effective team and establishing trust with the university community.

SONOMA

STANISLAUS

- Reformed General Education requirements.
- Identified techniques to improve student retention and graduation rates.
- Attracted the Carnegie and Eisner grants (\$7 million each) in education and created the Teachers for a New Era initiative.
- Completed the 30-year physical master plan, Envision 2035.
- Initiated the Imagine the Arts campaign for the 1,700-seat Performing Arts Center with the campus and the San Fernando Valley community.
- Increased donor gifts to the university.
- Enhanced the physical aesthetics of the campus and made it easier to navigate.
- Began the 250-unit faculty and staff residential community that will offer for-sale and rental properties.
- Completed parking structures and parking lots.
- Initiated a comprehensive review to improve management of information technology services.

Of special note is the fact that the revision of the physical master plan was completed, in an open process, with no public opposition.

The current senior management team is regarded as a cohesive and talented problem-solving group. The campus community trusts the campus management. The campus budget process is transparent. CSUN completed its PeopleSoft fiscal, human resources, and student components on time and within budget. In terms of physical appearance, the campus facilities and grounds have never looked better.

President Koester regularly attends the monthly meetings of the Academic Senate, where she presents the president's report at each meeting. In addition, she meets regularly with the faculty president. She attends the Associated Students board meetings. Dr. Koester meets regularly with the leadership of the faculty union (CFA) and does not hesitate to engage in open discussions provided they do not infringe upon bargaining. Finally, she responds to e-mail messages, and directs staff to follow up as appropriate.

Dr. Koester has a habit of walking the sidewalks and engaging people in conversation; she drops into campus offices unannounced about twice a week to talk with people. Dr. Koester also invites a small group of faculty to a coffee meeting almost every week. These informal contacts are much appreciated by the campus community.

Community relations in the San Fernando Valley continue to grow even stronger. Dr. Koester is very visible in the community through meetings and events. Media coverage of the university is positive. The current campaign for the new 1,700-seat Performing Arts Center (PAC) is attracting a positive community response; the PAC project will be 50% state funded and 50% donor funded.

On the academic front, Dr. Koester and the provost continue to push an agenda to improve time to graduation. This effort preceded the systemwide initiative, and adapts the 22 point agenda cited in the Trustee initiative. Dr. Koester identified "Learning Centered University" as a university theme. Most of the faculty are receptive to the concept and perceive it as consistent with regional accreditation (WASC) requirements.

The consensus on and off campus is that Jolene Koester is deeply committed to the long-term success of California State University, Northridge. She carefully uses the annual fall convocation addresses to lay out the priorities for the academic year.

President Jolene Koester and I discussed this review and established the following goals:

1. Support and implement the Graduation Rate Initiative of the Board of Trustees, resulting in the establishment of policies and practices that will improve graduation rates.
2. Continue to focus on raising contributed funds for the university.
3. Continue to strengthen the connections between the university and the community, as well as relationships within the campus community.
4. Continue to strengthen the management and operational teams of the university, including auxiliaries.
5. Continue the development of a model program in teacher preparation with the particular goal of linking teacher preparation to improved performance of pupils in the K-12 schools.
6. Working through the provost, continue to clarify the applications of the "Learning Centered University" by showcasing exemplars of how learning outcomes can be linked to innovative instruction.

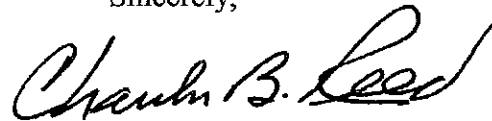
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7. In order to apprise the campus community of campus progress, continue to summarize the status of the past year's campus priorities in various campus communications.

Dr. Jolene Koester continues to deliver an outstanding performance as president of a very large urban university over her first six years. She is an energetic, dedicated, intelligent, and communicative president for California State University, Northridge.

With kind regards,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles B. Reed". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Charles B. Reed  
Chancellor

CBR/wd