Memorandum

To: CSUN Community and Allies
From: Dr. Roz Rosen, Director
Cal State Northridge National Center on Deafness (CSUN NCOD)
RE: CSUN NCOD Strategic Plan 2009-2015
Date: January 2, 2009

The National Center on Deafness (NCOD) at the California State University, Northridge (CSUN) possesses a laudable legacy, a proud present and the potential of a powerful future. To meet its mission of preparing Deaf and hard of hearing students* for modern-day success at CSUN and in the community, a roadmap was needed with laser-beam focus on student success and on the programs, services, linkages and resources essential for student success.

I am pleased to share with you the results of the CSUN NCOD strategic planning initiative. This report contains the CSUN NCOD Strategic Committee report and the administrative response. The CSUN NCOD committee commenced a year-long process which was open, transparent, and inclusive. It conducted surveys and forums to generate and synthesize input from students, staff, faculty, alumni, and other stakeholders.

CSUN administrators Dr. Terry Piper, Dr. Mary Ann Cummins-Prager and Dr. Roz Rosen reviewed the committee’s report end of May 2008 and applauds the comprehensive, inclusive and groundbreaking work of the committee. However, because the landscape, especially in California, had changed a year later, Dr. Rosen was asked to reformat the report to factor in CSUN’s intensified emphases on student success at CSUN and environmental/resource limitations.

The following therefore presents the strategic plan which builds on the committee’s report. First of all, the primary mission, vision and priorities of CSUN NCOD are riveted on success of Deaf and hard of hearing students in a mainstream situation. The overarching strategic goal for NCOD restates and encompasses top priorities as the 3 R’s for student success at CSUN and beyond:

- Readiness of students, including transition from school to collegiate studies;
- Retention of students and development of full potential in academic skills, holistic student development and leadership skills;
- Rate to graduation and employment.

*Note: In this document, “Deaf” is an inclusive term representing the spectrum of Deaf and hard of hearing people.
This overarching goal embodies laser-beam operational foci on student success.

The three supporting pillars (Figure 1) are the strategic directions needed for positive student outcomes.

- **Program Excellence: Academic and Support Services**: Exemplary staff and outcomes in terms of service, assessment, research, practice and outreach;
- **Communications, Connections and Community**: Quality access to all programs and services with effective on and off campus connections; (also see Figure 2) and
- **Resource Development and Sustainability**.

This schematic plan (Figures 1 and 2) illustrates the recommendations made by the CNSP committee, reframed into one overarching goal and three supporting pillars for student success. Dr. Rosen and the NCOD Management Team and Leadership Team will next identify, prioritize and implement the strategic directions and timelines, 2009-2015, focusing on student success and “Communication, Connections and Community” at California State University, Northridge, to achieve the strategic theme of:

“Focused on Student Success; Recognized Regionally and Nationally.”

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**Fig 1: Strategic Goal and Supporting Pillars**
"It takes a village to graduate a student."

Fig 2: Linkages for Student Success
Introduction

The California State University Northridge (CSUN) National Center on Deafness (NCOD) Strategic Planning Committee was established in April 2007 by Dr. Roz Rosen, NCOD Director, to formulate a plan of priorities related to student success at CSUN. The committee was asked to address current realities, challenges and opportunities; review possible and preferred future needs, programs, and projects; and provide a framework of strategies for excellence based on input derived from university policy documents, data, and stakeholders.

The committee was charged with the task of proposing a 3-5 year strategic plan which would address and enhance the quality of (1) student outcomes, (2) program operations; and (3) resource development and connections. The principles guiding the work of the committee included (1) focus on educational success for Deaf and hard of hearing* students in a mainstream setting; (2) use of meaningful input from the students, staff and alumni; and (3) alignment with University goals, priorities and values, given a changing post-ADA environment and serious resource limitations.

The California State University Northridge/National Center on Deafness Strategic Planning committee (CNSP) included representatives of students, staff and alumni:

- Students: Nicholas Comegna and Laura McManus (recommended by Deaf CSUNians);
- Alumni: Michael Dubowe and Lauren Maucere (recommended by NCOD Alumni);
- Staff: Barbara Boyd and Shawn Clark; and
- Management: James Macaluso and Cathy McLeod (Chair).

An orientation was provided to the committee by Dr. Rosen regarding roles, responsibilities and possible processes. The committee received copies of the University Mission, Values, and Vision; University Goals and Initiatives, Student Affairs Strategic Priorities, Weiner NCOD Program Review Report, the NCOD Staff Strategic Analyses, and the NCOD Goals. (Appendix A)

*Note: In this document, “Deaf” is an inclusive term representing the spectrum of Deaf and hard of hearing people.
Mission

The committee recommends updating the mission as follows, to more closely parallel that of CSUN Student Affairs, to be more student-centered while also providing support and linkages. The committee, based on input from various stakeholders, also suggests changing the name of NCOD to represent current terminology used within the Deaf community.

The National Center on Deafness exists to enable students who are Deaf and hard of hearing to maximize opportunities for effective student learning as appropriate and effective for Deaf students, personal development and responsible citizenship. NCOD ensures student well-being and success through engaging individuals and communities in educationally purposeful activities, creating opportunities for access, delivering support services, and advocating for student needs and aspirations.

A Vision of Excellence

In brief, the vision is:

“Focused on Deaf students and community; regionally and nationally recognized.”

The programs offered through NCOD at CSUN are driven by NCOD’s commitment to student success through the provision of quality educational opportunity, engagement and excellence for its students, professionals who work with them, and a networked community. Focused on Deaf students, NCOD is regionally and nationally recognized for its educational innovations, effective models, leadership and networked communities.

CSUN Deaf and hard of hearing graduates will become community, workplace and role model ambassadors who will be:

- Secure in their identity as Deaf persons with diverse abilities;
- Independent thinkers capable of interpersonal and mutually supportive relations;
- Respectful and assertive about diverse rights, roles and responsibilities;
- Able to demonstrate personal, social and civic responsibility;
- Proficient in utilizing services and technology for various purposes; and
- Life-long learners.

NCOD as part of an institution of higher learning will:

- Be recognized as a leader and model of accountable educational planning and programming for Deaf and hard of hearing students;
• Be a premiere choice for Deaf and hard of hearing students who desire a quality and accessible mainstream educational environment supported by qualified staff and faculty and enhanced by technology;
• Sustain a community of shared values and goals among students, staff, faculty, families, alumni and external linkages; and
• Be recognized for its distinctive achievements in teaching, learning, scholarship and service.

Values

NCOD provides a Deaf-friendly learning centered environment, incorporating the values of the University:

• Commitment to excellence in individual students, programs and operations;
• Focus on accessible, Deaf-appropriate and value-added services and experiences;
• Promotion of behavior, programs, and policies that respect and value cultural diversity and multiple languages, i.e. American Sign Language, English, and/or bilingualism/multilingualism;
• Use of assessment results to inform continuing improvements and strategies for student success;
• Commitment to an environment of learning, teaching, scholarship and innovation through service, education, and research;
• Community partnerships, on and off campus; and
• Wise stewardship of resources in alignment with priorities for student success.

The CSUN NCOD Community: A Definition

The NCOD target constituency is foremost its Deaf and hard of hearing students. To paraphrase a truism, “It takes a village to graduate a student;” the extended community for student success includes families, professional staff and faculty on and off campus, alumni, and other stakeholders such as schools, service programs, businesses and state/federal agencies providing specific services to Deaf persons. (Figure 2) This community is bound by shared needs, goals and interests as a cultural minority who use American Sign Language and English as well as technologies and assistive technologies within a mainstream community. As such, CSUN NCOD is viewed as an important entity by the diverse Deaf community.

The NCOD community is part and parcel of the CSUN community. NCOD serves a unique population and facilitates connections and collaborations among diverse populations and programs throughout CSUN and the California State University system.

NCOD has a proud past dating back to 1962 and a respectable present, resplendent with history, legacies and present accomplishments. (Appendix B)
Current Challenges and Opportunities

Current realities of fewer resources and greater expectations create the impetus for planned change. External forces include the changing economic environment, increasing expectations for assessment/learning outcomes and accountability, legal policies and action supporting enhanced rights, roles and responsibilities for citizens, changing workplace needs, competition for talented students, decreased resources and increased need for partnerships. Internal forces include the changing demographics and needs of students, continuing commitment to quality in access services and programming for students, expectations for data-driven planning, marketplace forces, and heightened needs for connections. Perceptions and expectations create new realities, challenges and opportunities.

Strategic planning provides NCOD with the opportunity to validate its legendary past, assess its positive present and fortify its possible and preferred future, by focusing on student success.

Process Used to Develop this Plan:

The CSUN NCOD Strategic Planning Committee (CNSP) developed and employed surveys targeted to specific stakeholders and focus groups. Committee deliberations, framed by the Director’s charges, researched extant University goals, priorities, values and data from relevant sources.

The committee conducted online surveys and host face-to-face forums. Four designated surveys were disseminated; the populations included (1) CSUN Deaf students; (2) alumni; (3) staff; and (4) service providers. Face-to-face alumni forums attracted three populations: (1) alumni; (2) students; and (3) community, and focused on three themes: (1) NCOD and the Community; (2) The Future of NCOD; and (3) Giving Back to NCOD.

CNSP submitted its recommendations to Dr. Rosen who reviewed it with Vice President Terry Piper and Associate Vice President Mary Ann Cummins-Prager. Upon review and taking into consideration CSUN’s emerging priority of achieving recognition by its focus on students outcomes and a fiscally challenging environment, it was decided to further synthesize the CNSP recommendations into one overarching goal — the 3 R’s of Student Success: Readiness, Retention and Rate to Graduation/Appropriate Employment. The CNSP’s other three priorities were then transformed to strategic pillars supporting the overarching goal of Student Success. (Figure 1)
Recommended Strategic Directions for NCOD, 2009 – 2015

Strategic Goal: Student Success

Student Success at CSUN and beyond is operationally defined as the 3 R’s:

- Readiness of students, including transition from school to collegiate functioning;
- Retention of students and development of full potential in academic skills, holistic student development and leadership skills;
- Rate to graduation and employment.

Individual student success is defined as the achievement of scholarly performance, personal and interpersonal development, ability to do collegiate work, persistence to graduation and a career and/or graduate studies aligned with the chosen major(s), within a mainstreamed academic environment. This requires a programmatic shift to address the needs of current and future generations of students in line with changing demographics, greater expectations for accountability and shrinking resources. The outcome will be a working plan for positive retention and graduation rates of students who are prepared to pursue a variety of career and community options in a multitude of settings.

The primary and singular strategic goal for NCOD is greater student success as operationally defined above and as programmatically described below.

A. Programs and service enhancements will be student-centered, data based and congruent with University goals, values and common learning outcomes. Planning, assessments, advising and tracking will be aligned with University priorities and supported by correlation data and software.

B. Program and service enhancements will be directly linked to student success:
   a. Readiness of students for college-level work and transition to/enrollment at CSUN;
   b. Retention of student, including academic and personal/interpersonal success, within the context of a learning centered mainstream University; and
   c. Rate to graduation, leading to graduate studies and/or appropriate employment.

C. Program and service enhancements will be innovative, based on current/future student variables and tied to cutting-edge support services and visual technology in academic and community settings. Tracking and forecasting student variables will inform decisions regarding needs and services.
Strategies for Student Success:

1. **New Students:**
   a. Readiness: Increase the pool of qualified potential students through transition training and outreach to increase number of academically prepared diverse students as First Time Freshmen and First Time Transfers.
   b. Ensure that new student orientation program integrate key CSUN goals, values and common learning themes, as well as student understanding of their individual selves, needs and goals, applications of roles, rights, respect and responsibilities, and appreciation for bilingual/multilingual literacies and diverse differences. Incorporate data results to inform subsequent orientation programming.
   c. Ensure that incoming students develop bonding with both Deaf and hearing students and professionals as they begin their journey at CSUN.
   d. Establish student advisement and mentoring programs for incoming students to facilitate transition, engagement, career planning and timely persistence to graduation.
   e. Support the planning, advisement and tracking with appropriate software. Track cohorts of students with enrollment data and identify/fortify variables enhancing collegiate success. Sustain a critical mass of Deaf and hard of hearing students.

2. **Continuing Students:**
   a. Enrollment Management: Track and retain students with effective co-relational data bases. Establish linkages with University data management departments.
   b. Academic Services: Strengthen academic planning with assessments and linkages to career goals and co-curricular opportunities. Track students and indicate benchmarks for possible interventions/referrals. Maintain and promote departmental offerings of direct communication classes with signing professors in critical disciplines. Expand tutorial services to meet student needs.
   c. Career Services: Implement provision of direct communication career planning in conjunction with academic planning, internships, mentoring and training programs for students, both Deaf-specific and general university career services.
   d. Identity Development: Offer special co-curricular programs focusing on rights and responsibilities, respect and appreciation for diversity, Deaf people, cultures, languages, leadership and empowerment. Examples of programs include knowledge of self and rights, organizational leadership and cultural opportunities, both on and off campus.
   e. Access Support Services: Enhance student access to and scheduling of support services with technology. Increase automation and efficiency in providing services, including student-initiated requests, scheduling and input where feasible.
   f. Technological Expertise: Empower students to become self-sufficient with use of communicative technologies in various situations.
Three Strategic Pillars to Support Student Success

How may student success be further enhanced within a modern-day global community, a rapidly changing world laden with challenges and opportunities and a formidable economical environment? The following three Strategic Pillars will support the overarching goal of student academic and personal/interpersonal success. These strategic pillars will also bring recognition to CSUN as a premiere educational institution for Deaf and hard of hearing students.

**Strategic Pillar 1: Academic and Support Services**
Enhance professional development, research, scholarship and leadership to position CSUN NCOD as a leader in education for Deaf people in region, state and nation. Enhance research and outreach to ensure that NCOD is viewed as a front runner with cutting-edge advancements in technology and research.

1. **Academic Staff Skills:** Support academic staff development and efforts in data collection, assessment, research and publications/presentations regarding best practices in academic programming, bilingual literacy, and tutorial/developmental courses. Provide mentoring and training where needed by staff and service providers.
2. **Professional Development and Summer Institute:** Expand and support Summer Institute in-service training opportunities for professionals and service providers/interpreters and captionists. Implement year-round lecture series and expand special training seminars for professionals, community and alumni.
3. **Technology:** Utilize current and cutting-edge technologies, internet and media to strengthen access support, assessment, research, development and dissemination.
4. **Leadership Training Program (LTP):** Provide leadership training and coursework in collaboration with the departments of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Deaf Studies, and Special Education.
5. **NCOD Library:** Expand Library and Media resources focusing on Deaf people and community, the Deaf learner, bilingual education and American Sign Language and Deaf Studies, to support research and scholarship efforts of students, faculty, staff and other public entities. Digitalize publications. Consider physical expansion of Library.

**Strategic Pillar 2: Communications, Connections and Community**
Establish CSUN NCOD as an effective mainstreamed educational model meeting diverse student needs. Fortify NCOD visibility and linkages with on-campus programs and external communities.

1. **On-campus connections:** Fortify bridges and collaborations within CSUN to achieve Deaf-appropriate and relevant environments for learning and achieving goals. Enhance ability of CSUN faculty and staff to meet Deaf student needs with “how to” guidelines, videoclips, brief training sessions, and mentoring. Encourage linkages and teaming.
2. **NCOD Visibility:** Improve NCOD communications and website with more current information, VLOGs, and relevant links. Provide “State of the Center” periodical addresses and articles featured in the NCOD website. Feature alumni and student
success in newsletters and brochures. Embark on a public relations/marketing plan to enhance NCOD visibility via the media, internet, events and leadership on several levels.

3. Name as a brand for NCOD: Consider benefits and possibilities in making a decision for name change for NCOD. Put name signage on Chisholm building for public awareness.

4. Alumni Connections: Continue to strengthen ties with CSUN NCOD individual alumni and state-level alumni chapters. Provide joint programming and opportunities for alumni-student interactions: assistance with training, tutoring, internships and mentoring.

5. Educational Outreach: Enhance outreach services to students in elementary, middle and high school and their families with Deaf Student Ambassadors and special programs (such as a summer academic baseball camp). Fortify NCOD leadership in Deaf Education in California and with regional/national organizations serving Deaf students, families, professionals, communities and workplaces.

**Strategic Pillar 3: Resource Development & Sustainability**

Increase resource development and sustainability to support student programs and scholarships. This includes (1) financial and human resources; (2) scholarships and endowments; (3) grants and fundraising; and (4) operational effectiveness and facilities enhancement.

1. Human Resource Development
   - Advisory Groups: (A) Establish NCOD advisory council(s) with representatives of Alumni, Students, Families, Community and other possible stakeholders. (B) Establish an advisory board of associates who will focus on fundraising and connections.
   - Legislative Support: Seek legislative action to increase support for CSUN/NCOD as one of the premiere national programs for Deaf students.

2. Scholarships and Program Support
   - Increase scholarships in terms of numbers awarded and amounts awarded. Establish an endowment goal of at least five million dollars [$5,000,000] by 2013. The goal is to generate at least $200,000 a year for scholarships and programs.
   - Implement a clear and explicit donor program such as the Tree of Support with focused rationales and marketing to different stakeholders including families and alumni.

3. Fundraising:
   - Increase Revenues: Enhance financial resources with fundraising events such as the Stars Gala, Sign n’ Run and smaller events on a continuing basis. Expand the Summer Institute.
   - Grants: Seek grants, making sure that they become sustainable (with funds or publications that can be replicated) or institutionalized as appropriate within the operational framework.
   - PEPNet Partnership: Maintain and collaborate with PEPNet Programs to support research and professional development opportunities for student success.
4. Facilities and Operational effectiveness:
   o Maximize resources with greater use of technology and streamlined service provision options.
   o Facilities: Expand NCOD facilities to enable all the above by adding a wing to the current building to house expanded student services, interpreter training and working space in collaboration with VRS service providers, Deaf-appropriate library and media center; and larger multi-purpose room/auditorium without fixed seats.

Assessment of Strategic Goal: Student Success:
Utilize in-house developed databases; institutional databases; content-oriented interviews, exit-surveys, course evaluations, questionnaires, focus groups, observation, field notes, document review, and documented self-reports to analyze:
- Enrollment data;
- Student retention and variables influencing retention/success;
- Rate to graduation;
- Assessment of student learning outcomes and increased independence;
- Assessment of effectiveness of direct communication classes in developmental and general education courses;
- Analyses of use and benefit of tutorial and career planning services;
- Analyses of student use of and benefit from technologies;
- Student satisfaction surveys with communication and academic service provision;
- Data on graduates and their careers; and
- Other assessment results as determined by NCOD service providers.

Assessment of Strategic Pillar 1: Academic and Student Support
Utilize surveys, content-oriented interviews, specially-developed portfolios, observation, field notes, document review, and documented self-reports to analyze:
- Staff development and effectiveness of in-service training;
- Impact on the field as evidenced in research and dissemination results, and evaluations of conference presentations and products;
- Effectiveness of and innovations in use of interpreters and technologies to enhance academic and student development; and
- Use of NCOD Library.

Assessment of Strategic Pillar 2: Communications, Connections and Community
Utilize surveys and questionnaires, content-oriented interviews, exit-surveys, focus groups, observation, field notes, document review, and documented self-reports to analyze:
- On-campus connections;
- Effectiveness of training and mentoring for CSUN faculty;
- Visibility of NCOD both on-campus and in the community;
- Collaboration with alumni in current NCOD programs and projects;
• Employment of Deaf students in outreach activities;
• Increased opportunities for Deaf student participation in community and service agencies; and
• Annual “State of NCOD” reports, i.e. reporting on advances in student learning outcomes; legislative support; procurement of grants; endowment contributions; and specialized fundraising; share documented meeting summaries of Advisory Groups.

Assessment of Strategic Pillar 3: Resource Development & Sustainability
Utilize standard benchmarks to review the following:
• Comparative data to determine operational effectiveness;
• Performance data on resource development, grant proposals and fundraising outcomes;
• Legislative efforts; and
• Analyses of facilities reviews.

Next steps:
The driving goal for the committee is to meet the priorities for students and stakeholders [staff, service providers, alumni, community members) while also meeting the expectations of California State University System (CSU), Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), and the various funding sources. The proposed strategic directions do not come with an operational cookbook, timelines or budget plan.

The committee recommends that the next step would be for the NCOD Management Team to operationalize a strategic action plan in alignment with the University mission, vision, priorities and values, given a tight economy. The implementation will begin with the 3 R’s of student success; such steps will embody assessment data, benchmarks, and environmental scanning, to ensure student success and effective connections at CSUN and beyond.

This plan will be focused on student success in three arenas: Education, Employment and Empowerment for Deaf and hard of hearing students.

APPENDIX A: Resources and References used by the Strategic Planning Committee
• CSUN Values Statement
• CSUN Planning Priorities, Division Goals and NCOD Goals
• Weiner Program Review of NCOD, March 2007
• Rosen Presentation on Strategic Planning, April 2007
• NCOD Staff Strategic Planning Summary, April 4 & 13, 2007
• CSUN Branding Work Group Report, August 2007
• CSUN President’s Convocation, September 2007
• CSUN Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, March 2008
• NCOD Leadership Team Retreat, June 2008
APPENDIX B: NCOD at CSUN: Its Proud Past and Present

- In 1962 CSUN gained national visibility and respect as the first institution of higher education to serve Deaf and hard of hearing students in a mainstream setting with the establishment of its legendary National Leadership Training Program, which was a federally funded, state supported master’s degree program for professionals interested in working with Deaf people in schools, agencies and communities. Students were attracted to CSUN and enrolled in mainstreamed courses and programs throughout CSUN. The National Center on Deafness (NCOD), formerly known as Campus Services for the Deaf, was formed in 1964 to provide coordinated access services and enhanced programming for them. NCOD was the first postsecondary program in the nation to provide paid sign language interpreters for Deaf students in the mainstream.

- Since that time, the program has grown to be the largest of its type in the Western United States. To date, NCOD has served over 2,500 Deaf and hard of hearing students. In a given year, NCOD provides communication access, leadership opportunities, scholarships, academic advisement, tutoring, and direct communication classes for approximately 200 Deaf and hard of hearing students. While programs and communication access for students is part of the base budget funded through CSUN, NCOD’s innovative programs and services also rely on external contributions.

- NCOD students take advantage of a variety of social and leadership opportunities. The Deaf CSUNians, established in 1980, is a student organization of, for, by and with the students. Its purpose is to facilitate cultural, political, and social awareness among students, campus members, and the general community. Students also choose from a variety of co-curricular programs including but not limited to theatre, arts, Greek organizations, and athletics.

- A national model, NCOD is home to a variety of federal grants such as PEPNet that provide outreach and training to educational institutions both nationally and internationally. The NCOD Resource Center has one of the largest and finest libraries and clearing-houses dedicated to Deaf and hard of hearing issues in the world. Its online catalog includes 6,487 books, 1,700 videotapes and 20 periodicals in addition to a wide variety of dissertations, scholarly publications and other resources.

- CSUN is also home to two exemplary academic programs, Deaf Studies and Special Education (Deaf Education strand), popular major choices for both Deaf and hearing students. The CSUN housing program includes the Lighthouse Living Learning Community, a residential program for sign language users.

- CSUN is a sign language users community on campus of approximately 1,000 people.