

California State University **Northridge**

President's 2nd Annual Convocation Address

Dianne F. Harrison, President

Valley Performing Arts Center, August 22, 2013, 9 a.m.

(Prepared text for remarks)

I. Thank you Steven.

Let me welcome those who are new to the campus. The program lists 30 new tenure-track faculty members, and 171 permanent full-time staff who have joined us in the past year or have taken on new roles. And 84 faculty members were tenured or promoted. Everyone who is in one of these groups, please stand and receive our welcome and congratulations!

II. Priorities and vision

It has been a little over 14 months since I assumed the presidency of CSUN. I appreciate the enthusiasm with which the campus community has moved forward with new initiatives, while maintaining excellence and continuous improvement in fulfilling our mission. It is a privilege to lead this campus and build on CSUN's remarkable foundation of excellence. CSUN *truly* shines!

Over the past year I have met with several thousand students, more than 1,100 faculty and staff members, and attended events with more than 1,500 external stakeholders. I have seen first-hand the many ways in which CSUN and its faculty, staff, and students shine. I have appreciated and celebrated what has been working well.

I am regularly asked about my **priorities** and the university's future. Campus leadership agreed this past year to **seven university priorities**, all of which are designed to sustain and strengthen the university and its mission. Today I will speak about CSUN's recent successes and future plans around these seven priorities:

- An unrelenting focus on student success
- Focus on employees for success
- Growing the visibility and reputation of the university
- Planning for a future less dependent on state funding
- Increasing research activity and sponsored programs
- Sustainability
- Using athletics as a tool for engagement

My philosophy as president is to use encouragement and persuasion to help us address these priorities; and use as much evidence as I can, participate meaningfully and authentically in our shared governance, and be transparent and inclusive. Expanding the Extended Cabinet to include more key campus leaders was one step. Asking and listening and responding to faculty, staff, and students is another.

So, what is my *vision* for CSUN?

What I want to achieve and accomplish, is that CSUN is known nationally, state-wide, and regionally for being an *outstanding* educational institution – with highly-ranked academic programs and faculty; where all students have every opportunity to engage in research, internships, learning communities, and cutting-edge technology; and where we nurture and grow the future talent and leaders of our state and nation. We already reflect the future demographics of California and the U.S., and we can educate our future leaders right here.

I want CSUN to be known for providing the most incredible education in the CSU and in California, and to have evidence of that by our graduation rates, career and graduate school placement rates, and other external validations. I want students to know that quality, and job or career placement, or graduate school placement, is our “middle name.” I want CSUN to be the envy of institutions who also strive for access and diversity, because we do it better than anyone. That is my vision of CSUN – a campus of inclusive excellence that produces leaders and innovators and the highest percentage of successful graduates.

III. Celebrating achievements and looking to the future:

An annual address is a time to celebrate achievements from the past year, to thank those who supported our students and the university priorities. I love to share with others the accomplishments of CSUN students, faculty, and staff. When the achievement spotlight shines on any of us, we all shine!

CSUN has *many* accomplishments, and I will have time to highlight only a few today. I will *not* be able to mention the vast majority of the outstanding work that has come to my attention, but please know I *am* aware of it, and I thank you for it! This Convocation is also a time to forecast what we plan and can expect in the future, and especially over the coming year. I will focus on our seven university priorities.

1. First, **student success** – I have repeated many times over the past year that an *unrelenting* focus on student success will be the university’s *continued* top priority. Because it is the top priority, I will speak about it more than any other. Academic excellence and student engagement for retention, persistence, and graduation are paramount. Other priorities and goals exist in primary support of student success.

This year we accomplished much in service to our students and their success, and our students made us proud through their achievements.

First, are the numbers of students, the access to higher education that CSUN provides, and the comprehensive ways in which we serve students. This fall nearly 39,000 CSUN students will be enrolled in 70 baccalaureate majors, 58 master’s degree programs, 28 teaching credential programs, and two applied doctoral degree programs. We will welcome our largest freshman class ever. And that is just on the state side – the Tseng College of Extended Learning educates another 15,000 students annually! Think about it – we are helping to transform the lives of 54,000 individuals and their families.

Among the many strengths of CSUN is the access we provide to traditionally underrepresented communities. We are among the top ten for awarding degrees to Hispanic students. We are first in the nation in journalism and in the liberal arts and sciences; second in psychology; and fourth in the social sciences.

Academic Affairs issued a paper last month that listed hundreds of programs, policies, practices, and procedures that have been implemented at CSUN in support of student success, retention, and graduation. As testament to CSUN’s spirit of collaboration, most programs involve multiple departments, and not just in Academic Affairs. They might be spearheaded, for example, by Student Affairs, or be a collaborative effort with Information Technology or Administration and Finance. That is key – working not only cross-disciplinarily but cross-divisionally. Down with silo models; up with collaboration.

The results so far have been excellent. Graduation rates have improved (even though we have more work to do) as we have provided greater access for more students, and served more from traditionally underserved communities. I want to give a special “shout out” to our faculty in liberal studies, math, writing, and early outreach for the work you are doing to help us improve. Bravo to each and every one of you!

Now, let me mention just a few of our academic programs that were recognized externally in the past year for their excellence.

- CSUN’s Financial Planning program was ranked as one of the 25 top in the country by *Financial Planning* magazine, and CSUN students, advised by finance professor Mike Phillips, took first place among 200 international teams in the value portfolio category at the 2013 RISE competition.
- Our Broadcast Journalism students regularly win Golden Mike awards for their work on KCSN-FM. Last year was no exception.
- Our Cinema and Television Arts students are seeing their work make it to prime time, such as a class project by Robert Taylor which was made into a television movie in Australia. Graduate student Lacey Dyer won a Daytime Emmy for her writing on NBC’s “Days of Our Lives.” (Confession time – that was one of my favorite soaps as an undergrad.)
- CSUN’s online master’s degree program in speech-language pathology received the 2013 Outstanding Program Award from the University Professional Continuing Education Association.
- Nursing students from CSUN received a nearly perfect pass rate – 97% – on the national pre-licensure exam.

Let me point out also a few new developments of the past year:

- At last year’s Convocation, I spoke of my commitment to ensure that students are able to get the courses they need. We made an all-out effort last year to add course sections and seats to meet demand and to eliminate bottlenecks. Thanks to the efforts of advisors and faculty and department chairs (please stand!) – and aided by the new automated waitlist system, which helped gauge demand – students were able to take more classes and we attained one of the highest ever average unit loads (at 12.4) for undergraduates. We expect even better this year.
- We opened the CSUN Pride Center, a central place for LGBTIQ individuals to obtain resources and support. We opened the Veterans Resource Center, providing support for veterans as they transition from service. There are currently 650 veteran students at CSUN, and that number will increase.
- We provided new technology tools. CSUN’s mobile app is now available for free download, and students can use their smartphones to view class schedules, add and drop classes, and access campus map navigation and Moodle. More functions will be added soon, including navigation of building interiors, and students will soon be able to make payments from their mobile devices.
- Our focus on student success extends to our K-12 partners. For example, CSUN faculty in the College of Science and Mathematics and the China Institute partnered with the Nanjing University of Science and Technology in China to invite Los Angeles area middle and high school students to submit proposals for a possible science experiment on a Chinese space shuttle.

Let me mention the proud achievements of a few of our students.

- This year 17 CSUN students were selected to be California Pre-Doctoral Scholars, the highest number of any CSU campus. (The second highest was 13, but who's competitive in our environment? That would be me, I admit.)

This program is one reason so many CSUN students go on to complete doctoral degrees. The National Science Foundation ranks CSUN 17th among 550 comprehensive U.S. universities preparing students who later earn doctorates. We are 1st in psychology, 2nd in science and engineering, and 5th in biology, and more than half of CSUN's graduates in marine biology over the past 25 years have pursued doctoral studies.

- Congratulations to our computer science students who were challenged to develop an app to turn a cell phone into an emergency alert system for the deaf and hard of hearing. Vying against teams from top research universities including USC and UCLA, their app took top honors.
- CSUN's 2013-14 Hearst Scholar, social work major Brooke Hall, will be awarded the CSU-wide Galinson Scholarship in a couple of weeks, given to the Hearst Scholar who best exemplifies extraordinary public service. Brooke is a highly committed volunteer and contributor. Way to go, Brooke!
- CSUN's Model United Nations team received multiple top honors at the 2013 competition. For more than a decade, CSUN teams have consistently garnered these top honors. They are so proud and we are so proud of them.
- The *Daily Sundial* last year received numerous awards, including from the Los Angeles Press Club, who voted it "best college newspaper." It isn't often that you will hear a university president say this – our student newspaper is among the best! Read it in print or online, but read it!
- CSUN engineering students advised by Professor C. T. Lin competed against 52 teams, including from the most elite engineering schools, in the 21st Annual Intelligent Ground Vehicle Competition. CSUN's mobile robot, Scorpion, tied for second-place overall and won first-place in the Autonomous-Navigation Challenge, which is the most difficult challenge. For the past three years, CSUN students have placed first or second in this international competition. Bravo! I love those students and faculty, and you should all go to their annual showcase – what a treat!
- CSUN engineering students swept all top awards sponsored by the Society of Manufacturing Engineers at the Aerodef Manufacturing Conference. Grand prize went to the CSUN team who created the Assisted Gripping Rig, a glove that augments the grip of people whose grip is impaired.
- Fox Deportes will use ideas developed by our marketing students, led by Dr. Kristen Walker, for a national campaign for their Spanish-language viewers.
- The 100 Citizens community outreach fitness program involving Kinesiology students advised by Dr. Steven Loy was recognized at the White House by Michelle Obama.
- Six CSUN students were awarded the 2013-14 Chinese Government Scholarship Council's full scholarship to study at China's top universities. Thank you faculty and Justine Su of the China Institute.

- And Talar Alexanian, elected last spring as Associated Students vice president, was selected by Governor Brown as the next CSU Student Trustee. Talar will be an exceptional representative of the students in the 23-campus CSU system, and the first student trustee from CSUN.

So what of next year and CSUN's future?

We are ready to welcome record numbers of students next week – the largest freshman class ever, the largest number of new transfer students ever, and large numbers of continuing students. Freshmen have already been attending orientation and I have personally had the pleasure of welcoming over 4,000 freshman students. The university will welcome them formally on September 12 at Freshman Convocation. For many freshmen, the academic year began in summer with Early Start and Summer Bridge. Transfer students are also receiving advisement and their own orientation program.

I am delighted that at the time of my investiture, donors created a scholarship, the Harrison Leadership Award, to recognize and support an emerging student leader from the freshman class. My husband and I have personally contributed and have a planned gift in place. When we pass away, an endowment will be in place to continue this award in perpetuity. I hope it will be the first of many recognitions for students who shape the culture of leadership on our campus and are our next generation of leading voices. The first recipient will be announced at Freshman Convocation.

CSUN continues to be one of the leading universities in the CSU in enrollment of international students. The presence of international students enriches the education of all our students because of their diverse cultural experiences. Over the past year, a reorganization was completed to provide international students with an improved experience. We will continue to monitor and track how this is working.

In case you haven't learned yet, I am all about access. This is my mission. That is our mission. It is also part of a national agenda to increase the numbers of Americans who hold high-quality college credentials. The goal is 60% of the population by the year 2025. Because of the size of our population, California and CSUN must play a significant role in this agenda.

There is a sense of urgency around this goal, and you might ask why we should continually push for growth and access? One reason is for the economic recovery for our country. A degree translates into better jobs and more future earnings. Those without are disadvantaged. By 2015 those with a bachelor's degree will earn 96% more than those with a high school diploma. Income inequalities will continue to grow unless we provide access and high quality education – resulting in a degree – to as many students as we can accommodate. And given the country's changing demographics, this will mean a growing number of underrepresented and first-generation students. Of the 17.6 million undergraduate students enrolled in U.S. colleges, 75% juggle work, family, and school. These are our students!

The need for an educated populace is urgent but I don't think of it as a crisis. I see it as an opportunity and a privilege for CSUN to educate more students. I would like us all to adopt this mindset.

Let me talk briefly about a few highlights planned for the coming year.

- Last year, more than 2,000 students enrolled in thematically-linked General Education Paths around one of three themes – social justice, global studies, or sustainability. Faculty across disciplines worked together to link their courses. This year we add three new GE Paths – health and wellness; arts, media and society; and aesthetics and culture. More than 6,000 students in more than 80 courses will experience this new approach to GE.

- We are involving more alumni in student success. Through the collaborative efforts of Student Affairs and University Advancement, the Career Center and Alumni Relations launched the online mentoring platform, “Mentor a Matador.” Already approximately 350 alumni have volunteered. (Some of our alumni also share their knowledge as “professor for a day,” in the Colleges of Business and Economics and Health and Human Development.)
- Next week we launch the myCSUNtablet initiative. More than 1,000 students will participate, in classes across seven disciplines, with access to e-texts, apps, digital content, and iPads to learn and collaborate. To prepare, during the spring and summer, approximately 70 faculty members and 60 advisors attended training and better familiarized themselves with iPads . CSUN is committed to exploring new technologies to improve student learning and reduce costs. I would like to thank the early participants; and thank Hilary Baker, Vice President for Information Technology, and Deone Zell, Senior Director of Academic Technology, for their leadership.
- The Oviatt Library has been transformed, with the new Learning Commons on the first floor and the Learning Resource Center now on the Library’s third floor. If you haven’t yet seen these spaces, visit them soon! The Learning Commons is a true 21st century library space –learning-centered versus book-centered, light and open, with current technology and comfortable spaces for individual and group study; and the Freudian Sip! Expect to see a transformation in the way the library is used.
- This year we will begin construction on the second phase of student housing designed specifically to support freshman success. The new facility will house 400 students and will open for fall 2015. In fall 2014 we will launch a sustainability-focused living-learning community – the Matosphere Theme Living Community. Thanks to all the REAL participants for your efforts.
- We proceed this year with the creation of the Wellness Center – a collaboration between the University Student Union, Associated Students, the Student Health Center, University Counseling Services, and the College of Health and Human Development – to address the greatest wellness challenges for students, including stress and sleep. Look forward to a full array of services and education in tranquil and restful spaces!
- And next year you may notice that commencement may have a more university-wide feel. A working group led by Vice President William Watkins is comprehensively studying our options, and will be vetting these options with various groups in the near future.

2. So, a second university priority is a **focus on employees for success**. CSUN supports *student* success through the commitment and engagement of *employees* – both faculty and staff. CSUN strives to be a destination workplace, where everyone understands that he or she belongs to a community of educators and is important in advancing student success and providing exemplary service to all stakeholders.

This is the second year that employee volunteers will serve as CSUN Navigators during the first week of classes. As they did last year, CSUN Navigators stationed throughout campus will welcome students, answer their questions, and help them find their way. This year they will also show students the new CSUN Mobile App. The number of staff volunteers has tripled since last year. The experience is a reminder that each of us plays a role in helping students realize their educational goals. Thank you to our CSUN Navigators, and to the supervisors who support the Navigators’ time away from their regular duties.

Then on August 28, employees will again volunteer at the Annual President's Welcome Back Picnic. It is fun to welcome the students; and students and employees alike can picnic and share company in a social setting.

Another way we have encouraged engagement and innovative thinking among employees is through the "Help Make CSUN Shine Brighter" initiative. Each semester an issue is brought to the campus community. The first produced suggestions for improved pedestrian and vehicular traffic flow on campus, and the second for growing CSUN spirit, pride, and reputation. I am delighted by the interest and response. The initiative was acknowledged by the Chancellor's Office and featured in a video shown to the Board of Trustees. This fall we will roll out a third topic, should we become a tobacco-free campus, and if so, how to do it.

Also over the past year we introduced new technology tools to aid employees. In addition to the CSUN Mobile App, we now have available myCSUNbox, a cloud service for staff, faculty, and students. You can store files and access them from any device – work and home computer, smartphone, and tablet.

Again this year there are many faculty and staff achievements to celebrate. I will mention only a few:

- Kinesiology professor Paula Thompson was named one of the top 20 female professors in California by a nonprofit organization interested in access to education through technology.
- Professor Mary Schaffer of Cinema and Television Arts was elected president of the Broadcast Education Association.
- English professor Cheryl Spector, director of CSUN's Academic First Year Experiences, received the Outstanding First-Year Student Advocate award from the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.
- KCSN's Sky Daniels was nominated Public Radio Program Director of the Year by the influential trade publication FMQB. Sky, you are the best! Tell everyone to listen to KCSN!
- Mechanical engineering professor Nhut Ho's 2008 visit to Vietnam as a Fulbright Scholar developed into an extended effort, with Vietnam National University-Ho Chi Minh City and the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training – and resulting in the Outstanding Contribution Award in 2012 – to develop a national model for curricular reform.

As we look to next year and beyond, an ongoing challenge and opportunity is to identify and develop the university's future leadership. I have asked the university vice presidents (and I will participate) to identify interested faculty and staff and those identified by their supervisors as having leadership aspirations or potential. I ask all who have such aspirations to let your supervisor know, and "lean in" (in the words of Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg). Will all your aspirations be realized? I can't say. You may need additional training, development, experiences, or feedback – but please *do* lean in. I am also challenging our MPPs to lean in themselves. I want us all to stretch regarding expectations and goals.

Another challenge and opportunity is to attract and retain a diverse faculty and staff, more aligned with the diversity of our student population. As we enter a new cycle of faculty hiring and fill staff and administrative vacancies, this is a priority.

I am excited that for the coming year, Human Resources has planned a menu of professional development programming aligned with the university's priorities. For example, in keeping with the priority of student success, sessions are planned to assist in our understanding of the 21st century student and in addressing the needs of veterans and LGBTIQ students. In keeping with the priority of employee success, Human

Resources is taking a holistic approach with sessions ranging from personal wellness to faculty-led workshops on the arts, literature, and STEM that stimulate the mind while expanding understanding of the work done here at CSUN. Finally, there will be sessions around leadership, sharing the knowledge and skills consistent with being a destination workplace.

Cross-divisional initiatives are underway to help streamline work processes for the benefit of employees and move CSUN forward as a sustainable work environment. Expect to see more online forms, automated workflow routing, and electronic signatures. One project that I am personally excited by is the movement to online travel approval and claims. This should shorten the time to reimbursement and improve accuracy and efficiency over the current paper processes.

3. A third priority is to **grow CSUN's visibility and reputation**. Opportunities for students, employees, and funding are enhanced by positive visibility and reputation; and our capacity to engage constituents – current and prospective students, parents, faculty and staff, elected officials, donors, and community partners – is dependent on it.

As CSUN's president, I love to tell all who will listen about the extraordinary work that happens every day on this campus. I have been doing that today, and I do it in many venues. And CSUN has engaged on important public issues – for example, we signed on to the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities; and have advocated to elected officials regarding immigration reform and on behalf of our alumni who were detained in Mexico and not allowed to return to the U.S. Many activities of the past year have brought positive visibility:

- Last fall, the BizFed-Daily News LA Mayoral Candidate Forum was held in the Valley Performing Arts Center.
- CSUN was named to the 2013 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction; and was honored by the Peace Corps, ranking third on the Peace Corps' Top Volunteer-Producing Hispanic Serving Institutions list.
- The university was honored by New Horizons for service and programs that prepare graduates for careers of service to persons with disabilities and special needs; and CSUN's 28th Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference was the largest ever with 4,000 attendees.
- CSUN was inducted into the 2013 San Fernando Valley Business Hall of Fame by the Valley Industry and Commerce Association, and we joined the L.A. CleanTech Incubator's Leadership Council.

Last year I announced CSUN Shine – a positioning platform and unifying theme for telling CSUN's stories. The campus community was quick and enthusiastic to embrace the CSUN Shine wordmark – in publications, as email signatures, and on our CSUN swag. The hire of an Associate Vice President for Marketing and Communications, who joins us next month, will accelerate the implementation of visuals and messaging. In addition to the campus effort, CSUN Shine will be increasingly important in telling the CSUN story off campus through a variety of media, including our CSU-leading social media presence. Our Facebook following is far and away the largest in the CSU, and followers regularly share their support and pride.

I also spoke last year of the need for a more functional website that better represents CSUN's excellence. Over the past year we have moved many websites into our Web-One content management system,

improving accessibility, navigation, and consistency. The CSUN home page, two administrative divisions, the President's Office site, and two colleges have moved all content. All will be completed by the end of this academic year. This is vital, because for many, the university's website is the face of the university. I would challenge those of you who have a longer calendar in this move to push it up. I recognize the work efforts involved, but we all need to be on the same page in a timely manner. We are judged daily by visitors to our website.

New this year, the CSUN Foundation Board's Committee on University Engagement will help our Board members more fully engage in the life of the university and serve as stronger advocates. In January, Government and Community Relations will launch the Matador Advocates program to strengthen awareness of CSUN's role and contributions in the region. Matador Advocates will serve as ambassadors, strengthening relationships with elected officials, policymakers, and community stakeholders.

Of course CSUN alumni are some of our most natural advocates. Alumni Relations is growing the CSUN Global Alumni Network anywhere that CSUN alumni want to gather. We are working to establish three alumni clubs in China. The time is ripe for more alumni engagement. The 2013 Distinguished Alumni Awards was the largest to date with 450 in attendance.

4. A university priority that should be no surprise to anyone is **planning for a future less dependent on state funding**. The past several years were plagued by reductions in state funding to the CSU system and to all public higher education. With voter approval of Proposition 30, the 2013-14 budget brings some relief – \$125.1 million in new funding for the CSU and backfilling of \$125 million from last year's budget cut. We also avoided a planned \$250 million mid-year cut, and a planned tuition hike was rolled back. This is all good news.

Still, after years of cuts, the amount of funding the CSU receives from the state is approximately \$1 billion less than it was, and tuition is higher. Costs continue to rise related to utilities and health care, and no one expects a major reinvestment from the state. To safeguard access and quality education for students, the university *must* be prepared for a future less dependent on state funding.

At CSUN we have been prudent in our spending, and have achieved some financial flexibility through self-support programs (thank you, Dean Joyce Feucht-Haviar), purposeful growth of non-resident enrollment, and the Campus Quality Fee which has funded initiatives benefiting students. Last year, licensing of campus facilities (for film and television shoots, for example) brought in more than \$1 million, a record high (thank you, Rick Evans, Executive Director of the University Corporation).

Grant funding and philanthropic gifts are important sources of revenue for specific programs and non-discretionary projects. As state funding has declined, CSUN has heightened its efforts to garner such support. \$14.79 million was raised last year through fundraising – the most in five years, and the CSUN Foundation's assets total a record high of \$110 million. Some of the gifts this year are:

- \$1 million from alumnus Kenneth Floyd and his wife Ana for support of the College of Business and Economics.
- A \$1 million planned gift for the Michael D. Eisner College of Education.
- A \$500,000 challenge grant from alumnus Paul Jennings to raise \$1 million for the College of Business and Economics. His gift serves as a catalyst for others to give back to an institution that has "made an incredible economic impact on the San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles as a whole."

Many gifts directly benefit our students through scholarships:

- A grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for low-income nursing students.
- Professor Emeritus Paul Lee and his wife endowed the Paul and Amy Lee Scholarship Endowment in Physics and Astronomy.
- Our neighbors, Dr. Richard and Ilona Buratti, made a bequest to the College of Science and Mathematics for scholarships and research-related expenses for graduate students.
- Linda Nichols Joseph, a 1981 graduate in English, grateful for the opportunities CSUN afforded her as a nontraditional student, left her estate to CSUN, and last spring four students were awarded the English Merit Scholarship funded by her gift.

Our thanks for all those generous gifts!

Many CSUN faculty and staff secured grants and gifts in support of work that would not otherwise be achievable:

- Mathematics professor Katherine Stevenson won a \$2.3 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to help students bridge the math gap in transitioning from high school to college.
- CSUN's Music Therapy Wellness Clinic received two gifts last spring in support of its individually-designed music therapies for persons with disabilities and special challenges.
- The Institute for Arts and Media received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to digitize CSUN's African-American photography collection.
- The Hollywood Foreign Press Association awarded CSUN's Cinema and Television Arts program a grant to support senior student film projects, and recently established a new scholarship.

CSUN must and will continue the momentum in cultivating non-state resources. We have established a new pace and level of expectation for private support, and I am fully committed to doing my part and spending an enormous amount of time and energy in external relations of all types, including with our financial supporters, donors, and prospects. I will continue to tell the CSUN story. In July, Robert Gunsalus joined CSUN as the Vice President for University Advancement, and he has hit the ground running to help us grow our reputation, relationships, and resources. I expect to have much good news to report to you over the coming year.

5. Another university priority is **increasing research activity and sponsored programs**. Applied and basic research are essential to our mission, and I want to ensure that it is an integral part of the CSUN identity. Research engages the expertise of faculty to address compelling questions and problems. When faculty involve students in their research, they provide the highest form of educational experience and mentoring. Students receive training as researchers and innovators, and we know that students who are involved and work side-by-side with faculty do better academically. Similarly, faculty with research grants mentor newer faculty.

Funded research is an important source of support funding for both faculty and students. Last year I set a goal to double research grant volume over the next five years. I am delighted to report an all-time high of \$31 million in grant and sponsored program activity last year. CSUN faculty with funded projects provided research experience, training, and financial support to more than 500 students.

Some of the notable projects of the past year are:

- NSF funding of \$18.5 million over five years to CSUN and partner universities UCLA, UC Berkeley, Cornell, and ETH Zurich to create a center for nanotechnology research. Physics professor Nicholas Kioussis leads the effort at CSUN.
- Education professors Norman Herr and Brian Foley received a grant from Hewlett Packard (their second from HP in two years) for their Computer Supported Collaborative Science project to transform science education for middle and high school students.
- Mathematics professor Helena Noronha received a five-year \$1.5 million grant from NSF to foster undergraduate research and encourage students from underrepresented communities to pursue advanced degrees.

Funded research has led to CSUN registering its first patent – a device for logic and memory applications developed by physics professor Nicholas Kioussis.

Yesterday was the official first day on the job for Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research, Dr. Crist Khachikian,

and the support for research offered through that office is being bolstered. Also, as part of The University Corporation's ongoing PRO-PI initiative, the Corporation's accounting and human resources departments are being reorganized for a higher level of support and seamless service for PIs.

I am pleased to announce that CSUN's College of Social and Behavioral Sciences will partner with the National Autonomous University of Mexico, one of Mexico's largest and most recognized universities, to establish a Center for Mexican and Latin American Studies. We look forward to collaborative research partnerships between our two institutions.

I want our funded researchers to know that their efforts are valued, appreciated, and supported. Last fall I invited all principal investigators to the inaugural Principal Investigators Recognition Celebration at University House. This will be an annual event, and this year's event is scheduled. Also, as part of the Dialogues with the Provosts (and Guests) series, Academic Affairs organized a day-long event around research. We need to do more. Let us know how we can help.

6. Now let me turn to a sixth priority, **sustainability**. Sustainable practices help the university achieve cost savings, represent responsible stewardship of physical resources, and help us prepare knowledgeable graduates. CSUN has long been a leader – with reduced energy and water usage, the generation and use of alternative energy, and educational experiences. We have two LEED Gold Certified buildings – the Valley Performing Arts Center and the Student Recreation Center.

As president, I established sustainability as one of my priorities, and I signed the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment on behalf of CSUN. I was an early signer at CSU Monterey Bay, and I may be one of the *only* university presidents to sign the Commitment on behalf of two institutions. I now serve on its Steering Committee, along with Chancellor Tim White. Like other

signatories, CSUN is committed to the pursuit of climate neutrality, including the development of a comprehensive plan to accomplish that end.

Shortly after my arrival, I requested that Dr. Helen Cox, Director of the Institute for Sustainability, lead an effort to develop a campus sustainability plan. It was completed in the spring, and covers 10 topic areas, including administration, dining services, education, energy and buildings, transportation, and water. Each section analyzes our current state, lays out objectives for the next decade, and recommends actions aligned with the national Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System. One outcome is we have created a new position, a campus sustainability manager, who will promote sustainable practices and work to implement the sustainability plan.

Over the past year we have completed several projects to reduce energy use and promote sustainable campus management practices. We celebrated the opening of the Transit Center, which provides the campus with improved access to public transportation, and added the new eco-region demonstration garden adjacent to it. A successful campaign increased student adoption of electronic refunds, which reduces paper (and produces faster refunds!). The Institute for Sustainability hosted educational programs such as Campus Sustainability Day and Water Day to raise awareness of important issues, and launched the CSUN Sustainability Tour, to educate about the many sustainable features at CSUN.

Plans for the coming year include completing an upgrade to the central plant energy system, which will improve automation and reduce overall energy use across campus; more energy efficient exterior lighting; and collaborative efforts between Administration and Finance and Information Technology to improve business processes to reduce paper use.

7. A final priority is **using athletics as a tool for engagement**. CSUN engages internal and external communities through a wide variety of programs, but athletics as a tool for engagement has been under-utilized – something recognized by the volunteer Special Task Force on Engagement, which led to the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee on Athletics Engagement, a group of mostly alumni volunteers.

Most important, we need to ensure that every student has a quality experience at CSUN, including student-athletes and students who are fans. Let me congratulate just a few of the achievements of our student-athletes – our men's and women's soccer teams won their Big West Conference championships; and eleven members of the water polo team and six members of the women's tennis team were named Academic All-Americans.

We have welcomed this year Athletics Director, Dr. Brandon Martin; head basketball coach, Reggie Theus; and head baseball coach, Greg Moore. In addition to their impressive athletics and coaching backgrounds, I am most impressed by their deep commitment to academics and student well-being.

Under Dr. Martin's leadership, the Matadors have recruited talented staff and student-athletes, and increased engagement among fans and donors. For example, Matador legend and sportscaster, Dick Enberg, gave a six-year pledge for post-graduate scholarships for CSUN student-athletes who exemplify the best of academic and athletic life. CSUN has also executed a multi-year agreement with Nelligan Sports Marketing to generate revenue through corporate sponsorships. The projected revenue will be valuable as we continue to enhance and build the Matador athletics program.

One exciting development is the \$900,000 grant from the NCAA, part of a three-year pilot to expand academic support services for student-athletes. CSUN is one of only six institutions selected, and we received the maximum award. The grant establishes the Matador Achievement Center in Bayramian Hall, providing space, equipment, academic support staff, and mentoring and tutoring. The Center has served students this summer, and the official ribbon-cutting is September 9.

CSUN is moving forward with many of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Athletics Engagement, including a feasibility study regarding the *possible* construction of a multi-purpose event center that could host athletic events as well as commencement ceremonies, conferences, and campus and community events, and free up academic space in Redwood Hall. The first phase feasibility study will be completed this fall, and help us determine if there is a need, and answer some questions about size and costs. I am grateful to the Ad Hoc Committee for their hard work and for providing a comprehensive report that has prepared us to take this initial step.

For the fall, Matador student-athletes and fans will enjoy facilities improvements including a new soccer entrance plaza, and renovations of the Matadome and the athletics conference room. The coming year will see further improvements, such as to the Matadome lobby.

As I am sure you appreciate, the coming year will be a busy one. We will serve record numbers of students, and move the university forward on many fronts. On September 9, Chancellor Timothy White will pay us a visit, and I am sure he will appreciate how CSUN shines. I hope you will attend the midday Town Hall meeting with the Chancellor. We will provide details later of the time and place.

I want to say I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year at CSUN – there is so much strength and excellence in CSUN’s people and programs. I continue to appreciate the commitment of CSUN faculty and staff, the spirit of collaboration and innovation, and the wonderful diversity of our community. I am excited to be launching into another academic year, and I look forward to all the good work we will do together to spread the CSUN shine. Let me know how I can help you and your students succeed.

The President thanks the following individuals for their assistance in preparing the visual slideshow presentation accompanying her remarks: Lee Choo, Alex Ferreyra, Barbara Gross, Tatsuo Kumagai, Peter Medina, Krishna Narayanamurti, Sydney Powell, Julie Sinclair, Deone Zell, and the technical staff of the Valley Performing Arts Center