President’s Forum
Thursday, February 14, 2013
Clarke Field House
3:30 p.m.
President Karen Haynes
Good afternoon. Happy Valentines Day! I’d have worn red but at a budget forum — our 17th, no less — that could convey a very different message than love and green doesn’t mean money rolling in. If I haven’t seen you yet this semester, then let me extend a happy spring semester to you. We’re off to a running start. I know it has not been without its challenges as you go above and beyond to serve students who were trying to add courses to their schedules, to graduate, or to get a full or fuller load. I recognize those challenges, and I want to commend and thank the colleges, department chairs, faculty, staff and everyone at the university for doing what you could individually and collectively to serve students within the constraints of fewer available resources.

We sometimes forget here in sunny San Diego that spring is a time of change. This year, changes at CSUSM and in the CSU have certainly been on all of our minds as we deal with changes and pressures in the national higher education landscape, transitions in CSU leadership, and significant changes right here on our campus, which I’ll speak to in a moment.

Change can lead to discomfort, fear, uncertainty and a whole host of other emotions. You may have a new boss, as I do, be in a new organization or new role, or learning a whole new way of doing things or using new technologies. Reorganization can create efficiencies and improve service delivery, but I know that it can also create some anxiety, disrupt informal networks and no doubt take some time to merge cultures, remap processes or address unintended but necessary steps. You’ve heard me say that there will still and probably always be a level of uncertainty; it is the new normal as we face broader policy changes, diminished state funding, new models for learning and for providing student services and leadership transitions.

So while I can’t promise certainty, I can and will do what I can to continue to provide the information as we know it and clarity around our decision-making and direction. By doing so, I hope that I can reduce some of the discomfort that change brings, and that instead you see opportunity for yourselves and for the institution – to develop new expertise, build new networks, to have diverse views and ideas for how we can do something differently or how we can do more of something that is working well. The value of our collective contributions is what has gotten this University through the most challenging years in our history — in national history. I hope we walk away from each of these budget forums with a shared commitment to that value and our institutional values, and I hope you feel empowered to ask for clarification, provide your ideas and seek opportunity within the inevitable and continuous change.
Before I go any further, I know and, in fact have been told, that with all of the leadership transitions and seat changes here locally, you might be asking what is the proverbial “next shoe to drop.” Well unless you know something I don’t, there are no other known transitions here on our campus. I’ll briefly recap what has already occurred with changes and backfill here in a moment, but I wanted to put that out there up front. So with that, let’s talk about the changes that I know have been on my mind and yours.

The Budget

First: the state budget. The Board of Trustees had previously decided to roll back the 9.5% tuition increase they’d approved a year ago if Proposition 30 passed, and we all know it did. We have refunded 4.1 million dollars to our students. The passage of Prop 30 avoided the 5.4 million dollar cut, which would’ve been our share of the system cut had the measure have failed. But, when you subtract the 4.1 million dollars in tuition refunds, it results in only a 1.3 million dollar net gain. And I probably don’t have to remind you that our base budget is still 18 million dollars less in state appropriations than it was in 2008.

The Governor’s budget provides 125 million dollars for new investments for the CSU and its students in the 2013-14 fiscal year, including 10 million dollars set aside off the top to offer more courses to students through online technology. The Governor also proposes backfilling the loss in revenue associated with the rollback of the tuition, but that would not be until the 2013-14 year. He also provides for a minimal increase to our state appropriation (not our total budget) over the next four years, with the expectation that we would not increase tuition during those years.

The system hasn’t made any allocation decisions on the new monies. And here’s why. First, the budget request submitted by the board of trustees to the Governor was almost three times the amount proposed by the Governor and did include a line item for compensation increases. Second, the Governor is proposing significant changes in how the CSU will fund future infrastructure investments and is requiring the CSU to absorb ANY future debt service costs for investments renovation and construction of new state facilities requiring bond financing. He is also expecting that the CSU cover from its operating budget retirement benefits associated with any additional faculty and staff hired. We will push back, but —
Since 2007-2008, the system has not received funding to cover the cost of increases to health care premiums, resulting in a cumulative 70 million dollars in unfunded costs that the system and each campus has had to absorb. Increases in health care, energy, utilities and new classroom and lab space have resulted in additional annual costs of over 200 million dollars since 2007-2008.

There are conversations about decoupling enrollment and state funding and looking at enrollment more strategically based on the regional demographics, campus demand and capacity. I can tell you I have written four letters since 2009 to the system requesting just that for us. Perseverance may pay off.

At my meetings this week in Long Beach, we thoughtfully discussed a possible new budget allocation model that will hopefully combine system principles with campus needs/strengths, but, again, this is something for the future. There are also conversations about looking at funding relative to our graduation initiative. We all know that that conversation cannot be just one metric, but we also know that this campus has been exemplary in improving graduation rates and in closing the achievement gap. No decisions have been made about these funding models. No decisions have been made about health care contributions, and no decisions have been made about compensation. That is not criticism of the system.

In fact, Chancellor White has already met with the statewide academic senate, with the systemwide student association and with the Presidents the last two days to discuss options, to be deliberative and consultative and to develop a pathway forward for the Trustees to consider in March. And though no conclusions were reached, I will say that the conversations were thorough, inclusive, strategic and comprehensive.

You’ve heard me say before that we are very early on in the budget process, and while promising, we don’t know what the final budget will look like. And we have the additional uncertainty of not knowing what the Chancellor’s Office will hold centrally and what will be allocated to the campuses, and whether those campus allocations will be similar to past formulas.

Much of this information was shared with the University Budget Committee at their meeting last Friday. I have also charged them with thinking about high level categories for reinvestment should new monies become available in the 2013-14 fiscal year, but I again temper that with the above unknowns.
Transitions

I mentioned that Chancellor Tim White has already met with the statewide senate, the student association, briefly spoke to CABO and VPSAs and, over the past two days, the Presidents. He has also held four conference calls with the Presidents to discuss rules of engagement, refining, defining, and revising them, and to hear ideas about what the high level immediate issues and opportunities are, his campus visit planning, management and governance, and generally how we can be more strategic in our actions, our relationships and our systemwide initiatives. Themes throughout the discussions were about not taking a “one size fits all” approach and about relationship building with both internal and external constituencies. He believes, as you know I do, that presidents should almost always be first in new conversations instead of last and that decisions should be framed within “people, programs, and places” with the system and vice chancellors there as possible facilitators and enablers rather than campus rule makers. Chancellor White is an active listener and, as a former campus executive, believes in campus autonomy and flexibility. All promising signs.

We have also had a number of transitions and seat changes here. Former Provost Emily Cutrer will be a wonderful president of Texas A&M – Texarkana. While Matt thought we might get a phone call that first week she was on her new campus and there were tornado warnings, I know she’s a Texan and knows what “real” weather events are. As soon as Emily called me with her acceptance of this position, I met with AALC collectively and invited many of them to have one on ones with me — most accepted — to ascertain the best fit with the least disruptions. Graham Oberem has quickly stepped into the interim role and is keeping the division moving.

You likely saw my announcement appointing the search committee last week. Faculty members were nominated by the Academic Senate, staff by the Academic Affairs Leadership Council (AALC) and the student by the ASI President – as is our process to make this a “workable” committee and as broadly as representative as possible. The committee members are:

- Linda Hawk — CFO and Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services (Chair)
- Roger Arnold — College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral and Social Sciences
- Kyle Azcuna — Student Representative
- Pam Bell — Project and Degree Audit Coordinator, IITS
- Vassilis Dalakas — College of Business Administration
Mike Schroder — Dean of Extended Learning
Adam Shapiro — Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral and Social Sciences
Laurie Stowell — College of Education, Health and Human Services

The committee will meet over the coming weeks and will communicate with the campus community when finalists’ campus visits are scheduled, likely the first week in May. Graham is not excluded from being a candidate. I hope to have a permanent Provost on board by July 1.

AALC also concurred that the two “six month” interim deans should have their appointments extended; be charged to “not just maintain” and to provide our new provost an opportunity to search and appoint permanent deans during spring 2014. Janet Powell has agreed to be the dean of Education, Health and Human Services, and Wayne Veres has agreed to the same term as dean of the library for the same reasons.

Backfilling some of Graham’s AVP tasks; Sharon Hamill will be our WASC ALO, in addition to the many other things she is doing. Dawn Formo will take on Graham’s former role as co-chair of the Long Range Academic Master Planning committee. Finally, Michelle Hunt will serve as the interim Assistant Vice President for Faculty Affairs.

In Student Affairs, I am happy that Lorena Meza has stepped up and agreed to be the interim vice president there. Eloise Stiglitz became the vice president and dean of students at Mills College. She had expressed her long-term desire to be at a women’s college and to have more direct interaction with students, and this opportunity presented itself to her. Similarly to the process for interim Provost, I consulted with the Senior Management Team of Student Affairs collectively and individually and there was unanimous consensus to make an interim appointment for a full year.

Bridget Blanshan has agreed to serve in a dual role as interim AVP for Student Academic Support Services and AVP for Student Life and Leadership. In addition she will be the chair of the Academic Excellence and Student Success Fee task force, with Rick Fiero, associate dean of the College of Science and Mathematics, serving on that committee.

Dilcie Perez has stepped up to be interim dean of students, and Greg Toya will have interim oversight of the student life and leadership team; a group of extraordinary student service professionals.
Finally, Scott Gross is serving in a dual role as interim AVP for diversity and educational equity in addition to his role as AVP for community engagement. As you know, in early December Derrick Crawford accepted a position with the NCAA to be much closer to his ailing father. After a national search, we are already scheduling first round interviews for the regular appointment, which as today’s announcement pointed out will begin next Tuesday. I appreciate the service of the search committee, which includes Rodger D’Andreas, Lisa McLean, student Arthur Silverstein, Melanie Chu, Garry Rollison, Marilyn McWilliams, and Scott Gross as chair.

**Looking Ahead**

I now want to talk about what is before us this semester and over the next twelve months, in addition to the searches. We are moving forward with the Academic Excellence and Student Success Fee. As I mentioned, Bridget has stepped in for Graham to champion that process.

We will complete construction and move into the new student union, and construction will begin for the new student health center. We will no doubt need to have conversations about budget, enrollment, and how we respond to mandates and new opportunities.

I suspect that we will also continue conversations around space. With the previous space committee, deliberations often took weeks, if not months, often times to the point of paralysis. In several instances, after much time passed and several hours of deliberation had occurred, the request was deferred up to the Executive Council with no recommendation. The process was dated, ineffective and prevented decisions or missed opportunities that were in the best interest of the institution.

We unfroze the process and developed a new process map for requests that would flow up through divisional governance and leadership structures, through the VP and ultimately to the President. What has become apparent is that we did not do well communicating the new request process or the decisions that had been made, or their rationale. In particular, the move of nursing to University Hall was not communicated broadly to fully understand the downstream impacts so that a discussion could immediately begin about how we mitigate those impacts. I can assure you that those conversations are now taking place, and will continue so that we can understand and mitigate the impacts of this move.
I also recognize that the campus community wants an opportunity to see and understand the decision making process as it takes place and have the opportunity to provide comment. New mechanisms and processes will be put in place to address these gaps. We are developing an intranet site that includes our space planning principles, the space policy, the request forms and a map of the process. It will also include any pending requests that have been received as of the date of the launch of the site and will include from that point on any space assignments that have been made. Finally, there will be functionality that enables comment on the pending requests. The comments will be provided to the executive council for their deliberations in making a recommendation to me. Division vice presidents will establish and communicate the process and procedures for space requests to flow up through their management and governance structures.

I hope that through these changes and in all that we do that my executive council and I have demonstrated decision-making that is deliberative, data-driven, consultative and transparent and responsive to mistakes and oversights. I trust and expect that my executive council team brings forward recommendations and suggestions that have bubbled up through their leadership teams and governance structures, so that our decisions are and will continue to be truly deliberative and inclusive of the diverse perspectives, ideas and divisional goals and priorities.

Ideas and recommendations come to me and executive council from the various leadership teams, the university budget committee, through my direct 1:1 meetings with the senate chair and vice chair and the ASI President, my open forums and other advisory committees, task forces and boards. It may at times seem to be a bit chaotic or you’d have liked to have had more time to deliberate, but I believe we’ve built an effective web of influence that does not get us into decision paralysis, where we deliberate to the point that we miss the opportunity, stick to the status quo or set ourselves back. That’s not to say it’s always perfect, and I trust that I have demonstrated my willingness to listen, to adapt processes and to consult.

We take seriously university-first, we have not allowed our divisions or our initiatives to be siloed and exclusive, and we all have each other’s back. That is a powerful mechanism for affecting positive change.

So to loop back to where we started, change can be an intimidating beast. While I can’t eliminate the uncertainty, I hope that these forums, our conversations and communications reduce fear and anxiety. I’ve said that it would’ve been easy to hunker down, but that we
wouldn’t. You’ve risen to that challenge. I sincerely hope that you see opportunity, individually and collectively, in the changes we’re in the midst of and that are before us. I hope that you see opportunities to expand your networks, to broaden your knowledge, or to develop new relationships. I hope that you feel empowered to speak up about what’s working and how we can do more of it, to provide new ideas of how you do your work and how we do our collective work. That is how we will continue our impressive trajectory and continue to stand above the rest as an adaptive, resilient and forward focused public university.