REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Educate. Innovate. Elevate.

Thursday, February 7, 2013

Event Pavilion, Lot N

7 a.m.

President Karen Haynes
This is a pivotal moment in California’s history, and what hangs in the balance is nothing less than the future of this state.

The Golden State’s image is tarnished. We are no longer the land of opportunity, the state known for its commitment to public higher education. This past year, the state allocated a billion dollars more to prison spending than to higher education. California now spends roughly 50,000 dollars per inmate and less than 7,000 dollars per CSU student.

Across California, the overwhelming response of universities to repeated budget cuts is one of hanging on and trying to survive. At Cal State San Marcos, our approach to these challenging times is something quite the opposite, as you well know. We have chosen to be more agile, less bureaucratic, and infinitely more inventive.

We know, without a doubt, that we cannot fulfill our promise to serve the students of our region by curbing our aspirations. We cannot help solve our region’s most pressing problems by slowing our pace and committing to stagnation. The work that we are doing to address today’s complex problems is essential — not only for Cal State San Marcos — but for the economic vitality and the intellectual vibrancy of this region.

There are singular moments in time that require unprecedented daring, a willingness to explore uncharted territory, and a bold investment in the future. This is that defining moment for public higher education.

Cal State San Marcos, YOUR university, is the intellectual, social, cultural and economic engine of this region. And, despite these constrained times and lack of legislative support, we will continue to hold true to our vision:

“to prepare tomorrow’s leaders, build better communities, and solve critical issues.”

Our commitment to our students’ success is evidenced by curricula that provide students with relevant experiential learning opportunities and skill sets for future workforce needs, as well as by our increased retention and graduation rates. Our freshman retention rate is now 80 percent, the highest ever. We are clearly focused and motivated, and we are changing the national conversation about public higher education.
We are a university that works in common purpose, that moves in common direction, and that produces uncommon results. Our strikingly modern approach to education and our unwillingness to be daunted and detoured from our five strategic priorities should assure you that we will continue to: educate, innovate, elevate.

**EDUCATE**

Public universities are facing a new reality — one that includes insufficient state funding, even as the value of public higher education has never been clearer. How else can you explain five consecutive years of budget cuts? State funding to our institution alone has fallen from a high of nearly 11,000 dollars per student in 1999 to roughly 7,000 dollars today — almost a 40 percent reduction!

It took the passage of Prop 30 to stop further cuts. And although we are grateful that Cal State San Marcos didn't take another 5.4 million dollar reduction, because the initiative passed, our Board of Trustees agreed to roll back a 9.5 percent tuition increase that they had approved a year ago. Therefore, we refunded 4.1 million dollars to our students, resulting in a net gain to our budget of only 1.3 million dollars. And our permanent cut is still 18 million dollars less in state appropriations than we had in 2008.

The Governor's budget proposal provides a small increase to our state appropriated budget for the next four years with the expectation that we do not increase tuition during these years. That small increase per year is unlikely to cover mandatory increases for utilities and healthcare benefits. Worse, we will now be expected to pay for other costs previously covered by the state — like our debt service on capital projects. So we will continue to deal with a budget woefully short of restoring lost funds and covering mandatory costs.

On top of that, local and national press continue to print story after story on rising tuition costs and student debt with seemingly little concern for what is actually happening at the local level. Why? Because in our case, the “local” facts aren't the news that sells or that support the national picture.

What are the facts: yes, our tuition — the system’s tuition — has increased over the past five years of this recession, but today, at 6,867 dollars per year, our tuition is less than half the national average and less than all other peer institutions.
And our average student debt, at 13,000 dollars, is about half the national average and 40 percent less than the state average. Furthermore, a college graduate can expect her degree to “pay back” more than one million dollars in her lifetime — considerably more than a student with only a high school degree. A quality education leads to quality jobs and a higher quality of life.

But earning a college degree isn’t just a “personal good,” it’s a “public good” — good for our entire region and state. For every dollar Californians invest in higher education, they receive a net return on their investment of four dollars and fifty cents. Students who enter and complete college are less likely to be impoverished, are less dependent on social services, and are more likely to pay taxes!

California must make critical investments in education today in order to have greater economic strength tomorrow. We must rethink, reimagine and recalibrate our plans for public higher education or we will lose our competitive advantage.

It’s predicted that by 2025, only 35 percent of all working adults in California will have a college degree, yet the workforce will demand numbers closer to fifty percent. California will be woefully short of meeting these future workforce needs and will likely continue to fall further behind our nation and the world.

Because of the 26 percent reduction to our state appropriations, our system has mandated for years that campuses limit their enrollments. Without those system limitations, we would currently have 2,000 more students enrolled — students and graduates who would help meet California’s workforce needs. The impact of the cuts is even more critical when you consider that we would also be graduating 3,100 more students by 2016 if we were being funded at sufficient levels. That’s an entire graduating class lost!

As a high demand campus in a growing region, I am angry — and you should be too — that we are forced to turn away qualified regional students because of decreased funding. We had more than 18,000 applicants this fall for only 2,500 slots. While some of these students did attend college somewhere, many of them did not. We all lose when that happens.

And while it is our system that has set our reduced enrollment targets over these years, let me be clear that it is our legislature and their divestment in us that
requires this. We simply cannot educate more students with fewer and fewer financial resources.

Public higher education remains vulnerable because California has no mandates for funding its public universities. So as the economic conditions have worsened, public universities are seen as the “discretionary” part of the state budget and an easy target for reduction.

Unlike the state, CSUSM’s blueprint for the future calls for us to build upon our present talent, not to deconstruct it. As a public institution, we are obligated to provide high quality education at affordable prices, and we are doing this. A college degree at a private or for-profit university is very costly and can lead to extreme debt. In fact, comparable nursing programs in the private sector are more than double the cost of our high quality nursing program. And the retention and graduation rates at for-profit universities are abysmal.

Our value is evident in more than just our affordability. In every college and discipline, we are growing a creative class of professionals who will build an economy that will sustain us and move us forward. The intellectual journeys our students embark on are critical to our region’s success, and at the heart of each journey is CSUSM’s spirit of adventure and innovation, of doing things markedly different from other universities.

INNOVATE

We, at Cal State San Marcos, truly believe that innovation is no longer an elective; it is a requirement for the future. Innovation must be woven through the fabric of the university, from academics to student services to community engagement to fiscal stewardship. We believe that for any university to survive, they must seek out partnerships that make sense because they expand access, benefit students and creatively meet the needs of their region.

We are not alone in our thinking. According to a national study, 83 percent of Americans believe that the model for higher education has to change, that universities need to be more innovative and more engaged with and responsive to their students and their communities. We are a model of responsiveness and engagement.
In answer to growing student demand for on-campus housing options, we announced a collaboration with Urban Villages last year to build The Quad; student housing that opened in August and is filled to capacity. Phase two will open this fall. Having more student housing built by a private partner not only helps us fulfill one of our strategic priorities, to enhance student life, but has also allowed us to have the capacity to meet another institutional need: a student union — the steel structure that you saw as you entered campus today.

Recognizing that students need a central location on campus to meet, study, attend events, or just “hang,” we initiated discussions with students who agreed to “tax” themselves through a student union fee to pay for the building, which will open next year.

The construction that is taking place, the groundbreakings and dedication ceremonies, are reshaping not only our physical landscape, but are also shaping the intellectual landscape for our entire academic community for the years to come. We are blazing an uncharted path to the future. We are creating a brave new paradigm for what it means to be a public, comprehensive 21st century, community engaged and fiscally responsible university.

The CSU Institute for Palliative Care at Cal State San Marcos is an extraordinary example of our future focus and creativity and is, itself, a new paradigm for health care. The Institute was launched here because our history and success at leveraging innovative partnerships to meet community needs impressed a member of the CSU Board of Trustees. She believed that this Institute should happen within our system and that Cal State San Marcos was the perfect launch pad for such a bold, futuristic vision.

Palliative care improves the quality of life for patients and families facing serious or chronic illness — whatever the diagnosis or prognosis. It prevents and relieves suffering by addressing pain as well as the physical, emotional, psycho-social and spiritual issues associated with serious and chronic conditions.

In California, 46 percent of the population has at least one chronic health condition, a number that’s rising. Since our system already educates 70 percent of all the nurses and social workers in this state, as well as a large percentage of other allied health professionals, the fit to our system is obvious. Yet as obvious as this
need is, no one in the nation is thinking about palliative care in the way that we are — with goals to:

- Embed palliative care curriculum in courses for current students;
- Create or make more accessible certifications for health care professionals in palliative care; and
- Significantly increase community education and awareness about the resources that are or should be available.

Launched with 2.5 million dollars from foundations and a regional philanthropist, the Institute for Palliative Care puts CSUSM front and center in shaping the future of health care. We will be the national leader in training current and future health care workers in how to provide compassionate, holistic, humane care. Complimentary to this initiative, we hope to launch Masters degree programs in both Social Work and Public Health this fall.

We have also recently finalized a groundbreaking agreement with the Ben Hundall Memorial Trust of Kaiser Permanente to offer online nursing degree prerequisite courses to Trust participants. More than 45,000 members of Kaiser’s workforce, across its regions, will soon have access to those quality CSUSM courses. We are the first and only university to partner with the Trust — a collaboration that will help raise the educational attainment level of our nation’s nurses and address national workforce needs — certainly a sure sign that our reputation for innovative models of education is growing exponentially.

Our partnerships with public and private organizations have enabled us to introduce innovative projects such as our Institute for Palliative Care, as well as our biotechnology certificate, our advanced Spanish for medical personnel course, our Temecula campus, and our School of Nursing, which received more than 1,000 applications for only 150 spots last year.

Students working toward our Professional Science Masters degree are gaining the advanced training of a science master’s with the business backbone of an MBA. Students in our newly launched Communicative Sciences and Disorders master’s program are combining education and the sciences to help people with speech problems. And students participating in our Environmental Leadership Academy are
learning the business and scientific benefits of creating public policies that respect the environment.

Every single one of these degrees, initiatives, certificates and programs contributes to our fundamental goals of excellence in education. They also represent the ability of our students to get REAL jobs in this region, and they are the intentional outgrowth of our commitment to educate and elevate the wellspring of talent in our region.

I believe you also “get the picture” that these initiatives suggest an appetite to experiment with innovative curriculum and experientially relevant pedagogy, illustrating that we have immense capacity for thoughtful change. They should convey to you a commitment to engage the larger world, to meet its challenges in ways that a university distinctively can, and they demonstrate a desire to pursue ideas along pathways unblocked by barriers of discipline or profession; unconcerned whether public or private ownership; unfettered by narrowly prescriptive revenue streams.

**ELEVATE**

As an agile, nimble and responsive university, CSU San Marcos is elevating our region by not only opening the door of opportunity to students in our region but, as importantly, by also actively reaching out to potential applicants, their families and their schools with the message that college is a realistic and necessary destination for them. And we are not complacent to leave it there, as many universities do. Our intentional, structured, sustainable and “regionally significant” partnerships ensure that the most educationally at-risk students know early what it takes to get into college and have the help to get them there.

Our partnerships are working. Last May we graduated our largest class ever — 2,600 students — 50 percent of whom were the first in their families to earn a four-year degree. Fifty percent were also minorities. Yes, we are doing it, transforming lives and, in so doing, transforming families and this entire region.

Since last May, we have hosted almost 9,000 students and their families for campus tours, and the San Marcos Unified School District awarded more than 100 scholarships to students participating in our guaranteed admission program, known
as the PACE Promise. These students have higher GPAs and SAT scores than other students and are also retained at significantly higher levels.

These improvements are consistent across the three districts from which we are already receiving students: San Marcos, Escondido, and Valley Center-Pauma. Simply put, regardless of ethnicity or race, students who are in a partnership district come to us better prepared, perform better once they're here, and have better retention rates.

Whether they come to us through a partnership program or not, our students are first generation in college and demographically diverse — in race, in age, in background. They are veterans and active duty students. They are former foster youth. They are Latino, African American, Asian and Pacific Islanders, and Native American. Each has had a different journey, but the same destination: Cal State San Marcos. They are here because we have shown them the pathways and the possibilities. They are here because of our hands-on learning opportunities, because our faculty are first-rate “teachers” and because our support services are robust and student centered. We are leveling an educational playing field that all too often favors the already advantaged.

When I came here in 2004, nine years ago, I committed to you that I would work hard to raise the educational attainment rate of this entire region. I am keeping that promise.

Our ACE Scholars Services program serves the highest per capita number of former foster youth in the system and has received national press. The success of the program in leveling the playing field and elevating our region is evident in its 88 percent retention rate.

Our military students also remain at the university, with a 90 percent one-year continuation rate and GPA’s that are 20 percent higher than the national average. That’s part of why Military Times Edge named us the top public university in California for veterans and their families. We are working to elevate the educational attainment rate of every segment of our region’s population.

Let me tell you one story that dramatically illustrates our reach and our success and is a true point of pride. Cipriano Vargas, one of nine children, emigrated from Mexico with his parents, who were migrant farm workers. Every day, he would
watch them work long hours in fields, following the harvests to provide for the family.

Cipriano knew that he wanted a better life for himself and for his entire family and that college was the way to achieve this goal. Through the College Assistant Migrant Program, he earned a grant to study at CSUSM and became the first person in his family to attend college.

Since arriving here in 2009, Cipriano has been an active student leader, spearheading numerous campaigns and serving as a peer mentor and on the board of Associated Students Inc. And while we are certainly proud of him for these reasons, we are extremely proud of his most recent accomplishment: being appointed by the Governor to the CSU Board of Trustees — our first student trustee!

Cipriano’s story is truly our story; the story of a first generation college student; a student who came to us because he saw that education would improve his life; a student whose can-do spirit models that of the university’s. He exemplifies how public higher education *elevates* and transforms.

**CONCLUSION**

Cal State San Marcos, your university, from my absolutely biased and unabashedly proud perspective, does not just *educate* those who come to us. With intentionality, we create pathways that reach out and reach back to ensure that our doors are open to the most educationally at risk.

We provide not just the “traditional” education; we also *innovatively* craft experiences for our students that are real-world focused. We create experiential learning opportunities; we build new academic programs by examining future workforce needs; we provide co-curricular learning to complement the classroom work, and we create innovative learning opportunities that “round out” our students’ experiences, such as social justice and civility training, as well as an understanding of the value of “giving back” as illustrated by our senior class giving program, “leave your mark.”

What we are doing is essential for the 21st century: We are opening doors, creating opportunities and fulfilling the needs of our region. Even as universities face mounting criticism and growing attacks, we have remained true to our strategic
vision and priorities. We know — because we see it every day — that education is a passport to social and economic prosperity for our students; for this region; that our responsibility is not just to ignite in our students a passion for learning, but to also transmit the knowledge and skills necessary to make a living.

As we look to the future, we will innovatively diversify and expand our partnerships and collaborate with industry, local governments and non-profits. We will make maximum use of our location and our technology to expand opportunity, grow the economy, and elevate our region.

The entire axis of public higher education is shifting, but Cal State San Marcos is better and stronger than other universities because of our can-do spirit. We don’t merely train students to survive in the world; we educate them to improve the world.

Here, at Cal State San Marcos, amid formidable strains, enormous budget reductions, and unrelenting criticism of public higher education, we persevere. We aim high. We think big. We take risks.

I believe that the current criticism of public higher education stems from misconceptions regarding our purpose, a lack of imagination and short sightedness about our potential. But, you know what — I don't care. We know what our purpose is, and you know our potential. These times demand the very best from us as educators, legislators, and community leaders concerned about this region’s future. Cal State San Marcos is a brilliant example of what’s possible in public higher education – possible if you step outside the bounds; possible if you push new ideas; possible when you believe that to educate innovatively is to elevate our region.

We possess — everyone in this room, at the university, in this region — we must possess — an unrelenting dedication to persisting in the support of this most extraordinary university. This will be hard work, tough going. It will take unyielding future focus; unprecedented creativity; external resources and, undeniably, it will take everyone. This is a pivotal moment in history, and what hangs in the balance is nothing less than the future of this state and this region.

NO ONE GETS A PASS.