



Wednesday, March 10, 2021

Dear CSUSM employees,

Last fall we began a process of searching for our next permanent vice president of Finance and Administrative Services/Chief Financial Officer. We knew that finding the right candidate would be of critical importance as we emerge from the current challenges of COVID-19 and look toward our future with a strategic, collaborative, innovative and adaptive spirit. To that end, I am pleased to share with you the appointment of Leon Wyden, a chief financial and administrative officer with a breadth of educational and business experience, as our new vice president for Finance and Administrative Services. He will join our campus community at the end of May.

Leon has a tremendous track record of financial and strategic leadership supporting institutional priorities, facilities master planning, improving fiscal and administrative operations, and ensuring financial sustainability. He currently serves as the vice president for Administration and Finance at Frostburg State University (FSU) in Maryland. Frostburg is part of the University System of Maryland. Leon has a range of higher education experience at both private and public universities. His previous positions include vice president for Business Affairs at the University of Findlay, vice president for Finance and Administration at Tiffin University, and associate vice president of Finance and Planning at Upper Iowa University. A certified public accountant, Leon's first position in higher education was as deputy controller at Howard University.

I was impressed by Leon's creative approach to developing, implementing, and monitoring strategic campus master and capital plans for his previous institutions. In addition, he showcased a solid understanding of budget planning and aligning funds with university strategic goals. Leon is committed to shared governance and has a track record of working closely with faculty, staff and union leaders. Finally, his commitment to student success and inclusive excellence aligns with our values here at CSUSM.

I want to thank our search advisory committee (Carl Kemnitz – chair, Maria Froehle, Sajith Jayasinghe, Katy Rees, Ariel Stevenson, Alan Styles, Sarah Villarreal and Timothy Pelayo – student rep) for all their time and effort to shepherd this national search process. I also want to express my appreciation to Mary Stephens for her ongoing leadership during this transition period. Finally, my sincere gratitude to the entire FAS division for all of their hard work and resilience during this time.

A virtual welcome reception will be organized in the coming weeks to formally welcome Leon to campus. In the meantime, please join me in congratulating Leon – I know that he is eager to join our university and looks forward to getting to know all of you.

Sincerely,

Ellen Neufeldt

President

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