Report to the Community:
Ten Years Together
Thursday, February 6, 2014
7 a.m.

President Karen Haynes
A few of you may have been in that room when I interviewed for this job more than 10 years ago. If you were, you may remember that I was one of three finalists, and the only woman, and I began that public forum with, “You may be wondering about why I am wearing this fuchsia suit. I wore it because I am the first of three candidates, and I wanted to make certain that you would still remember me at the end of the search process, AND I’m sure that neither of the other two candidates will wear fuchsia.”

They didn’t. And upon my appointment, the North County Times’ headline was, “Fuchsia Suit Wins.” I started my presidency on February 1, 2004, and one year later, I delivered my first Report to the Community.

Today, I stand here to deliver my 10th Report to the Community. Can you believe that? Could any of us have imagined how far, how fast we would have come to this day? So I hope that as I report on this grand and special university you’ll allow me to reflect on this ten-year journey that we have taken TOGETHER.

When I delivered my inaugural report back in the Clarke Field House, I said that we would work with you, that TOGETHER, we would build and grow our university into a successful model for 21st century education. I affirmed that we would act deliberately and that we would be fearless in our pursuit…

• To raise the educational attainment of our region;
• To create a student body that mirrors the diversity of our region;
• To connect with and serve our community by producing well-prepared, ready-to-lead graduates;
• And to no longer be the “best kept secret” in North County.

These were big, bold goals, goals that I knew were going to take everyone working TOGETHER to achieve. I also knew that I might regret
those dramatic statements. And I certainly thought that some of you might be more than a bit skeptical and think, “we’ll see.”

Of course, the six-year recession that followed didn’t help. None of us could have predicted the dramatic reduction in our state funding that could have — BUT DID NOT — deter us from pursuing and from meeting those goals.

**TOGETHER WE HAVE**

So undaunted by the recession, undeterred by public criticism of higher education and despite the reduction to our state appropriations, we have, for the last 10 years, stayed focused on our priorities. We have benchmarked our progress. We have innovatively pushed through barriers and, TOGETHER, we have:

- Doubled our student population from 6,000 to 12,000 students
- Doubled the number of buildings from 10 to 20
- Doubled our endowment from 10 million dollars to 20 million dollars
- More than doubled our academic degrees from 27 to 58
- More than doubled the number of our athletic teams
- Nearly tripled our alumni from 13,000 to 35,000
- Almost tripled our employee base from 700 to 1,900

Our work has been intentional and grounded in our commitment to our region and in those four goals I mentioned earlier. It has been done with and for our community. And I would underscore that our work TOGETHER has not happened by accident or because the last 10 years have been easy for
public higher education in any state, and certainly not in California. Our achievements have happened because:

- We created a strategic plan in 2005 that has guided our actions;
- Because we recalibrated our goals annually, raising them as we achieved them, refining and redefining them if we didn’t;
- And because we did not shy away from risk during unprecedented times.

Everything that we have done, and all that we do, is rooted in our principles and focused on the goals I laid out in that first report to you – ten years ago. Our shared journey, our shared commitment and work, has created a university with expanded access and broader reach, a university that is both the anchor of this region and a model in the nation.

We have remained focused on those four promises, and we have fulfilled them, because that woman in the fuchsia suit doesn’t make empty promises.

**TOGETHER WE ARE**

TOGETHER, we saw that the old model of comprehensive public higher education wasn’t sustainable, and we were inspired to adapt, to partner, to change the worldview. Everything that has been done, is being done, and will be done fits within this framework – a framework that is a radical adaptation to a new reality and one that not only sustains the important mission of our institution but also helps broaden our reach.

It isn’t a random or disconnected framework, but rather one that entwines the threads of those four strands I talked with you about 10 years ago. That framework created a new model.

We are creating part of that new model with CSUSM at Temecula, where we are leveraging the resources of the region with the intellectual
capital of our faculty. It eliminates administrative redundancies, and its impact continues to be exponential.

Jen, whose parents are immigrants, was working two jobs to help support her family, including an ailing parent, when she decided to return to school. But living in rural Southwest Riverside County, and with no one to help her at home, she couldn’t make the daily commute to San Marcos. She was also concerned about being much older than her classmates. She explored CSUSM at Temecula and found that it was the perfect place for her.

She recently received her degree in nursing from our Temecula center and now, as a full-time nurse, is able to better support her family as well as personally help care for her mother. Without her degree, without CSUSM at Temecula, Jen is convinced that she would still be struggling, professionally and financially, and would not be working in what she considers to be a fulfilling and rewarding field.

She isn’t alone. We’ve already graduated more than 300 nurses from CSUSM at Temecula, right in time for the opening of the new Temecula Valley Hospital. And we currently have nearly 300 students enrolled in nursing, kinesiology and business administration — so many that we need additional space. Because of our presence, students can now move seamlessly from high school to Mt. San Jacinto College to CSUSM at Temecula because they have a clear path.

While we have watched public higher education contract across the nation, leaving thousands of communities and individuals without access to affordable quality higher education, partnerships like our Temecula one change that. We are increasing access through unique partnerships, and TOGETHER crafting a new framework for public higher education in the 21st century.
Riverside and San Diego counties are among a handful of counties in California that have experienced moderate or even robust growth in high school graduates. However, the statistics show that most of this growth is in populations not expected to go past high school – if that far. Statistics also indicate that California will be short one million college educated workers by 2025.

As many of you know, we CHOSE to change this pattern beginning in 2006 when we signed our first guaranteed admission agreement with San Marcos Unified School district, called PACE Promise. We created the guaranteed admissions program to help at-risk students get into and through college and prove the statistics wrong. We started with one program and have expanded now to agreements with eight public school districts.

Anissa participated in the PACE program at Mission Hills High and, because of the guidance she received, the pathways that were laid out for her through PACE, and the program’s strong academic emphasis, she felt very well prepared for college level work. She’ll soon complete her degree and take a position as director of after school programs at an elementary school in Oceanside. For Anissa, the job constitutes a vote of confidence in her education.

Marisol also came to us through PACE and credits our program with exposing her to new possibilities and to instilling in her the work ethic needed to be successful. Prior to starting at CSUSM, Marisol began a small, local handmade jewelry business.

With the bachelor’s degree she earned last May in management entrepreneurship, Marisol has launched a full, online jewelry business that is attracting customers from across the country. Her work is also now sold in boutiques throughout San Diego and Orange Counties. The knowledge she
acquired at Cal State San Marcos has allowed her to restructure and grow her business — a possibility that wouldn’t have existed had she not earned her college degree.

Our goal, our big, bold, audacious goal was TOGETHER, to raise educational attainment rates in our region. We are doing that. Students who come to us through our guaranteed admission programs have higher GPAs and higher retention rates. And, as Anissa and Marisol demonstrate, students moving through our programs are better prepared for the college experience. Marisol, like many PACE students, graduated in four years, and Anissa is on the Dean’s List. It’s likely that neither of them would be where they are today without our commitment to raising the educational attainment rate, to creating a new framework for public higher education.

Another example of dramatically “beating the odds” for an educationally at risk population is our ACE Scholars Services program for former foster youth. We started the program in 2007, and we now educate more former foster youth per capita than any institution in the United States.

ACE Scholars goes to the heart of our mission to raise the educational attainment rate, to create a diverse student body, and to produce career ready students. Many of our ACE Scholars come from broken homes, or no homes, and they have endured incredible obstacles and hardships on their path to college. Through scholarships, on campus work opportunities, internships, counseling and other support, ACE provides former foster youth with an opportunity for a better life, for stability and social mobility.

Yohita entered the foster care system when she was 16. Severely ill with pneumonia, she wasn’t expected to live, so the system stepped in to get her the medical attention she needed. She soon recovered and enrolled in and graduated from the San Pasqual Academy.
Coming from a very poor, erratic family life, Yohita has found support and encouragement in the ACE Scholars program. She is a criminology major and president of a Chicano student organization. She is also researching Ph.D. programs with the goal of becoming a college professor. ACE has changed Yohita’s life and is positively shaping the lives of other former foster youth, transforming them into informed and productive citizens.

Like former foster youth, American Indian students have historically been overlooked and not expected to attend college. Again, we CHOSE to pay attention to them, to extend the very real possibility of earning a college degree. Through college fairs specific to tribal communities, through communications in Native languages, and through our tribal liaison, we are increasing access, creating clear pathways, and providing the support necessary for American Indian students to turn the odds in their favor.

Mark is in the process of changing his odds. A member of the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians, Mark saw college as a way to help his tribal community, to bring awareness of their needs and contributions to our region. He is now pursuing his Masters of Arts in sociological practice here, and has his eyes on earning a Ph.D. so that he can return to campus as a professor.

Ricardo also had very specific reasons for coming to Cal State San Marcos. A former sergeant in the Marines, he was deployed four times to Iraq and Afghanistan and served on Lieutenant General Sattler’s personal security team, keeping Sattler safe while he directed the invasion of Iraq.

Ricardo chose CSUSM because of our regional focus, because 11 percent of our student body is veterans and, in part, because we are consistently ranked in the top 15 percent of all universities nationally for being a military-friendly institution. Ricardo graduated last May and is now
an advisor in our College Corps Program where he encourages high schoolers to pursue college.

We are doing the work that our regional sister institutions are not. Yes, the other institutions are filling a need and doing excellent work. They are increasingly meeting national and international needs and taking high caliber students. They are graduating students who work around the globe. But these are not the educationally at risk students, the veterans, the former foster youth, the American Indians, the ones the statistics said wouldn’t go to college.

Those are the students that we are educating. TOGETHER we are beating the odds; changing the national public higher education model; ensuring that the most educationally at risk students have the knowledge, skills and support that they need to get to and to get through college and meet our region’s workforce needs and lead fulfilling lives.

TOGETHER we are also radically changing how our University and our community engage and partner to innovate, to solve problems, to develop communities, and to improve economies. The McMahan House is a good example. JoAn and Richard McMahan had watched the university take shape and were impressed with what they saw, with the new leadership and with our commitment to our region.

They approached us with a gift to build a president’s house, but with our forward focus, we convinced them to build a “community house.” The McMahan’s $5 million dollar gift and our vision provided a space for the community and the academy to come TOGETHER to discuss solutions to real challenges, to celebrate accomplishments and to talk about the future.

That future included more student housing. At the height of the recession, new construction was stagnant across the country, including San
Marcos, but by partnering with our community, we found a solution. The development of the Quad student housing, an innovative public-private partnership, is stimulating local economic development and providing much needed student housing for the University.

More student housing provides an opportunity for students to become more engaged with the university, to participate in learning communities and to be exposed to a multicultural, global environment. And studies indicate that students who live on campus succeed at higher rates. By fall, 1,500 students will be living in campus housing, learning, discussing their futures and engaging with our community.

Our faculty continue to engage with our communities and our world through groundbreaking research. One of our faculty is leading an international team of 75 scientists from 12 countries in the first ever documentation of a pan genome — a core set of genes shared by different algal varieties. The study has lasted nearly a decade and is one of few international studies to unravel the genomes of marine algae. The findings are opening new avenues for studying climate change and carbon cycling.

Other faculty are engrossed in research that could lead to improved treatment options for diabetes. Type 2 diabetes affects nearly 25 million adults and children and often leads to infections and other devastating complications, such as amputations. CSUSM faculty members have identified genes that facilitate tissue repair, which could significantly improve patient care.

It’s all work that may change the world, that will shape the future and that is transforming our region into a global knowledge center. It’s work that is making us nationally known, one of my four goals 10 years ago.
The data support what we’ve accomplished TOGETHER. The stories support what we’ve achieved TOGETHER, and the region reflects what we’ve realized TOGETHER. We are raising the educational attainment rate, creating a diverse student body, developing career ready students and gaining international recognition for our new model and innovative approach to public higher education.

There is a national paradigm shift that needs to happen for universities to remain relevant. Because we are forward focused, we realized this early on. Through the programs I spoke about, through our dedication to those four goals, CSUSM is not only making that shift, we are leading the way. We are a radically different and unique university.

**TOGETHER WE WILL**

With the slow but steady economic recovery, with some return in state appropriations to CSUSM for enrollment growth, quite clearly now isn’t the time to slow our pace. When I arrived, the foundation was in place, but the blueprint was unclear. TOGETHER we created a blueprint for the future, and we have taken that blueprint and crafted not only a smart and spirited university, but a 21st century model for the nation.

TOGETHER we will and we must continue down this path of radical innovation, adaptation and execution. With the commitment from our system for enrollment growth, this will mean more campus life, more students engaged in the community, and more academic programs. Our growth will expand opportunities for industry and university collaboration, for broader community partnerships, and for us to engage with each other.

Our new veterans center, a sustainable building gifted by the Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey, will open next fall and is one example.
Chosen by Stevens because of our national reputation for serving veteran students, and because of a resounding endorsement from a Camp Pendleton general, the center will provide space for us to better support student veterans like Ricardo, who I talked about earlier, transition from military to civilian life.

We will provide expanded opportunities for veterans to combine the skills and capacities they’ve developed as corpsmen with academic and lifelong learning skills that ensure their social mobility and success. The gifting of the solar building also started a conversation about what other opportunities exist to partner with a similarly innovative and forward focused institution on the other side of the country, to collaborate on research and create pathways to their graduate programs.

It is that forward focus, that vision for the future, that ability to get things done, that led to us being hand picked by a CSU Trustee to create and launch the CSU Institute of Palliative Care last year. The Institute will address an important part of the national public health agenda that was being ignored, and the impact of our programs will be profound. We will change the face of healthcare delivery.

Nurses, doctors, spiritual advisors and social workers will better understand cultural differences. They will take a broader patient and family-focused approach, and will be able to talk more compassionately about choices for care and for dying. As our national palliative care advisory board said at their recent meeting, “the nation is watching” us.

TOGETHER, we will further realize the purpose and impact of working with our region. Fostering and promoting engaged scholarship and service, our University will call on the community and industry as experts of
practice to partner with faculty and to engage in research aimed at solving issues and contributing to the greater good.

Students will engage in service learning experiences to understand society and its problems and their role as citizens. Academic programming, student learning, and faculty research and scholarship will be more interdisciplinary. Our focus will shift toward preparing students with skills and capacities for careers that may not yet exist, and to be entrepreneurial in their efforts while being committed to social justice and their local communities.

Wes has always had an entrepreneurial spirit, and he knew a CSUSM business degree would be his key to pursuing a fulfilling career. He graduated with that degree in 2010. In 2011, he became managing director of a local company that provides co-working office solutions for start-ups. It also serves as an incubation hub, connecting individuals and companies. It’s a field — connecting innovators with each other and the community — that didn’t exist when Wes was in elementary school.

Whether it’s a field like Wes’s or something entirely new, TOGETHER, we will, with our K-12 and community college partners, ensure that young people are moving through the education system with a pathway before them — a pathway that offers them technical skills to move into a successful career, academic skills to be lifelong learners, and social skills to be contributing members of society.

Working with our K-12 partners, we developed a plan to improve and clarify pathways and better support families and districts. The Price Family Charitable Foundation responded to our proposal, and through their half-million-dollar grant, we are building the Alliance to Accelerate Excellence in Education. We are on the cusp of a model that lets no one fall through the
cracks. With our partners, and with all of you, we will continue to build and refine this model so that it is sustainable and scalable.

We will collect the data. We will develop gateways for collaborations between K-12, community colleges and CSUSM. We will create cohesive pathways to a four-year degree. We will host conferences and engage with parents. We will enroll and graduate more at risk students and, in doing so, we will create more educated, successful, economically sound communities.

**CONCLUSION**

TOGETHER we have continued to blur the lines between our university and our region. TOGETHER we have formed partnerships that leverage the strengths of those at the table and that provide mutual benefit to our partner and our University. We have engaged TOGETHER in issues important to the region’s future. We have identified and leveraged new technologies, solved critical issues through research and service, and developed our workforce.

TOGETHER we continued on this path toward bringing new meaning and substance to public higher education. And we will continue to do it by pushing the boundaries of the tried and true model to a more dynamic and relevant model.

While there are varying definitions of a great university, we, TOGETHER, have defined what it means to us. A truly great university is defined by its ability to educate students through theoretical and experiential learning, and to provide an appreciation and appetite for discovery. A great university will be defined by its ability to invest in and support sophisticated, life-changing research. A great university will be defined by its ability to work hand-in-hand with its community to enable change, to solve substantive issues, and to partner for the common good.
Any university can take third generation in college, high achieving students and stretch them and graduate them. Any university can, with reason, say, “times are tough, we’re cutting back; we can’t serve any more students.” But this “great” university reaches back to public school districts and community colleges, and with intentionality creates pathways and support services for the most educationally at risk students.

Our “great” university attracts AND retains faculty who are both student focused and world-class researchers. Our “great” university “gets to yes” despite the 1,000 points of “can’t do it, never been done.”

In ten years TOGETHER, we have fostered a stronger sense of common goals. We have delivered on promises and contributed in transformative and innovative ways to the prosperity of our region. Our momentum, our growth, our accomplishments signify our propensity for risk-taking, for audacious actions, and for our ability to break molds and create new models. In ten years TOGETHER, we have transformed lives, rebuilt communities and reinvigorated our economy. We have built a university geared toward educating the 21st century student.

I am so proud of the work we have done TOGETHER over these last ten years.

And, let me be clear…

…in case you’re thinking that this is my swan song…

This fuchsia suit isn’t done yet!