“Moving Forward Together in Uncharted Waters”

University Day Address

President Horace Mitchell
CSU Bakersfield
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Good morning. It has been my privilege and honor to serve with you as President of CSU Bakersfield over the past eight years. I join the previous speakers in extending a warm welcome to each of you – our new, continuing, and returning faculty and staff from our main campus here in Bakersfield and our Antelope Valley Center – as we begin the 2012-13 academic year. I want to acknowledge those who are joining us this morning via live video stream over the internet. I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer with some time for relaxation, to enjoy the company of family and friends, to be re-energized, and for renewal of your spirit.

Please join me in a moment of silence as we honor the memory and spirits of those members of our campus community, our families and extended families and our larger community who have passed since our last University Day. (ashay) Thank you.

University Day gives us the opportunity to come together to reflect on our progress to date, identify the significant challenges and opportunities ahead, and outline our priorities and plans. It reinforces our tradition of working collaboratively toward the continued advancement of our vision for excellence. I appreciate the comments made by each of our university partners in the Academic Senate, CFA, Staff Unions, Staff Forum, and ASi. I look forward to our continuing productive work together.

I want to take a moment now to let each of you know how proud I am of you, and what we have achieved over the past few years. I have seen countless true “partnerships for excellence” within, between and among faculty, staff, students, administration, and our larger community. Even in the context of the state budget crisis and its continuing impact on us, our campus culture has been characterized by shared governance, effective collaborations, and “can do” attitudes as we have worked together to address issues, resolve problems, make progress, and plan for an uncertain future. I would like to ask everyone to stand and give each other and yourselves a standing ovation. Thank you.

Please join me in thanking the University Day planning committee for their time and diligence in organizing today’s University Day events. Would the chair, Dr. Soraya Coley, and committee members please stand?

Before I talk about today’s University Day theme, I want to remind you of the themes for our most recent University days. Our theme for 2009 was “40 Years at CSUB: Creating Opportunities in Challenging Times.” It charged all of us to create and implement strategies that would assist us in continuing to make progress toward realization of our
vision in spite of being hit hard by state budget reductions brought on by mis-
governance and mis-placed priorities at the state level and the worst economic crisis in
California since the Great Depression.

Our theme for 2010 was one with which I continue to resonate completely and I hope
you do as well. “Walking the Talk: From Vision to Evidence of CSUB Excellence”
compelled us to look beyond our well-stated vision which was adopted in 2004 and ask
ourselves, “Are We Walking the Talk?” That is, “Are we doing those things which must
be done in order to achieve our vision of excellence?” Further, it compelled us to
document the evidence.

Last year (2011) our University Day theme, “Achieving Educational Effectiveness:
Educational Resources, Technology and Evidence,” moved us farther ahead by
specifying how we are using our educational resources and technology in the process of
achieving educational effectiveness and providing the evidence of that for ourselves as
well as for our WASC Educational Effectiveness Review.

As we considered a University Day theme for 2012, we wanted it to reflect as much as
possible our current situation as well as our intent to move forward. What came to mind
for me was a quote that I heard for the first time from Dr. Herb Carter, former chair of
the CSU Board of Trustees. It was a quote by Sir Oliver Wendell Holmes from his book,
“The Aristocrat at the Breakfast Table.” He said:

“I find that the great thing in this world is not so much where
we stand, as in what direction we are moving.

We must sail, sometimes with the wind and sometimes
against it, but we must sail and not drift nor lie at anchor.”

The theme we chose is, “Moving Forward Together in Uncharted Waters.” This theme
asserts our intention to continue to make progress toward achievement of our mission
and realization of our vision even in the context of the most uncertain and unstable
environment I can remember. I want to take a few minutes to remind you of that
environment before moving on to describe how we must “sail.”

This is what we know at the present time:

- In November 2011, the Board of Trustees passed a 9% tuition fee increase for
  academic year 2012-13. That fee increase has generated $132 million for the
  CSU to fill some of the gap in funding resulting from a state budget cut of $750

- The 2012-13 approved state budget has a “trigger” cut to the CSU budget
  amounting to an additional $250 million if the governor’s tax initiative, proposition
  30, is not passed by California voters in November. That would be a total cut of
  $1 billion in two years-40% of the total state funding for the CSU.

- Last July the Board of Trustees passed a resolution in support of Proposition 30.
The Governor has said that if Proposition 30 is passed, he wants the CSU to rescind the 9% fee increase for the current academic year (2012-13). In exchange, he would provide $125 million to the CSU in 2013-14.

- This would cause the CSU to lose the $132 million which is already budgeted for 2012-13 with no new funding being allocated by the state until 2013-14.
- If the current fee increase is rescinded, refunds would have to be provided to students who have paid already.

These are the unknowns at the present time:

- Whether or not the Board of Trustees will vote to rescind the 9% tuition fee increase, contingent on Proposition 30 being passed, when they meet in two weeks
- Whether or not Proposition 30 will be passed by voters in November
- Whether or not, if Proposition 30 fails, the Board of Trustees will approve an additional fee increase to partially off-set the $250 million reduction

In the context of these varying scenarios as possible outcomes, CSU and CSUB budget planning have been very dynamic processes filled with uncertainties. We are clearly in “uncharted waters.”

The initial CSU Budget Plan was that each campus must make permanent reductions in 2012-13, with only minimal and strategic use of one-time and carry forward funds. Our current share of the reductions is $4.1 million. Subsequently, the plan changed to defer permanent reductions until after the results on Proposition 30 become known in November. Therefore, at CSUB we have made few permanent reductions to campus budgets, using instead temporary funds to maintain most campus departmental budgets for 2012-13 at their 2011-12 levels. However, permanent reductions, whatever they turn out to be, must be implemented for 2013-14.

In addition to the uncertainties regarding budgets, there are also uncertainties about enrollment for fall 2013. While CSU campuses are currently receiving applications, campuses are holding all applications at this time. Notification of admission decisions will occur only after the outcome of the California general election on November 6, 2012, has been determined. As enrollment is tied to the amount of available state funding, enrollment capacity for fall 2013 will be dependent upon proposition 30’s outcome.

Here in the Central Valley we know the vital importance of access to higher education. It is a critical factor in our collaborations with community partners to increase overall educational attainment in our region. As the state-budget-determined CSU “enrollment pendulum” has swung from required enrollment reductions to encouragement of
enrollment growth in excess of campus targets, our strategy has been consistent. We have not denied admission to any eligible student from our region.

Another significant area of change has been among the campus presidents. Seven, mostly long-serving, presidents retired during 2011-12 and Dr. John Welty, President of Fresno State, recently announced his plan to retire. In addition, Chancellor Reed is retiring after fourteen years and the search for his successor is currently underway.

Last year we also saw significant changes in the Board of Trustees. The chair was not reconfirmed by the senate, and five other trustees were not reappointed by the governor or resigned. Three new Trustees have been appointed while several positions remain open.

Given these circumstances, as our university day theme suggests, we must “move forward together” and “sail” through these “uncharted waters”, and “not drift nor lie at anchor.”

As we “sail”, in what direction are we headed? Where will we be when we have completed our navigation? Our “GPS” system must always be anchored in our mission, vision and values, because when all is said and done, that is what motivates each of us to remain committed to making our unique individual contributions that come together into the mosaic that is CSU Bakersfield. We know that we provide access to quality and affordable academic programs and co-curricular experiences that are transformative—that make significant differences in the lives of our students, their families, and our communities. We must continually work together to position the university to be agile in addressing the ever-changing challenges we will face in effectively and efficiently serving our students and community as we move toward the half-century mark of the university’s history.

As I reflect on all that we have accomplished together and think about what we need to achieve over the next three to five years, there are several areas I want to cover in this presentation. I will, of course, leave plenty of time for questions, comments and observations. As a reminder, I have issued the President’s Monthly Campus Update since January 2006 in order to keep the campus community informed on an on-going basis. Last month’s issue contains the latest information on a broad range of topics which I will not repeat in this presentation. So, I encourage you to read it when you have a chance because I am incorporating it into this presentation by reference.

Semester conversion

We will implement the decision made last spring to convert our academic calendar from quarters to semesters. As I have said previously, the timing of the conversion will depend on when significant resources for that purpose become available from the chancellor’s office. For a refresher on why the administration believes the change is important for our campus, please read the discussion paper which was issued by Provost Coley and me on April 3, 2012.
Review of Retention, Tenure and Promotion (RTP) criteria

Teaching, research, and service are the universal criteria for the evaluation of tenure-track faculty for retention, tenure, and promotion. However, how these terms are quantified and the relative weight given to each in the evaluation process vary greatly. Currently our RTP criteria are not consistent across schools and departments. Campus-wide criteria are general and tend to give deference to departmental criteria. All faculty must be held to a high standard of performance when they are being considered for promotion to associate professor or tenure.

The standard of performance should be “outstanding”, which is the requirement for “early tenure and promotion”, rather than “meets minimum criteria”. Provost Coley and I will collaborate with the school deans and departments, the Academic Senate, and the University Review Committee toward achievement of this goal.

General Education

There is a widespread recognition among faculty and academic administrators that we must “refresh” or refocus our general education program. There must be a clear relationship between our general education requirements and our university learning outcomes. A number of faculty has already attended workshops or institutes on general education. Tomorrow and Thursday, a “dialogue on general education” will be an opportunity for all faculty to engage in discussion and planning on this important topic.

Assessment of student learning

Our renewed focus on assessment makes it clear that the faculty’s role does not end with teaching. It must include their articulation of student learning outcomes for their courses and programs, their assessment of students' achievement of those learning outcomes, and their use of that data to inform the teaching-learning process moving forward.

Our faculty have done commendable work in establishing student learning outcomes at the university, program and course levels and in developing appropriate assessments of student learning. While the pending WASC Educational Effectiveness Review which occurred last fall was an impetus for many to complete these plans, that does not end our focus on the assessment of student learning. We must continue to refine our methods for providing evidence that our students are achieving our student learning outcomes.

On-line courses and programs

By offering more on-line courses and programs, we can extend significantly the access that students can have to our academic programs. A number of faculty have completed institutes on on-line courses. I want to recognize the Academic Senate for incorporating on-line courses in their broad framework of support for quality teaching.
Antelope Valley Center

Our Antelope Valley Center has been a part of CSU Bakersfield since 2000. Since that time, the campus has never been allocated the funding promised/expected for support of the center. Therefore, academic programs offered there have been dependent on what Bakersfield-based departments want to offer. In the current economic environment, Provost Coley is leading the effort to define the best model for the operation of the center in terms of the academic programs offered there and the funding model. In furtherance of that effort, Kent Price has completed a community scan involving more than 300 local residents to determine the role and potential future opportunities for the Antelope Valley Center. We have called on Craig Kelsey to assist us by serving as the Interim Associate Vice President for the Antelope Valley Center while continuing to serve as Dean of Extended University.

Academic Facilities

- **Engineering Buildings**

  You might have noticed that there is the beginning of construction just south of the Extended University building. That will be two temporary engineering buildings. They are being funded by grant funds, not state funds. In fact, if we were depending on state funds, we would not be able to have these buildings. Likewise, the engineering programs that will be housed in those buildings are also not state funded. Instead, they are funded through grants awarded to the school of natural sciences, mathematics and engineering. This is an example of our entrepreneurial approach to continuing to make progress on our academic priorities even with declining state funding.

- **Art Labs**

  The arts labs are the beginning of what we hope to be a new humanities complex. The early stages of the project were funded and well underway when it was halted by a lack of state funding. The project is likely to be resumed when the state is able to sell lease revenue bonds for several projects, possibly at some time within the next few months.

  It is important to note that the arts labs project also includes the construction of a satellite plant for the campus and the extension of our sewer system. While these last two aspects might not seem exciting, they are infrastructure requirements that are necessary in order for additional buildings to be constructed on campus.

- **Doré Theatre**

  The third project is the seismic retrofit of this building – Doré Theatre.
• Replacement of Faculty Towers

The project that I see as the highest priority is the replacement of faculty towers. That building is not up-to-date in terms of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and it has seismic deficiencies. The proposed replacement building would have about 53 faculty offices and one large classroom.

The last three of the academic facilities I mentioned have been on the Board of Trustees priority list for several years. However, available state funding has never reached down to where they were on the list. Fortunately, they are on the 2013-14 priority list ranked at #3, #11, and #21 respectively. Hopefully, available funding will go at least that far down the Board of Trustees’ priority list.

Student Housing

After many setbacks caused by a lack of adequate funding, we are now moving forward with plans for the construction of phase one of a new student housing project. Last week we selected a builder from a list of firms which responded to our request for proposals. The next step in the process is a review of the schematic design by the Chancellor’s Office next week, then final approval by the Board of Trustees at their November meeting. The construction schedule will be determined after the Trustees’ approval. Opening of the 500 plus beds, $34 million dollar project is tentatively scheduled for Fall, 2015. I want to express appreciation to Crystal Becks, Director of Housing, Vice President Mike Neal and Assistant Vice President Pat Jacobs who have worked on this project over the past few years, and Vice President for Student Affairs Thomas Wallace who has been involved since he joined us last February. As one of our cost-saving synergy initiatives, the construction will be managed by staff from CSU Fullerton.

Athletics

Within the budget challenges facing all areas of the University we continue to consider how best to reduce costs in Athletics.

• Sport Sponsorship

You might recall that in 2010 we made the decision to eliminate four of our 19 sports programs to bring athletics expenditures in line with declining resources. Those sports were wrestling, men’s and women’s golf, and women’s tennis. Our community asked if the sports could be maintained if they were funded by the community. Our response was “yes”, and those sports have continued to be offered without university funding of direct costs—i.e. coaches’ salaries, scholarships, travel and other expenses. Because support for women’s tennis has been well short of the $125,000 needed to support that program each year, we announced recently that that sport would be discontinued. In addition, we have eliminated the indoor season for men’s track and field. In order to meet our gender equity commitments, we have replaced women’s tennis with the new
emerging NCAA sport of sand volleyball, with minimal additional funding being required.

- **Conference Affiliation**

  I know many of you are wondering where we are in terms of a single conference affiliation for all or most of our sports programs. Athletics Director Jeff Konya has continued to stay abreast of the ever-shifting landscape of conference memberships and he has kept Vice President Thomas Wallace and me fully informed.

  Here is an example of the sort of things that are happening: San Diego State University, a member of the Mountain West Conference through 2011-12, will now have its football program in the Big East Conference and the rest of its sports in the Big West Conference.

  The changes center mostly around football – how conferences can get the best line-up of football-playing institutions to maximize revenues from cable and television networks. Any other considerations come later.

  Stay tuned.

**CSUB Foundation**

The CSUB Foundation has been a significant campus partner for over 40 years. It will play an increasingly important role in the future of CSUB. The Foundation Board held a retreat two years ago at which they sharpened their mission and reduced the number of committees. Two critical committees are: (1) Community Engagement and Cultivation, and (2) Advocacy. Under the outstanding leadership of the board chair Morgan Clayton, a business leader, the board has developed a new community engagement program called “CSUB Connects.” The second in a series of “Connect” events will be held later this month. In addition to chairing the board, Morgan also chairs the Community Engagement and Cultivation Committee given its centrality to the Foundation mission.

- **Major fund raising campaign**

  We need to engage members of the CSUB Foundation Board of Directors in a major fund raising campaign to: (1) increase the university’s endowment for support of academic programs and scholarships, and (2) to provide much-needed support to address other university priorities. This will be an early top priority for David Melendez our new Vice President for University Advancement.

- **Community Advocacy – “CSUB is Your University”**

  We need to increase significantly the percentage of community members who have a compelling passion for the importance of CSU Bakersfield to the future progress and success of this region and evidence that passion through their
personal engagement, advocacy and philanthropy. You have probably seen the currently-available video with students and alumni telling why “I chose CSUB”. A new video is being prepared that will feature prominent alumni of other universities telling why they also see CSUB as “their” university. I have said that no matter what college or university might be their alma mater, CSUB is also “their” university because it is the university that makes a significant difference in their community in terms of education, quality of life and regional economic development.

The Advocacy Committee is chaired by Greg Bynum, a past board chair and member of the CSUB Alumni Hall of Fame. I will also ask members of the President’s Community Advisory Council to become engaged in our advocacy efforts.

As I move toward the close of my remarks, let me touch on three other topics. First, we are scheduling the first meeting of the University Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee. While we must wait until after the November election before we can have substantive discussions regarding our budget, the committee will be able to move forward on the part of their charge that focuses on strategic planning. In particular, the committee will review strategic indicators for selected initiatives including baseline information and data on our progress to date. We will schedule our next Campus Budget Forum after the November 6th election and the Board of Trustees meeting on November 13th and 14th.

Secondly, this year, as you have heard and by popular demand, we have a special University Day afternoon program for staff. It will begin with lunch with guest speaker Mr. Patrick Prince. Arrangements have been made for all staff to be able to attend this luncheon. Afterwards there will be a staff workshop with Ms. Lois Zsarnay entitled “Find What Works; Build from There.” MPP’s will also have a workshop led by Mr. Prince and me followed by a reception with the President’s Cabinet.

Finally, I want to close by inviting all faculty and staff to participate in the activities of our new student convocation weekend and welcome week. The activities have been enhanced by Dr. Mimms, Dr. Wallace and their staffs. We anticipate another year of record enrollment – 8,255 students – with more than 1300 first-time freshmen, a record freshmen enrollment. In particular, I encourage you to attend the New Student Convocation and Pinning Ceremony which will be held at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday in the Icardo Center. This will be our formal welcoming of new students into this learning community while we express our expectations for student learning, our collective commitment to facilitating their success, and our belief in their potential to graduate from the University.

Thank you, and let’s have a great 2012-13 academic year.