

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, BAKERSFIELD



2024



2025

PRESIDENT'S

ANNUAL REPORT

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P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

At the 2025 spring commencement exercises, I congratulated our graduates on one of the most significant milestones of their lives. But before I handed them the degree they had worked so hard to achieve, I left them with one final question to ponder:

WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE?

Without purpose, the acquisition of knowledge amounts to a diploma to frame and hang on the wall. Purpose gives our dreams momentum and defines who we are. It is our why.

Over the last year, faculty, staff and students clarified CSUB's purpose by embracing our role as Kern County's University. To paraphrase history, we are an institution of the people, by the people and for the people in Kern County.

We honored that purpose in many ways, which you will see in the pages of this report. But I'd like to highlight a few pride points here.

In 2025, we added several new degrees and certification programs, including a bachelor's degree to prepare tomorrow's music teachers. In the Antelope Valley, the hub of discovery and innovation in California, CSUB-AV launched its first STEM degree, in computer science. And in the fall, we welcomed our first cohort to the Doctor of Nursing Practice Program, CSUB's second doctoral degree opportunity.

But being Kern County's University is about much more than providing a first-rate education.

Being Kern County's University is a feeling. An expression of friendship. A welcome sign to our community.

And it's joyous.

Around Kern County, we are partnering with businesses to display `Runner basketball jerseys as we build bridges with neighbors and inspire pride.

We're also reaching out to the faith community to better understand the important issues and topics on the minds and in the hearts of congregation members.

And we are making a vibrant statement on our campus, hanging banners that promote `Runner pride and offering new and imaginative ways to build spirit and loyalty.

One of those initiatives is a cooperative effort between Temblor Brewing Company and Lengthwise Brewing Company, who have joined forces to create `Runner Gold, the first official beer in the long history of CSUB.

That's a lot to celebrate, but what excites me most is that all of those new ideas were incubated in an atmosphere of wonder and bold thinking, an impulse that drives us to attempt ambitious plans that expand our footprint and relevance in the region.

And we're just getting started. Many of the audacious goals we have in store are in the early stages of development but will fill the pages of next year's annual report, so please stay tuned.

One final thought: If you are reading this report, it means you care about Kern County's University. I want to thank you for believing in CSUB, our students and the vision that unites us: a prosperous and secure Kern County through education and community building.



VERNON HARPER JR., PH.D.
PRESIDENT, CSU BAKERSFIELD



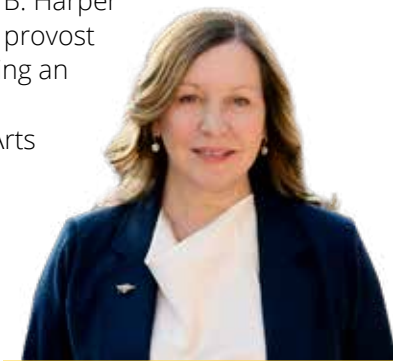
A photograph of a student sitting at a wooden desk in a library, looking at a laptop. The desk is positioned in front of a large window that looks out onto a lush green forest. Bookshelves filled with books are visible on both sides of the desk. The overall atmosphere is quiet and studious.

ACADEMICS

CSUB's mission is to empower students and guide them to academic success. The university offered 35 undergraduate majors, five education credential programs, 17 master's programs and doctoral programs in educational leadership and nursing practice during the 2024-25 academic year. Graduates leave this institution with more than a degree. Most of our graduates' lives are linked closely to the communities that surround CSUB. They contribute the education, skills and passion they developed at Kern County's University to the success of our region.

Dr. Deborah Thien chosen as CSUB's new Provost

California State University, Bakersfield President Vernon B. Harper Jr. announced the appointment of Dr. Deborah Thien as provost and vice president for Academic Affairs on May 2, following an extensive search. Dr. Thien replaced Harper as Provost. She previously served as dean of the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). Dr. Thien earned her BA in English and women's studies at the University of Victoria, Canada; her master's degree in gender studies from the University of Northern British Columbia and her Ph.D. in human geography from the University of Edinburgh in the United Kingdom.



College Future Foundation's
California Mobility Index

New bachelor's degree in music education



CSUB has taken a big step toward providing music students at the university with a path to becoming music teachers in the Kern County region.

The Bachelor of Music (B.M.) in music teacher education elevates CSUB's offerings in music, giving students the opportunity to choose from a more liberal arts focus to their degree or focus on a degree that will set them up for jobs as music teachers in local elementary, middle and high schools.

"We are really excited about this new degree," said Dr. Ángel Vázquez-Ramos, professor and chair of the Music and Theatre Department. "We want to create a new generation of music educators in this area that will help transform Kern County. We need people from here who want to be here and want to make a difference in their community."

The degree is designed to respond to a rising demand for music educators following the passage of Proposition 28 in 2022. The law gives K-12 schools in California extra funding for arts education programs.



Master's Universities
Washington Monthly



Top Public Schools in U.S. News'
2026 Best Colleges report

#20

Top 50 Most Affordable Colleges
and Universities, University HQ

#21

Top Performers on Social Mobility
U.S. News and World Report

#23

CollegeNET national 2025
Social Mobility Ranking

Carnegie Foundation classifies CSUB as Research University

The prestigious American Council on Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching gave CSUB the new Research Colleges and Universities (RCU) classification in 2025, indicating its growing dedication to research that adds to the collective knowledge of the nation and the world.

“Receiving the Carnegie Classification for research is a benchmark of CSUB excellence that puts Kern County’s University in an entirely different league,” said President Vernon B. Harper Jr. “It is impossible to overstate how prestigious and important this recognition is because it will allow us to recruit top researchers into the ranks of our already exceptional faculty and provides another reason for our region’s students to study right here at home in pursuit of their university degree. It also brings distinction to Kern County, for it is due to the support of CSUB by this community that our groundbreaking research is possible.”



CSUB has several centers and institutes that offer research opportunities for students and faculty, including the California Energy Research Center, Public History Institute, Center for Environmental Studies and the Center for Economic Education and Research.





California State University, Bakersfield delivers a powerful economic boost to the Kern County region and the state of California in general. A recent economic survey by the California State University system showed just how much financial benefit our campus contributes to the communities we serve.

For every dollar the state invested in the campus, CSUB generated \$15.24 in statewide industry activity. In California:

- **CSUB supports 5,800 jobs**
- **Contributes \$226.6 million in wages earned**
- **Creates \$585 million in industry activity**
- **Generates \$45.9 million in state and local tax revenue**

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Alumni impact

CSUB alumni had higher median income attributed to their CSU degrees, totaling \$1.4 billion. That supported statewide impacts of 8,100 jobs, \$582.1 million wages earned, \$1.7 billion in industry activity and \$133.9 million in state and local tax revenue.

More than 11,000 students are pursuing their degrees at CSUB's campuses in Bakersfield and in the Antelope Valley, many of whom are first-generation. While students come from various backgrounds and bring their own unique experiences, what connects them at CSUB is a shared passion to learn, grow, graduate and use their degree to drive positive change in their lives and in their communities. Here are a few stories highlighting their successes.

STUDENTS



Jonathan Juarez and Christine Sipin

Sipin and Juarez were both named CSUB's top undergraduate and graduate students of 2025, respectively. Sipin, who attended CSUB's Antelope Valley campus, received her bachelor's in sociology with a minor in criminology. She excelled despite having to cope with the loss of her five-month-old son to sudden infant death syndrome shortly before starting at the university. Sipin works as a volunteer at the California Correctional Institution in Tehachapi and would like to become a correctional psychiatrist. Juarez graduated with his master's in biology and holds a bachelor's in the subject from CSUB. His research focused on water ecology. Juarez was one of several student researchers who have joined Dr. Rae McNeish in studying how water loss in the Kern River has impacted local wildlife. He now works as a staff biologist at an environmental consulting company.

"Christine and Jonathan are among the top students not just at CSUB, but in the entire nation," President Vernon B. Harper Jr. said. "It is a misconception that this region's best and brightest students go somewhere else for college, and these two brilliant scholars are proof of that. They have chosen to stay right here in their communities, devoting their time and talent to the concerns, opportunities and needs of their friends and neighbors. And they excelled in the face of incredible challenges."



11,573

2024-2025 AVERAGE
ENROLLMENT

2,600

DEGREES CONFERRED
ANNUALLY

60%

STAY IN THE REGION
AFTER GRADUATION

Julie Esty

Esty wasn't ready for college after graduating high school, so she opted to join the U.S. Army instead. After sustaining an injury that resulted in the end of her service after seven years, the New Jersey native decided to move to Bakersfield for a fresh start and finally give college a shot. Esty thrived at CSUB, where she graduated with dual bachelor's degrees in psychology and criminal justice. She wants to be a therapist for juveniles in the prison system. Having struggled herself with behavioral issues as a youth, Esty believes she can help put them on a path to making better life choices.

"I want to be there for them and see if we can make a difference. When they act out, it's usually them asking for help," Esty said. "Today, as an adult, I'm succeeding because I'm on proper medication and proper therapy. I have all the tools that I need to thrive, but some of these kids don't."



'Runner Involve aims to increase student engagement

To encourage more students to participate in clubs and activities on campus, the Office of Student Involvement has expanded its club management program — formerly known as RunnerSync — and rebranded it as `Runner Involve. The online platform allows students to not only join clubs and manage their involvement but also keep track of skills and experiences they've acquired through their participation. Students can also earn rewards points just for attending events, which can be redeemed for CSUB gear.



FACULTY & STAFF

CSUB employs more than 1,229 dedicated faculty and staff with collective expertise, knowledge and commitment to students, the CSUB community and Kern County. Their mission is to strengthen and inspire student success through collaboration in the community and across the region. Their work continues to grow and advance the university.

Here are a few faculty and staff stories.

1,229

FACULTY AND STAFF



California Energy Research Center (CERC) Director Katy Larson

Katy Larson has ambitious goals for CERC, including expanding its scope and increasing its visibility within the community and beyond. She was appointed in 2025.

Larson has been in Bakersfield since 2013, when she joined Occidental Petroleum, which later became California Resources Corporation (CRC). She worked there for eight years, contributing to field operations across California and participating in the company's early carbon sequestration efforts.

She later worked for Tallgrass Energy as a geoscience compliance manager, where she built and led a carbon sequestration compliance and permitting program, before joining the CSUB family.

"I was drawn to the energy industry because I am a lifelong learner. There is never a shortage of learning opportunities and innovation," Larson said. "I love the fast pace of the technology and research, as well as the day-to-day operations. I realized this is what I want to do."

New 'Runners Baseball Coach Jordon Banfield

Jordon Banfield joined California State University, Bakersfield, in July 2024 as the fourth baseball coach in the university's history. He brought nearly 20 years of experience to the role after serving as head coach at Oakland University, where he led the program to its first winning season in 25 years and its first 30-win season in 27 years.

Banfield also brought experience in building competitive programs, with a focus on helping CSUB become a contender in The Big West and return to the NCAA Regionals.

"I'm deeply committed to building a program that the university and city of Bakersfield can be proud of," Banfield said. "Support us and stick with us, and I promise the 'Runners will truly be on the rise in short order."

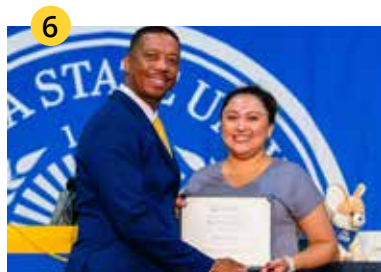


FACULTY AND STAFF

Faculty and staff recognized for dedication to university

CSUB recognized five educators during the 2025 University Day event as faculty and staff returned to campus to celebrate and recognize the upcoming academic year.

"These are educators who consistently provide our students with the critical components necessary to achieve a high-quality education," Academic Senate Chair Dr. Melissa Danforth said. "Not only do they contribute to the overall mission of CSU Bakersfield, but they also contribute significantly to their individual fields, elevating the value of a degree from our institution and the reputation of our university in the local community and beyond."



This year's faculty award recipients were:

- 1 **Dr. Kristina LaGue**, professor of teacher education, Millie Ablin Excellence in Teaching Award
- 2 **Dr. Danielle Solano**, professor of chemistry and biochemistry, Faculty Leadership and Service Award
- 3 **Lindsay Nelson-Berkert**, criminal justice lecturer, Outstanding Lecturer Award
- 4 **Dr. Matthew Herman**, assistant professor of geology, Promising New Faculty Award
- 5 **Dr. Elaine Correa**, professor of human development and child, adolescent and family studies, Faculty Scholarship and Creative Activity Award

The Outstanding Staff Member Award was presented to two employees in recognition of their dedication and service:

- 6 **Maria Diaz**, dean's assistant for the College of Business and Public Administration
- 7 **Michelle Monge**, administrative support coordinator for the Communications Department

"Both Maria and Michelle received multiple glowing nominations highlighting their impact and excellence," said Staff Forum member Jasmine Padilla. "Thank you, Maria and Michelle, for your hard work and dedication in going above and beyond the call of duty."



Kern County's communities are one of the driving forces behind CSUB's growth and success. Our supporters provide transformational resources to help students achieve their goals. The university is focused on strengthening its community partnerships through events, collaboration, sponsorships and other initiatives. Here are some examples of how CSUB is building those relationships.

COMMUNITY

Making CSUB Kern County's University

CSUB launched several efforts last fall to build awareness and strengthen its ties with local businesses in the community.



In August, the university began a year-long campaign to recognize its relationships with business partners through the presentation of framed basketball jerseys. Businesses that have received them include the Grow Public Schools, Old River Grill, Sol Y Luna, Eureka!, Mama Tosca's, Mom's House and Athena's Greek Cafe.



CSUB also launched its first official beer: `Runner Gold. The light lager is a partnership between Temblor Brewing Company and Lengthwise Brewing Company. Besides being sold at CSUB games, `Runner Gold is also available on tap at select Temblor and Lengthwise locations. A portion of sales go to support CSUB's student-athletes.

Students, faculty and staff are also now able to show their CSUB pride by purchasing a San Joaquin kit fox plushie from the `Runner bookstore. A portion of the sales proceeds goes toward conservation efforts for the kit foxes that make CSUB their home.



CSUB holds NextTech Kern

The university held its first NextTech Kern conference on October 2, which brought together hundreds of students, educators, business leaders and community partners to explore the future of technology. The inaugural conference centered on artificial intelligence and how it is impacting academia, business and cybersecurity. The event featured speakers, hands-on sessions and demos as well as student research showcases.

"NextTech Kern is more than just a tech event; it's a regional movement to spotlight how innovation, education and industry come together to shape the future of Kern County," said Associate Vice President and Chief Information Officer Chris Diniz.





CSUB begins development of new strategic plan

CSUB has begun the process of drafting a new strategic plan that will guide the university over the next five years. The plan will lay out a list of goals and strategies for how it will serve students in the future. The university has begun the process of collecting feedback from employees, students and community members on how CSUB can better meet their needs and prepare for future challenges.

"This strategic plan will highlight what our core values are as an institution and how we work to meet the needs of our community," said Strategic Plan Co-Chair Dr. Shaylyn Marks. "Our main goal is to make sure that our students are having a positive learning experience so that they can be strong contributors to our community and society as a whole."

Energy Innovation Building gets key approval

The California State University Board of Trustees approved the designs for CSUB's Energy Innovation Building in 2025, paving the way for a groundbreaking in January 2026. The 56,000-square-foot, three-story building will serve as the hub for energy research on campus and will be located south of one of the university's existing science buildings. The new facility will include teaching labs, student research and collaboration space and a 240-seat events hall. Bynum Inc. of Bakersfield is serving as project manager while Architect AC Martin of Los Angeles and construction contractor Swinerton of San Francisco are collaborating on the design.

"The Energy Innovation Building will be more than a building; it will be the physical representation of CSUB's vision for a STEM-prepared workforce to meet the opportunities and demands of the future and a hub for research, exploration and new ideas to meet the world's energy needs responsibly and sustainably," said President Vernon B. Harper Jr.





THE ENERGY INNOVATION BUILDING (RENDERING)

PHILANTHROPY

A large group of people is gathered at an outdoor evening event, likely a gala or fundraiser. The scene is illuminated by warm string lights hanging from trees and a gazebo in the background. People are seen talking and dining at round tables. The overall atmosphere is festive and social.

More than 1,790 donors donated \$5.08 million to California State University, Bakersfield during the 2024-25 fiscal year, helping the university to passionately pursue educational experiences for our students that transform their families and our communities.

DONOR STATISTICS

MORE THAN

1,790

GENEROUS DONORS

APPROXIMATELY

\$5.08

MILLION RAISED IN 2024-25

Notable gifts provided during the 2024-25 fiscal year include:

- **Phil and Lisa Cerro** made an estate gift commitment of \$1 million to the University, which will support the William and Laura Edwards Scholarship Endowment, the Cerro Family Scholarship Endowment, CSUB Athletics, the CSUB Education Department and the CSUB President's efforts to improve and maintain the university.
- **Chevron** gave \$610,000 to support the CSUB Fab Lab, NSME's Public Health Department, the Chevron SURE program, President's Associates, Science, Engineering, Health Career Education video production, STEM student affinity group professional development, Vex Robotics competitions and clubs and the CSUB Alumni Hall of Fame.
- **Valley Strong Credit Union** gave \$301,000 in support to a three-year pledge for the Valley Strong Credit Union Athletics Scholarship, Alumni Party in the Park, Kegley Institute of Ethics, Vally Strong Student Fellows, President's Associates, Future Runner Day, Alumni Hall of Fame, Baseball Lead-Off dinner and the CSUB Spring BBQ.
- **Bill Lazzerini, Jr.** pledged \$250,000 to support the Athletic Baseball Turf Project.



“

I believe that being part of the Student Research Scholars program has really pushed my academic career. Before starting, I wasn't sure how I wanted to pursue this degree. I've really been appreciative of the ability to do a lot of research.

*- Francisco Ortega
Student Research Scholar*

ENDOWMENT

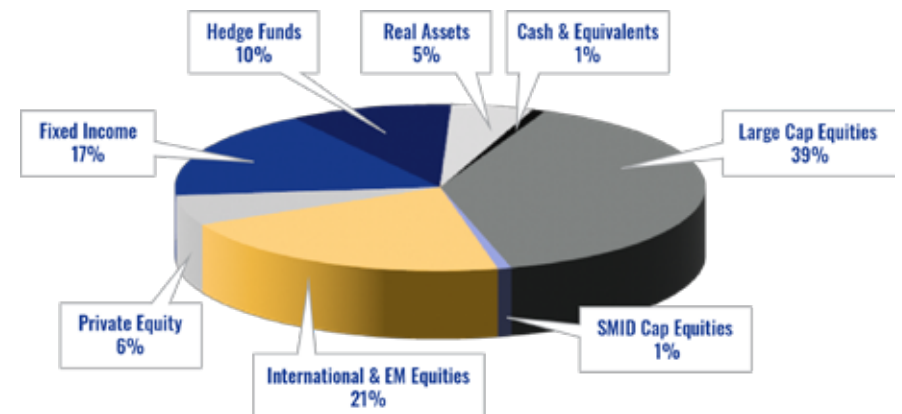
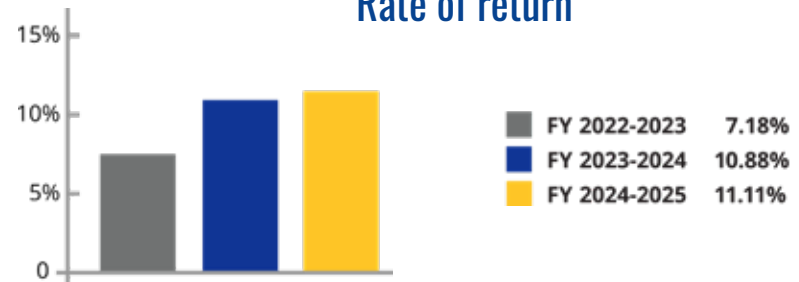
Philanthropic gifts that create endowments are critical to ensure CSUB students have ongoing sources of funding and support for their academic pursuits. Endowments provide donors the ability to create an enduring legacy for themselves while also creating opportunities for students who might otherwise been challenged to attend CSUB, complete research or complete their educations.

Endowment fund asset allocation

The endowment pool is invested in accordance with the CSUB Foundation's investment policy, which is designed with principal preservation and controlled growth as the main focus. With this long-term objective in mind, the portfolio is a diversified mix of investments across a broad range of asset classes, including equities (stocks), fixed income (bonds) and alternative investments. The assets are managed externally by professional investment managers hired by the CSUB Foundation and are closely monitored by the Foundation's Finance Committee.

The CSU Bakersfield Foundation invested endowment balance as of June 30, 2025 is \$46.98 million, allocated as follows:

Rate of return



ATHLETICS



*Here are highlights from
Roadrunner Athletics' 2024-25 year:*



CSUB launched its inaugural Athletics Hall of Fame celebration, honoring `Runners (pictured L to R) Loni Burton, Rudy Carvajal, Charles Craig, Stephen Neal and the 1992-93 Men's Basketball Team.



Jemel Jones reset the CSUB Men's Basketball all-time single-game scoring record, tallying 45 points in a victory that broke a 31-year-old record.



Road

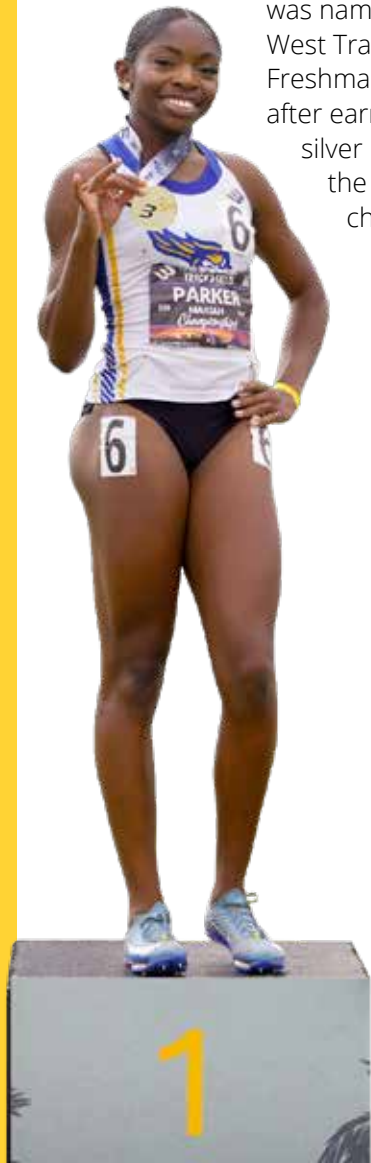
Cal State Bakersfield Wrestling sent three `Runners to the NCAA Championships, with AJ Ferrari placing third and earning the team's first All-American honors in a decade.



Photo (R):
Jake Andrews



winners



Makiah Parker was named the Big West Track & Field Freshman of the Year after earning gold and silver medals at the conference championships.



Roadrunner Swim & Dive earned nine medals at the Big West Championship, including three from junior **Vili Sivec**, who also represented CSUB and his home country of Croatia at the World Championships this year.

Across 96 **ESPN+ broadcasts**, CSUB Athletics enjoyed almost 250,000 viewers tuning in to watch the Runners compete, with an average viewership of 2,430 per contest. The Men's Basketball team ranked #2 in The Big West in average viewers (5,535).

The CSUB Women's Soccer team reached the Big West Championship final.



CSUB student-athletes completed over 2,013 hours of community service during the 2024-25 school year.

ATHLETICS STATISTICS

MORE THAN

2,000

HOURS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR THE 2024-25 ACADEMIC YEAR

Scholar-athletes continued to earn an annual cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher, a streak that now runs 21 consecutive terms and culminated in a 3.21 GPA at the end of the 2024-2025 academic year.

CUMULATIVE

3.21

GPA FOR THE 2024-25 ACADEMIC YEAR

CSUB student-athletes posted a Graduation Success Rate of 90%, a new program record and the fourth-straight season with an increased score.

CUMULATIVE

90%

GRADUATION SUCCESS RATE

Women's Soccer student-athlete **Catalina Roggerone** helped Argentina place third at the Copa America Feminina.



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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