



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

California State University, Bakersfield

Dear Campus Community,

One year ago, each member of our CSU Bakersfield family left behind our classmates, colleagues and friends to return to the safety of our homes amid alarming reports of a deadly new virus.

At that time, no one had any idea how long we would need to shelter in place, how we would deliver instruction or when the pandemic would subside, allowing us to resume our normal lives.

It is still difficult to fully grasp the toll this year has taken on all of us. Lives lost. Despair. Isolation. Financial hardship. The grief has been difficult to bear.

But as we see signs that we are turning a corner in this pandemic, I look back in wonder at all that has happened and I see grace and determination from every member of our CSUB family. I see a community that has made sacrifices time and again for the greater good.

This entire year, we have reflected on the 50th anniversary of our beloved CSUB. And we should.

Yet as proud as we are of the transformative moments in the history of this great institution, I can't help but believe that 2020-21 will be remembered as the most extraordinary year yet.

We have suffered the loss of family members, friends, colleagues and neighbors. Together.

We have changed the way we learn and teach. Together.

We have figured out ways to do our jobs away from the resources on campus. Together.

We have managed to keep going even on the darkest of days. Together.

We have sacrificed. We have mourned. We have known fear.

And we have done all of this for the good of ourselves and our families, but also for one another.

To our students: As enrollment numbers have fallen at other universities, you have chosen to continue your studies. This has not been an easy choice to make. But it is the right choice. And when you receive your degree, you will know that it was earned through sacrifices few college students in history have been asked to make.

To our faculty: You have leaned on one another to innovate solutions to the challenges of virtual instruction, always putting the students first. Through hardship, and under great pressure, you have revolutionized teaching. It is through your dedication that so many of our students have remained committed to their education.

To our staff: The backbone of all of our efforts at CSUB is service to our students. Across the CSUB universe, you serve this vital mission in so many ways: by keeping us safe, informed, uplifted, fiscally sound and more. You do this with no expectation of being noticed for your work. But I notice.

There is a spirit here at CSUB. I felt it the moment I first visited campus in 2018. It is based in mutual respect, a common bond that tethers us to our university home – and to each other. This year has only strengthened and deepened those ties.

I would like to close by offering my sympathy and love to all of our community members who have lost loved ones to this virus. May you hold the memories these precious people in your hearts forever.

And as you take the time to reflect and to grieve, please take comfort in knowing that you have the entire 'Runner family behind you.

Ernest Hemmingway once wrote, "The world breaks everyone and, afterward, many are strong at the broken places."

We will emerge from this crisis stronger. United. Together.



Lynnette Zelezny, Ph.D., M.B.A.
President



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