

September 19, 2016

Good morning everyone and welcome back to campus!

I am excited to be here for my first convocation at CSUSB and I am honored to be the first woman in CSUSB history to serve as your Provost. I've been an educator for nearly 20 years and I come to you from Cal State Fullerton, where I spent the last 16 years working my way up the faculty ranks and then serving as chair, dean and deputy provost. I have a bachelor's degree and Ph.D. in social ecology from UC Irvine, and a master's degree in health science from Cal State Northridge. So I am a product of our public education system. I believe in it and I have a son graduating from a CSU this year!

It's only been 2 ½ weeks since I formally started and I know I made the right decision. You have all been kind and incredibly helpful. A special thank you to Juan Delgado, your previous interim provost. You are a gem and I so appreciate your insight, talent and patience walking me through things. Please join me in thanking Juan for his service to this great institution (Present Juan with token of appreciation).

Last week I was asked to represent the campus at a Gates foundation meeting. Gates usually doesn't attend individual campuses- they like to do system things. After reading the public policy report that peeked their interest, I knew why they were visiting -- they want to know how we do it? No or little achievement gap? Some might say impossible. Most campuses can't figure how to reduce the achievement gap. But this campus has because of the intentionality in the way our faculty reach out to our students. A second area they were interested in was remediation through a residential program--coyote first step - a residential program bringing math remediation and English/literacy readiness- this was amazing. I want to thank the 60+ faculty that participated in coyote first step and I hope others can be involved next year as we transform lives and become nationally known for our efforts. We are not only valued early on in the students' career but take them on a journey of discovery through research and creative activities that provide high quality high impact experiences for our students.

What I have found here is that there is a compassion and commitment from faculty and staff regarding our students. Your selfless attitude is apparent in serving nearly 1000 different students last year with the food pantry. Our students, 80% first generation, are at risk for poverty. I know your mentorship will empower them and they will graduate CSUSB with a sense of hope, pride and encouragement.

All this university can become is frankly up to you. You will last through many cycles of students and administrators. I know we have faculty that have served this institution for up to 40 years

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which is a testament to this university. This is why it is important as I go on my listening tour I get an understanding of who and what you want to be and where you want to go as an institution. I do know from your strategic plan that you would like a faculty center for excellence. I envision a one stop shop for faculty. You could take classes, meet other faculty, get software or your laptop fixed, chat over a cup of coffee or brainstorm on a research project. More importantly you can collaborate across disciplines to understand complex societal problems, such as food and water security, social justice issues, cybersecurity, terrorism, aging and chronic illness. These require different paradigms working together. I look forward to working with you on this center for excellence and other faculty support initiatives. In fact, we will be having our first faculty night on October 18th rooting on our coyote volleyball team ...you and a guest are invited and if you register you will be invited to a special VIP reception with food and beverages. Please join me in thanking Dr. Haynes from student affairs and our athletics department.

We continually have to respond to external pressures to graduate in less time, do more with less. I know there are challenges with this but I want to make sure we do our part in helping students achieve success and removing impediments that get in the way. I know through the campuses commitment to purposeful and transformational change we will serve as a model for other institutions on how we can deliver the opportunity for social mobility of these underserved students. As we seek to serve others I look forward to serving you

Now it gives me great pleasure to introduce CSUSB's 4 other Vice Presidents:

Dr. Doug Freer, Vice President for Administration and Finance  
Dr. Ron Fremont, Vice President for University Advancement  
Dr. Brian Haynes, Vice President for Student Affairs, and  
Dr. Sam Sudhakar, Vice President for Information Technology

Thank you for joining us this morning. I'd like to now introduce the Deans of each college who will introduce all of their faculty.

Please let us now welcome our Senate Chair, Karen Kolehmainen who will, on behalf of the CFA, invite everyone to lunch.

Thank you,  
Shari McMahan, Ph.D.  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs