

Appendix 9

Colleagues,

Welcome back to campus as we begin 2017! I hope each and every one of you enjoyed a well-deserved holiday break with family and friends. A new calendar year provides an opportunity to reflect back on our ongoing efforts to strengthen campus life, providing our faculty and staff the type of professional experience that builds community and reinforces our commitment to transparency and shared governance.

I have spent a great deal of time meeting and speaking with you, both collectively and individually; in addition, the Vice Presidents have committed extensive time to meet with and carefully listen to members of their respective divisions. Those conversations have revealed four primary areas that required a greater commitment from me and the entire leadership team, including communication, expanding social opportunities and building community, strengthening professional pathways, and faculty/staff workload.

We have great reason to be proud of our collective progress in all of these areas:

- **COMMUNICATION:** From a macro prospective, we have created a number of new tools that allow us to celebrate our mission and the work of those that support our students, including the bi-weekly Inside CSUSB videos which showcase our success stories, while the redesigned home page provides a new front porch for prospective students, friends and families. I have also worked personally to keep you current on the most important issues facing campus life, both locally and nationally.

But just as important as these mass communications, we need to continue to grow the communication within colleges, divisions and departments. I encourage all of us to reach out to one another. Know that I will continue to meet with you all in small groups and one-on-one, while the vice presidents and deans will continue to do the same within their divisions and colleges.

Another aspect of communication is how we collectively interact, reflecting our commitment to build a common framework for engagement. This includes our campus-wide interpersonal dialogue amongst students, faculty and staff. Virtually every MPP has completed an HR sponsored training on Microaggressions, a program we hope to make available to faculty, staff and student leaders. In addition, Provost Shari McMahan, Faculty Senate Chair Karen Kolehmainen and ASI President Alex Gutierrez are tri-chairing a task force on Campus Collegiality and Respect. We look forward to sharing those outcomes later this spring.

- **SOCIAL INTERACTIONS:** Bringing back the campus picnic was, quite frankly, the most frequent suggestion I heard a year ago. I am pleased to say that we did just that, coming together on Sept. 16 for a great day of food and fun. The feedback was great and we will make it happen every fall. In addition, the tragedy on Dec. 2, 2015 required that we

move the annual holiday party to January. That proved to be very successful and the feedback allowed us to create a new year welcome event, scheduled for later this month on Jan. 20.

We have also made a commitment to wellness, providing each of our employees complimentary access to the CSUSB Recreation and Wellness Center and the Palm Desert Fitness Center. There are also other things going on locally, including a bowling league that has been around for many years. But we also want to hear your ideas. If there is a different opportunity that you would like promoted, please let me know.

- **PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:** In support of faculty, the Faculty Center for Excellence Committee has been working hard to develop and program that allows for interdisciplinary collaboration and enhanced research training. The committee has also created a vision statement, organizational chart and has been working collectively across all disciplines.

Every faculty or staff member who is truly committed to growing professionally should be given the type of counsel and support they need. In November, Rowena Casis-Woidyla was named as the inaugural Director of Leadership Development and Employee Enrichment, charged with strengthening our growing number of professional development training opportunities. We are prepared to invest in career advising and advance support of professional development opportunities in every division and college.

The campus picnic also provided an opportunity to launch a Staff Development Day. And as part of the Strategic Plan, we are also moving towards the development and implementation of a Staff Development Center.

- **WORKLOAD:** This remains one of the most difficult issues for us to address. You have likely heard me share that CSUSB ranks as the second lowest funded campus in the CSU. There isn't a department on campus that has a full complement of faculty and staff. But that cannot stop us from giving our students an exceptional experience.

In 2015-16, we dedicated \$7.75 million to fund faculty reassigned time, resulting in only 8% of our full-time tenure/tenure-track faculty teaching full quarter loads. The Provost and I are committed to continuing to support faculty in this way, allowing them to grow professionally with an equitable work load.

Some staff have also faced an expanding portfolio. If we have people working out of classification, we must adjust accordingly. Our team in Human Resources will work with any department to address potential inequities to ensure people are treated and compensated fairly.

While last year marked our 50th Anniversary, this June will be the 50th Commencement exercise in university history. Many of you have spent your entire careers in service of our students. Your efforts have had a remarkable impact on our alumni and this community.

We are facing an exciting era in public higher education. To meet the challenges of the next decade and beyond will require creativity, innovation and imagination, skillsets that define this community.

I remain incredibly proud to be a part of the Coyote Family, as committed as ever to support our unique culture and address opportunities that will strengthen our mission.

Again, thank you for all your efforts and I look forward to seeing you on campus.

Tomás D. Morales
President