Open Letter to the Sacramento State Community:

During the fall 2009 term, the sixth-year review of Alexander Gonzalez, President of California State University, Sacramento was conducted. The review took the form of collecting and summarizing letters from a selection of the campus and external community members, and visit in November 2009 by a four-person team. The review concluded on January 26, 2010, with a discussion of the review by the CSU Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees and I appreciate the contributions of those who worked with us on this review.

Criteria established by the Board of Trustees in 1984, and updated in 1994 and 2001, were used to assess the performance of President Gonzalez and the progress of the institution. These measures included the overall management of the institution, relations on campus and within the system, educational leadership, community relations, major achievements of the campus and the president, and personal characteristics of the president. Faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community representatives were invited to submit written comments responding to the trustees’ criteria.

The visiting team was comprised of Dr. Roy McTarnaghan, President-emeritus, Florida Gulf Coast University; Ms. Melinda Guzman, member, CSU Board of Trustees; Dr. Roberto Haro, Professor-emeritus, César Chávez Policy Institute, San Francisco State University; and, Mr. Don W. Kassing, President-emeritus, San José State University. Following advance preparation with resource material, the team conducted one-on-one interviews of a selection of the campus and community on November 9.

The results of the team’s interviews and the written responses draw consistent conclusions that Dr. Alexander Gonzalez is an effective president for Sacramento State.

Among the achievements of the university and President Gonzalez are: successful re-accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC); developing and implementing the Destination 2010 concept; fostering improved communication, collaboration, and transparency on campus; improving connectivity with the community and the alumni; constructing the Eli and Edyth Broad Fieldhouse, the American River Courtyard student apartments, the bookstore, the parking structure with 3200 spaces, and the soon to be completed student recreation and wellness center; acquiring the former CalSTRS building that will be used for expansion of the nursing program and the speech program; establishing the
Open Letter to the Sacramento State Community  
January 2010  
Page Two

University Budget Advisory Committee and the Strategic Planning Council; instituting the honors program; requiring orientation for new students and advisement for continuing students; acquiring 25-acres for future development of faculty/student housing; improving campus signage; and, elevating the image of the university.

The review results point to the successes President Gonzalez has had in implementing the Destination 2010 initiative: build a welcoming campus; create a dynamic physical environment; foster excellent academic and student programs; and, develop community support for the institution. In completing the initiative, Dr. Gonzalez re-invigorated and modernized the campus.

In terms of transforming the physical campus, recently completed projects are the bookstore, the Eli and Edyth Broad Fieldhouse, the 3,200 space parking structure, and the American River Courtyard student apartments. Soon to be completed is the student Recreation and Wellness Center. All of these projects fall under the Destination 2010 vision.

At the same time, he has de-mystified the budget process early in his presidency, established the University Budget Advisory Committee (UBAC), and formulated a Strategic Plan with inclusive internal and external community input. The creation of the UBAC is viewed by faculty members as a transforming measure that created transparency, shared responsibility, and good will – essentially a new era of openness. This is a fundamental change from past practice at the university.

President Gonzalez has appointed an effective group of vice presidents who work well together. As an example, the Student Affairs division works closely with Academic Affairs to support student success and the university life experience. President Gonzalez bases decisions on presentation of facts developed by the leadership team. His ultimate priority is that students come first. To discuss important campus issues, President Gonzalez convenes town hall meetings.

A visit by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) in spring 2009 praised the university for its clear commitment to students through the support of
Open Letter to the Sacramento State Community  
January 2010  
Page Three  

student learning and assessment. Retention and graduate rates are improving but remain as the next big priority for President Gonzalez to address with the campus. All new students are required to participate in orientation as a condition of enrollment and a system is in place to flag students who are struggling academically.

President Gonzalez is an active participant in regional civic and community affairs. Dr. Gonzalez has participated as a member of the Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce, Linking Education and Economic Development, World Trade Center, Sacramento Area Commerce and Trade Association, United Way, and Colleagues in Conversation. Currently, he serves on the boards of Valley Vision and Sutter Health. At the CSU system level, he is member of the Presidents’ Council on Underserved Communities. He has served on presidential search committees for Channel Islands and East Bay as well as the Technology Steering Committee.

Alumni, business leaders, and legislative staff praise President Gonzalez for bringing the community to the campus for events and to be included in important initiatives. Dr. Gonzalez has successfully bridged a gap that existed for a number of years.

President Alexander Gonzalez and I discussed this review and established the following goals:

- In accord with Trustee policy on student retention and graduation, make student academic performance a key priority of the university in order to ratchet up success rates in retention and graduation.

- Maintain visibility on the campus and continue using communication devices such as holding town hall meetings as a means to engage in conversations with faculty, students, and staff as a means of understanding concerns and solving problems.

- Engage in a campus wide program to increase awareness on diversity issues to avoid the type of actions that have been observed and felt, to address intolerance and biases.
Open Letter to the Sacramento State Community
January 2010
Page Four

- Impress upon the university community the importance of hiring and retaining a diverse faculty and staff.
- Diversify sources of funds needed to support the university, including generation of income from acquired properties.
- Continue lifting institutional aspirations for successes in donor support.
- Increase efforts with the K-12 schools to graduate students who are academically prepared to enter the university.
- Continue the community outreach efforts that are yielding benefits in terms of campus identity, friends and supporters, and partnerships.
- Continue making alumni relations a priority.

Dr. Alexander Gonzalez is deeply committed to the success of California State University, Sacramento, and its students, staff, and faculty. He is an energetic, dedicated, focused, motivated and very capable president for California State University, Sacramento, and it is noteworthy that these attributes are finally being appreciated. Dr. Gonzalez has transformed the institution into one that is respected and appreciated in the Sacramento region.

With kind regards,

Sincerely,

Charles B. Reed
Chancellor

CBR/ wd