Green & Gold Gala celebrates past, nods to future

More than 600 Sacramento State supporters and members of the campus community came together Friday, March 22, to celebrate 10 years of leadership by President Alexander and Gloria Gonzalez during the 2013 Green & Gold Gala.

The black-tie fundraiser, held in the University Union Ballroom, was a time to reflect on the University’s many accomplishments under their guidance – a Decade of Distinction – and to anticipate what’s to come.

A nod to the future came with the announcement of the President Alexander and Gloria Gonzalez Public Service and Community Leadership Scholarship, created as a legacy for the couple by the Sacramento State alumni and community and business leaders who served on the Gala’s organizing committee.

“I hope this scholarship will make public service more attractive, so that future leaders can feel the sense of accomplishment that comes with helping others live better lives,” Gonzalez said before introducing the first recipient, Katherine “Katie” Williams. She’s a junior psychology major from Milpitas, who hopes to work with adolescents as a clinical psychologist and to advocate for the rights of the mentally ill.

In his remarks, Gonzalez also acknowledged the changes that have taken place during his tenure at the University.

“Together we built new facilities for teaching and learning, with community engagement to support those programs. … And together we elevated Sacramento State to new heights as a university – one that is viewed as an even greater asset in the region and worthy of the pride, hope and promise that we all feel tonight,” he said.

“On a deeper, and in many ways more important level, we have changed the way we interact with our students and with one another as colleagues.”

Among the changes and accomplishments that have taken place under the President’s leadership are:

- The number of freshman applicants increased by nearly 75 percent.
- Key initiatives led to an increase in underrepresented students, who now make up 60 percent of the Sac State student body.
Nearly 85 percent of graduating seniors said they would enroll at Sacramento State, if given the chance to choose a college again.

Of those graduating seniors, more than 82 percent said they were satisfied with the overall quality of instruction.

43 classrooms were renovated and upgraded with advanced “smart” teaching technology.

As of fall 2012, 6 percent of class sections were taught fully or partly online.

Nearly 400 top students have enrolled in the General Education Honors Program since it began in 2006.

Sponsored research grants to faculty increased by more than 33 percent.

The University signed international partnerships with campuses on six continents, to increase study-abroad opportunities for our students.

And last month, Gonzalez and Congresswoman Doris Matsui unveiled Sacramento State’s cutting-edge molecular biology lab known as CIMERA, or Center for Interdisciplinary Molecular Biology Education, Research and Advancement. The renovated laboratory, which was 10 years in the making, strengthens the University’s leadership in education for the all-important STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields.

Gloria Gonzalez shares her husband’s love for the University and the greater Sacramento community. Among her passions are women’s empowerment efforts and improving students’ lives through scholarships. A large percentage of the $118.9 million in private support Sacramento State received over the past 10 years has gone to student scholarships.

“While it is important to reflect on what we have done, we must always be mindful of the long-term needs of our University – and continue to prepare for the future,” the President said.

He spoke of a new Master Plan, which is a blueprint for all physical aspects of the campus, from classrooms and traffic flow to housing and amenities. A part of the plan addresses opportunities to develop the south end of campus and the potential there for new student housing, retail, restaurants and an events center.

“We also are working with our faculty to identify more ways to foster student success,” he said. “Some of this involves making our curriculum more responsive to the changes taking place in society, as well as the need to prepare our students to be competitive in the workplace. But we must also be cautious and strategic as we implement curricular changes and utilize technology in a smart way.

“Doing everything we can to help students has always been a very personal issue for me,” Gonzalez said.
The generous sponsors of the 2013 Green & Gold Gala included Sutter Health, University Enterprises, Inc., and Wells Fargo at the Presidential Level, and TMCS Construction Management at the Platinum Level. The Gold Level sponsors were Douglas and Barbara Patiño, Jeff and Jane Einhorn, Lee Ritchey and Kella Knack, PG&E, the Alex and Faye Spanos Family, and VALIC Financial Advisors, Inc. Click here to see the complete list of sponsors, visit www.csus.edu/gala.

For media assistance, contact Sacramento State’s Office of Public Affairs at (916) 278-6156.

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