CASE honors President Gonzalez for outstanding leadership

President Alexander Gonzalez today received the Chief Executive Officer Leadership Award at the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) District VII conference in Newport Beach.

The biennial award honors an institution president, headmaster, chancellor, system head or other institutional chief executive for his or her efforts to promote the understanding and support of education. District VII covers California, Arizona, Guam, Hawaii, Nevada, the Northern Mariana Islands and Utah.

In accepting the CEO Leadership Award, Gonzalez recalled growing up in East Los Angeles during the 1950s. The expectation was that he, the middle child in a large Hispanic family, would graduate from high school, get a job at a local plant, marry and start a family. He exceeded those expectations, becoming the first in his family to attend and graduate from college.

Gonzalez enrolled at Pomona College on the GI Bill, earning a degree in history, after serving in the Air Force. He attended Harvard Law School and earned a doctorate in psychology from UC Santa Cruz. He later became a professor, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at Fresno State, then served as president of California State University (CSU), San Marcos. In 2003, he was appointed Sacramento State’s 11th president.

“I was fortunate to have many highly educated and insightful mentors throughout my life,” Gonzalez said, “and as I moved upward in my career, I have always made it a priority to pay that gift of mentorship forward. … In education, mentoring allows you to impact the teaching and learning process that takes place across the country today and tomorrow.”

Gonzalez will retire at the end of the 2014-15 academic year after 12 years as Sacramento State’s leader. The CSU Board of Trustees is expected to name his successor in a few weeks. Gonzalez plans to return to Sac State as a member of the faculty.

Among the President’s proudest accomplishments at Sacramento State was his Destination 2010 initiative, which resulted in an honors program, an educational leadership doctorate, additional modernized classrooms, a state-of-the-art recreation and wellness center, a new bookstore and a suite-style residence hall.

And his successful 2012 initiative, Redefine the Possible, was dedicated to transforming Sacramento State into a university for the 21st century, with an emphasis on progress, innovation and marshaling intellectual resources.
Gonzalez leaves Sacramento State poised for the future with a strong strategic plan and visionary master plan in place. – Dixie Reid