



Tuesday, Oct. 15, 2019

To: CSUSM Campus Community

In early September, I sent a [campus message](#) regarding fiscal stewardship and the CSU Audit and Advisory Services' investigation into the spending of one of our employees. I know how much our faculty and staff value our mission and support our collective efforts to carefully manage our resources, particularly related to travel. I take this matter extremely seriously and, thus, want to share an update on what steps we have already taken:

- We are in the process of conducting a comprehensive review of travel expenditures across all divisions, including expenditures funded by both state and CSUSM Corporation accounts. As part of this review process, we have already identified areas for improvement including: limits on travel expenditures related to the cost of hotels and air travel, the frequency of travel, cost of meals, and reimbursement of alcohol; and improving documentation requirements.
- At my request, the university is creating an internal audit function so that we can review our process and protocols related to university spending and internal controls on an ongoing basis.
- Finance and Administrative Services is updating travel and hospitality guides to make authorization and reimbursement processes and protocols clearer.
- We will provide the resources needed for our travel desk to ensure appropriate review of expenses moving forward.
- In September, I gathered senior administrators together to review our travel and expense protocols. I acknowledged that we as a group have areas to improve on and that we must all join together in increasing our accountability moving forward.
- Given the questions raised during my Listening and Learning Tour sessions regarding other travel-related practices such as access to professional development for faculty and staff, and a desire for improvement of the

duplicative and cumbersome travel approval processes, I requested that Finance and Administrative Services create work groups to explore opportunities for improvement and enhanced efficiencies.

I want to reaffirm my commitment to transparency and collaboration within legal parameters. The San Diego Union-Tribune has made additional Public Records Act requests for the travel expenditures of senior executives and deans. We are providing the responsive documents and are reviewing them as part of a larger comprehensive analysis.

As a reminder, once the CSU Audit and Advisory Services' investigation is complete, the report will be made public and available to you. In the meantime, I will continue to update you as appropriate on how we are working to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our university.

In just three short months, you have all shown me how dedicated you are to our mission and you let me know how important it is that our dollars are spent thoughtfully and wisely. I truly believe that what we do now builds a better future for our students, our employees and our region. Thank you for all that you do to make CSUSM such a special place.

Sincerely,
Ellen Neufeldt
President