



Dear CSUSM Students, Faculty and Staff,

Since February 2004, I have had the distinct honor of serving as CSUSM's third president. From that day to the present one, I have felt privileged to lead this unique and very special institution as we have made great strides to increase the educational attainment rate of our region and engage with our communities in unique and meaningful ways.

As CSUSM approaches the close of its first major philanthropic campaign, and given its strong position as a forward-focused institution, it seems to be an appropriate time for first gentleman Jim Mickelson and me to consider our future. After much reflection, I have decided to retire as president of Cal State San Marcos—and Jim as Founding Director of ACE Scholars Services—effective June 30, 2019.

While many have called this moment of deciding to retire bittersweet, and while we all know it is an inevitable moment in one's lifetime, it has been one of the most difficult and emotional decisions of our careers. We are—and always have been—passionate about this work of changing lives, making a difference and advocating for those who cannot advocate for themselves...after all, we are both social workers!

Here at CSUSM, Jim and I both found the quintessential positions to take our passions and turn them into strategies for positive change. Over the years, we have had the gratification to work with immensely talented individuals at all levels of the university. Thanks to our collective work, we have seen the growth of the campus, with new buildings, academic programs, faculty and staff, students and alumni. We have also cultivated the less visible yet still very tangible aspects of our university's development, including the growth of traditions and pride, the solidifying of our campus' unique culture, and the increased visibility and impact of CSUSM in our region and beyond. Today, CSUSM stands as a beacon of inspiration to students of all backgrounds, a welcoming place that values community building, open dialogue, diversity, inclusion and respect.

By giving Chancellor White and the CSU Board of Trustees this early notification, I am providing them as much time as possible to search for a new president who will lead CSUSM through its next phase of growth. Per CSU policy, Adam Day, chairman of the Board of Trustees, will appoint a committee of trustees who will work with an advisory committee comprised of various members of our campus community to identify the next president. The membership of both committees will be publicly announced at a later date. Campus and community input will be sought in an open forum held on campus.

However, this is not a farewell message. Jim and I will continue in our respective roles, just as we have always done, until our final day. I will continue to advance CSUSM according to our strategic plan and initiatives and, at the appropriate time, I will do all I can to ensure a smooth transition to the next president.

In retirement, and while we are still in good health, Jim and I are looking forward to spending time with our family—including our children and grandchildren—to traveling, and to pursuing the next leg of our personal journey. However, let me say again how honored I have been to serve as president of CSUSM, and to work alongside so many dedicated individuals who share such a strong commitment to our students and their success.

Jim and I will always consider ourselves proud Cougars, grateful for the myriad ways students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends have touched our lives.

Sincerely,

Karen S. Haynes  
President

Jim Mickelson  
First Gentleman/Founding Director, ACE Scholars Services