

To: All SDSU Faculty and Staff

From: President Elliot Hirshman

Provost and Senior Vice President Chukuka S. Enwemeka

Vice Presidents Mary Ruth Carleton, Tom McCarron and Eric Rivera

Vice President and Graduate Dean Stephen Welter

University Update

As the summer begins, we have many accomplishments to celebrate and much information to share as a community. We write to provide updates on some of the important developments.

Graduation and Enrollment Update

A few weeks ago we celebrated our 117th Commencement – the highlight of our academic year and one that underscores the profound impact of SDSU on our greater community. Some things have changed since that first class of 26 graduates – the Class of 2016 contains nearly 9,900 graduates, and they were feted over four days at eight ceremonies. The pride of the graduates' family and friends – 47,000 attendees this year – was once again evident as they cheered, recorded the moment in photos and videos, and shed the occasional tear. Under the guidance of our faculty and staff, the Class of 2016 left an important legacy. The number graduating with honors increased by nearly 5 percent, and class members raised \$45,000 for an endowed scholarship to benefit future students – donors wore red-and-white cords at Commencement. We saw the birth of another commencement tradition when mechanical engineering graduate Austin Owens, founder of our Mechatronics Club, received the first Zahn Spirit of Innovation Award and a \$25,000 cash prize funded by SDSU supporter Irwin Zahn. Austin is headed to his first job at SpaceX.

Turning to the future, enrollments remain stable, and we recruited another strong class. This fall we anticipate enrolling 3,400 new transfer students and 5,000 freshmen (average freshman GPA 3.72 and average SAT score 1119). Students of color will make up 60.2 percent of our freshman class.

Financial & Budget Update

Our budget outlook remains stable. We will finish the 2015-16 fiscal year with the budget balanced, and we project another balanced budget for 2016-17. The biggest change in our 2016-17 budget will be increased compensation for our faculty and staff. Governor Brown has proposed \$148 million in additional continuing state funding for the CSU, and his May budget revise added \$25

million in one-time funding for initiatives to increase graduation rates. The final budget will be determined by negotiations between the governor and the Legislature that will conclude by the end of June. Additional state funds will be used to support mandatory cost increases (e.g., increases in employee health-care costs), enrollment growth of 1 percent and a portion of the referenced compensation increases.

Strategic Plan Update

As we near the end of the third year of implementing our strategic plan, “Building on Excellence,” we wish to share our community’s accomplishments in several areas.

- Our Aztec Scholars Initiative has increased enrollment and retention of our African-American and American Indian students. For fall 2016, the total number of African-American applicants who intend to enroll has increased 12.3 percent, and the total number of Native-American students intending to enroll increased 17.8 percent. Retention rates and overall GPA have risen for participants in our Harambee and Elymash Yuuchaap student success programs.
- The number of students enrolled in commuter student learning communities increased this year to 730, and our new Sophomore Surge peer-mentoring program enrolled 235 students.
- Our newly remodeled Pride Center and new Women’s Resource Center are providing expanded programming and additional student support.
- The number of students obtaining internships increased by 22 percent to 3,430, and the number of participants in the Aztec Mentor Program, which pairs students with alumni mentors, increased 63 percent to 1,350.
- International experiences are an important part of the SDSU experience, and 93 faculty members will lead study-abroad programs in 2016-17. Nine students earned Fulbright scholarships for next year; 85 have earned Fulbrights since 2005.
- Thanks to the Moxie Foundation and the Zahn family, the Zahn Innovation Center has been transformed into the Zahn Innovation Platform (ZIP). ZIP includes the ZIP Launchpad and the new ZIP Laboratory, which will use design thinking to facilitate collaborative problem-solving. In addition, the Zahn Professor of Creativity and Innovation is currently being recruited.
- We have made important progress in support for academic programs. We are in the third year of our five-year plan to hire 300 new tenure-track faculty members. When this year’s searches conclude, we will have hired approximately 180 new tenure-track faculty members in the last three years. Six academic units are receiving support from the first Provost’s Innovation for Excellence Award to improve student success through innovations in pedagogy, curriculum development and extracurricular activities. In April, the inaugural Provost’s Distinguished Lecture brought

- Dr. Richard Schrock, a Nobel laureate in chemistry, to our campus.
- Our initiatives in Research and Creative Endeavors are paying significant dividends. Recent awards include a \$16.5 million award from the federal government to Caren Sax in the Department of ARPE & the Interwork Institute to establish a training center for state workers who serve individuals with disabilities. The NIMH awarded public health researcher Susan Kiene \$2.9 million to develop in-home HIV testing and links to care in the developing world. **Psychology researcher David Marx received a \$1.5 million NSF award to create a role model program for young women in STEM fields, and NASA awarded biology professor Walt Oechel \$1.2 million to monitor carbon dioxide and methane fluxes in the Arctic as part of a climate change study.** In addition, an interdisciplinary team was awarded a \$10 million NIH endowment to build the research infrastructure needed to reduce health disparities in underserved communities. Our Arts Alive SDSU initiative hit a high note this spring with our “Downtown” mega-concert attended by over 2,500 community members at Copley Symphony Hall.

Campaign Update

The Campaign for SDSU has reached the \$695 million milestone, which includes \$135 million for scholarships. The Campaign is enhancing our academic program through gifts like the classics endowment from alumnus David Stepsay that funds a post-doctoral fellow and the gift from former Jack in the Box chairman and CEO Linda Lang and husband Tom – both alumni – that establishes the Linda Lang Lecture Series to bring notable businesswomen to campus. We have seen a large increase in planned giving, with significant gifts from our extraordinarily generous faculty and staff. Former Undergraduate Studies dean and English professor emerita Carole Scott made a significant planned gift to create an endowment for Love Library and to support the Susan and Stephen Weber Honors College Endowed Scholarship. Athletics employee Nora Dawson and her husband, Mark, made a bequest to support sports medicine, new initiatives and scholarships in Athletics. Some \$26 million has been pledged in bequests, charitable trusts and insurance in the current year. We anticipate that planned gifts will help double our endowment over the next 10 years.

Construction Update

We continue our efforts to enhance and renovate our academic and support facilities. We are pouring the foundation for our Engineering and Interdisciplinary Sciences Complex and expect to top off the structure with the last beam in early fall. South Campus Plaza is on schedule to open student housing in January and retail space in the spring of 2017. Our College Square facility on College Avenue underwent a major renovation and now provides classrooms for our College of

Extended Studies. We also will pursue a large number of classroom and laboratory renovations this summer.

We are grateful for the hard work and extraordinary dedication of our faculty, staff and students. All of these efforts are creating the community achievements that will be a significant legacy for SDSU. We wish everyone an enjoyable and productive summer.