

**CSUN**®

CALIFORNIA  
STATE UNIVERSITY  
NORTHRIDGE

## **President**

### Leadership Profile

February 2020



*WittKieffer*

## Executive Summary

California State University, Northridge (CSUN) seeks a visible, transparent and forward-thinking leader to join its campus community as its next president.

One of the largest universities in the country, California State University, Northridge is an urban, comprehensive university that delivers award-winning undergraduate and graduate programs to nearly 40,000 students annually and counts nearly 370,000 alumni who fuel the region's economy. Since its founding in 1958, CSUN is one of 23 universities of the California State University (CSU) system. The university has made a significant and long-term economic impact on California, generating nearly \$1.9 billion in economic impact and nearly 12,000 jobs each year. The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities named CSUN an Innovation and Economic Prosperity University, and the Wall Street Journal ranked CSUN second in the nation for the university's diverse learning environment. CSUN's nine colleges offer 60 baccalaureate degrees, 41 master's degrees, 3 doctoral degrees, 28 credentials in the field of education and various opportunities in extended learning and other special programs. CSUN exists to enable students to realize their educational goals and designs programs and activities to help students develop the academic competencies, professional skills, critical and creative abilities and ethical values of learned persons who live in a democratic society, an interdependent world and a technological age.

Reporting to the chancellor of the California State University system, the next president will be expected to provide leadership within a strong shared governance environment and build productive and sustainable relationships across the campus with faculty, staff and students and within the local community and region. The president will also be expected to work productively and collaboratively across the system and with the other 22 campuses and the system office. The president should be highly committed to diversity, equity and inclusion with an unwavering focus on student success and the mission of CSU. It will be important for the next president to be knowledgeable and respectful of the institution's history and traditions while advancing the campus into the next decade and beyond.

The president will be an accomplished leader and administrator with experience required to lead an organization of CSUN's size and complexity. The president will demonstrate a deep and authentic commitment to students – particularly those who are first-generation college students from low income and diverse backgrounds – and genuine willingness to support their needs and success. Likewise, the president should be highly committed to diversity, equity and inclusion with an unwavering focus on improving measures of student success, including graduation and retention rates, and closing the achievement gap of underrepresented students. Like many of CSU's students, food insecurities, housing costs, transportation issues, mental health and other basic needs are among many challenges facing students. These challenges can result in an unstable living environment, which make it more difficult for students to attend class and remain enrolled. The incoming president should be experienced at identifying resources to support programs and activities that address these and other student needs and concerns. The president must also be a consummate relationship builder and community-minded individual who has a strong desire to become highly visible and active both internally across campus and externally with donors, alumni, business executives, national and community leaders. A strong capacity for fundraising will be important, as well as management of large, complex budgets. A record of scholarship and a doctoral degree is preferred.

For information on how to apply or to submit nominations, please refer to the section, "Procedure for Candidacy" at the end of this document.



## Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

### **Provide inspirational, collaborative and transparent leadership**

CSUN's incoming president will be tasked with establishing an institution-wide collective vision for the future, and providing inspirational leadership that motivates the campus toward executing on that vision. It will be important for the president to learn about and be sensitive to CSUN's history, traditions and accomplishments while working to develop a plan that advances the institution into the future. The next president should serve as a visible and accessible leader and develop and create authentic relationships with multiple constituent groups across campus. Open, transparent and consultative leadership that unifies the campus community across all constituent groups will be important for success. The president should be an effective communicator who is relatable and understanding of the needs and issues of CSUN's faculty, staff and students, and who has the ability to articulate clear and concise messages both verbally and in writing in various leadership settings.

### **Support research activities while maintaining strong teaching focus**

CSUN places a strong value on teaching excellence. Basic and applied research and creative activities are also essential components of CSUN's mission, values and vision. As the institution implements and advances its strategic plan, the incoming president will be expected to support incremental increases in its research and creative activity while enhancing its strong teaching foundation. For students, active participation with faculty in research and creative activity provides for a high form of educational experience and mentoring. The next president should be committed to expanding opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate participation in research and creative activity. The president should be an advocate for and work closely with the external relations and development staff to generate awareness, build support and ultimately help raise funds for cutting-edge initiatives and demonstrate how a focus on teaching, research and creative activities improves the overall undergraduate and graduate student learning experience and outcomes.

### **Engage in and support external relations and fundraising activities**

CSUN places a high value on engaging in philanthropic activities to support critical campus needs and innovative programs. The campus has recently started the planning process for an upcoming comprehensive fundraising campaign that will shape the future of the campus. The president will need to work with various campus stakeholders to develop and articulate initiatives and programs that inspire alumni and community engagement, and ultimately increase philanthropic donations. The incoming president should have an ability to communicate effectively with various stakeholders and constituents, and make a compelling and meaningful case for partnerships and support. Likewise, the president will serve as the university spokesperson and advocate for government relations activities in close collaboration with the Cal State system office.

### **Create and champion a diverse, equitable and inclusive campus community**

CSUN is proud of its diversity and seeks a president who will affirmatively support the needs of its campus community. The president must be a catalyst for change and champion a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for all students, faculty and staff. Creating an equitable and inclusive

environment is a continuous and ongoing effort. Therefore, the president should demonstrate leadership by promoting a culture of anti-racism and social justice, and by encouraging open and honest dialogue on social issues important to the campus. The incoming president must have a fundamental understanding of CSUN's student demographics and a desire to address the unique needs and concerns of underrepresented, immigrant, undocumented and formerly incarcerated students, as well as students with disabilities. The incoming president should consider funding opportunities that promote and support diversity initiatives and academic programs of study. To this end, the president will be expected to champion a diverse, equitable and inclusive campus community, and partner with various constituent groups across campus to ensure steady progress.

### **Cultivate a student-centered campus committed to transforming lives**

The president is expected to be highly engaged in the life of students. The president must be student-centered and dedicated to cultivating a campus environment with educational opportunities and student success programs that are truly transformational. The impact of the university on the lives of its students cannot be underestimated. The next president must relate with and have a deep contextual understanding of the barriers faced by the campus's diverse student body and work to close the achievement gap of underrepresented students. The president should be committed to meeting with students, learning and understanding their true needs – which include issues around mental health, economic, transportation, food and housing insecurity – and be steadfast in supporting them to achieve their educational and personal goals.



## Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The ideal candidate is a proven and seasoned administrator and ethical leader with a demonstrated history of leadership success in an academic environment, particularly one that places a high value on diversity, student success and communication. It is preferred that the incoming president hold an earned doctoral or terminal degree in a field relevant to the mission of CSUN.

Strong candidates will have many of the following personal and professional characteristics:

- Ability to lead with clarity, passion and integrity; fosters a culture of collaboration and transparency;
- Adaptable and committed to shared governance;
- Experience serving an underrepresented, first-generation college student population;
- An understanding of the opportunities and challenges of public higher education in California;
- Strong fiscal management experience;
- Ensures the continued value of the educational degrees issued by the University and maintains high academic integrity;
- Places a high value on student success; experience improving graduation and retention rates;
- Highly engaged, accessible and visible in the campus community; values building relationships with students, faculty and staff;
- Familiar working with faculty and staff unions; experience working within a strong and robust labor relations environment;
- Ability to connect with and inspire external constituents; demonstrated success in partnership building and fundraising;
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills and the ability to communicate in a clear, consistent and transparent manner to create shared goals and understanding;
- Listens carefully and consults broadly; able to make difficult decisions and to see them through; and
- Leads from a place of authenticity, empathy and morality.

## About California State University, Northridge

### Overview

One of the largest universities in the country, California State University, Northridge (CSUN) is an urban, comprehensive university that delivers award-winning undergraduate and graduate programs to nearly 40,000 students annually and counts nearly 370,000 alumni who fuel the region's economy. Since its founding in 1958, CSUN has made a significant and long-term economic impact on California, generating nearly \$1.9 billion in economic impact and nearly 12,000 jobs each year. The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities named CSUN an Innovation and Economic Prosperity University, and the Wall Street Journal ranked CSUN second in the nation for the university's diverse learning environment.

### Mission

California State University, Northridge exists to enable students to realize their educational goals. The university's first priority is to promote the welfare and intellectual progress of students. To fulfill this mission, we design programs and activities to help students develop the academic competencies, professional skills, critical and creative abilities and ethical values of learned persons who live in a democratic society, an interdependent world and a technological age; we seek to foster a rigorous and contemporary understanding of the liberal arts, sciences and professional disciplines, and we believe in the following values.



## Values

**Commitment to Teaching, Scholarship and Active Learning.** We demonstrate excellence in teaching. We honor and reward high performance in learning, teaching, scholarship, research, service and creative activity. Because the quality of our academic programs is central to our mission, we encourage intellectual curiosity and protect the multiple expressions of academic freedom.

**Commitment to Excellence.** We set the highest standards for ourselves in all of our actions and activities and support the professional development of faculty, staff and administrators. We assess our performance so that every area of University life will be continually improved and renewed. We recognize and reward our efforts of greatest distinction and through them provide state and national leadership.

**Respect for All People.** We aspire to behave as an inclusive, cooperative community. Our behaviors, policies and programs affirm the worth and personal dignity of every member of the university community and contribute to a campus climate of civility, collegiality, tolerance and reasoned debate.

**Alliances with the Community.** We seek partnerships with local schools, community colleges, businesses, government and social agencies to advance the educational, intellectual, artistic, civic, cultural and economic aspirations of our surrounding communities.

**Encouragement of Innovation, Experimentation and Creativity.** We seek to provide an environment conducive to innovation, experimentation and creativity. We encourage all members of our community to take intellectual and creative risks and to embrace changes that will enhance the fulfillment of the university's mission.

## Vision

California State University, Northridge is inspired by the belief that our commitment to educational opportunity, inclusion and excellence will extend the promise of America to succeeding generations. Our graduates will be the vanguard of leaders—committed to sustaining a democracy in which diverse people share in the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, proficient in applying technology to wise purposes and dedicated to securing a humane world community and sustaining the bounty of the Earth.

As an institution of higher learning:

- We will create a community of shared values in which faculty, students, staff, administrators and alumni will experience personal satisfaction and pride in our collective achievements;
- We will be the first choice for university applicants who seek a rigorous, collaborative teaching/learning experience in a technologically rich environment;
- We will be the leader in enhancing the educational, cultural and economic resources of our region; and
- We will receive local and national recognition for our distinctive achievements in teaching, learning, scholarship and service.



## University Planning Priorities

### 1. Advancing Student Success

An unrelenting focus on student success will be the university's enduring principle priority. Academic excellence and student engagement for retention, persistence and graduation are paramount; other university priorities and goals exist in primary support of student success.

### 2. Focusing on Employees for Success

The university succeeds in supporting student achievement through the commitment and engagement of its faculty and staff. Employee success is key to effective student success initiatives.

### 3. Fostering Diversity and Inclusive Excellence

The university is strengthened by a shared understanding and appreciation of the benefits and function of diversity within the campus community. CSUN recognizes the power of diversity and inclusion in the generation of ideas, in the exploration of problems and possibilities, in research, innovation, creative expression, community and organizational development and in meaningful participation in an increasingly complex world.

### 4. Increasing the Visibility and Reputation of the University

Opportunities for students, employees and funding are enhanced by the positive visibility and reputation of the university. CSUN's capacity to engage both internal and external constituents – students and potential students, parents, faculty and staff, alumni, elected officials, donors and potential donors, community partners and the community at large – is dependent on managing, nurturing and ultimately elevating the visibility and positive reputation of the university.

### 5. Planning for a Future Less Dependent on State Funding

To more aggressively pursue CSUN's mission and planning priorities, CSUN must increase the amount and sources of revenue beyond state support, while also prudently and strategically managing the expenditure and deployment of resources.

### 6. Expanding Research Activity and Sponsored Programs

Basic and applied research and creative activities are essential components of CSUN's mission, values and vision. Scholarly activities in all forms benefit society and is a hallmark of a vibrant university. Research engages the expertise of the faculty to address compelling challenges facing our region, state and world and brings significant reputational benefit for the university. For students, active participation with faculty in research and creative activity provides for a high form of educational experience and mentoring. CSUN is committed to expanding opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students to participate in research and creative activities. Externally funded research, creative activities and programs allow CSUN to expand such opportunities and provides an important source of support for both faculty and students beyond state appropriations.

### 7. Supporting Sustainability

CSUN is a role model of sustainability for universities and large organizations nationwide, highlighting the importance and benefit of responsible stewardship of our shared environment. A focus on sustainability achieves cost savings, preserves the university's physical resources and prepares knowledgeable graduates who will become leaders and stewards of the earth's resources. CSUN

shows leadership with its sustainable buildings, efficient practices, reduced energy and water usage, as well as its generation and use of alternative energy. CSUN's focus on sustainability promotes educational experiences for students.

## **8. Using Athletics as a Tool for Engagement**

CSUN engages with our communities via a wide range of programs, including the arts, to appeal to our various constituencies. Athletics is a powerful vehicle for engagement that creates cohesion within the campus community and between the university and the general public. Additionally, CSUN strives to afford every student a quality, multi-dimensional and fulfilling university experience, thereby positively impacting student success.

## **Academics**

Our nine colleges offer 60 baccalaureate degrees, 41 master's degrees, 3 doctoral degrees, 28 credentials in the field of education and various opportunities in extended learning and other special programs.

- [Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, & Communication](#)
- [David Nazarian College of Business and Economics](#)
- [Michael D. Eisner College of Education](#)
- [Engineering & Computer Science](#)
- [Health & Human Development](#)
- [Humanities](#)
- [Oviatt Library](#)
- [Science & Mathematics](#)
- [Social & Behavioral Sciences](#)
- [The Tseng College](#)

## **Athletics**

There's never a shortage of exciting sports action at CSUN. [Athletics](#) offers a full lineup of intercollegiate sports that provide high-level competition for student athletes and exciting, low-cost spectator opportunities for the entire community. The university supports 18 sports teams in the highly competitive Division I level of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Fifteen are members of the Big West Conference and three play in the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation. CSUN's mascot, Matty the Matador, and the university's award-winning cheer squad keep the excitement level high at the Matadome and other sports venues.

## Learn more about CSUN at the following links:

- [CSUN Administration](#)
- [Academic Colleges](#)
- [CSUN Counts \(demographics, facts and figures\)](#)
- [CSUN University Student Union](#)
- [CSUN Associates Students](#)
- [CSUN Marketing Campaign — Elevating Los Angeles and Beyond](#)
- [Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts](#)
- [88.5 FM — Broadcasting from the CSUN Campus](#)
- [CSUN Economic Impact Report](#)
- [CSUN Today — Online Newsroom](#)
- [CSUN Athletics/GoMatadors.com](#)
- [CSUN History](#)
- Social Media Links
  - [YouTube](#)
  - [Facebook](#)
  - [Instagram](#)
  - [Twitter](#)
  - [LinkedIn](#)





## Northridge, California

Northridge is a neighborhood of Los Angeles, California in the San Fernando Valley and is sheltered by the majestic Santa Susana Mountains and has a history that can be traced back to the 1700's. The region that became Northridge was originally settled by the native Gabrielino or Tongva people, who built their dome-shaped houses in the area where Northridge is now located. When Spanish explorers came to the region in the 1700s, it was called Zelzah and was home to fresh water fed by underground streams that still run beneath the neighborhood. Renamed North Los Angeles in 1929, the name was later changed to Northridge in 1938 to avoid confusion with nearby North Hollywood.

Dubbed the "Valley of the Stars," Southern California's San Fernando Valley, encompasses the City of Burbank, City of Calabasas, City of Glendale, City of Los Angeles and City of San Fernando. The San Fernando Valley offers an incredible array of fine dining, shopping, lodging and recreational opportunities, along with world -class attractions at each of the scenic entrances to the Valley, including the magnificent new Getty Center, the Hollywood Bowl and the Los Angeles Zoo at the southern entrances; the site of the granddaddy of all college bowl games — the Rose Bowl — at the east; the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library at the west; and the tallest, fastest roller coasters in the world at Six Flags Magic Mountain to the north.



## Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting California State University, Northridge in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by March 20, 2020.

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Zachary A. Smith, Ph.D., Jeff Compher and Alejandra Gillette-Teran

**[CSUNorthridgePresident@wittkieffer.com](mailto:CSUNorthridgePresident@wittkieffer.com)**

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*Reasonable accommodations will be provided for applicants with disabilities who self-disclose.*