



PRESIDENTIAL INVESTITURE
OF
RICHARD YAO, PH.D.

CALIFORNIA
STATE UNIVERSITY
CHANNEL ISLANDS



INVESTITURE

The investiture of Richard Yao as CSU Channel Islands' fourth president celebrates the University's treasured past, promising present, and ambitious future. President Yao was appointed by the CSU Board of Trustees on January 26, 2022, after serving in an interim capacity since January 11, 2021.

With this ceremony, the California State University Board of Trustees formally invests in President Yao the authority of his position. Through his investiture, we celebrate not only President Yao's leadership of the University, but also the many connections to CSU Channel Islands (CSUCI) represented by all who are assembled here today—the people of this campus, of this region, and of the State of California whose trust is also invested in him.

CSUCI is a place where ideas are tested, minds are expanded, and dreams become reality because of this campus community's efforts to achieve the University's mission and meet the needs of this region and its people. Placing responsibility for leading all of this is an incredibly significant act for this campus and its diverse population of students, staff, and faculty, as well as for the CSU as a whole.

ABOUT CSUCI

CSUCI is Ventura County's only public university. It opened in 2002 as the 23rd campus in the CSU system, serving the regions of Ventura, Santa Barbara, and Los Angeles counties, as well as the entire state. CSUCI is nestled against the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains located between Camarillo and the Oxnard Plain, midway between Santa Barbara and Los Angeles, and 25 miles north of Malibu.

With close to 7,000 students, 1,200 employees and over 22,000 alumni, CSUCI is poised to grow in size and distinction, while maintaining a uniquely student-focused learning environment in public higher education. CSUCI offers 90 academic pursuits including undergraduate and graduate degrees, teaching credentials, certificates, and a number of professional and community programs.

CSUCI MISSION STATEMENT

Placing students at the center of the educational experience, California State University Channel Islands provides undergraduate and graduate education that facilitates learning within and across disciplines through integrative approaches, emphasizes experiential and service learning, and graduates students with multicultural and international perspectives.

CSUCI 20TH ANNIVERSARY 2002 – 2022

Through CSUCI's 20th Anniversary theme, "Honoring Our Past – Building The Future," we begin our third decade of striving every day to realize our mission of student-centered excellence in higher education, and toward this end, to enact the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that we do. We recognize and appreciate each partner with an essential role to play in achieving this mission and in operationalizing these values – the students, families, faculty, staff, alumni, partners in PreK-12 and higher education, leaders of community and industry, elected representatives, and more – all the people who are part of CSUCI.

In this consequential era of human development, we commit to honoring the best of our past; fusing that history with hope, energy, strategic planning, and impactful academic and co-curricular programming; demonstrating faith in the students whose application of knowledge and experience will create our collective future; and rising to the critical challenges of learning and leading in exceptional times.



THE MACE

The CSU Channel Islands Mace represents the authority of the University at official and ceremonial functions for the lifetime of the institution. Designed and crafted by renowned artists David Elder and Linda Elder of Ventura County, the Mace is an important symbol of the University and its design reflects the spirit of the campus. The staff is carved from native walnut, signifying the growth of the University on California soil, which had been the land of the Chumash peoples before California existed.



On each of the four sides of the bronze finial is a carved medallion; these are the University's seal, the California State University seal, an atom, and the book of knowledge. The latter two signify scholarship, research, and service to humanity. At the pinnacle of the Mace, two dolphins dance in the waves, symbolizing the campus' proximity to the Pacific Ocean, the richness of its marine life and the learning opportunities it provides, and the selection of the dolphin as our campus mascot.

PRESIDENTIAL MEDALLION

The Presidential Medallion is conferred on the President by the Chancellor of the California State University system as a symbol of the authority and responsibility of the office and is worn by the President with academic regalia at official functions.



The Presidential Medallion is a silver disk engraved with the University seal. The seal includes an image of the Bell Tower in the forefront with a rising sun in the background. The Bell Tower is an important symbol for the campus and serves a function like bell towers around the world—as a community center. The rising sun behind the Bell Tower signifies the birth of the University, with the light of knowledge and warmth of engagement emanating from the University.

BIOGRAPHY OF RICHARD YAO

Richard Yao was appointed to serve as the fourth President of California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) in January 2022. President Yao initially joined CSUCI in June 2018 and served as the Vice President for Student Affairs until his appointment as Interim President in January 2021.

Since coming to CSUCI, President Yao has ensured that the campus is well equipped to face imminent challenges while also focusing on the future and what CSUCI can accomplish throughout its third decade and beyond. He is committed to ensuring that the campus is effective in supporting the needs of the people, as well as the employers of our region, and to maintaining consistent collaborations with the community and building upon those close connections with CSUCI.

President Yao's priorities include promoting the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Toward this end, he led the development of CSUCI's first Inclusive Excellence Action Plan (IEAP), created through the work of six Inclusive Excellence Action Teams (IEAT) composed of more than 85 members of the campus community—with each IEAT including representation from each division and students. Implementation of the 2022-23 IEAP is underway, with Cabinet-level responsibility for achieving its goal of advancing racial and social justice through six strategic priorities:

- Provide employees with professional and leadership development for promoting DEI.
- Recruit, hire and retain a diverse workforce.
- Promote University Advancement through a DEI lens
- Realize a campus culture of inclusive excellence.
- Utilize data effectively to help achieve equity goals.
- Facilitate success for all students, with an explicit focus on those historically underserved and under-represented in higher education.

With the well-established knowledge that institutionalization of IEAP initiatives will require the ability to “make the case” with President Yao, data will be collected and cases will be made to inform the campus' next iteration of IEAP 2023-24.

In partnership with Provost Mitch Avila and the Division of Academic Affairs, President Yao supported a planning exercise in 2021-2022 called Charting Our Course, an assessment of academic programs

required to serve the needs of the region's people, communities, and industries. A defining feature of his leadership is President Yao's commitment to ensuring that CSUCI is both dedicated and responsive to serving regional needs.

He is utilizing the Graduation Initiative 2025 goals set by the CSU Chancellor's Office to define and meet student success criteria, building a variety of student supports through to graduation. Using new funding allocated for this purpose, he will be leveraging these funds to increase student retention, increase financial support for students, and ensure customer service satisfaction for students and campus partners.

While serving as the Vice President for Student Affairs, President Yao worked to increase opportunities for collaboration between the divisions of Academic and Student Affairs, improving student success indicators and working to ensure that co-curricular programming was in full alignment with the academic mission of the University. Through his leadership in the Division of Student Affairs, he championed the building of data systems to demonstrate the relationship between Student Affairs utilization data, and academic success. In collaboration with the Chancellor's Office, he helped lead a system-wide pilot program to develop a Student Affairs data dashboard and examined student demographics in relation to utilization of support services.

Prior to joining CSUCI, President Yao resided in Las Vegas, Nevada for 23 years, where he was an active member of the higher education and mental health communities. Early in his clinical career, he worked with individuals with chronic and persistent mental illness and with transition-aged youth from the foster care system. President Yao then focused primarily on forensic psychological assessments, with an emphasis on juvenile certification evaluations for the Juvenile Court and Public Defender's Office, parental capacity evaluations for the Department of Family Services, and psychological disability evaluations for the Bureau of Disability Adjudication. Throughout this time, he also served as a full-time Psychology Lecturer at Nevada State College, which, like CSUCI, opened its doors in 2002. He was eventually tasked with building out their Student Affairs programming. He served as the Director of Student Development for Nevada State College before becoming that institution's founding Dean of Students.

President Yao earned a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Fielding Graduate University, an M.A. in Clinical Psychology from Eastern Illinois University, and a B.A. in Psychology from Eastern Illinois University.

ORDER OF CEREMONIES

Friday, Sept. 23, 2022 – John Spoor Broome Library Plaza

PRE-CEREMONY MUSIC

The People's Trio
Gabriel Kline, Jackson Roberg, and Ben Yao

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mitch Avila, *Provost*

PROCESSIONAL

CHUMASH WELCOME

Raudel J. Bañuelos, Jr., *Barbareño/Ventureño Band of Mission Indians, Chumash Elder, CSUCI Chumash Cultural Advisor*

PRESENTATION OF COLORS

Oxnard High School Air Force Junior R.O.T.C.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Sabrina Moreno, '22 B.A. *Performing Arts*

MULTILINGUAL WELCOME MESSAGE

PRESIDER REMARKS

Wenda Fong, *Chair, CSU Board of Trustees*

CAMPUS REMARKS

Mitch Avila, *Provost*
Jason Miller, *Academic Senate Chair, Professor of Mathematics*
Annie Block-Weiss, *Staff Council Chair, ASI Student Programs Coordinator*
Mark Lisagor, *Chair, CSUCI Foundation Board*
Ilien Tolteca, *Student Government President*

GREETINGS FROM PREVIOUS STUDENT GOVERNMENT LEADERS

GREETING ON BEHALF OF THE CSU PRESIDENTS

Erika D. Beck, *President, CSU Northridge*

“DE COLORES”

Performed by Members of the CSUCI University Chorus

INTERIM CHANCELLOR REMARKS

Jolene Koester, *Interim Chancellor of The California State University*

“I AM, WE ARE”

Spoken Word and Dance: Written, Choreographed and Performed
by CSUCI Students & Alumni

**kiwawəmina
The Seaweed Song**

Performed by Eleanor Fishburn (née Arellanes),
Barbareño/Ventureño Band of Mission Indians Chumash elder and CSUCI student;
Raudel J. Bañuelos, Jr.,
*Barbareño/Ventureño Band of Mission Indians, Chumash Elder,
CSUCI Chumash Cultural Advisor;*
and Matthew Vestuto,
Barbareño/Ventureño Band of Mission Indians Vice Tribal Chair and Linguist

Tapestry of Dance

Performed by CSUCI Students & Alumni
and created by those who have come before us

INVESTITURE OF THE PRESIDENT

Jolene Koester, *Interim Chancellor of The California State University*

INVESTITURE ADDRESS

Richard Yao, *President, CSU Channel Islands*

CHUMASH BLESSING

Raudel J. Bañuelos, Jr.,
*Barbareño/Ventureño Band of Mission Indians, Chumash Elder,
CSUCI Chumash Cultural Advisor*

CLOSING

Ilien Tolteca, *Student Government President*
“Freedom”

Music by Jon Batiste
Choreographed and performed by Hip Hop Mindset Crew
Finale Choreographed by CSUCI Dance Studies Students
Performers from Rio School District, Oxnard School
District Students, and CSUCI Community

RECESSIONAL

RECEPTION

SPECIAL GREETINGS FOR PRESIDENT YAO

KATHY WILD

**Clinical Director, Mojave Adult, Child and Family Services
Las Vegas, Nevada**

My first encounter with Rich Yao was in Las Vegas, Nevada in 1996. Early in our clinical careers, we were working at Mojave Mental Health, a non-profit agency affiliated with the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine. Mojave is an agency that services individuals with chronic and persistent psychiatric illnesses. Rich provided a decade of service at Mojave and was at the forefront of creating programming that promoted client rights and de-stigmatization of mental illness.

As a day treatment counselor, Rich did all of these things while also having fun. His authentic ease in making others comfortable along with natural traits of empathy, optimism, and enthusiasm made him very popular with all he encountered. He incorporated his love of music into client treatment, even playing drums for the agency band, the Mojave Lounge Lizards. Clients loved to dance and sing along with their favorite counselor, Rich. He also could be seen playing hacky sack with clients during group breaks. His love of sports and aptitude for trivia were shared on a regular basis. Rich was once asked to fill in on a local sports talk radio podcast and performed as if he had been working as an ESPN anchor for years!

Even though Rich was talented on a multitude of fronts, he remained humble. His achievements were the relationships he developed. Most memorable of all was his unconditional positive regard towards a population that is so often marginalized, underprivileged, and underserved. The value he brought to the organization is beyond measure, and his influence here lives on.

JOHN PAGLINI

**Forensic Psychologist
Las Vegas, Nevada**

I had the pleasure of serving as Dr. Richard Yao's clinical post-doc supervisor. During his post-doc, he worked 24 hours per week in an intensive forensic psychology internship while concurrently working as a full-time psychology lecturer at Nevada State College (NSC). While he was paid for 24 hours of post-doc work each week, anyone who understands the nature and rigor of forensic psychology knows that Rich put in far more hours than he was paid. The fact that he worked two jobs and did both at exceptionally high levels speaks volumes about his character, grit, work ethic, and determination.

It was a pleasure to mentor Rich over a five-year period, first during his post-doc and then after he was licensed. It was evident immediately that Rich was very invested in the field of psychology, as well as improving others' lives. I quickly bonded with Rich. He constantly worked hard and exhibited high character. I referred to him as "a machine" due to his focus on providing such high-quality reports. After becoming

SPECIAL GREETINGS FOR PRESIDENT YAO, *continued*

licensed, Rich continued to maintain his private practice and teach full-time at NSC. For several years, I tried to sway Rich from teaching to devote all of his time to his forensic psychological practice. However, Rich eventually advised me that he was discontinuing his private practice to accept an administrative position at NSC. I was disappointed but excited and supportive of Rich as he exhibited such passion for this new position. Years later, Rich talked to me at length about the opportunity to come to CSUCI as their Vice President for Student Affairs. I listened as Rich shared his genuine excitement and desire to be a part of the CSUCI community.

If we had more individuals like Dr. Yao leading in esteemed positions, our country then would be more stable, more accepting, and less divided. Rich, it brings joy to my heart to call you a dear friend. I wish you much success and happiness as you lead CSUCI into the future.

TONY SCINTA

Executive Vice Provost, Nevada State College

When I first met Rich Yao we shared a single office—along with two other faculty—in a refurbished vitamin warehouse at a budding institution called Nevada State College. Rich’s surroundings were unspectacular, to say the least, but over time I would learn that everything else about him was exceptional. The first indication was in his work as a faculty member, where Rich expertly educated and engaged the class, cultivating students who were both better informed about the world around them and eager to learn more. As I watched Rich weave his instructional magic for a captive audience, I remember thinking, “Here is a reason for students to come to our college, and here is a reason for them to stay. You can build something special with this.”

Much later, Rich’s peerless excellence and unassailable integrity led to his selection as our first-ever Dean of Students. He jumped into the role with no guidance or blueprint for success, yet set an example that we will do well to follow for decades to come. He was passionate and committed in his work, yet also resolute in his pursuit of exemplary, data-informed, evidence-based practices. He was admired as a leader by his staff and loved as a dean by his students, despite—or perhaps because of—his determination to make the right decision, not necessarily the easy or popular one. I believe he charted this path, one defined by the pursuit of equity and excellence, because he wanted to help the college produce graduates that we could be proud of, ones that would make a difference for themselves and for others as they made their way into the world.

As he begins his term as President of CSUCI, my observation from so long ago still stands: Rich is a reason for people to come to Channel Islands, and he is a reason for them to stay. You will continue to build something special with him.

THANK YOU



I want to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to making today possible. Thank you to the Investiture Committee—led by Dr. Kaia Tollefson and CJ Yao—for creating the vision for today, ensuring that every detail held meaning and honoring our campus’ accomplishments while highlighting all that we have to look forward to in the future. Thank you to the events and communications teams, facilities, and our other campus partners who spent countless hours ensuring this event is a success. Thank you to our guests, community members, students, staff, and faculty for welcoming me and helping us usher in a new chapter for Channel Islands together.

In tandem with this Investiture, I must acknowledge how reaching the University's 20th anniversary is a significant accomplishment for the entire community. This truly was a region-wide effort, and nothing can better exemplify the Channel Islands spirit. We don't just serve this community; we are a part of it. So many members of our community had a direct impact on the creation and development of CSUCI and now we celebrate together. The dedication of our Foundation Board members cannot be overstated as they are the tireless agents of philanthropy for this University.

Being here with you all today to celebrate CSU Channel Islands is the most rewarding experience of my career. To the past CSUCI Presidents, it is an honor to carry on your legacy. To the Trustees and fellow CSU Presidents, it is an honor to collaborate with you. To the dedicated faculty and staff of this University, it is my privilege to work alongside you. To our students, I commit our collective best to you.

Thank you, everyone. It is my honor and privilege to serve as President of this exceptional University.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WITH SINCERE GRATITUDE TO THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN TODAY'S CELEBRATION

THE PEOPLE'S TRIO

Gabriel Kline is a guitarist based out of Portland, Oregon. Born in Las Vegas, Nevada, Gabriel has studied music since the age of 12. They attended Las Vegas Academy where they were introduced to Ben Yao and Jackson Roberg. Through the years, Gabriel has participated in numerous competitions, both solo and as an ensemble member. Gabriel received a Bachelor of Music in Music Performance with an emphasis in Classical Guitar from Portland State University in the Spring of 2022. Here, Gabe studied with Jesse McCann of the Oregon Guitar Quartet. Outside of performing, Gabriel has worked both in the public elementary school system, as well as a private music instructor and seeks to pursue a career in music therapy.

Jackson Roberg was born and raised in Las Vegas, Nevada, and has been performing music since the age of six. Focusing primarily on guitar, Jackson was accepted for studies at the Las Vegas Academy of the Arts. There, he was first introduced to his bandmates, Gabriel Kline and Ben Yao. Furthering his musical education, Jackson completed his Bachelor of Music in Guitar Performance at Oklahoma City University, where he studied with a variety of professors specializing in early music, jazz guitar, and contemporary classical guitar performance. Following graduation, Jackson moved to Redlands, California, where he established an independent music school providing high-quality, low-cost music lessons online and to students across San Bernardino county. Currently, Jackson is preparing his application materials for law school where he plans to focus on labor and civil rights law.

Ben Yao is a guitarist and pianist residing in Sonoma County, California. Raised in Las Vegas, Nevada, they met their fellow trio members, Gabe Kline and Jackson Roberg, while they were all studying guitar at Las Vegas Academy of Performing Arts. After graduating, Ben studied Classical Guitar Performance at Oklahoma City University under the instruction of Dr. Stephen Lochbaum before earning their Bachelor's in Music with an emphasis in Classical Guitar Performance from San Diego State University while studying under Sean Basset. Ben has had the opportunity to study under professional guitarists, such as Pepe and Celin Romero, in addition to performing across the world from Brownsville to Madrid. They are currently pursuing a master's degree in Library Science at San Jose State University and working as an English reading and writing tutor at Sonoma State University.

MUSICAL PERFORMANCES DIRECTED BY KUANFEN LIU

KuanFen Liu, Associate Professor of Performing Arts, is originally from Taiwan and is a graduate of the prestigious Eastman School of Music (M.M.), and Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California with a major in conducting (D.M.A.). This summer, Dr. Liu's 108-member choir (including CSUCI students) and the New England Symphonic Ensemble performed to a standing ovation audience at the Carnegie Hall and received a 2024 invitation to return. She co-founded the Channel Islands Chamber Orchestra and the Channel Islands Choral Association as part of her vision to nurture an appreciation for classical music throughout our communities.

DANCE PERFORMANCES CURATED AND DIRECTED BY HEATHER CASTILLO

Heather Castillo is a performer, dance-maker, scholar, educator, mom, and an Associate Professor of Performing Arts at CSUCI. Heather's career as a commercial dancer includes working with stars such as Andy Williams and Selena Gomez. She graduated from University of California (UC), Irvine with the goal of broadening jazz dance practices and research within higher education. In 2018, she won CSUCI's President's Award for Teaching & Learning Innovation. In 2020, she and MiRi Park were awarded the Schlundt Lecture in Dance from UC Riverside, the Faculty Innovation & Leadership Award from the CSU Chancellor's Office, and they co-produced the Readin Series, a reading of W.E.B. DuBois' Black Reconstruction. She recently wrote a new Dance Studies program for CSUCI which launched in Fall 2022.

INVESTITURE STAGE MANAGERS

Heather Castillo, *Associate Professor of Performing Arts*
Catherine Scott Burriss, *Associate Professor of Performing Arts*

RIO SCHOOL DISTRICT

John D. Puglisi, Ph.D.
Wanda Kelly

HIP HOP MINDSET DIRECTOR

William V

RECEPTION MUSICIANS

The Lee Bros Band
Jonas Lee, '18 B.A. *Performing Arts*
Max Lee
Westin Byerley
Paul Murphy, *Professor of Performing Arts*
Steve Marsh, *Lecturer, Performing Arts*

CSUCI CONTEMPORARY MUSIC ENSEMBLE (PAMU310) DIRECTED BY PAUL MURPHY

Michael Dore
DJ Martinez
Anita Montgomery
Daniel Nunez
Josh Salvatierra
Sihoon Seong
Josh Valdez

INVESTITURE STEERING COMMITTEE

Kaia Tollefson, Co-Chair, *Chief of Staff*

CJ Yao, Co-Chair, *CSUCI Volunteer*

Andrea Coppinger, *Presidential Aide*

Nancy Covarrubias Gill, *Associate Vice President for University Communication*

Mary McDonnell, *Support Analyst to the Chief of Staff*

Alex Padilla, *Special Projects & Communications Specialist*

Carolyn Shamowski, *Events Specialist*

Kristin Steiner, *Interim Director of University Communication*

Rebecca Tung, *Director of University Events*

MEMBERS OF THE INVESTITURE SUBCOMMITTEES

Fope Adesina, *Budget & Administrative Analyst*

Susan Andrzejewski, *Dean of the MVS School of Business & Economics*

Annie Block-Weiss, *Staff Council Chair, ASI Student Programs Coordinator*

Aura Bryan, *Executive Assistant to the Vice President for University Advancement*

Jessica Chiang, *Graphic Designer*

Leticia Dowd, *Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs*

Courtney Ellis, *Staff Resources Specialist*

Karen Gundelfinger, *Executive Assistant to the Provost*

Whitney Howard, *Photographer & Videographer*

Tom Hunt, *Assistant Vice President for Facilities Services*

Christopher Jetton, *Lieutenant*

Andrew Lorenzana, *Community & Government Relations Analyst*

Nic Manocchio, *Catering Manager*

Drake Massey, *Interim Chief of Police*

Jason Miller, *Academic Senate Chair, Professor of Mathematics*

Jessica Lavariega Monforti, *Vice Provost*

Joanna Murphy, *Associate Director of Communication & Marketing*

Kirsten Olson, *Director of Counseling & Psychological Services*

Charles Osiris, *Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Retention,
Outreach & Inclusive Student Services*

Sheradyn Ruef, *President's Scholar*

Caleigh Tupy, *President's Scholar*

Indy Valencia, *Information Technology Consultant - Lead*

Celina Zacarias, *Executive Director of Community & Government Relations*



CSUCI

2002-2022

HONORING OUR PAST • BUILDING THE FUTURE