

Convocation Address
Honoring Our Past – Building the Future
August 19, 2022

(Slide 1) Good morning, everyone. Thank you all for being here today, whether in person or via livestream, and welcome to this formal kickoff for our Fall 22 semester.

(Slide 2) As many of you know, Ventura County lost a champion last Friday night, as our Ventura County Board of Supervisors Chair, Carmen Ramirez, tragically and unexpectedly passed away. She was the first Latina elected to the Oxnard City Council, the first Latina elected to the Board of Supervisors for the county, a fierce advocate for environmental and social justice, and such a dear friend and ally of our University. Please join me in honoring her memory with a moment of silence.

(Slide 3) I welcome all of you this morning not only to the start of the new academic year, but also to our first 20th Anniversary celebration event of the year. CSUCI officially turned 20 years of age on August 16th, and we'll be celebrating our two decades of existence and accomplishments throughout this Fall and next Spring. Shout-out to Jessica Chiang, one of our alums who is now our graphic artist who designed our 20th Anniversary artwork.

(Slide 4) It was a much smaller but no less mighty group of faculty, staff, and administrators who gathered somewhere very near here 20 years ago – I believe it was in the large conference room on the second floor of Sage Hall, Room 2030 – where they came together to set the direction for CSUCI's very first academic year. In fact, we could ask President Emeritus Dick Rush who is here today all about those early days. Welcome, Dr. Rush, and other honored guests, including Foundation Board members Linda Dullam, Kevin Cruz, and Bill Kearney. I would also like to welcome our Vice President of Alumni & Friends, Sandy Garcia. Thank you for joining us today.

(Slide 5) I'd like for us to take a minute right now and reflect. Where were you 20 years ago today, exactly when CI's first academic year was being launched? [Pause.] Were any of you here for CI's first year? What have you been through in the last 20 years of your life? Who have you lost, and who have you gained? Where were you living that Fall, and what were you working on? [Pause.]

Now, think about all that you've been through as an individual over the past two decades. Then multiply that exponentially, once for every person who has worked and learned here since 2002, and we can begin to understand the magnitude of what's been accomplished over the past 20 years in bringing a brand-new university into being.

Whether you were here from the start or came to CSUCI 15, 10, or 5 years ago, or even *days* ago, we are all part of that legacy and part of this University's future. Our 20th Anniversary theme speaks to that exact reality. And it's such an exciting, consequential time. We're gathered here today, "Honoring Our Past—Building the Future," at this pivotal, critical moment—looking back 20 years - and at the same time, we cast our eyes forward to the next 20.

Welcome to New Colleagues

I'm so glad to see so many familiar colleagues and new faces in the crowd today. And I am very pleased to welcome everyone who has joined us since the beginning of 2022 - the 38 new faculty members – 20 on the tenure track and 18 lecturers, 45 new staff members, and 13 new administrators. This is not to say that we're fully staffed, but we are clearly and steadily building our way up from the thin-bench reality that many units across campus had become accustomed to.

I want to acknowledge and congratulate our faculty members who have received tenure, and for some, promotion to associate or full professor. These milestones in the career of an academic are profoundly meaningful. My heartfelt congratulations to each of you on your achievement. Thank you for choosing Channel Islands as the place to build your career and to have a positive impact on our students' academic, social, and emotional development. I also want to thank and recognize our lecturers for this, too - the faculty members who teach most of our classes and whose impact on students is so substantial.

(Slide 6) Since Spring 22, we have some new administrative colleagues to welcome:

- Dean of the School of Education, Dr. Elizabeth Orozco Reilly
- Associate Vice President for High Impact Practices and Experiential Education, Dr. Verónica Guerrero
- Associate Vice President for Academic Programs and Continuous Improvement, Dr. Lina Neto

And other administrative colleagues not new to Channel Islands but in new roles include:

- **(Slide 7)** Dr. Michael Gravagne, Assistant Vice President Student Affairs-Student Wellness
- Dr. Ernesto Guerrero, Assistant Vice President for Student Success and Retention
- **(Slide 8)** Dr. Michelle Hasendonckx, Associate Vice President for Student Academic Success & Equity Initiatives
- William Nutt, Executive Director of Equity & Inclusion
- Dr. Jenn Perry, Executive Director of Regional Educational Partnerships

Congratulations, all.

(Slide 9) I would like to recognize and acknowledge our new Academic Senate officers -- Dr. Jason Miller, Chair, Dr. Christina Smith, and Dr. Colleen Harris – **(Slide 10)** and our returning officers of the Staff Council – Annie Block-Weiss, Chair, Catherine Hutchinson, Tanya Gonzalez, Renee Fuentes, and Hannah Smit. Thank you all for your willingness to lead – especially during these challenging times.

(Slide 11) I am also pleased to acknowledge our new Student Government President, Ilien Tolteca and new Vice President, Javier Garnica. Leadership at every level is critical, but perhaps especially so at the student level - where capacity for envisioning and enacting values like diversity, equity, and inclusion seems more concentrated, the need for a more just and

sustainable world seems more visceral, and the urgency for action seems more insistent. I see an essential role for our student leaders in shared governance, alongside faculty, staff, and administration, and I look forward to making more progress toward that ideal with each constituency at Channel Islands.

The Plan Ahead

(Slide 12) In a tumultuous context, the calm, mindful, and alert state that an effective learner must achieve to be able to absorb, integrate, and utilize new information and then to apply it in novel ways is so difficult to achieve. Leading up to this address, I have been reflecting on our institutional parallels. As I consider the numerous, complex, and weighty responsibilities and challenges awaiting us in the 22-23 academic year and beyond, and as I think about the tumultuous state of the world today, I can palpably feel the need for our community as a whole to achieve that calm, mindful, and alert state of the able learner. **(Slide 13)** And as such, I've selected three words of intention for this upcoming year: (1) Steadiness, (2) Focus, and (3) Coherence.

I think everyone who was working in higher education last year would resonate with the idea that we spent all of last year still in crisis mode, whether we all realized it or not. We were dealing with the ongoing global pandemic and the fear, loss, and disconnection it brought; then came our precipitous drop in enrollment either caused or exacerbated by the pandemic, and that drop has resulted in an \$8M revenue loss that we're facing this year.

We're evaluating all of our data and still making sense of it, but we know these enrollment challenges are very real. Our enrollment crisis creates such complex dissonance between the realities of where we are and where we need to be, with significant tensions now existing between the need to invest resources in new programs and initiatives that will ultimately grow enrollment but balancing that with the need to implement cost-saving measures to protect our fiduciary responsibilities as a public institution. This will require us to embrace and lean into this complexity – and do so as a campus community. I look forward to engaging in these discussions through our Strategic Resource Planning Committee meetings, and I'll also be hosting a series of Town Halls this semester to share enrollment data and engage the campus in thinking through our process for navigating this challenge.

In the context of that complexity, a planning priority for me this year is to create a framework to help us all to be in that space of steadiness, focus, and coherence.

(Slide 14) Last year, back in Fall 21, I identified six goals, each of which is focused enough to allow for data-informed reflections on progress and yet large enough to endure over time. Individually, these remain my priorities for the coming year.

However, what's become increasingly clear to me over the past 12 months is that a next step must be to braid each of these threads and more into a strategic, long-term vision for the University—necessary for guiding our decisions, our actions, and our ongoing, data-informed reflections on progress made and new questions discovered.

Our four Strategic Initiatives sunset in 2023, suggesting that work must begin on developing a new strategic plan. However, I disagree with that conclusion for the simple reason that we are not beginning that work this year. **(Slide 15)** We have spent every month since I became Interim President in January 21 planning strategically in a number of areas that are all vital to the long-term health and success of our University. This includes our:

1. Academic Master Plan, Charting Our Course
2. Plan for achieving GI2025 goals and equity priorities
3. Plan for DEI praxis, our Inclusive Excellence Action Plan and associated Teams.
4. Integrated Marketing Communication Plan and its market research project, website audit, and web refresh
5. Our work towards developing a Strategic Enrollment Management plan
6. Thematic Pathway Review plan for re-accreditation, with our WASC visit scheduled for Spring 2024
7. The beginnings of our Strategic, Integrated Budget Planning Process

Clearly, we've been planning, and very strategically – with all of this work happening in segmented parts, by necessity, as I was in an interim role until eight months ago. We couldn't launch a full strategic planning effort under interim leadership before my official appointment, and the advisability of launching such an effort last Spring would have been questionable at best.

Here we are, then, with a number of plans created separately and in various stages of development – and while all are interrelated, we're lacking an overarching focus and sense of coherence. As an initial step toward centering our energies and building the parts into a coherent whole **(Slide 16)**, I offer three themes that represent for me the basic structure into which these plans and their associated initiatives can be placed.

- **(Slide 17) Theme 1: Institutional Identity.** As you can see from the guiding questions on-screen, development of this theme will include, for example, our work from Charting Our Course, the Inclusive Excellence Action Plan, the Integrated Marketing Communication Plan, and our re-accreditation plan.
- **(Slide 18) Theme 2: Enrollment Management and Academic Excellence.** Answering these guiding questions will require, for example, our work from the GI2025 and equity priorities plan and the development of a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan.
- **(Slide 19) Theme 3: Campus Culture.** We have opportunity through this theme to answer such guiding questions as these, utilizing this theme to place our work toward achieving campus culture ideals—which may include more than those listed here.

I look forward to sharing more and engaging with you about this overarching framework as we move into our third decade. I also look forward to hearing how everyone across the

University will engage with these sets of guiding questions, from their varying divisional and program perspectives.

Institutional Growth & Development

(Slide 20) Having great faith in our students, most of whom are also beginning their third decade of being, leads me to an intriguing parallel. **(Slide 21)** I also have great faith in this University and in the people who *are* this University to truly lead—to be an example, sorely needed in this world, of trustworthiness, integrity, resilience, academic excellence, and the kind of respectful collegiality that makes compromise and self-government possible.

(Slide 22) The tricky thing about placing faith in other human beings, however, as [C. Douglas Lummis](#) explained, is that faith is only necessary when the possibility of failure is real. A rock requires no faith in it to fall to the ground when it's dropped; a rose in bloom requires no faith for it to be fragrant. **(Slide 23)** But people, can fail to warrant our faith. This is why Lummis calls faith the key democratic virtue. **(Slide 24)** We invest our faith in each other because of the reality we want to bring into being – not because we're guaranteed of others living up to our hopes or expectations.

(Slide 25) All that being said, I do have great faith – and great confidence – in our students. Yes, they will make mistakes. They actually need to, in order to learn. **(Slide 26)** Without our faith and confidence in the face of error, they may be tempted to believe they're failures rather than learners. **(Slide 27)** And I also have great faith and confidence in CSUCI and in all of us. But we, too, need the freedom to try, to make mistakes, and to learn. Allowing each other that freedom to learn and to do better is essential, because the world sorely needs the reality we want to bring into being.

(Slide 28) I think of that reality in terms of culture building on many dimensions – of working at CSUCI to build a DEI-competent culture, a data-competent culture, a conflict-competent culture, a communication-competent culture, and more. **(Slide 29)** We will surely fail ourselves and each other, on occasion, in our efforts toward achieving truly worthy goals. Our plans and our actions are not perfect. **(Slide 30)** They can't be and they don't need to be. What is required is the forward momentum that faith makes possible, allowing us all to be learners who are not perfect, who make mistakes, who genuinely want to do and be better on each dimension of these culture-building categories, and who refuse to quit because doing this work matters.

(Slide 31) This context beautifully illustrates this moment in time for our university. On both individual and collective levels, we experience the full range of emotions and cognitions that accompany authentic growth – excitement, confidence, and the thrill of creative opportunity, along with periods of anxiety, stress, and self-doubt. **(Slide 32)** I would imagine that the original group who started CSUCI 20 years ago felt similar emotions – the excitement of building a new university while knowing full well that there was no guarantee of success. **(Slide 33)** Leaning into this vulnerability requires the courage, conviction, and

cognitive flexibility to navigate the successes and inevitable disappointments that come with invention on an organizational, institutional scale.

(Slide 34) And while we feel a strong bond with our colleagues who were here 20 years ago – some of whom are still here today – we are in a very different place now. **(Slide 35)** We have 20 years of experience behind us with data to inform our work. Through our experiences, we have begun to develop clarity about who we are and who we serve. **(Slide 36)** I think about being a Hispanic Serving Institution, one of nine in the nation to earn the Seal of Exceclencia in 2019, and the first CSU to receive that recognition; I think about our work of engaging students in experiential learning opportunities like undergraduate research and service learning; **(Slide 37)** I think about our interdisciplinary focus and how this is exemplified in our research station on Santa Rosa Island; **(Slide 38)** and I think about the role of a CSUCI education for our diverse student body and regional population, in the social mobility of our graduates, and in the development of new leaders for the communities we serve.

(Slide 39) We have accomplished and learned so much in two decades – but as any serious student knows, the more you learn, the more complex the questions become and the more nuanced and challenging the problems will be. But by asking questions that matter, by being open to the data they bring, and by making those data increasingly accessible and actionable, we can better see our strengths, our weaknesses, and the future we want not only for Channel Islands, but for the people and communities of our region.

(Slide 39-B) Moving forward, addressing these areas will require us to do what academics have all been trained to do in our respective disciplines – ensure that our work is firmly grounded in theoretical foundations; become aware of our biases and overcome our conditioned responses that accompany them; utilize research and best practices to inform our work; and rely on data to assess and inform our progress.

With this context in mind, **(Slide 40)** I'd like to focus on our student success data and provide recent updates on some of our key metrics.

Current Data on Key Metrics

Graduation Rates

(Slide 41) Let's start with our preliminary graduation rates for the spring. Please know, and as the entire Institutional Research team continuously reminds me, these are not our official figures. We haven't incorporated our Summer graduates just yet and the Chancellor's Office will finalize our numbers later this Fall.

The preliminary 4-year graduation rate for the 2018 first-year, full-time cohort is over 27%, with another 2-3 percentage points expected once summer graduates are included. As you know, this is our greatest area of need, so a 3% increase from the 17 cohort is good news. That said, we are short of our interim target and have work to do if we are to meet our GI 2025 goal of 40%.

The preliminary 6-year graduation rate for the 2016 cohort is 55.8%, with less than one additional percentage point expected once summer graduates are included. While this figure is still higher than earlier cohorts, we are short of our interim target and need to make progress to meet our GI2025 goal of 67%.

(Slide 42) With regards to our transfer students, I am proud to announce that we will meet our 4-year graduation target for the 4th consecutive year. Our preliminary 4-year rate for the 2018 new transfer cohort is 77.5%, and we anticipate this to increase by approximately 1 percentage point when summer graduates are included.

The preliminary 2-year Spring graduation rate for the 2020 cohort is 39.1%, though we expect to add 4-5 percentage points once the Summer graduates are included. **(Slide 43)** We are likely to fall below our interim target, but I am confident that we'll get back on track and meet our GI2025 goal of 54%. Keep in mind, this cohort started their academic journey with us in the midst of COVID and our virtual learning environment.

Equity Gaps

(Slide 44) With regards to our equity gaps, the Pell gap as measured through Spring is now under 4%, which is a substantial improvement from the previous two cohorts. This is a very positive indicator, as our Pell gap has historically been more stable and trending in the wrong direction. When we include our Summer graduates, we anticipate the gap to close a bit further. This current figure exceeds our interim goal of 5.4% and puts us firmly back on track for meeting our GI2025 target.

(Slide 45) However, the equity gap for Under-represented Minority students as measured through Spring is 11%. This is a 2.7 percentage increase from the previous cohort. While the URM gap has historically been highly variable, 11% is substantially off our interim goal of 2.5%. We're continuing our efforts to disaggregate the data to get a better understanding of how specific demographic groups are faring and to examine various metrics associated with improved persistence. We've placed specific emphasis on improving 1- and 2-year retention rates through a number of student success initiatives. These focused efforts have been promising, as our URM students are on par with non-URM students on 1-year retention. We've also seen similar trends for 2-year retention, although the 2020 cohort is presenting with a slight gap for URM students.

I continue to share this data with you every year, so that we all have clarity on exactly where we stand in relation to our student success goals. My hope and my expectation is that each one of us – faculty, staff, and administrator alike – is intimately familiar with our goals and knows how they can contribute to advancing this work.

(Slide 46) While we are still learning about the impact of COVID on current student behavior and performance, we now have actionable data that point to the impact of COVID on our new, incoming students. All of our incoming first year students are administered the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement. For our incoming cohort this year,

expectations about their level of engagement at CI in relation to their overall success are at all-time lows – on some measures having fallen 20 or more percentage points since 2019. This is true for nearly every topic surveyed – from expecting to seek help when having difficulty with coursework; to thinking that support services will be available to them; to anticipating the need to write more than one draft for a paper; to expecting interactions with people of a race or ethnicity or with religious beliefs other than their own, and many other behaviors associated with student success.

We don't know exactly why our incoming first-year students expect less. We don't know if their lower expectations are due to the pandemic or to a combination of existential threats now normalized in the lives of today's children and adolescents. It is worth our taking the time and care to consider the value of healthy expectations, and to realize that we are in a unique position to help the young people in our care to develop and build them. We need to create an all-encompassing campaign to explicitly teach our new, first-time students what their success requires them to expect of us and of themselves. This is very easily a place where we can all contribute directly. I look forward to seeing how this necessary, cross-divisional effort will take shape in the coming weeks and months.

Cross-Divisional Collaborations

(Slide 47) And this is something that I've seen better facilitated and developed over the four years that I've been with CI – the commitment to authentic, cross-divisional collaboration and partnership that is required for student success. We're moving beyond the idea that collaboration means simply informing each other of what we're doing in our various divisions. Instead, I've seen a number of ways in which we have worked diligently to overcome decades of conditioning in the broad world of higher education to consider student success the province of Academic Affairs alone. If there is one thing we've learned in the last two decades – here at CI and through the literature more broadly – it is that every single division, program, and employee plays a role in our students' success.

(Slide 48) A case in point is the work done from March through October of last year, by six Inclusive Excellence Action Teams – each of which included membership from all divisions, faculty, staff and administrators - whose work led to the creation of Channel Islands' first Inclusive Excellence Action Plan. This included a budget line for these initiatives, and our cross-divisional Strategic Resource Planning Committee – again with representation from all divisions and levels of the university – deliberated to prioritize and provide me with funding recommendations. **(Slide 49)** Of course, we cannot yet claim any substantial progress toward advancing racial and social justice within our community because of this intensive planning effort. All we have is a plan with several of its initiatives underway, a strategy for making progress and impact visible, and a commitment to Cabinet-level accountability for operationalizing the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access. That we have not yet succeeded in this is not the point. As Theodore Parker and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., observed, while “the arc of the moral universe bends toward justice,” that arc spans centuries and has had the hands of untold millions both pushing and pulling upon it. Forces pushing against that justice-oriented arc are emboldened yet again, in our time, with the

oppression of minoritized peoples occurring once more in the broad light of day. So instant success with our IEAP was never the goal. Instead, getting as many of our hands as possible directly involved in our IEAP initiatives, helping to press that long arc toward justice is the point. Not quitting because it is hard work or when things aren't immediately perfect is the point.

(Slide 50) If you are new to CI, I encourage you to learn about the IEAP and find opportunities to get involved. I know that two opportunities to sign up are coming in September. In one, the MPP-Dismantling Racism initiative, all administrators will have the opportunity to join a text-based discussion group, a “safe for risk-taking” kind of group for learning the vocabulary, concepts, sensitivities, and strategies necessary for going beyond “I am not a racist” to “I am anti-racist.” We need all of our administrators to be building the knowledge and skills for DEI leadership. A second opportunity to get involved is for faculty, staff, and students alike. Nine Critical Learning Collectives will be formed, facilitated by CFG/CLC qualified coaches, for the purpose of engaging with campus climate survey data over the course of the coming year, sharing with the campus what is learned through Town Halls, and recommending strategies for ongoing improvement.

Several other examples of cross-divisional innovations include the following.

First-Year Experience Initiatives

(Slide 51) Our **First Year Experience Initiatives**, which are specifically designed to improve the retention and persistence of our incoming cohort. **(Slide 52)** This includes our Summer Success Academy, which was a 6-week residential bridge for almost 70 first year students, where they completed 6 GE units all before the start of their very first fall semester. The program also focused on peer-to-peer academic and psychosocial support, building navigational capital, and developing community and a sense of belonging. Thank you to Toni Deboni, Ernesto Guerrero, Catherine Villareal, Jacqueline Connell, and Daniel Banyai for leading the planning; our dedicated faculty members who taught the courses, and to the many other Student Affairs staff who were involved.

(Slide 53) This also includes the expansion of our **learning communities**, which is also tied to our **renewable 2-year housing grant** and **Green Family Foundation renewable scholarships**. I thank Dr. Marie Francois for her enduring leadership here, working with the Office of the President – with a special shout-out to Mary McDonnell for her work in coordinating the Green Family Foundation Scholarship, Cindy Derrico and her team for coordinating the Scott-Jewett Housing Grants, **(Slide 54)** and of course, all of the faculty who are teaching linked courses that form the core of our learning communities

(Slide 55) Also importantly, we are expanding our **embedded peer tutoring** program through the Learning Resource Center and Writing and Multiliteracy Center to include EPT's in all sections of quantitative reasoning and composition rhetoric. This is critical, as we know the correlation between the completion of composition and quantitative reasoning in the first year and improved persistence and graduation rates. I thank Dean Alicia Virtue,

Brook Masters, and Dr. Sohui Lee for leading this effort, as well as Crystal Gomez, Lysandra Garcia, Megan Eberhardt-Alstot, and Jamie Hannans for their leadership and engagement; and of course the faculty who are doing so much of the heavy lifting here: Drs. Mary Adler, Stacey Anderson, Emily Spitler-Lawson, Nancy Park, Geoff Buhl, and Brook Ernest.

(Slide 56) And I want to also recognize our Interim VP of Advancement, Ritchie LeRoy and the entire Advancement team, as well as our Foundation Board, for their work in facilitating the unprecedented level of support from our community which made the First-Year Experience Initiatives possible.

CSUCI Initiative for Mapping Academic Success

(Slide 57) CIMAS: The CSUCI Initiative for Mapping Academic Success program launched in Spring 2022 to support students who were struggling from the ongoing pandemic and the cumulative stressors associated with it. For seven different cohorts of 12-15 students, CIMAS provided faculty-led weekly sessions, alternating academic workshops with regular check-in sessions. The students who took part in the CIMAS program saw an increase in their GPAs, units taken, and retention rates. The roots of CIMAS date back to 2017, when Dr. Elizabeth Sowers, Sociology, and Monica Rivas, now Director of Academic Advising, collaborated on creating what they called the Sociology Student Success Workshop, which was implemented by Dr. Sowers and Dr. Leslie Abell. This program was named a 2020 Program to Watch by Excelencia in Education. In January 2022, Drs. Sowers and Abel created CIMAS, building from their model, as well as a professional development program to prepare faculty to lead the weekly sessions. Congratulations and thank you to all whose work led to this promising intervention for students, including the faculty who taught in the program and Drs. Dennis Downey and Michelle Hasendonckx, who helped launch and oversee the CIMAS pilot in March.

Post-Graduate Outcomes

(Slide 58) As many of you know, we launched an initiative last year to more broadly and rigorously assess and measure post graduate outcomes as one facet of social mobility. This was a cross divisional collaboration involving Academic Affairs, Career Services, Institutional Research, and the Office of the President. This work is being led by Dean Sue Andrzejewski, Drs. Miguel Hellester Delgado, Paul Peterson, Matt Zivot, Amanda Carpenter, Kaia Tollefson, and Jessica Muth. I also want to recognize Dr. Jared Barton who did much of the heavy lifting for us early on. We've launched a webpage with descriptive findings and are currently employing regression modeling to identify predictors of post graduate success as it relates to high impact practices within academic programs.

Middle Leadership Academy

(Slide 59) One of the greatest challenges facing higher education is how to maintain our fiduciary responsibility as an institution of higher education while concurrently eliminating

financial barriers to student success. I want to thank a cross divisional team from Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, and Business and Financial Affairs for their work on examining and recommending changes to our disenrollment for non-payment of tuition policy. This work is so important, and it represents a hole in the research literature. I'd like to recognize Dr. Michelle Hasendonckzx, Dr. Ernesto Guerrero, Anna Bencoter, Colleen Forest, and Sunshine Garcia for blazing a new trail through their work in the Middle Leadership Academy.

CSUCI Sustainability Policy, Goals, and Actions

(Slide 60) Roxane Beigel-Coryell has been an effective leader in helping to design and marshal support for our sustainability policy and several goals and initiatives – and has done an exceptional job of engaging faculty, staff and students in this work. One notable program will launch this year, the Green Revolving Fund. The GRF is an internal fund for financing energy and water efficiency projects, with \$250,000 in one-time seed funding. Proposals will be invited from students, faculty, and/or staff members requesting a loan from the GRF to fund projects that must be able to demonstrate a measurable return on investment, with utility savings achieved by the project used to repay the project loan. It is this kind of innovation that we and the planet need to see us into our next 20 years and beyond. Thank you for your vision and leadership, Roxane.

Capital Projects

(Slide 61) I've developed such an appreciation for the cross divisional nature of our capital planning and design process. We have some very exciting highlights to share on this front:

(Slide 62) Gateway Hall is on track to open by the Fall of 2025. So much has happened since this project started – and in many ways, with our campus leadership changes and COVID, we've had to reset to a certain degree – but through setbacks, we have developed a much more inclusive process involving faculty, staff, and administrators from all divisions. One major issue we've had to navigate is the hyperinflation of construction costs. We've been navigating cost escalations throughout the project, but very recently, we saw a \$13.3M increase to the project. However, thanks to the hard work and planning of Dave Carlson, Tom Hunt, Barbara Rex, Laurie Nichols, and others, our proposal requesting support from the Chancellor's Office was received extremely well. And I just received final word yesterday that we secured the additional \$13.3M to ensure the project continues as planned.

(Slide 63) Early Childhood Care & Education Center. I want to thank and acknowledge our School of Education leadership as well as the Early Childhood Studies faculty who have played such a significant part in moving this project forward. Our feasibility study was updated last spring to provide more depth on the early childhood education programming, as well as the anticipated new credentialing requirement for universal TK educators. This work, combined with the advocacy of Celina Zacarias, additional state support through Assemblymember Jacquie Irwin – we received an additional \$2M allocation, and philanthropic efforts through University Advancement, this project is moving forward, and we are confident that the additional funding for the capital project will be secured. The

response from our community has been remarkable, with early childhood education having been identified as one of the most pressing regional workforce and service needs that will be addressed through our academic programming and research.

(Slide 64) Performing Arts Theater: We are also moving forward with the initial planning phases for our Performing Arts Theater, which will be located adjacent to Gateway Hall. Again, our capital planning team, along with our faculty and academic leadership, have been working together during these initial planning phases. We are in early days on this project in terms of securing the funding needed to proceed, but this long, talked about project is no longer a pipe dream. I have good cause to be hopeful – more details to come soon - and look forward to seeing how this facility will impact our Performing Arts, students, faculty, and programming opportunities.

Conclusion

(Slide 65) And so there we have it – incredible projects underway in every division, including a number of significant new construction projects, alongside of needing to absorb and respond to the sobering enrollment scenario we are facing. There is much to celebrate and much work to do.

Thank you all for being a part of the Channel Islands story, and for weaving your ideas and your contributions—past, present, and future—into the fabric of our University.

President's Awards for Student, Faculty, and Staff Excellence

And now, I would like to introduce the recipients for the President's Award for Student Innovation, Faculty Teaching and Innovation, and Staff Excellence.

President's Award for Student Innovation

(Slide 66) Our student innovator is Sheradyn Ruef, a Computer Science student, Data Analyst Student Assistant for Career Development and Alumni Engagement, and last but not least, a President's Scholar. She was nominated for having "established several post-graduate outcome data projects which have a significant contribution to CSUCI and our regional communities."

Sheradyn's work has helped us share our student success stories with external communities and help programs further identify their post-graduate outcomes. Her nomination letter said, "Ms. Ruef is an engaged student who possesses strong values and ethics required of professionals in the technology industry. While her work ethic is stellar, it is her ingenuity, positive demeanor and professional skills that tremendously impress us."

Please join me in congratulating Sheradyn. I know from our conversations that she is tremendously honored by this award; she would prefer not to make any remarks today. Congratulations again, Sheradyn. It has been such a pleasure getting to know you in your role as a President's Scholar.

President's Teaching and Innovation Award

(Slide 67) The President's Teaching and Innovation Award I award to Dr. Ekin Pehlivan, Associate Professor of Marketing in the Martin V. Smith School of Business & Economics. Dr. Pehlivan has been acknowledged by countless CI community members for her dedication to our students and focus on her data-driven pedagogy. From launching the Business Analytics and Data Storytelling minor to the launch of CI Solutions (previously known as the micro-internship program), Dr. Pehlivan inspires her peers with the amazing work she has accomplished.

In one of the many nominations she received, the nominator wrote "Dr. Ekin Pehlivan is a teacher, friend, mentor, and role model; however, she is more than that to me. She is family. When you have someone who genuinely and consistently cares about your best interest and is not afraid to provide genuine feedback, there is no other word than family for that." Another nominator said, "Ekin is one of those professors whose dedication and passion inspires everyone around her. Her passion for teaching makes it so easy to find a passion for learning."

Please join me in congratulating Dr. Pehlivan.

President's Staff Award for Excellence

(Slide 68) The President’s Staff Award for Excellence is awarded to Megan Eberhardt-Alstot, our Teaching and Learning Innovation’s Learning Design Lead. Megan is yet another example of excellence, clearly recognized as such through the multiple nominations from colleagues and students that she received from across the University. According to one colleague, she is a “dedicated lifelong learner who inspires and motivates others.” A student wrote that “she has emphasized the importance of student voices in the mission to achieve student success and giving students like me, a platform to speak from,” with yet another nominator noting, “Megan has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to humanizing the learning process and supporting faculty.”

She truly deserves recognition for all she has accomplished within TLI, including her support of the summer faculty development program, and her creation of the Learning Online 101 program which teaches students online habits that will increase their success in their courses.

Please join me in congratulating our staff honoree, Megan Eberhardt-Alstot.

President’s Faculty Fellow

At this time, I would like to welcome our inaugural President’s Faculty Fellow and introduce our new Faculty Fellow for the 2022-23 year. **(Slide 69)** Please join me in welcoming Dr. LaSonya Davis who served in the role from August 2020 through December 2021. We are lucky to have amazing faculty on our campus like Dr. Davis whose dedication has positively impacted so many of our students.

Her work in assisting the development of the Inclusive Excellence Actions Teams and Plan has helped us assure that we take institutional responsibility for acting upon the values of diversity, inclusion, and equity that we claim, and continue to assess how we can do better.

Her leadership in this position has been truly invaluable to our campus, and I thank her for navigating this inaugural fellowship during the pandemic, and through leadership changes, and never faltering in her tremendous and positive energy, her vision, and her dedication for this work.

Please join me in congratulating and thanking Dr. Davis.

Now, I would like to introduce the new President’s Faculty Fellow for 22-23, Dr. Michelle Dean. **(Slide 70)** Dr. Dean is an Associate Professor in our School of Education. She prepares our students to become special education teachers and teaches in our Master of Arts in Educational Leadership program. Her research on Autism Spectrum Disorder is widely published and appreciated for what it does to help educators, parents, and other readers understand the development of social skills in K-12 students with autism.

As the President’s Faculty Fellow, she intends to focus her scholarship on disability inclusion, accessibility, and acceptance in relation to disability systems and policy implementations on our campus. Dr. Dean will use her findings to make meaningful change in the lives of our campus community members with disabilities. Please join me in welcoming and congratulating Dr. Dean. **(Slide 71)**