Forging CSUS, Turlock partnership

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The riches of California’s Central Valley are unparalleled, and in many ways unappreciated. One of the greatest resources we share is California State University, Stanislaus — a university that is destined to make even greater contributions to our community, our state and our nation.

The future of California State University, Stanislaus depends on its partnership with our home community. My chief commitment to strengthening that partnership is to focus on service: to explore how we serve our communities as we continue to look how best to serve our students. In the coming months, I look forward to meeting personally with as many community constituents as I can find out about their perceptions of our University and to hear their ideas on community needs. I intend to supplement my work by reaching out to regular community surveys to find out how we are meeting the needs of the community.

We begin from a position of strength. California State University, Stanislaus has excellent academics, a dedicated and inspirational faculty, an incredible campus, outstanding programs that create partnerships with the communities of the Central Valley and serves an unparalleled student success. When I see an institution that has one of the highest retention rates in the state, I know that the faculty and programs here are highly effective in meeting student needs. In addition, California State University, Stanislaus has enjoyed unprecedented growth in enrollments as well as the construction of new facilities. And, the university has had great success in fund-raising and winning grants and awards for faculty research — further indication of the fact that the quality of this institution is recognized by both public and private support.

This is a promising foundation upon which to build. We are fortunate to enjoy these many strengths, as high education faces a complex, often confusing array of public expectations and governmental demands. Let's take a look at the context within which we must work.

The traditional view of higher education as a public good has been systematically eroded over the last few decades. Economic pressures and a consumer-driven society have placed greater emphasis on the private benefits of higher education than on the larger view that education should be a preparation for life rather than preparation for a lifestyle. Yet at no time in our history has the traditional role of education for the public good been more vital to the future of our nation and our world. At the same time, higher education faces an incredible array of challenges which threaten the survival of some colleges and universities, large and small, public and private.

The pace of change with which higher education must cope is dazzling. We accept as given that the world is infinitely more complex and more interdependent than it has ever been. The Magento of the cathedrals of the causes and conflicts, the continuing globalization of our economic, cultural, and political systems, is divided by the still major conflicts of our time. Higher education continues to be the most important pathway in the nation for young people to the nation's future and the fulfillment of their promise. Yet how well higher education can meet that demand will depend on how well it can meet the needs of the 21st century.

We are witnessing a fundamental shift in the nature of our society — a move away from the traditional, well-defined roles of the past to a more fluid, dynamic and complex world. The world of tomorrow is not a place that we can predict, but one that we must prepare our students for. The challenges we face today are not just financial, but also social, cultural, political, and environmental. We must prepare our students to be leaders in a world that is constantly changing.

At California State University, Stanislaus, we have a unique opportunity to shape the future of higher education. We are in a position to make a difference in the lives of our students and in the communities we serve. Let us work together to ensure that California State University, Stanislaus remains a leader in higher education and a beacon of hope for all who seek the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in today's world.

We must recognize that the future of higher education is not just about providing a quality education, but also about creating a community that is inclusive, diverse, and supportive. We must work towards creating an environment where students feel welcomed and valued, where they can learn and grow in a safe and nurturing atmosphere.

Let us continue to work towards this vision and create a future that is bright and full of opportunities for all.

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