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A Presidential Exit

Dianne Harrison to Take the Helm at CSUN

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PHOTO PROVIDED BY CSUMB

It was a day before the end of Spring Break when Cal State Monterey Bay (CSUMB) Pres. Dianne Harrison sent an e-mail to the campus stating her leave from the school's office of the presidency. The reason: to take over at Cal State Northridge (CSUN). 0

On March 27, Harrison toured her new campus, wearing her new colors: red and black.

"It's a nice campus," Harrison said. "It's very beautiful and a huge campus compared to [CSUMB], and older as well. I've been here for six years," she said. "It's a big career move, and I intended to return to a large campus."

CSUN's student population is about 36,000 in comparison to CSUMB's population, which is about 5,000.

In her first address to CSUN, Harrison outlined one of her strengths.

"I am and will be for CSUN a strong advocate for this institution while also being a team player in the CSU system," Harrison said.

Harrison will project her characteristics at CSUN just as she did in CSUMB where she secured money for the school budget, which aided the university during the CSU budget gap crisis, as well as gathered community money for financial aid and academic programs — such as the new nursing program.

That was a strong part in the CSUN presidential search committee's attraction to Harrison candidacy.

"Dr. Harrison brings an outstanding portfolio of administrative experience, academic credentials and student-focused approach to her new position as president of CSUN," CSU Trustee Bob Linscheid, chair of the committee said in a statement.

Harrison becomes CSUN's fifth president in mid-June. The CSU Board of Trustees will decide on Harrison's salary at their upcoming meeting, which is scheduled for May 8 and 9.

Pres. Harrison spent 30 years at Florida State University (FSU) where she worked up the hierarchy, beginning as a faculty member, dean of social work, associate vice president for academic affairs, dean of graduate studies and vice president for academic quality and external programs.

After her tenure at FSU, she came to CSUMB.

"When I arrived, there were no signs on how to get to the campus. People got lost. People would say: 'I'm not going there. I'll get lost.' In fact, my first day, I got lost. And my philosophy is if something can happen to me, it'll happen to someone else. So I fixed that," Harrison said about placing signs to direct the route to campus.

She feels part of a legacy she leaves at CSUMB is the university setting on campus.

"While some people think it's cool to have abandoned buildings, other people don't. Prospective students and parents, visitors, community members, speakers, all the folks we need to enroll or come out, the university needs to look safe and normal for them. When the library was built, many were saying, 'now we're a real university.'"

The transformation of CSUMB required her to reach out in the community, which Harrison excelled at, coordinating with city and county officials in order to demolish abandoned buildings to improve the university setting.

Although Harrison wants to return to a research institute school with a larger population, she is still dedicated to the CSU system.

"I'm committed to the CSU, its mission of providing access to students who might otherwise not be able to attend college, while providing excellence; it's quality education," she said.

As of now, an interim president has not been appointed to replace Harrison since it is the Chancellor's duty according to Provost and Vice President Kathy Cruz-Uribe.

The CSU Board of Trustees, under consultation with the Chancellor, is responsible for recruiting, selecting and appointing CSU campus presidents. There are two committees responsible in the process, though.

There is the Trustees Committee for the Selection of the President (TCSP), consisting of the chair of the Board, four Trustees and the Chancellor. TCSP is responsible for developing the final job description, reviews and interviews candidates and the ultimate body for final decisions, according to the Board of

Trustees selection policy.

The second committee, the Advisory Committee to the Trustees Committee for the Selection of the President (ACTCSP), acts as an advisory group to TCSP. The Chair of the Academic Senate on campus, who in the case of CSUMB is Carl Ferguson; two faculty members selected by CSUMB faculty; one member of campus support staff selected by the staff; one student selected by the CSUMB student body; one member of the TCSP; one alumnus/ alumna elected by the Alumni Association; one vice president or academic dean; and a president of another CSU selected by the Chancellor.

Harrison, who was viewed by many as a staunch supporter of student groups, thinks whoever follows her will continue to support these programs.

"More students who are engaged are more likely to graduate. We want to do what we can to support student successes," Harrison said. "Some students succeed in playing on the court, others in pep band, the dance team, business club — or other clubs. Whatever it takes, I think people in leadership roles will see that."

Harrison may be leaving in a few months, but she still has pride in her work at CSUMB. Mentioning the increase of academic programs offered, Harrison was thrilled on the nursing program to be offered.

"It's unlike any other in the area," she said. "It's policy-oriented and avoids duplicating the programs at surrounding schools."

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Henry loves scouting out the scoop in the world, nation, state and local news realm. But, other than that, he spends much of his time thinking of how *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* are great allegories for an international political world, and just how ingenious *Doctor Who* is.

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