



California State University  
**Dominguez Hills**

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Office of the President  
1000 East Victoria St. Carson, CA 90747

January 25, 2010

Dear Colleagues:

Happy and healthy New Year! Welcome back to campus for the spring 2010 semester and the beginning of our 50th Anniversary celebration! I hope you all had a restful and enjoyable holiday break with your loved ones, families and friends and are ready to return with renewed energy to serve our diverse, talented student body.

As we begin this semester to conclude the 2009-10 academic year, I want to share with you the progress we have made together on behalf of CSU Dominguez Hills since my last formal letter to you in November. We remain on course in making important progress on our four collective goals: Building Community; Enrollment Management; Points of Pride: Celebrating Dominguez Hills, and Fiscal Stability.

### ***Building Community***

CSU Dominguez Hills continues to enjoy a positive trend in relationship building, evidenced by increased philanthropic support, enhanced media placement, as well as a greater recognition of the University within the Los Angeles and South Bay communities. Some of the highlights include:

While we are not immune to the difficult budget situation and economic climate, we have achieved a great deal. From FY 2007-08 to FY 2008-09, our philanthropic commitments increased by 52%, media placements by nearly 10%, and a community engagement strategy was launched that resulted in over 30,000 visitors to our campus. We are in the process of redesigning the CSUDH Foundation Board and have maintained our active advocacy program by visiting and partnering with almost all of the state, county and local representatives in our service area.

We held the first meeting of the President's Legislative Advisory Council at which members of the California Assembly and Senate from our service area visited with me. This program allowed for an informal and frank conversation about the impact of the state budget on the CSU and on Dominguez Hills in particular and our crucial role of preparing engaged, informed graduates equipped for professional careers in our region and state.

This year we created a new Alumni Association using a model where all of our students automatically become members of the Association upon graduation and we have an Alumni Advisory Council that allows for further engagement. In the six months of operation, it has been very successful and we are finding greater alumni interest and participation. Many of you have long-time friendships and connections with our alumni and we ask you to encourage them to

reach out to our Director of Alumni Programs, Porsche Gordon, ([phgordon@csudh.edu](mailto:phgordon@csudh.edu)) and become involved. It would be a wonderful contribution to this University to increase our alumni database and inform them of all that has occurred up until now. Let's invite them to the many celebrations that will be occurring for our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In my last letter I shared with you that the Alumni Association has hosted receptions in the South Bay beach cities. Through these events and follow up we have established valuable partnerships and had significant outcomes. We now have a feature article in monthly newsletters of several chambers of commerce and are strengthening our relationships with mayors and city council members by hosting them on campus.

Our relationship with the Home Depot Center and the Chivas USA and L.A. Galaxy teams has improved significantly. We are working collaboratively to ensure that the University is at the center of any decision making that concerns the campus. The University's suite at HDC occasionally has available space, and while it is sometimes a last minute invitation, we hope you will let us know if you would like to be notified of availability. Please email Delores Benjamin ([dbenjamin@csudh.edu](mailto:dbenjamin@csudh.edu)) with your name and contact information.

Within Dominguez Hills, I continue to meet with small groups of faculty to discuss teaching, research and community service. Meeting in this way provides an opportunity for all of us to learn more about each other and share our passions about our work. I still remain surprised by how many of us from across our campus meet for the first time at these gatherings. It is always a pleasant and unexpected consequence when mutual research interests are discovered, new friendships are formed, and collaborations emerge. Cheri Mason ([cmason@csudh.edu](mailto:cmason@csudh.edu)) in my office will schedule these small faculty meetings during the spring semester.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you who were able to take the time to attend the University Holiday Gathering at the University House. It provided a wonderful time to reconnect informally and engage in conversation. This too is important as we build community within our University and continue to meet individuals who are committed to our mission and serving our students.

### ***Enrollment Management***

As I reported last November, we opened the academic year with a record number of students! As of the census on September 28, 2009, the University had enrolled 14,483 students. While the census has not been completed for the spring term, our records indicate that we had 8,008 FTE students enrolled as of January 20th. We are on track to meet our enrollment target for the 2009-10 academic year and what a wonderful tribute to all of your hard work. As we celebrate our 50th anniversary one of our accomplishments will be meeting enrollment targets for the second consecutive year. As our enrollment numbers are finalized, Vice President Sue Borrego will update you.

We will continue to focus our efforts on recruiting students for 2010-11. Like our sister institutions, we had a record-breaking number of fall applications and saw an increase of 37% for freshman and 167% for transfers over the prior year. We are confident that we will be able to meet our enrollment targets and enroll an academically strong fall 2010 class.

As we focus on enrollment reports, we must also be cognizant that retention is key to reaching and maintaining our enrollment goals. It is so important that we not only enroll students but also that we assist our students in graduating as soon as possible. Access and graduation of students from superb academic programs is a hallmark of a model urban university. Thus, we will be participating in a CSU systemwide initiative to “Close the Achievement Gap.” During the fall 2009 semester, Provost Ron Vogel and the Academic Affairs division in concert with Vice President Sue Borrego and the EMSA division began reviewing critical areas pertaining to student success, course scheduling, program offerings for day and evening students, degree pathways, academic advising and student support services. As we all know, the collaboration of these two very important divisions is crucial for providing the academic and co-curricular programs that will continue to ensure our students have every opportunity for success. As this plan is finalized the Provost will share the initiatives with all of you.

### ***Strategic Planning***

This semester we will once again focus on our strategic planning process. Last year, the University created a strategic framework that will be used to support the campus community in setting priorities and establishing goals that are in alignment with our vision of becoming a model comprehensive urban university. This effort ensures that our students have the best possible educational experience and benefit fully from having graduated from Dominguez Hills.

Dr. Sue Borrego recently conducted a market research study to help us determine the focus of future marketing efforts and develop a strategy execution work plan that will include goals and priorities for functional areas within the University that support our mission and vision. We need each of you to engage fully in the process as we begin to create measurable objectives and action items. Updates and additional information can be found at [www.csudh.edu/strategicplanning](http://www.csudh.edu/strategicplanning).

Co-chaired by Vice President Sue Borrego and Provost Ron Vogel, the strategic planning process will be completed by the end of the spring semester. This will allow for implementation of the plan by the fall 2010 semester.

### ***Points of Pride: Celebrating Dominguez Hills***

This month we began celebrating our 50th anniversary, which will continue through commencement of 2011. We look forward to the many activities that will honor our institution’s history, underscore the significant role we have played as the University in the South Bay, and utilize this strong foundation to catapult into the future, ready to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. CSU Dominguez Hills was born in the turbulent 1960s and has grown into an exceptional 21st century academic institution. We can be very proud that we are part of a transformational institution that has faced great challenges, and yet, has remained committed to offering an outstanding educational experience to a diverse student body. The very best teaching and learning, coupled with faculty engaged in research and community service, has taken place at this University for fifty years. I hope each of you will proudly wear our 50th anniversary pin. If you do not yet have one, please contact Ceremonies and Events Manager Toby Bushee at [tbushee@csudh.edu](mailto:tbushee@csudh.edu).

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee, chaired by Vice President of University Advancement Greg Saks and Toby Bushee, has been hard at work. The committee wanted to ensure input from the University community in selecting a theme for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I appreciate the wonderful ideas that were submitted and thank everyone who voted over the last few weeks. I am delighted to tell you that the winning theme is *Honoring our History, Forging our Future*, and it will be incorporated into all 50th anniversary events and programs.

In addition, generous donations from AEG, Shell Oil and Watson Land Company allowed the 50th anniversary committee to establish the Golden Toro Ideas Program. Through this program, grants will be distributed to campus organizations for the development of new programs and to enhance events already planned that will become a part of the 50th anniversary celebration. For additional information and an application please contact Toby at [tbushee@csudh.edu](mailto:tbushee@csudh.edu) or visit [www.csudh.edu/50thanniversary](http://www.csudh.edu/50thanniversary).

On January 9, the University unveiled the “Dave Yanai Court” in the Torodome to honor former men’s basketball coach Dave Yanai. Coach Yanai dedicated 19 years to CSU Dominguez Hills and in that time inspired many student-athletes to greatness on the court and off. During the reception prior to the unveiling, John Nojima, one of our alums and a former player under Coach Yanai shared a very important memory. He asked the coach what he really wanted from his players and the Coach responded, “That all of our team graduates.” This exemplifies why this Coach has been so well loved and honored throughout his career. The Dave Yanai Scholarship Endowment Fund and the naming of the “Dave Yanai Court” will ensure that his legacy lives on here at CSU Dominguez Hills.

As part of the 50th anniversary celebration, a special lecture series is being organized that will highlight the rich history of Dominguez Hills and the surrounding community. On January 14, the first talk of the 50th Anniversary Speakers Series welcomed Karen Gebhart, president of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association Foundation. Ms. Gebhart spoke about this region’s role in aviation history as the site of the historic Los Angeles International Air Meet, which took place January 10-20, 1910 at Dominguez Field near where the university now stands, as well as the importance of aviation in today’s economy. The talk was well received and was a great beginning to what will be a very exciting lecture series. The full slate of speakers in the series will be announced in the months ahead.

Returning from the holiday break, I am sure you have noticed the progress that has been made on the library expansion. Like the Loker Student Union, our Library will become another architectural point of pride for our campus. Coupled with our 50th celebration, we will also have a grand opening of the Library. The ribbon cutting ceremony will take place on April 29, CSU Dominguez Hills Founder’s Day. The library faculty has always been an integral asset to our academic enterprise. Their contributions to the success and graduation of our students, support of our faculty research, and their role as a resource to our South Bay community are second to none. This new state-of-the-art building will increase the space necessary for them to continue their work and serve as an important resource for our student body and each of us.

We will celebrate our 50th anniversary with events, lectures and exhibits throughout 2010-11. The 50th Anniversary Committee welcomes you as we celebrate our history and set the stage for

the next 50 years. We'll continue to share information and stories with you on the 50th Anniversary website ([www.csudh.edu/50<sup>th</sup> anniversary](http://www.csudh.edu/50th_anniversary)) on a regular basis. We hope you will find time in your busy schedules to join us!

### ***Financial Stability***

While we are celebrating the University's five decades of achievement, we also need to recognize the challenges this institution has faced during that time. While the financial stability has been shaky in our recent past, we as a community were working together to stabilize our situation to ensure a better fiscal picture for our future. We had nearly eliminated a \$2.8 million structural deficit, reducing it to approximately \$700,000, and planned to solidify our resources when this global and national financial crisis hit. These severe budget reductions have been felt by every department and division on this campus.

Historically, as many of you know, budget cuts at Dominguez Hills were distributed unevenly across divisions and Academic Affairs received the lowest percentage cut, in order to protect academic programs to the fullest extent possible. Unfortunately, given the severity of the cuts, it is no longer possible for the other divisions to absorb a greater percentage of the reductions and, over the last 3 years, cuts have been more evenly distributed among all divisions.

Our University Budget Committee (UBC) has been hard at work and recently submitted their recommendations on Phase II of the budget reductions for FY 2009/10. Today, I will meet with the UBC chair, Dr. Irene Vasquez, to discuss the committee's recommendations and to share the final FY 2009/10 budget decisions.

It should be noted that over the past two years, the University has been seeking entrepreneurial and cost saving measures. For example, we are job sharing with other CSU campuses and the Chancellor's Office in the Budget Planning and Administration Office (Budget Analyst), the Human Resource Office (Worker's Compensation Manager) and in Information Technology (Campus Security Officer). All divisions continue to look for creative solutions to provide required services to our students, faculty and staff, while at the same time seeking cost savings.

The Governor's budget proposal for 2010/11, released on January 8, restores \$305 million in cuts to the CSU system and adds \$60.6 million in funding for enrollment growth. The Governor also called for legislative changes to ensure that higher education receives more than our state prisons. CSU Chancellor Reed commended the Governor for his renewed investment in higher education, but cautions that we are still faced with challenging circumstances and it will be a slow process to return to financial stability. The \$305 million that the Governor is proposing to restore was a one-time cut to the current budget. The additional \$60.6 million for enrollment growth is contingent upon the state receiving a threshold amount in federal aid for other state programs.

We should all remain cautiously optimistic about the Governor's proposed budget for 2010/11, and I must remind everyone that the budget proposal is preliminary and changes can be expected between now and the May revise, and potentially when the budget goes before the legislature. I would like to applaud everyone for their sustained efforts in voicing concerns about the budget

reductions to the Governor and legislature. We need to continue to raise our concerns with them as the legislature moves forward to finalize the budget process.

The UBC will begin their work on the 2010/11 proposed budget during this semester. While Academic Affairs presented their tentative plans at the December 9, 2009 Academic Senate meeting, the UBC will hold open hearings for all divisions to present their plans to the campus community to ensure an open and transparent budget process.

We at CSU Dominguez Hills remain committed to maintaining transparency in the budget process and working together to address our funding challenges. Our budget priorities will remain the same. Mission-critical services that places student learning and graduation at the center, a robust class schedule, retention of tenure and tenure-track faculty, and essential student support services are our highest priorities. If you have any questions and/or suggestions regarding the budget, I urge you to speak to your dean or director. We will continue to work with the Academic Senate through the Chair and the Executive Committee. It is unfortunate that at times rumors are generated that jeopardize the collaboration we all desire. I encourage you to ask questions of the appropriate individuals so we can all remain appropriately informed.

Five decades of excellence at our University gives us the knowledge that this campus has the fortitude to address whatever challenges will confront us in the future. I remain enthusiastically confident about our future and what we will achieve together. My hope and confidence is based on the tireless work you do every day for our students and the community. Your passion for and commitment to the work you do inspires me and I know we will have many more successes. Our visible benchmark is seen every year at Commencement when we witness the joy of the students and their families, knowing that this event marks a new achievement and future for them and generations to follow. Each of you as educators has played a role in transforming the lives of thousands of students who have entered the doors of CSU Dominguez Hills. Together we will continue to transform many more lives, we will continue to strengthen who we are, and we will become the premier urban model university of the nation.

Of course, please send any comments, thoughts or ideas you may have to [president@csudh.edu](mailto:president@csudh.edu). Have a wonderful spring 2010 semester!

Warm regards,

Mildred García  
President



P.S. Please feel free to copy and paste the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary logo for your email signature.