

New SDSU president to keep 'IV campus in mind'

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CALEXICO — The chancellor of the California State University has pledged to find a new permanent president for San Diego State University by the start of the spring term, one that will be equal to the needs of the local campus.



On Tuesday, Chancellor Timothy White visited the SDSU-Imperial Valley Campus to inform staffers and community about their search for a new president, as well as listening to their concerns. “If we stay on track, the CSU board of trustees will announce a new president at our meeting in Long Beach on Jan. 31,” he said.

White arrived with other CSU trustees and advisory committee members at the SDSU-IV library, including Vice Chair of the CSU board of trustees Adam Day, who is also search committee chair.

“We’ve already started the process and have 100 applicants,” he said. “We’ll probably reduce that pool to a manageable 15 and choose among the top three or four. We are looking for the best-of-best. We’ll need a president who comes up to speed quickly and keeps the IV campus in mind.”

Staffers at SDSU-IV took the time to share suggestions and concerns for the new eventual president. Carlos Herrera, associate professor of history at SDSU-IV hoped the panel would continue the tradition of supporting the professors’ research. When Herrera arrived 18 years ago, he was required to administer the department and had to fit in research as time allowed.

“We need ways to grow our numbers and attract students straight out of high school,” he said. “Our numbers should not be so low (nearly 800 students). The reason for the decline is, it happened when the economy collapsed (2007). And high school students refuse to come here because they want programs with a general business degree.”

Herrera also said students desire programs that lead directly into gainful employment opportunities.

Victor Jaime, Imperial Valley College superintendent and president, pointed out many students discover that jobs are plentiful with an Associate's Degree, but to advance they really need a bachelor's.

One of the most popular programs at IVC, the Imperial Valley University Partnership, enrolls freshmen simultaneously at IVC and SDSU-IV where they spend a half day at each campus.

"It's a highly successful program and it happened because of our partnership," he said.

Donna Castaneda, psychology professor and associate dean of the SDSU-IV campus remarked misconceptions about SDSU-IV tarnish it as not on par with the main campus.

"We have an excellent faculty and high-achieving students," she said. "We need a new president that is attentive to this campus and our need to grow."

Aracely Bojorquez, international programs and study abroad coordinator at the Calexico campus, said the new president should have a personality that fits into the campus, one compatible with the weather, geography, culture and students. There are 30 students a year who study abroad, but the future is uncertain.

"My goal is 100 percent of students have a semester to study abroad," she said. "More than 80 percent receive financial aid and they all need support to study abroad."

White acknowledged, it takes intrepid pioneers to develop a small campus into a large one, yet SDSU confers the same degree for both.

"We arrived here to make certain we didn't miss anything," he said. "If there's one thing we've clearly heard, is develop general business administration programs that can service a renewable energy sector and agricultural science. One of the advantages of being a border town is the binational economy and pool of talent you attract to service it."