SDSU-IV campus secures new dean
By DAVID STEFFEN, Staff Writer
Tuesday, May 25, 2010 12:32 AM PDT

CALEXICO — David Pearson’s experience at a combined community college and university convinced San Diego State University officials he would be an ideal dean for the Imperial Valley campus.

“I think his main attraction from the standpoint of many people on the committee was his recent experience developing a relationship between a community college and the University of Texas at Brownsville,” Mike Sabath, SDSU-IV chairman of the dean search committee, said.

Pearson serves as vice president for partnership affairs at the University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College. Pearson said the two institutions are fused into one and he is officially a University of Texas employee.

Students can pursue an associate’s degree or bachelor’s degree at the combined institution, he said.

On May 10, SDSU Provost Nancy Marlin announced the search committee had not found a replacement. She said SDSU would continue the search in the fall semester.

However, SDSU officials announced Pearson’s appointment Saturday. He will take the helm at the SDSU-IV campus on July 31.

“It’s one of the most gratifying and personally satisfying things that could have happened — what a cool thing,” Pearson said. “The honor is substantial.”

Pearson was one of three candidates in consideration for the dean position. He visited the campus in April.

Sabath said he could not comment on the decision to ultimately hire Pearson despite the May 10 announcement that the search would continue in the fall. Marlin could not be reached by press time.

Pearson said he needed additional time to discuss the significant decision with his wife, but he was excited for the position.

Sabath said Pearson’s experience with a community college and university setting would be beneficial. He said it is similar to the relationship between Imperial Valley College and SDSU-IV.

In addition to his experience as vice president for partnership affairs, Pearson has served as a professor of sociology.

According to Pearson’s curriculum vitae, he attended the University of Massachusetts at Amherst for his bachelor’s degree. He attended Yale University for his graduate and doctorate degrees in sociology.

Pearson said the interplay between the U.S. and Mexico in the Valley was one of the draws to the dean position.
He said he has enjoyed working in the Texas-Mexico border region in Brownsville and looks forward to doing the same in Calexico.

“In the border area, we appreciate the mixture of the two cultures,” Pearson said.

The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College has a Hispanic majority, he said. Pearson said he is also fluent in Spanish and his wife is from Madrid, Spain.

SDSU-IV Dean Stephen Roeder retires May 31. He said he will brief Pearson on all the aspects of the job and help him with the transition when Pearson arrives in the Valley. Roeder said he is pleased with the decision to hire Pearson as his replacement.

“He’s a wonderful choice — I’m very pleased,” Roeder said. “We’ll have a new, permanent dean on July 31, so I’m glad this has been resolved.”

>> Staff Writer David Steffen can be reached at 760-337-3452 or dsteffen@ivpressonline.com