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President Sylvia Alva addresses attendees at the presentation event for the Cal State Fullerton 2024-2029 Strategic Plan.

DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIC PLAN OUTLINES GOALS FOR THE NEXT 5 YEARS

A focus on enhancing students' experience

By Lou Ponsi,
contributing writer

Before announcing the goals of Cal State Fullerton's Strategic Plan for 2024-2029, university President Sylvia Alva outlined the six values that served as a guide to develop the plan:

Student success, faculty and staff di-

versity, equity and inclusion, scholarly and creative activities, shared governance, and civic and community engagement.

Titled "Fullerton Forward," the Strategic Plan for the next five years was presented Feb. 7 at the Meng Concert Hall with hundreds from the Titan community in attendance and more watching via livestream.

"These values point us in the direc-

tion to envision an even brighter future and the opportunity to be more strategic and mission-driven in our work," Alva said. "Cal State Fullerton is an extraordinary place that serves as a model university where members of our community have come together to define who we are and, more importantly, who we want to become."

To develop the Strategic Plan, the 52-member Strategic Plan Develop-

ment Committee hosted 28 campus forums in 2023, inviting students, faculty, staff, administrators, community partners and alumni to share their ideas.

Co-chairs of the committee were sociology professor Eileen Walsh and Su Swarat, associate vice president of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning.

More than 5,600 individuals partici-

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FUNDRAISING

Day of Giving aims high 'to transform Titan lives'

Looking for 2,500 to donate \$550,000

By Nicole Gregory,
contributing writer

This year's Titan Day of Giving will take place on March 6, with a tagline of "Embark on a mission to transform Titan lives." Grace Johnson, director of Annual Giving, University Advancement, said she and her colleagues are hoping to raise \$550,000 from 2,500 donors.

Most schools count on raising money on the nationally recognized "Giving Tuesday," following Black Friday after Thanksgiving. But in 2019, Cal State Fullerton

GIVING » PAGE 5



PHOTO COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES
Grace Johnson is director of Annual Giving, University Advancement at Cal State Fullerton

STUDY

Housing costs: Why young adults don't leave home

Affordability becomes the biggest factor

By Lou Ponsi,
contributing writer

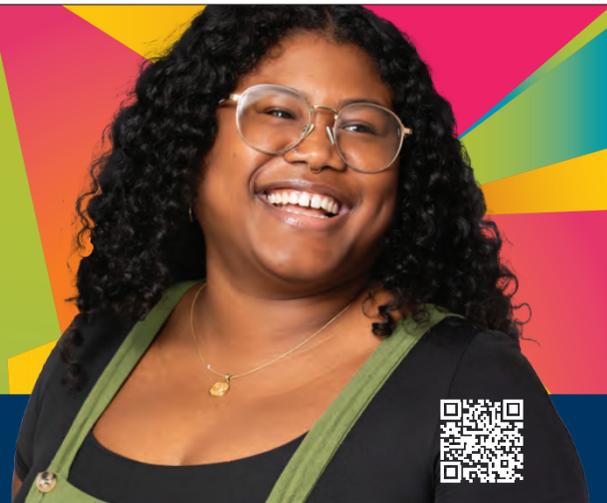
For parents who are counting the days until their young adult children leave home to live on their own, the wait might be a bit longer than they anticipated.

Blame the rapidly rising cost of housing, said Desen Lin, assistant professor of finance in the College of Business and Economics at Cal State Fullerton.

Lin, along with Arthur Acolin, associate real estate professor at the University of Washington, and Susan Wachter, professor of real estate at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton

HOUSING » PAGE 2

I ALWAYS WANTED TO
TEACH SPECIAL
EDUCATION



VISION & VISIONARIES

Archuleta honored for work creating low-income housing

Alumna committed to improving lives

By Jenelyn Russo, contributing writer

In honor of their accomplishments in their respective fields and their service and support of the university, Cal State Fullerton is recognizing four Distinguished Alumni and two Honorary Alumni on Feb. 24 as the 2024 CSUF Vision & Visionaries Award recipients.

Established in 1994, the biennial awards are the highest honors presented by CSUF to alumni and community supporters.

As a freshman at Cal State Fullerton, Laura Archuleta came in with an undeclared major, unsure of which career path she should take.

She credits her time at CSUF and the guidance of her professors for helping her discover a passion for serving some of the most vulnerable around us.

And now, for more than 30 years, Archuleta has worked to bring housing, resources and hope to lower-income residents in California.

In recognition of her commitment to helping improve the lives of many in our communities, including those at CSUF, Archuleta has been named a 2024 CSUF Vision & Visionaries Distinguished Alumni Award winner.

Growing up in Whittier, Archuleta knew she wanted to attend college, and she was the first in her family to do so. Although she had several options coming out of high school, CSUF was the best financial fit for her family and allowed her to commute from home.

Archuleta's first exposure to the Titan community beyond academics was when she pledged a sorority, Alpha Delta Pi, a decision that had a significant impact on her college career.

"I learned leadership through the sorority," Archuleta said. "I learned philanthropy ... and had just a ton of fun getting

to know a lot of young college students."

In her sophomore year, Archuleta began exploring career options and ended up taking a criminal justice course. At the time, the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program was prominent, and significant attention and focus was on Southern California youth gangs. She chose to pursue a degree in criminal justice and developed a strong interest in wanting to help people improve their lives, although at the time, she was not sure how she would put this into action.

She connected with one of her undergraduate professors, Jill Rosenbaum, who provided Archuleta the opportunity to conduct research with her on females and crime through what is now known as the California Division of Juvenile Justice.

"Doing research with (Rosenbaum), I got exposed to a whole other world of where education could take you," Archuleta said.

Not only did Archuleta earn her bachelor's degree in criminal justice in 1986, but Rosenbaum encouraged her to pursue her master's degree in public administration, which she completed in 1991.

Her education took Archuleta on a career trajectory that first landed her an internship with Garden Grove's Housing and Neighborhood Improvement Department. This was the start of a 12-year career working for cities in the affordable-housing sector, including stops in Cypress, Palmdale and Anaheim.

Archuleta then took a step back from city government and began consulting work when she came upon Jamboree Housing, a local nonprofit with the mission of delivering, "high-quality affordable housing and services that transform lives and strengthen communities."

She joined Jamboree Housing as the company's assistant executive director, and within one year, she moved into her current role as president and CEO, a position she has held for nearly 25 years.

Along with her team and a volunteer board of directors, Jamboree Housing has over 10,000 units of affordable housing throughout the state, with more than 24,000 Californians calling one of their properties home. Through



PHOTO COURTESY OF JEBB HARRIS ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER/SCNG

Laura Archuleta, CEO of Jamboree Housing Corp. and Cal State Fullerton alum

development and construction, and by working with various affordable housing financing entities, Jamboree Housing makes finding a place to live possible for many low-income families. The organization also provides support services for their residents who are dealing with mental health issues or special needs.

"It was just an incredible opportunity to bring together my background and passion for improving communities and neighborhoods, along with giving kids, those with special needs, veterans and seniors, hope that they could live in high-quality housing that they can actually afford," Archuleta said. "It's been an incredible journey, and it absolutely would never have happened without me going to Cal State Fullerton."

Archuleta is now giving back to the Titan community, having recently

joined the CSUF Board of Governors. Being selected as a 2024 Vision and Visionaries Award honoree leaves her "speechless" and with a heart full of gratitude, as she feels the education that she and so many other first-generation students received from Cal State Fullerton has opened doors and provided opportunities she never could have imagined.

"To me, being a Titan means that you can do anything," Archuleta said. "We have Titans all over the world doing amazing things, and here at Jamboree (Housing), we are full of Titans. They are super-smart folks who come out of CSUF ready to get their hands dirty and dive into some of the most difficult and pressing issues facing California. Cal State Fullerton gets them ready to be a full-fledged Titan by the time they graduate."

Housing

FROM PAGE 1

School, co-authored a study revealing that one in two adults aged 18-29 currently lives with their parents, up from one in four in 1960.

The study, which was funded by a grant from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, answers the question:

"Why do young adults co-reside with their parents?"

The study appears as the leading article in the 2024 January issue of the journal Real Estate Economics.

The factors impacting the decision to live with mom and dad longer have been understudied in past research, Lin said.

Instead, researchers examined factors such as the increase or decrease of the unemployment rate and the spike or decline in the average age of marriage and childbearing, Lin said.

The study by Lin and his colleagues used the 1960s as the starting point.

"We actually found something very interesting," Lin said. "(Affordability) has become more important than the traditional channels of unemployment, changing market conditions, postponement of marriage or childbearing," Lin said. "And affordability is, in particular, very important to almost all races and ethnicity groups. It's not just one set of the subset of our population group. It matters to all populations in the U.S."

Housing costs have become more of an issue over time, but at a much more accelerated rate over the past 20-plus years, particularly in the 18 to 29 age range, the study showed.

The study also showed that as of 2000, there were no noteworthy trends across specific population groups.

But by 2021, Asian, Black and Hispanic young adults experienced higher co-residency compared to 2000.

Hispanic young adults experienced the largest increase at 22%, followed by Black young adults at 10%.

"So, what matters is whether the rent or the price is growing faster than the local household income," Lin said. "In some places, the rent is high, the household income is also high, but the rent-to-income ratio could stay flat for a long period. It does not make a lot of difference in the co-resident's decision. What matters is the increase of the rent outpaces the increase of the household income. So, that matters to our young adults."

The study did not examine possible solutions to the housing affordability issue for young adults, but Lin said that could be the topic of his future research.

"But what I learned by doing this study is that first, we probably should still rely on the co-residency, so young



PHOTO COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES
Desen Lin, assistant professor of finance in the College of Business and Economics at Cal State Fullerton

adults without this co-residency option may face an even worse situation in this market," he said.

There are options for young adults who are intent on buying a home, Lin said.

Government programs exist in California and other states offering rental assistance, down payment assistance for first-time buyers and other options for easing the financial burden.

The California Housing Finance Agency serves low- and moderate-income renters and homebuyers by providing financing and programs focused on equity, according to the agency's website.

The CFHA's Multifamily Lending Division collaborates with developers and public agencies to provide affordable rental housing and its Single Family Division partners with lenders to provide first-time home buyers with access to first-mortgage loans along with down payment and closing cost assistance.

Simply put, young adults may simply choose to live with their parents longer, but that option could undermine efforts to boost homeownership, Lin said.

Lin has been recognized for previous studies on the topic of housing costs.

In January 2022, Lin was one of three 2021 Homer Hoyt Doctoral Dissertation Award winners for his study "Housing Search and Rental Market Intermediation," which examined the role of rental brokers in New York City.

The award also recognized Lin for his 2020 study titled "Mortgage Risk Premiums During the Housing Bubble," which focused on mortgages conditioned on loan and borrower characteristics in the years leading up to the 2008 financial crisis.

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IN THE NATION FOR
BEST VALUE

■ The Wall Street Journal, 2024

CSUF

Cal State Fullerton.

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MEDICINE

Researchers seek to design non-opioid treatment for pain

CSUF News Media Services

Cal State Fullerton medicinal chemistry students Faye Yun and Leah Duong are studying drug design and creating new chemical compounds to develop a novel non-opioid solution for chronic pain treatment.

The research project, led by Stevan Pecic, assistant professor of chemistry and biochemistry, is funded by a nearly \$600,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health.

“Our project has the potential to revolutionize pain management,” Pecic said.

According to the National Institutes of Health, more than 50 million adults in the U.S. experience daily chronic pain and another 20 million Americans report high-impact chronic pain. Common chronic pain medications include opioids and anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen.

“This research is crucial because chronic pain is a significant health issue worldwide, impacting millions and often leading to disability. The current reliance on opioids for pain management is problematic due to risks like addiction,” said Yun, a Class of 2024 graduate who will earn a bachelor’s degree in biochemistry in May.

Duong, a second-year graduate student studying organic chemistry, relayed that for those suffering from chronic pain, common nonaddictive painkillers like ibuprofen often don’t work and can lead to adverse side effects.

“The goal of this research is to develop a safe and effective non-opioid therapeutic option that is potent enough to treat chronic pain,” Duong said.

The most effective analgesic drugs currently used to treat moderate-to-severe pain are prescription opioids, such as oxycodone, explained Pecic, who previously worked in the Division of Experimental Therapeutics at Columbia University Medical Center.

“Prolonged use of opioids will eventually lead to tolerance, physical dependence, addiction and even death,” he said.

Promising option

Pecic and his team of student researchers are developing small molecules that simultaneously inhibit two enzymes, called soluble epoxide hydrolase and fatty acid amide hydrolase, which are involved in pain and inflammation processes.

“This promising therapeutic strategy



Stevan Pecic, assistant professor of chemistry and biochemistry

PHOTO COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES



Faye Yun, biochemistry student

PHOTO COURTESY OF FAYE YUN

represents an opportunity to solve problems linked to existing therapies with completely new, non-opioid pain management research,” Pecic said.

“Using modern medicinal chemistry and sustainable techniques and tools, we



Chemistry graduate student Leah Duong in the lab

PHOTO COURTESY OF LEAH DUONG

aim to demonstrate that our drugs effectively inhibit both enzymes involved in pain and inflammation.”

Pecic’s latest research continues his first \$426,000 NIH grant project. That

study, conducted from 2020-23, showed that inhibiting both enzymes simultaneously would relieve pain.

Pecic and his students are collaborating with Bruce D. Hammock, a professor and entomology and chemistry expert at UC Davis, and Ram Kandasamy at Cal State East Bay. Kandasamy is a behavioral pharmacologist and co-investigator of the new NIH grant.

Inside Pecic’s lab in Dan Black Hall, students are working on all aspects of the project, including designing and synthesizing these original drugs, studying how these drugs interact with the body, predicting drug properties and measuring enzyme activities.

Students are trained to work on sophisticated medicinal chemistry instruments and learn medicinal chemistry techniques integral to doctoral-level academic research projects and those used in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries.

“These experiences in the lab and at conferences will help students to pursue a career in the biomedical sciences regardless of their intent to pursue a career in academia or the workforce,” Pecic said.

In March, students will present their research at the American Chemical Society meeting in New Orleans and at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research in Long Beach in April. Duong and Yun also presented their projects at the California State University Biotechnology Symposium in Santa Clara last month.

Duong, born and raised in Vietnam, earned a bachelor’s degree in chemistry from CSUF in 2023 and plans a career as a therapeutic scientist to develop new drugs.

“Being able to do this research with Dr. Pecic and getting the opportunity to develop all the hands-on skills that I have learned will make a difference when I apply for jobs in the field,” she shared.

Yun, a transfer student from Chaffey College in Rancho Cucamonga and scholar in the university’s U-RISE program to prepare students for careers in biomedical science, has applied to doctoral programs in chemistry for the fall.

Her career goal is to become a researcher in the field of chemical biology, with a focus on drug development.

“Given my background and experiences, I am deeply committed to advancing the field of medicinal chemistry, especially in developing new therapeutic solutions for critical health care issues like chronic pain,” Yun said.

ASTRONAUT

Chemistry alumna launches into space for third NASA mission

CSUF News Media Services

It’s been 14 years since NASA astronaut and chemistry alumna Tracy C. Dyson launched into space to live and work on the International Space Station.

For her third mission, Dyson will launch to the space station March 21 on a Russian spacecraft as a member of the Expedition 70/71 crew.

“I’m a little older, wiser and more experienced,” said Dyson, a 1993 Cal State Fullerton graduate. “As a flight engineer, I’m thrilled to be able to serve the station and our international partners to keep the mission going.”

Dyson is looking forward to the possibility of performing breathtaking spacewalks, conducting pioneering experiments, and witnessing firsthand the improvements and changes aboard the space station over the last decade.

Since 2000, humans have continuously lived and worked aboard the space station to advance scientific knowledge and new technologies and make research breakthroughs not possible on Earth.

Dyson will launch on the Roscosmos Soyuz MS-25 spacecraft and will spend about six months aboard the state-of-the-art orbiting laboratory, a collaboration of 15 nations. She will travel to the station with a Roscosmos cosmonaut and a space tourist who will spend approximately 12 days aboard the orbital complex.

A 25-year astronaut and chemist, Dyson has worked in the Mission Control Center at NASA’s Johnson Space Center in Houston as a spacecraft communicator for space shuttle and space station operations.

Dyson’s last assignment on the space station was in 2010 as part of Expedition 23/24. She spent 176 days in space and performed three successful — and unplanned — spacewalks to make critical repairs, logging 22 hours and 49 minutes outside the station. She assisted in removing and replacing a failed pump module for one of two external ammonia circulation loops that keep internal and external equipment cool.

“Everything you’ve been studying goes right out the window,” Dyson recalled of her first spacewalk. “But I knew what I had to do. It was rewarding.”

Dyson relayed that it took her breath away when she first stepped outside the space station hatch: “The first thing you see is our planet if the sun is out; if not, you see this blackness that you’ve never encountered in your life, and you have to overcome that gulp to find your bearings.”

As a veteran astronaut and spacewalker, Dyson is eager to assist fellow crew members on their spacewalk — if the need arises — during this latest mission.

“It would be an honor to lead others on their first spacewalk and make sure they stay safe and are successful,” she said.

NASA ASTRONAUT TRACY C. DYSON

- Selected as an astronaut in 1998.
- In her first two missions, she logged more than 188 days in space and over 22 hours in three spacewalks.
- As a CSUF undergraduate researcher, she designed, constructed and implemented electronics and hardware associated with a laser-ionization, time-of-flight mass spectrometer for studying atmospherically relevant gas phase chemistry.
- In 2008, Dyson received an honorary doctorate of science from CSUF.
- In 2001, Dyson received the Cal State Fullerton Distinguished Alumna Award.
- Dyson speaks conversational Russian and American Sign Language and made the first American Sign Language address from space.
- Served as the on-camera host for NASA’s TV series, “StationLife,” spanning more than 10 episodes highlighting science and technology driven by the work aboard the International Space Station.

For more about Dyson, visit the NASA website.

As part of the Expedition 70/71 crew, Dyson will conduct scientific investigations and technology demonstrations that help prepare humans for future space missions and benefit people on Earth. Among the experiments she’ll be working on includes studying how fire spreads and behaves in space.

Dyson will also contribute to the station’s “Crew Earth Observations” study by photographing Earth to understand how the planet is changing over time.

After graduating from CSUF, Dyson pursued graduate school at UC Davis. A year after earning a doctorate in chemistry, NASA selected her as an astronaut in June 1998.

Almost a decade later, in 2007, she launched aboard the space shuttle Endeavour on STS-118 for a 12-day mission. As a mission specialist, she lived on the shuttle, docked next to the space station, and assisted in adding the starboard-5 truss segment to the station’s “backbone” and a new gyroscope.

The first in her family to graduate from college, Dyson participated on the track and field team as a sprinter and long jumper and recalled fond memories of her journey at Cal State Fullerton.

“In my heart, I am still connected to Cal State Fullerton. Going to college was a brand new world for me. It was



Tracy C. Dyson dons her spacesuit while going under water in the Neutral Buoyancy Lab in 2019 at NASA’s Johnson Space Center in Houston.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NASA/BILL INGALLS

THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

- The space station has been continuously occupied since November 2000.
- An international partnership of five space agencies from 15 countries operates the International Space Station.
- As a global endeavor, more than 270 astronauts and others from 19 countries have visited the unique microgravity laboratory, which has hosted nearly 3,000 research investigations from researchers in more than 108 countries.
- The station is larger than a six-bedroom house with six sleeping quarters, two bathrooms, a gym and a bay window with a 360-degree view.
- In 24 hours, the space station makes 16 orbits of Earth, traveling through 16 sunrises and sunsets.

Learn more about International Space Station research and operations here and visit the space station blog. Source: NASA

CAREERS

Learning about 'invisible' Corps: The front lines of public health

CSUF News Media Services

Biological science major Nic Furtado had never heard about the career opportunities within the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps — until officers came to Cal State Fullerton to share stories of their call to duty.

Furtado and other students met uniformed officers and learned about America's health responders at a Feb. 8 event hosted by the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and Health Professions Advising Office.

Commission Corps officers — one of the nation's uniformed services — serve as pharmacists, physicians, nurses, dentists, scientists, engineers and other professions. They work on the front lines of public health at government agencies such as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Indian Health Service and Federal Bureau of Prisons.

"I wanted to learn more about the Commissioned Corps because I'm interested in public health," said Furtado, an undergraduate researcher in infectious diseases and Associated Students Inc. college representative. "There are many different disciplines and pathways that you can take within the field of public health, so exploring career options is exciting."

Students also watched "Invisible Corps: In Officio Salutis (In Service of Health)." The PBS documentary explains the history and importance of the Public Health Service and how "invisible" Corps officers help to ensure safe drinking water, eliminate malaria and stop the spread of COVID-19.

"We're invisible because a lot of what we do is infrastructure and is not necessarily seen by the public. We don't spend time promoting ourselves. For every public incident you hear about, there is a public health safety officer providing expertise and leadership," said alumna and Rear Admiral Pamela M. Schweitzer, who retired in 2018 after 29 years of federal service, including 24 years as a Public Health Service Commissioned Corps officer.

Schweitzer, who earned a bachelor's degree in biological science in 1982, a Cal State Fullerton Philanthropic Foundation Board of Governors member, moderated a discussion with local corps officers who shared their career paths into public service.

A 2024 Vision & Visionaries' Distinguished Alumni Award recipient and university donor, Schweitzer shared that Corps officers are prepared to deploy before, during and after any public health crisis. Their mission is to protect, promote and advance the health and safety of the nation.

"Corps officers are our silent warriors," said Schweitzer, who earned a doctor of pharmacy and served as the first female chief professional officer of pharmacy and assistant surgeon general.

Lt. Claire Tipton, a consumer safety officer, shared that she serves within the Food and Drug Administration. She works at the Port of Los Angeles alongside U.S. Customs and Border Protection to inspect shipments of foods,



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PAMELA M. SCHWEITZER

Nic Furtado, a biological science major, meets alumna and retired Rear Adm. Pamela M. Schweitzer and U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps officers to learn about public health careers.

drugs and other FDA-regulated products to ensure items are safe before entering the country.

"We're the best kept secret," Tipton said. "But we don't want it to be a secret. We want to get the word out about what we do and inspire students to join the Commissioned Corps," said Tipton, who served in the U.S. territory of Guam and worked to establish an inter-agency task force to study and combat opioid abuse on the island.

Learning about the public health program was eye-opening for biology graduate student Alex Moran.

"It's something I can see myself doing," said Moran '22 (B.S. biological science), who plans to become a physician. "Commissioned Corps officers are unsung heroes, and their work is important."

For more information about the Commissioned Corps, visit the website. To learn about student opportunities in the Commissioned Corps, visit here. Watch the "Invisible Corps" documentary on PBS.



Lt. Claire Tipton, consumer safety officer

ACADEMICS

Business college maintains dual business and accounting accreditation

CSUF News Media Services

Cal State Fullerton's continued excellence in business education has again resulted in prestigious dual accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the premier global accrediting body for business schools and colleges.

Through 2029, the college, the largest business school on the West Coast, will be fully accredited both for business administration studies and accounting, an accolade for which the CSUF College of Business and Economics has stood alone in Orange County since 1997.

"The college's commitment to a high-quality, affordable, accessible and innovative business education sets us apart, and this recognition underscores our commitment once again to changing lives, organizations and our community," says Sri Sundaram, dean of the College of Business and Economics. "My sincere gratitude to our faculty, our hardworking staff, our engaged alumni and friends in our business network, and our achieving student body."

This international accrediting body took into account the college's progress toward student success outcomes such as career readiness, the thought leadership of faculty researchers resulting in more than 1,200 intellectual contributions, and our impact on the surrounding community and beyond.

It's a high bar, but it's one that the Cal State Fullerton Division of Business and Economics — the predecessor of today's college — began meeting in 1965, when the business program was only four years old, making it the youngest new college to receive accreditation in AACSB history.

Said Vivek Mande, director of the Cal State Fullerton School of Accountancy, on that program's particular recognition: "We stand apart on providing a tech-focused accounting education with the input of top industry minds at only the fraction of the cost of other institutions. Young professionals are more than pre-



PHOTO COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

The College of Business and Economics at Cal State Fullerton

pared to enter the high-tech world of 21st century accountancy through an education here."

Excellence in a new era of change and growth

Since the College of Business and Economics last maintained accreditation in February 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic brought the challenges and opportunities

of a remote and then hybrid work and study environment and clarified the need for adaptability and resilience.

The continued expansion of signature programs such as the student-run investment portfolio Titan Capital Management; plans for Landmark Hall, the new home for the Giles-O'Malley Center for Leadership; and the revitalization of family business and nonprofit/social enter-

prise education have demonstrated that the College of Business and Economics has not only survived, but thrived.

The changes have been myriad in the past half-decade, but the ability to reach higher through it all makes the college positive as it looks to the future to continue its impact on Orange County, Southern California and the global economic landscape.

Giving

FROM PAGE 1

Fullerton began laying the groundwork for a Day of Giving of its own, and it was launched on March 12, 2020, just as the COVID-19 pandemic was causing institutions to shut down.

Despite those obstacles, Johnson remembered thinking “We’re just going to press on,” adding, “It was a great success, and it has grown the last four years exponentially.”

That first year, CSUF raised \$239,139. The university raised \$528,969 with the Day of Giving in 2023.

The entire university community is invited to support the effort and donations of every size are welcome, she said.

“We have companies that do provide matching gift funds,” Johnson said. “PepsiCo, 7 Leaves, California Bank & Trust and Anaheim Ducks are just a few that are providing some unrestricted support to be used as matching gifts and challenges. But we rally our entire community. We love to have alumni

supporting the programs, centers or clubs that meant something to them, or that they received support from.”

Donors also include faculty, staff, and students who feel passionate about supporting the university, she said.

“We want every single person involved in some way, shape, or form,” Johnson said. “And for most people, that starts with the most basic thing of making a gift.”

Anyone who wishes to donate can direct their gifts to a particular college, club or organization in the university that they care about. “Anything on this campus that you love, you can support it. And in every single way, whether we think about it or not, it does absolutely make a difference for our students,” Johnson said. “It’s about showing your support and showing up for our students and our campus community and driving forward the success that we have.”

She and her colleagues work all year toward the Day of Giving by developing their communication plan. “We connect with people via email, text message, mail. We speak to people in meetings or in the community, in social media, digital advertisements,” she noted. “We’ll do physi-

cal advertisements around campus.”

The message they want to get across is that this is the most important way to support the university.

“This financial support that people are donating is changing the lives of our students and is giving them opportunities that would not otherwise be possible,” Johnson said, “so we want to make sure that people hear about this.”

The plan has many partners. More than 100 programs, centers, teams and student clubs participate in fundraising that day. “We really try and empower them to do communication as well,” Johnson said. “We provide them with toolkits and with training and encourage them to connect with every single person that they know, as well. While we’re doing communication, we also rely on our amazing partners to do the same.”

The Titan Day of Giving lasts exactly 24 hours. “We open our website at midnight. As soon as the clock switches over to midnight, it carries for the 24 hours until it hits midnight on March 7,” Johnson said.

Every year, she and her team aim to raise more money than the prior year.

“We always try to increase our dollar and donor goal,” she said.

Another goal behind the Day of Giving activity is to engage the entire community, Johnson said. “We will run social media challenges, and we’re going to have a happy hour event at BIGS, right down the street. Every single touchpoint, every single opportunity that we can showcase what is happening on our Titans Day of Giving is going to grow the support that these programs and centers and other causes will have.”

Not everyone wants to be recognized as a donor, a personal choice that is respected and accommodated.

“We have a donor wall on our website, and people can choose to show their name, hide their name and give anonymously, or hide or show the dollar amount,” Johnson said. “You can support this in a very silent, quiet manner and know that you’re doing amazing work. Even if you think, ‘I can only give \$5,’ every single amount matters,” she said.

“And you don’t have to tell the world that you gave that amount, but knowing you gave it and knowing that that support is truly invaluable and builds up to something greater — that’s what matters.”

Plans

FROM PAGE 1

rated and responded with more than 3,600 entries of feedback by individuals and groups.

The five goals of the Strategic Plan for 2024-2029 are:

- Enhance support for student access, learning and academic success
- Foster student engagement and well-being
- Recruit, develop and retain high-quality and diverse faculty and staff
- Expand and strengthen physical and financial capacity and community relations
- Innovate and improve campus operations

“The Strategic Plan is not one person’s plan,” Walsh said. “When we set out to envision how we will bring this plan together, the number one priority was for the committee to ensure that the plan reflects the diversity and the voices of our broad university community and that it represents our collective dreams and hopes.”

Strategies for reaching each goal were announced, along with the goal’s overall objectives and criteria for measuring its progress.

The objective of the first goal is to “expand access to higher education for all learners, enrich their learning experience through diverse and innovative academic offerings and enhance support services and infrastructure to ensure not only students’ timely graduation, but also their mastery of the knowledge and skills needed to reach professional and personal goals,” said HyeKyeung Seung, chair of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, who led the development of the goal. “In developing this goal, we aimed to reflect the changes in our student population, prepare for changes in the higher education landscape and incorporate the voices of our students.”

The second goal’s objective is to “support student success and holistic growth in an inclusive campus environment.”

The objective of goal No.3 — to recruit, develop and retain high-quality and diverse faculty and staff — is a continuation of the same goal in the Strategic Plan for 2018-2023.

Goal No.4 calls for expanding and strengthening CSUF’s physical and financial capacity and community relations.

The fourth goal was also part of the Strategic Plan for 2018-2023, noted political science professor Stephen Stambaugh, who led the formation of the goal for the new strategic plan.

“We will not only continue our efforts of campus modernization and financial capacity growth but also amplify them,” Stambaugh said. “We aim to augment our revenue opportunities and philanthropic investment and also expand support for externally funded research.”

Goal No.5 reflects a major collective ask from the campus community, said goal chair Nina Garcia, executive assistant and special projects liaison in Human Resources.

“In many convenings, in committee meetings, we heard time and time again that our community wants to break down silos, remove administrative barriers, and also improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our operations,” Garcia said.

President Alva said the new Strategic Plan is being built on the success of the 2018-23 Strategic Plan, which exceeded all of its goals in providing a “transformational educational experience and environment for all students.”

Accomplishments included recruitment and retention of a more diverse faculty and staff.

Graduation rates increased for freshmen and transfer students, and resources were put in place to help ensure the success of graduate students.

The “It Takes a Titan” philanthropic campaign raised more than \$270 million, enabling campuswide infrastructure and facilities upgrades, additional academic resources and enhanced programming.

“The outcomes of the 2018-2023 strategic plan are clearly impressive and propel the university forward,” Alva said. “Today, we build on that superb work.”



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From left are Elva Rubalcava, chief of staff; Tonantzin Oseguera, vice president, Student Affairs; Alexander Porter, vice president, Administration and Finance, and chief financial officer; Su Swarat, senior associate vice president, Institutional Effectiveness and Planning; Sylvia A. Alva, president; Amir Dabirian, provost and vice president, Academic Affairs; and David Forgues, vice president, Human Resources, Diversity and Inclusion.



Some of the members of the Strategic Plan Development Committee



The new strategic plan covers five goals for growth and improvement for the university in the next five years.

BASEBALL

Titans debut with a young roster and lots of opportunities

By Brian Robin,
contributing writer

Cal State Fullerton baseball fans who like change, who embrace the new, the different, the heretofore unknown, are going to love what awaits them this season.

Are you fans of a good mystery? Does Jason Dietrich and his coaching staff have the team for you.

Just as if David Bowie wrote “Changes” for them, Dietrich and his staff are turning to “face the strange” this season, his third at the helm of the CSUF baseball program. Practically everywhere they turn, a strange face greets them.

Twenty-two of them. “There’s just a whole bunch of new guys. You’re talking about guys on the team from last year who didn’t play last year,” Dietrich said. “We lost six starting position players, two weekend arms and my closer. That’s a lot of experience that’s gone, which will happen. When I took this job, I knew it would happen. It was just a matter of when.”

Dietrich saw this coming because the Titans had 17 returners from 2022 to help the program regain much of its swagger. Between 2022 and 2023, the Titans improved by 10 games overall and six in the Big West, returning to the postseason for the first time since 2018.

That break-out-the-party-hats improvement, however, came with a nasty hangover. CSUF lost First-Team All-Big West outfielder Nate Nankil, second-team closer Jojo Ingrassia, second-team outfielder/DH Caden Connor and honorable-mention selections Tyler Stultz, Fynn Chester, Zach Lew and Cole Urman. Stultz and Chester were the aforementioned weekend arms — Dietrich’s designated Friday and Saturday starters.

“As you can imagine, we brought in a lot of guys to protect ourselves but knowing that we could lose a lot of guys either to the draft, graduation or injury,” Dietrich said. “You’re doing your best to bring in as many players as you can handle and have them compete for jobs. You do your best to do your homework, and we felt we did the best we could.”

This explains the 22 new faces and the 47 players who started training. Several of those players didn’t make the team and transferred. Others were injured or left for personal reasons. Remember, Dietrich conducted a purge before last season that trimmed the roster from 43 in the fall of 2021 to 20 by the end of the 2022 season. In essence, the Titans have

lost the equivalent of two full recruiting classes since Dietrich arrived in the summer of 2021.

“We’re not wanting to bring in 22 guys for the last two years, as you can imagine,” he said. “Guys leaving causes a ripple effect, but you can’t bring in that many guys every year. It’s too much. We’re focusing on areas we need to get better in, and we’ll recruit 10 or 12 guys next year, give or take.

“We got here. We did our best to get guys in spots we needed to fill. This year is the first year of all our recruits. There are a lot of young guys. Right now in college baseball, there are a lot of older guys playing. Last year, we had the majority of older guys playing, but now, we have JC and (transfer) portal guys along with a lot of freshmen and sophomores who haven’t played a lot. It’s the ripple effect. ... We had a big (recruiting) class to be safe.”

The best place to see where the Titans are entering the 2024 season is to see who returns from 2023 — the faces Dietrich and his staff turn and face that aren’t strange. That begins with the left side of the infield: junior shortstop Maddox Latta and senior third baseman Jack Haley. Latta slashed .287/.350/.431 to go with 26 runs, 29 RBI and 11 doubles last year. He opened this year going 5 for 13 at last weekend’s season-opening series at Stanford’s Sunken Diamond. Haley, who will move over to third from shortstop, scored 23 runs and drove in 17.

Dietrich has two familiar faces in the outfield, one of whom already made his presence felt. That’s junior Colby Wallace, who played in 31 of 56 games last year, slashing .237/.342/.312, numbers that — if last weekend at Stanford is any indication — are due for serious liftoff. Wallace already surpassed his home run total for 2023, blasting two homers in three games, driving in six runs and going 6-for-13 (.462). The six RBI represent 46% of his 2023 total (14); the six hits 27% of his 2023 output (22).

Also back is junior outfielder Moises Guzman, who slashed .256/.423/.387 in 50 games last year. He scored 40 runs with 16 doubles and 41 walks, which was second in the Big West.

That largely sums up the returners with any significant experience. It also signifies battles at numerous positions that may take much of the pre-conference schedule to flesh out. Two early contenders to earn spots are sophomore center fielder Draven Nushida and junior transfer Matthew Bardowell. Nushida opened his 2024 account going 4-for-13 with a double, triple, three runs and



PHOTO COURTESY OF CSUF NEWS MEDIA SERVICES

Head coach Jason Dietrich’s lineup for this season is still evolving.

four RBI. Bardowell, a transfer who led Riverside City College to the 2022 community college state title with video-game numbers (.436/.537/.756, 64 RBI, 35 extra-base hits), can play outfield, first base or DH.

It’s on the mound, however, where Dietrich ventures into cautious-optimism land. He certainly has options aplenty, based on who stays healthy and who stays consistent. The options start with redshirt junior right-hander Christian Rodriguez, who returns after Tommy John surgery cost him the 2023 season. Upon his return, Dietrich tabbed Rodriguez his Friday starter — status that comes with the ace designation — and watched Rodriguez reward his confidence by holding Stanford to three hits and no runs in six innings of the Titans’ 4-0 win.

Dietrich named University of San Diego transfer Mikiah “Kai” Negrete his Saturday starter. Sunday’s starter remains up for grabs, with a plethora of contenders seeking significant innings. The conga line starts with returners Peyton Jones, Jason Blood, Evan Yates and Seth Tomczak.

A senior left-hander, Jones went 5-1 with a 4.45 ERA and a career-best 56 strikeouts last year. He earned the save in last Friday’s opening victory over the Cardinal. Blood (1-3, 6.39), a junior right-hander, struck out 39 in 38 in-

nings. Yates (3-2) finished 11th in the Big West with his 3.75 ERA and had a more than 2-1 strikeout-to-walk ratio (69-31). Tomczak (2-0, 5.35, two saves) earned the victory in CSUF’s 15-6 beating of Stanford in the second game of last Friday’s doubleheader, striking out five of the eight batters he faced in relief.

“Those guys can start, but we have so many new guys that I feel more comfortable with those guys helping us in the bullpen,” Dietrich said.

That opens up opportunities for the young arms that Dietrich said could be an eventual strength of the Titans. He used five pitchers in Sunday’s 4-1 loss to the Cardinals: starter Chad Gurnea and relievers Jason Krakoski, Aaron Ceniceros, Michael Flores and Derek Turner. All five made their CSUF debuts.

Put all the pieces together and, yes, embracing change and facing the strange comes with a quality many Titans’ baseball fans don’t possess an abundance of — patience. Yet, Dietrich does.

“When you’re working to rebuild, you’re going to have moments when you bite your tongue and realize it’s for the benefit of the future,” Dietrich said. “We like the guys we have and who they are. We just have to be patient with them. ...

“We’re excited and nervous. That’s good. I don’t know what we have, so let’s figure it out.”

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