Council of Senate Chairs
Arlene L. Maki Haffa - 2026-27 Convener

November 4, 2026

Dilcie D. Perez, Ed.D.
Vice Chancellor, Strategic Enrollment Management and Student Success
The California State University

Dear Dr. Perez,

We are writing as representatives of the CSU Council of Senate Chairs. Faculty representatives from fourteen of our twenty-two campuses attended the CSU Student Success Symposium in person in San José, CA, on October 22–23, 2026. Most (twelve) were Senate Chairs, two were designees appointed by campus Senates, and, of course, folks from across the CSU could attend portions of the Symposium virtually. Faculty representatives who attended in person compiled their experiences of being invited to the Symposium, where six were automatically selected by their campus administrators, and eight, the majority, had to petition to attend. Campus Senate Chairs are aware of the prescribed invite list, which notably did not include faculty representation as a direct invite. We note that student representation in the form of Associated Student Presidents was included on the list, and we applaud the effort to have student representation at system-level meetings, as has been done at previous Symposia. In comparing our experiences in being invited, it became apparent that some campus administrators were reported to be enthusiastic about including faculty representation, whereas others did not consider it at all, based on the prescribed invite list. Generally, those who were enthusiastically invited were those who had either attended previous system-level meetings (i.e., GI 2025) or those whose campus administrators had attended previous system-level meetings and had positive experiences with faculty and student representatives. Regardless, **representation matters** in a meeting ostensibly about student success, where faculty more often than not have the most direct influence on student success. This is not simply an administrative priority; student success is an academic endeavor that depends on faculty expertise, leadership, and sustained engagement.

We are writing this letter to petition for a cultural shift around who is included at system-level meetings, in particular, the yearly Symposium meeting that has traditionally taken place in the fall. Ideally, we should have faculty representatives from all twenty-two campuses at these meetings, and that should be codified in the invite list. The initiatives and direction of the largest public university system in the nation should not be driven by

only a few individuals at the top; it must be a concerted effort by all parties involved. **Representation matters**. We understand the hierarchy of this system we live and work in; campus administrators carry the burden of leadership, and, make no mistake, we understand this is a burden. Leadership is hard, often unrewarding, and can be a solitary assignment; though it doesn't have to be. *Shared governance* can alleviate this burden if wielded correctly; it is one of higher education's most sacred and unique values. We are in control of our own destiny, and we can write our own future. How serendipitous it is that we may govern ourselves much in the same way we inspire our students to do exactly that: write their own futures and control their own destinies. That being said, shared governance does not work without representation from all parties involved, which is why we are petitioning you to codify faculty representatives at future system-level meetings.

In addition to including faculty representation at future meetings, we are also petitioning you to consider a more *workshop*-oriented approach to the yearly Symposium. Professionals in a wide variety of fields travel to conferences, workshops, meetings, symposia, etc., to network with other professionals in their field. Notably, this year's Symposium was much more *lecture*-oriented than *workshop*-oriented. We can listen to speeches and podcasts from just about anywhere and at any time we want; however, we can't have a face-to-face conversation with counterparts from our sister campuses whenever we want. Gathering with our colleagues across the system is special, and, sadly, there were several missed opportunities this year related to that. In fact, there were even missed opportunities to collaborate with our own campuses during the Symposium. At the concluding GI 2025 Symposium last year in Los Angeles, Symposium organizers placed us with our regional cohorts, which turned out to be extremely impactful. For example, a group from the Northern California region is now collaborating on initiatives that may have lasting and positive impacts for our campuses and students. This is the "One System, Many Opportunities" group that, notably, is the only all-faculty group from the Regional Pitch Contest winners (talk about being in control of our destinies!). Those networks and relationships would not have happened without a *workshop*-oriented approach to the system-level meeting, and it is unfortunate that it did not happen this year. The relationships we make during these types of events can have long-lasting impacts, both professionally and personally, so we hope to see a shift in the way in which we interact next year.

In summary, those of us in attendance appreciated the opportunity to have a seat at the table; however, we want to ensure future faculty representatives will have that same opportunity without having to petition. Faculty representatives from all twenty-two campuses should have a direct invitation, along with student representatives, and the Symposium should be structured in a way that promotes discussions and collaborations across campuses. **Representation matters**. We would welcome a formal response to this request to share with our respective senate bodies and broader campus constituents.

Respectfully,

Chris W. Harmon, Professor of Chemistry, University Senate Chair and General Faculty President, Cal Poly Humboldt

Samuel J. Frame, Professor of Statistics, Chair of the Academic Senate, Cal Poly SLO

Benjamin K. Smith, Associate Professor of Communication, Academic Senate and University Faculty Chair, Cal State East Bay

Amir Dabirian, Professor of Marketing, Chair of Academic Senate, California State University, Fullerton

Yarma Velazquez, Professor Chicana/o Studies, Faculty Senate Chair, Cal State University, Northridge

Stephen Schellenberg, Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University Senate Chair, SDSU

Shari Berkowitz, Professor of Criminal Justice Administration, Chair of the Academic Senate, California State University, Dominguez Hills

Andrea Terry, Associate Professor of Rhetoric & Communication Studies, Faculty Senate Chair, Sacramento State

Christina Smith, Professor of Communication and Academic Senate Chair, California State University Channel Islands

Cecilia S. Uy-Tioco, Professor of Communication & Media Studies and Chair of the Academic Senate, California State University San Marcos

Jackson Wilson; Professor of Recreation, Parks & Tourism and Chair of the Academic Senate; San Francisco State University

Arlene L. Maki Haffa, MS, PhD, Professor of Biochemistry and Chair of the Academic Senate, Cal State Monterey Bay

Jordan Fullam, Professor of Teacher Education and Foundations, Faculty Senate Chair, California State University, San Bernardino

Neil E. Hultgren, Professor of English and Academic Senate Chair, California State University, Long Beach

Jason Nice, Professor of History and Academic Senate Chair, Chico State

Ayuaba Seidu, Associate Professor of Applied Economics and Speaker of the Academic Senate, California State University, Stanislaus

Bryan Burton, Associate Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice Studies, Faculty Senate Chair, Sonoma State University

Melissa Danforth, Professor of Computer Science, Academic Senate Chair, California State University, Bakersfield