



## Office of the President

**To:** Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

**From:** Ralph W. Kuncl, President

**Date:** March 9, 2017

**Subject:** President's Report 2016-17

This is a new “President’s Report,” a simpler way by which I have decided to communicate to the community on our top achievements, immediate priorities, future directions, and ongoing challenges. It is a “State of the University” communication of sorts, and my hope is that it will inform, inspire, and engage you in our mutual path to becoming ever greater. Please take this communication as your annual opportunity to know and understand your University even better, to join in a celebration of the year passed, to assess our present, and to work together toward our future. **Join me on March 16 at 4:00 p.m. in the Orton Center**, when I will be taking your questions and comments in a **forum for faculty and staff**. But also take this as an opportunity to contact me directly at [presidentsdropbox@redlands.edu](mailto:presidentsdropbox@redlands.edu), if you prefer email.

I think it’s fair to say that this is an interesting time for us all. It is a celebratory and optimistic one for some and appears to be a troubling one for others. I promise that I will move swiftly on in this letter to cheer on our University’s significant achievements and progress on important goals. But this time in our history is simply too present, too momentous in our minds to put off acknowledging. The leadership change in Washington has raised questions and concerns for institutions like ours. So, let me begin my report by discussing the policy landscape that we see for our own and similar universities under the new federal administration, as well as changing demographics and trends affecting enrollments.

## POLICY AND FUNDING THREATS

### Travel Restrictions, Undocumented Students, and Internationalization Goals

Under the new federal administration, protection of our undocumented students has proven to be a continuing concern. And the fears of many of our international faculty and students are real. The White House issued an executive order making it more difficult to live in the U.S. without citizenship status. Although it was overturned by the courts, a substitute executive order was signed this week that is only marginally narrower in its scope and implications. As of today, the repeated campaign pledge to terminate DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) has not moved ahead. But if it does, it will jeopardize the status of the hundreds of thousands of people in Southern California – including, we estimate, more than a couple dozen Bulldogs – who grew up in the United States but remain undocumented.

The advice of the American Council on Education and the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) is that we should remain watchful. Leaders of the University of California, the California State Universities, and the California legislature, along with city mayors around the country including Los Angeles's Eric Garcetti, are using legal means to address any threat to such residents. And U of R's General Counsel Brent Geraty and I were clear in our December [University Announcement](#) about what universities can and cannot do legally if federal or state officials approach our staff for information on our undocumented students. The unfortunate truth is that we cannot promise our undocumented students that we can protect them from all risks. But we can provide empathy and proactive support. Our December communication also listed specific things we are doing or will do to directly assist any undocumented student whose ability to continue their education with us is imperiled.

Here is an example of what's at stake for some of our hardest working students who already face obstacles to achieving their educations that documented students do not face. I anonymize this story. C. is a single mother of two seeking a graduate degree. At times the journey has "seemed extremely daunting and unattainable," she says. Due to her DACA status, federal financial aid is unavailable to her: "I have had a hard time paying off my tuition on the credit cards I have used to pay it along the way." And she cannot qualify for federally subsidized loans; private loans at higher rates are only available with a co-signer. Yet, C. says, she is pursuing her passion, so she perseveres. And she praises Redlands' support for that passion. "In the recent months, uncertainty has prevailed among the immigrant community, and it has been an honor to attend a university that is supportive of students like myself who are trying to use their education to serve their community."

We owe C. respect and dignity and all the protection we can legally provide, so that her passion and hard work will pay off for herself, her kids, and the generations of students she will impact in a life chosen as service. The University will remain steadfast in our resolve to protect students' privacy, yet still meet our legal obligations and respect the rule of law.

(As a related aside, C.'s example also reminds us that Redlands always seeks to improve our culture and structures in support of the University's commitment to justice and equality. The [University-wide Council on Inclusiveness and Community](#) that I convened last year continues its charge to think creatively about ways to enable this progress. The Council recently issued its first annual report, which can be found via the link above and which I encourage each of us to read.)

Universities have for a century been key foci of debate on the left or right, no doubt derived from their principles that are critical to both their inherent models as the "business of knowledge" and in being the world's most perpetual institutions. The central tenets of survival of such institutions are the centrality of learning, freedom of speech and open exchange, freedom of assembly, academic freedom, and intellectual diversity, which in the 21<sup>st</sup> century means an inherent affirmation of globalism. Protection of these values has meant universities have historically been the nexus of tensions – no matter from the political right or left – in the pre-World War I and World War II Eras of isolationism, to the 1950s McCarthy Era of reputational repression, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, the 1964 anti-Vietnam War Era of protest, and now currently a seeming anti-immigration, populistic, hyper-nationalistic era.

Let me tell you how close to home this is. We are not in some Redlands bubble; at least our mission seeks that we not be. We are increasingly an international university, and that has been one of my top three visions for Redlands. We have more than a dozen faculty with international

origins and either visas from other countries or green cards as permanent residents who are now rightly concerned about trends in travel and immigration restrictiveness; two have families who came to this “nation of immigrants” to avoid a repressive regime in order to find freedom here. Here is a direct quote from one of them: “The [initial] executive order directly affected us. We cannot leave the country. Our parents and family cannot come to the U.S. for a visit. I am worried about the direction of the new administration’s orders, which do not credit our civic lives and value. The actions that I am seeing from the new administration are very similar to what I have experienced before coming to the U.S. . . . That is concerning not only for the immigrants, but also for all of us.”

Although the revised executive order exempts current valid visa and green card holders as well as those with dual U.S. citizenship, it puts a 90-day hold on issuance of new visas from the six named countries. At Redlands, we currently have 145 international students on F-1 (or full-time student) visas at our combined campuses. Before the executive order, we expected this number to climb substantially following the next start dates in the School of Business, when the M.S. in Information Technology program in Burbank will take more international students. We also have 12 exchange visitors (scholars and year-long exchange students) on J-1 visas. We have about 60 students who are permanent resident internationals, including several from countries that are on the “banned” list. Then there are the couple of dozen undocumented students from Latin America. Those numbers don’t include students who themselves are citizens but are of international backgrounds – not just first-generation students who may be children of Latin American immigrants, but also students whose parents are from Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa whose parents may or may not have U.S. citizenship. Many of the students I’ve been meeting with fall into that category: concerned about their parents, concerned about visiting family overseas, and the like.

Just this semester, 200 prospective students came to audition for 50 places in the School of Music. About 40% were first-generation and many were international. An adjudicator was struck that on just one page of candidates’ names appeared nine names in a row that stood out, for reasons having nothing to do with their musical or academic talents: three were white, one Japanese, two Latino, and three were from Iran, Iraq (which has since been removed from the banned countries list), and Syria. All nine are first-generation students, born in the U.S. but with immigrant parents and families. While we attempt to recruit them to our University, they must be thinking, “If I attend here, what turmoil will I face as an international, and what are the chances my family will remain intact during my education?” We foresee the contribution their artistry, talent, and intellectual diversity will make to our community. They foresee senseless anxiety if they join us. We too are anxious, because when students lose their families, we lose the students. We in universities do not live in ivory towers, but in just the kinds of institutions habitually tested for our principles.

I quote from our University Distinguished Fellow and wise colleague, journalist, author, and former presidential speechwriter James Fallows: “Universities are, along with courts, this era’s arena for the contest between long-term constitutional values and shorter-term political passions. When that’s been true in the past, the universities and their leaders who have kept their eye on the longer-term values are the ones who have earned the most respect, and whose institutions have fared the best.”

## **Title IX and Other Higher Education Policies**

Authoritative national higher education organizations like the American Council on Education are anticipating decreased Title IX oversight from the new leadership of the federal Department of Education. Nevertheless, the University will remain dedicated to educating its community about, and addressing complaints of, sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct.

It is unclear what the specific agenda of new Secretary of Education DeVos will be. But it is likely to focus on school choice and mark shifts in the federal student lending program. The November elections virtually ended, at least at the federal level, the “free college” discussions – proposals of broader support for student access. In her confirmation hearing, DeVos supported streamlining the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* and indicated her intention to have the Higher Education Act reauthorized – the 1965 federal law that governs the administration of federal student aid programs. If these two statements become commitments, we will certainly welcome them.

## **State Funding Picture**

The overall California state budget picture has slightly declined for us, with Governor Brown projecting a \$1.6 billion deficit for 2016-17. There is limited new spending for undergraduate education in Brown’s proposed budget; in fact, an 11.3% decrease in the Cal Grant and phase-out of the Middle Class Scholarship program are proposed (the latter helps in-state undergraduates attend a University of California or California State University).

In his recommended 2017-18 budget, the governor did not include a repeal of the previous cuts to the Cal Grant program for students at independent colleges and universities, nor did he permanently repeal the impending 11.3% cut. For Redlands, the 11.3% cut means a \$1,028 reduction to each new Cal Grant student’s award. This is particularly significant because nearly 600 of our undergraduates currently benefit from the Cal Grant, as do 50% of our first-generation students. Retention and graduation rates of Cal Grant recipients are higher than those of our total student population, so the impact is felt by some of our most dedicated and hard-working students – those who most want to get to, stay at, and embark from Redlands into successful lives and careers.

The University is collaborating with AICCU on grassroots advocacy efforts with the state legislature to restore these funds to the final budget and support thousands of talented low-income students in their hard work, hopes, and dreams of attaining a baccalaureate degree.

## **THE ENROLLMENT OUTLOOK**

For the last two years, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed*, the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), and the National Student Clearinghouse have all prominently projected a decline in undergraduate enrollments among private, not-for-profit institutions. In a NACUBO survey last May, more than half of private colleges reported declining first-year student enrollments.

Demographic data from the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education illustrates we’re in the middle of a 10-year period of relative stagnation of projected high school graduates, coupled with an approximately 10% decline in white non-Hispanic high school graduates and a 10% increase in Hispanic high school graduates. In addition, historical enrollment patterns by

race/ethnicity suggest the number of high school graduates initially selecting private four-year institutions over public ones may decline further.

In our own backyard, the University of California (UC) plans to increase in-state resident enrollment by 10,000 students between fall 2016 and fall 2018 and to cap out-of-state enrollment. This growth plan by the UCs contributed to Redlands' lower enrollments in the College of Arts & Sciences (CAS) beginning in fall 2015.

### **U of R's Enrollment Picture**

The landscape I just described potentially worsens an already-diminished enrollment picture for the U of R. The decreasing high school graduation levels and expansion at public institutions such as the UC system have important long-term financial implications for Redlands and are a central focus of our planning.

Simultaneously, we have seen a worrisome decline in first-to-second year retention in CAS. This is at least partially due to competitive forces against private colleges by the external financial and political moves of public colleges and universities in California. There are always, of course, other financial, academic, and health problems that explain individual decisions to move away from U of R and complete one's education elsewhere. By contrast, retention and graduation rates in the School of Business and School of Education remain more relatively robust.

As of today, CAS stands at 2,417 enrollments, which is 74 (3%) under what we had budgeted for the current fiscal year. The School of Business is just halfway through the enrollment year and is on track to meet its budgeted enrollments – although we set a smaller targeted budget in the School than in the previous couple of years.

*But* – and here is where I will celebrate the first of several very important recent institutional achievements – our current and future enrollment picture is brighter than you may know.

### **Increasing Our Enrollments**

We have not stood by passively. We have actively planned and capitalized on a period of remarkable growth in the education labor sector and correspondingly in one of our own graduate and professional schools, and we have implemented some solutions toward optimizing enrollment pipelines.

The School of Education's enrollment has increased more than 60% in a three-year period. The current new student enrollment for 2016-17 is hovering close to 535 on an initial budget of 430. This is another remarkable year, following *two* prior years of significant growth.

The School of Continuing Studies (SCS) is expected to grow certificate programs, outreach to businesses and non-profits that seek short-time educational training, and inter-generational enrichment courses, which I'll talk more about in a moment. We also expect to expand the capacity of SCS to provide leveling and preparatory courses for our graduate programs, particularly the MBA in the School of Business.

Our *North Star 2020* strategic plan prioritizes the determination of "optimal" size for the overall University, and I'll talk more about both the plan and the size question in a moment.

## **Local Partnerships**

Last semester we successfully negotiated important [guaranteed admission agreements](#) with three local school districts (Chaffey, Redlands, and Yucaipa/Calimesa), and we are working on agreements with additional districts right now – as well as community college partnerships/agreements, such as the one with Crafton Hills College that's currently [in the news](#), to attract transfer students into CAS or into the School of Business for baccalaureate completion. The high school partnerships invite qualified graduating seniors to move seamlessly into their freshman year at Redlands and sweeten the pot with a \$10,000 scholarship. As I write, CAS is seeing a 33% increase in applications from the schools represented in these agreements.

The partnerships are important not only for their immediate impact on these students' educational choices and on our enrollments, but for their ability to help us build better understanding among all families of the relative affordability of – and the additional value received from – a Redlands education. Many local students and parents simply do not believe that a U of R education, or any private school education, is attainable, due to the false equation of “private” with “expensive”; they assume a path to community college and then perhaps into the California State or UC systems is all they can afford. Yet, we know Redlands can be competitive with those schools on cost. A recent [Los Angeles Times article](#) laying out one middle class family's college affordability dilemma prompted Vice President Dyerly to calculate their costs if their student were admitted to the U of R. He found that the family could actually pay less for four years at Redlands than at a UC campus – where, among other deficits they may encounter, they may find it is just not possible to complete a degree in fewer than five or six years. That is an important opportunity cost that students in the public sector continually pay.

## **The 4-Year Promise**

To capitalize on the financial advantage our University can offer over state institutions, this fall we are introducing the University of Redlands “4-Year Promise.” The Promise is founded in the certainty that each year nearly 90% of commencing CAS seniors have completed their graduation requirements in four years or less. The Promise articulates our commitment to encouraging proactive, collaborative action between the University and our students. We want to ensure that students take full advantage of their liberal arts education as they complete their bachelor's degree in four years of study. If a student abides by the responsibilities outlined by our faculty in the Redlands Promise but is not scheduled to graduate on time, the University promises to provide a remedy enabling him/her to graduate within the promised four years. If we do not, the University will cover the cost of the additional courses necessary for the student to graduate.

I'd add that our Cal Grant Tuition Promise, which ensures that Cal Grant-eligible students admitted for fall 2017 will have their entire tuition costs covered through a combination of state, federal and University grants, should have a positive impact not only on admissions yield, but on retention.

## **More On Retention**

Another positive counterbalance to the current CAS enrollment downturn and worrying projections of demographic trends is a host of new student support and incentive measures that will aid our ability to retain students through graduation. All of these pro-engagement actions can countervail the financial pressures, academic performance, and other forces gathering against

retention. From changes to New Student Orientation, to new tiered housing rates for all students, to Summer Bridge for first-generation students, to increased tutoring through the Academic Success Center, programs in our [Academic Affairs](#) and [Student Life](#) divisions are helping students stay balanced, productive, and academically on track.

## The Student Experience

In [Bulldog Athletics](#), Sophomore Caroline Ordian was the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Individual Women's Golf *National* Champion. Men's Soccer won its third Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SCIAC) title in a row and 13<sup>th</sup> championship in the past 16 seasons, and the team advanced to the NCAA Championships. Bulldog Football returned to top form, winning its 30<sup>th</sup> SCIAC title overall and the 12<sup>th</sup> in Head Coach Mike Maynard's 29-year career. The team advanced to the NCAA Championships, where they lost a closely-contested game to #1-nationally-ranked Mary Hardin Baylor. Finally, this year we have a record number of Student Scholar-Athletes at 148, which means that 31% of our student athletes maintain a grade point average of 3.5 or higher.

Intramural and Club Sports continue to grow – another sign of strong student engagement – with participation levels increasing by hundreds of students across both programs the last few years. A thriving arts and lectures scene continues to host prominent [speakers](#) and ground-breaking [performances](#) on the Redlands campus. Truly pioneering programs in our Campus Diversity and Inclusion area open dialogue and increase understanding among students. One of these innovative programs provides support for students who would like a “brave space” to talk about men’s issues as well as get more involved on campus. Dudes Understanding Diversity and Ending Stereotypes, or [D.U.D.E.S.](#), caught the eye of the *Los Angeles Times* last year, garnering a lengthy [article](#) and excellent exposure for the University.

And finally, I want to recognize [Tony Mueller](#), who has shepherded our Community Service Learning (CSL) program from its lean, grassroots-funded early days through [25 stellar years](#) of co-curricular experiences for students. Tony, celebrating his 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with us, and CSL are exemplars of dedication to mission and creative ways to sustain and grow programs that are central to the student experience – and thus, help us attract and retain students year after year. All of these great strides forward help brace the University for the future and bolster our ability to navigate external changes that are beyond our control.

I want to especially acknowledge Vice President and Dean of Student Life Char Burgess for her dedicated leadership in all aspects of student affairs. As I announced last semester, Char will transition into a new role at the University this summer, and I look forward to celebrating her 50-year legacy at a special community gathering in May.

## OUR FINANCIAL PICTURE

First, I want to sound some positive and celebratory notes about our University’s fortunes and immediate future outlook. Enrollments are crucial, but certainly not the solitary, major revenue source or potential source for our University.

In the last ten-year period, 2016 was our third consecutive year of net positive operating margins (which includes even deferred maintenance) compared to the seven prior years of deficits in operational results. Notably, we were also able to increase our capital expenditure projects by more than 30% in 2016 compared to the prior year, without adding to our existing debt levels.

Additionally, our reserves – funds set aside for general liquidity, debt service, and other long-term needs required to remain credit-worthy – were essentially unchanged for the year, at nearly \$22 million. We have also made great progress in managing the investment of our own regular operating cash to achieve greater investment returns, which improves our “bottom line” by approximately \$400,000 annually.

As I noted in my State of the University report a year ago, our endowment spending rate continues to gradually move towards a more sustainable level, now 4.25% of the trailing five years’ average. Although overall endowment levels are still significantly below where we must be for our size, we achieved endowment growth from \$154 million to \$191 million in the year just ended – a noteworthy achievement. All of these factors reflect our focused efforts to continually improve our financial health. But responsible foresight mandates that we maintain a close watch over our expenditure levels to avoid a return to the period of deficits that we all have worked so hard to leave behind.

## **Fundraising Success**

Another highly positive note for our future is the continued success of our comprehensive campaign, which will launch publicly this October during our homecoming festivities. In its quiet “leadership” phase, the campaign already has amassed more than half of the total gifts and pledges targeted for its culmination in 2020. Our generous alumni, trustees, administrators, parents, and friends have committed more than \$114 million since July 2013, an investment that demonstrates the pride and ownership that these generous partners feel for our University. Recent exemplars, new to our family of donors, are our great friends and Redlands neighbors, Tim and Carol Rochford. The Rochford Academic Initiative will create a pathway for at-risk children from neighborhood schools to attend Redlands. The Rochfords’ generous gift goes to fund staffing, intervention/tutoring programs, a summer institute, and more. We will further describe and celebrate the Rochford Academic Initiative at our campaign launch.

Gifts to the Redlands Fund allow our students to succeed today, while gifts to our endowment ensure and preserve the Redlands experience for future generations of Bulldogs. The impact of donor support can be felt each and every day at our University, perhaps most strongly through the hundreds of scholarship recipients whose access to a Redlands education was made possible in part through philanthropy. Rich and Ginnie Hunsaker ’52 and many others are helping the University attract and retain academically talented students through ongoing financial support. These and other legacy gifts to endowment that we will be able to announce at the October launch will help preserve the U of R for all time.

## **Challenges**

Despite all of the positive ongoing and new efforts I have discussed above, which are designed to have a long-term impact on enrollments and endowment, the budget planning for our near-term operations must be wholly realistic and practical. We entered this fiscal year with a positive operating margin for unrestricted funds that was less than half the size of the prior year, thus reducing our ability to fund general reserves or capital improvements. While we are compensating for the two-years-long toll of recent enrollment declines in CAS and the School of Business, and despite successful engagement of new and existing donors that I have described, a depressed enrollment outlook through the incoming undergraduate student pipelines and undergraduate retention issues have made our funding situation still both serious and deeply challenging. We are acutely and continually dependent on tuition revenue, and the current

decreased revenues in CAS and the School of Business compound as they roll into each new year.

Notwithstanding the immediate impact of reduced enrollments, we controlled our net operating revenue so that it was not significantly reduced in the year ended June 30, 2016 compared to 2015, at \$131 million. However, our operating expenses increased by more than \$4.5 million, or a little more than 3.5%, in just one year. This increase in costs was the primary factor in reducing our positive operating margin from its historic high of \$8.6 million in 2015, to \$3.8 million in 2016 – a trend we must eliminate. (Remember, that figure is *not* a surplus but includes deferred maintenance costs we *must* cover.) These results are not unique to Redlands, as many of our peers are facing similar challenges. We should keep the recent results in perspective.

The Cabinet and I, along with the Budget Office, have been working arduously to prepare three-year budget scenarios for the Budget Planning Committee and other shared governance bodies. Belt-tightening – beyond what we have already implemented this year – is required. And as I have said before, such action is simply prudent to undertake regularly, even in the best of times. Our leadership team firmly believes that to become financially stronger and more resilient, the University must offer new graduate and professional programs, tailor existing ones to meet the real, changing needs and expectations of our student and faculty scholars, and become ever more streamlined and strategic organizationally. We simply must align operations with our student population, while still planning strategically to support achievement of future goals.

*More communication on budget balancing actions and timelines will follow in May.*

## WHAT'S NEW

### Organizational Innovations

Part and parcel of tailoring ourselves to match the needs of the thousands of students out there who want and deserve the quality liberal arts and professional experience we offer is to constantly reassess how we are structured and how we operate. New examples of organizational and program innovation with positive implications for our financial future are:

- New Associate Dean of SCS, Dan Otter, is working to broaden opportunities for our continuing studies programs to serve the community, as well as the University. Most recently, he has helped us develop a new Certified Public Accountant certificate program and has expanded opportunities with United Technologies Corporation in Riverside. Dan also regularized our collaboration with the Redlands Plymouth Village retirement community to expand inter-generational course opportunities; for example, a Christian Scriptures course in the Department of Religious Studies provides joint enrollment with Plymouth Village residents. Plymouth Village also hosts a lecture series featuring Redlands faculty.
- The Armacost Library has started a migration of the Integrated Library System (ILS) to Ex Libris, which will update core technologies that support the operations of Armacost, as well as user searches for books and articles, library log-ins, and course reserves. This project requires that we migrate records and settings from our current system, integrate with external systems, and configure the new Primo research discovery service to align with the library's online environment and instructional curriculum. Migration of the ILS

is a cornerstone of the North Star initiative to enhance and expand Armacost as our Learning Commons.

- The appointment of Shana Higgins as Interim Director of the Armacost Library and Sanjeet Mann as Interim Assistant Director enables the library to work with the Library Advisory Committee and Academic Affairs on developing criteria for a new library director to replace Gabriela Sonntag, who retired from Redlands in summer 2016.

## **Innovation Grants**

Four projects sponsored through our inaugural round of Innovation Grants have progressed this year. I commend these faculty and administrators for the energy and entrepreneurialism that sparked their strategic innovations:

- Professor John Glover and the “Historical Geographic Information Systems Community of Practice” have created a GIS lab in Gannett and a map scanner in Armacost Library to support historical GIS research.
- Professors Julia Brandes and James Spee in the School of Business have pursued curricular and program design for a 4 + 1 pathway from Environmental Studies to an MBA with emphasis in sustainable business.
- Multimedia Services Manager Nicholas Sousa and Executive Director Steve Garcia from Information Technology Services have created the Redlands Media Production Center to provide video services, teach video production to students, and facilitate cross-campus collaboration.
- Professor Conroy Reynolds is leading a School of Education team to develop online courses.

## **New Academic Opportunities and Pathways**

I want to welcome again, and take my hat off to [CAS Dean Kendrick Brown](#), who in his first year with us is working with faculty and students to expand the already broad range of activities open to students at Redlands. One is a potential partnership with Tuskegee University. We are exploring a relationship with this renowned historically black university that will also allow Redlands students and faculty to experience its rich offerings while bringing talented Tuskegee students and faculty to Redlands.

CAS is also developing curricular guidelines that will better enable our undergraduate students to pursue graduate degrees or teaching certification in the School of Education, as well as take advantage of the master’s degree offered in geographic information systems – the MSGIS.

And Dean Brown is working with faculty and staff to re-imagine our Study Abroad program as a leaner, less expensive, yet more focused and selective set of travel-study opportunities, and thus a source of even more high-impact academic experiences and pathways for students.

[Jacob Khuri](#) is a great example of a student who has embraced both the residential liberal arts experience on campus and global opportunities through study abroad. He intentionally builds on the foundation of his on-campus academic experience through his study abroad choices, and

similarly builds on his internships and service experiences through the Associated Students of University of Redlands (ASUR), where he is Executive Director of Convocations & Lectures.

I also want to commend Dean Andrew Wall (the Robert A. and Mildred Peronia Naslund Dean of the School of Education) and his team, who not only have overseen an explosive enrollment growth on the Redlands campus, which I mentioned earlier, but have expanded access to our programs by adding the Riverside campus to the School's existing regional locations. At the same time, by many measures, quality has improved – a very tough combination to achieve. The School of Education also embraces the importance of academic pathways by focusing on developing and enhancing relationships with local K–12 schools and school districts. We should be so proud that our School of Education alumni have deep impact in school districts all across the region. One recently was a finalist for a national school counseling award and met former First Lady Michelle Obama at a [White House ceremony](#) – a great honor not only for Yuridia Nava '10, '11 and her family but for our entire University.

Dean Wall, Interim School of Business Dean Keith Roberts, and the faculties of both professional schools are also working with partner Keypath Education to develop another important educational pathway for students – online degree programs – the first of which our accrediting body has now fully approved to launch this fall. These online offerings are not window dressing. They are envisioned to offer those courses that are amenable to digital technology in ways that enhance learning. A side benefit is that, because they offer convenience and flexible timing, they promise to diversify and potentially increase our revenue streams.

And finally, special thanks go as well to Dean Roberts, CAS Business faculty, and all who participated in the “blue ribbon” external review and self-study which, inspired and supported by the *North Star 2020* call for educational pathways, has opened doors of communication and opportunity between CAS and the School of Business, to the benefit of our students. On a related note, the search for our business dean launched in the fall and is progressing on schedule. Candidates are visiting campus as I write, and we expect to host a finalist very soon. Here are just two examples of the pathways our new dean will join all of us in fostering:

- Kayla Wobschall is an undergraduate student from Broomfield, Colorado. A recipient of the Quincy Brown Memorial Endowed Scholarship, Kayla has been a first-year seminar peer advisor and is a Maroon & Grey Student Ambassador. She carefully planned her academic pursuits from her arrival at the University of Redlands to major in psychology, minor in Spanish, and meet all requirements for the multiple-subject teaching credential in four years. Kayla’s plan is to transfer 17 units from the teacher credential program into the graduate Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching Program in the School of Education. This carefully planned pathway will enable Kayla to earn a B.A., teaching credential, and M.A. in five years.
- GIS was the unexpected turn in the academic career of Brittany Miller '14, '16. As a history major, Brittany took a great interest in GIS, completing the MSGIS program at Redlands. Her master’s thesis, “Cartographic Representation and Three-Dimensional Modeling of Hopi Archaeological Sites,” is a GIS solution for a real-world problem of improving the archaeological efforts on the Hopi Reservation. For this work, she was awarded the Roger Tomlinson Prize for Excellence in GIS, funded by Jack and Laura Dangermond.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Watch for a communication coming very shortly from Provost Ogren, in which she will distribute our finalized new strategic plan, *North Star 2020*, and describe next steps in its adoption and tracking of progress against goals.

*North Star* is of little use if it simply sits on a shelf. That's why integrated, consultative, and iterative planning is compelling in university cultures. We assume that some flexible adaptation will be required to stay on course. But we should, as a community, be able to adjust to challenges, mark achievements, and account for changes we will make to the plan. Provost Ogren convened summits to organize our collective work on the following priorities: spatial studies, fostering professional development, business education, data and decision making, optimal size, and soon, the Armacost Learning Commons. An Implementation Committee for *North Star* began its work in December. Twenty of the 33 initiatives identified in *North Star* are either completed or underway. A Web-based tracking document configured as a dashboard will soon be available for everyone to access not only through the Provost's Web page but multiple other sites; details will follow very shortly.

### **Provost's Optimal Size Working Group**

In the *North Star 2020* plan we wrote that "determining who our students can and should be through achieving optimal size, thoughtful enrollment growth, and diversified pathways" is our first over-arching goal. Understanding our likely optimal size enables us to plan for quality education as well as diversified revenue. It is central to prudent fiscal management.

Specifically, we elaborated: "Within the first year of *North Star*, determine optimal growth, size, and configuration of undergraduate and graduate enrollments. Do we grow undergraduate enrollment, remain at a steady state, or reduce capacity? How do we maximize our access to and integration with master's programs?" Under the stewardship of the Provost and Vice President for Enrollment, an "Optimal Size Working Group" was launched to engage administrative and faculty leaders. This group will practice congruent execution of its charge with existing planning committees that currently manage or govern the following: enrollment and marketing; retention and student success; regional campuses; campus master planning; and curricular or program planning. Constituted in January 2017, the Working Group includes faculty, administrators, and the President of ASUR.

The Working Group, which will meet throughout the spring 2017 semester, is considering one-to three-year budget scenarios relative to enrollment and will produce a preliminary recommendation on optimal size, ideally by the May 2017 Board of Trustees meeting. National and regional enrollment projections suggest that we will want to plan for a CAS that is slightly smaller than the 2,500–2,600 envisioned a decade ago. Similarly, the size and diversity of our graduate and professional offerings will likely increase substantially. But these assumptions need to be tested and vetted with the Working Group as we consider the short- and long-term planning consequences of the assumptions we make.

For example, we need to define quality as understood in metrics such as faculty-student ratio and admissions criteria; enrollment and market trends over the next three to four years; the value of 4 + 1 combined B.A./M.A. programs for attracting students and fostering greater retention; and resource needs, including facilities and residence halls.

In addition to the North Star Implementation Committee and the Provost's Optimal Size Working Group, four other new working groups have already been hard at work:

- Business Education Working Group
- Spatial Studies Working Group
- Professional Development Working Group
- Data/Decision Support Working Group

## INCREASING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

And now I'll move from organizational excellence, pathway creation, and strategic planning to the ever-increasing excellence of the academic experience we provide our students. The number and breadth of academic awards that our students garner is outstanding as one important measure of our quality.

This year three CAS students have received the [Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship](#), a prestigious award sponsored by the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The scholarship is designed to encourage federal Pell Grant-eligible students at two- or four-year colleges or universities to participate in study abroad and internships around the world. Our 2016-17 Gilman Scholars are:

- Saba Asif – Global Business – Studied in Nagoya, Japan
- Hannah Holthaus – Sociology – Studied in Buenos Aires, Argentina
- April Hong – Johnston emphasis – Studying in Seoul, South Korea

We also have two Fulbright finalists this year:

- Manmit Dhami, Johnston major – Teaching (India)
- Jacob Khuri, Biochemistry major – Research concerning the health of immigrant populations (Denmark)

And 16 Hunsaker Scholars, thanks again to the Hunsakers' generous support:

- Sophomore Hunsaker scholars will be going to Washington, D.C. between the spring and May terms to network with local alumni and explore career options. They are being mentored by biology professor Ben Aronson and CAS Associate Dean, Sawa Kurotani, with invaluable support from Heather Luth in the Office of Professional Development.
- Six first-year Hunsaker scholars are transitioning well to their academic lives at Redlands under the mentoring guidance of biology professor Linda Silveira.

Redlands' showing in the Proudian Interdisciplinary Honors Program continues to be impressive. Congratulations to the 15 [Class of 2019 Proudian Scholars](#) who were selected in October 2016. For Hanson-Schroeder Scholars, language and cultural immersion provide even deeper opportunities for life-changing student experiences. Here are some stories of our recent scholars and the program's impact on them – all made possible through ongoing donor support:

- Through his Hanson Scholarship, Trevor Warren '19 traveled to Chile to work on a farm using sustainable agriculture techniques in a rural village, help a park ranger on a wildlife conservation in Patagonia, and assist a nonprofit with water conservation education and

research in Santiago. Through his adventures, Trevor says he developed more of an intercultural understanding about the Chilean culture and his own cultural identity, and regards this experience as academically and personally transformative.

- Chryse Kruse '19 was awarded a Hanson Scholarship that took her to Romania for ten weeks where she worked at a primary school and with foster children. The experience has been life-changing. "There is no way you can work with these children in a community like this and not come out changed. You don't know what suffering, hungry, poor, or strong is until you see what these young kids have lived through."
- Dakota Hughes '19 is currently immersed in the intensive study of Mandarin Chinese, because his Schroeder Summer Language Award took him to Beijing, China. Dakota is the first freshman at Redlands to be awarded the Schroeder Scholarship and is the only two-time winner. He said it is exciting to meet the challenge of mastering Mandarin Chinese and understands that the commitment means he will spend long hours studying and very few socializing.

## Faculty-Student Research

Abundant opportunities for student-faculty research is another hallmark of a quality academic experience, and our University shines in this arena. The John Stauffer Charitable Trust Student Science Research challenge is a major campaign goal for us.

- Physics Professor Julie Rathbun is working with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory as one of nine [Europa Mission](#) scientists working with a thermal emission imaging system to measure temperatures on the surface of Jupiter's moon, Europa. Capitalizing on this rare opportunity for a small liberal arts institution, Ifft Student Science Researcher Sebastian Saballett '17 researched quantitative measurements of active Ionian volcanoes in Galileo Near-Infrared Mapping Spectrometer data, studying the volcanic activity of Jupiter's moon Io, unique because it is the only moon with its own atmosphere. Sebastian presented his research at the American Astronomical Society's Division for Planetary Sciences. Read [Sebastian's story](#).
- Biology Professor Lei Lani Stelle and former MSGIS graduate student Melodi King '12 developed [Whale mAPP](#), a Web- and mobile-based application that uses GIS to monitor marine mammals. Any user of a GIS-enabled Android-based device can use the app to share information about marine mammal sightings, which is then shared and saved through the online geodatabase [whalemapp.org](#). Stelle's work has been featured in [National Geographic](#).
- Tessa Foster '17 has spent three years researching marine mammals and says the Student Science Research program allowed her to experience the life of a field researcher. Through observation and study of the decline in marine mammal populations and the effects of climate change and noise, chemical, and trash pollution on marine mammals, Tessa knows she now has a better understanding of the work that needs to be done.

Students often report how important mentoring relationships are to their college experience. These stories particularly and richly speak to the working relationships between professors/advisors and students. I want to thank those professors who maintain very high numbers of advisees. Some of our faculty also offer a first-year seminar every year, truly enhancing our already-rich opportunities for students.

## ATTRACTING THE BEST

### Students

Our current student body is an academically strong and culturally rich one. I am proud to be part of such an accomplished community filled with students of such [wide-ranging backgrounds](#), accomplishments, and contributions.

Our students are attracted and recruited to Redlands through a mix of art and science: artfulness – in the form of compelling, authentic information, stories, and images provided through our recruitment materials and digital presence – and empirical science – complex targeting recruitment strategies that identify and reach out to the type and mix of students we seek as great matches for Redlands. (I'll hasten to add, though, that less complex targeting works for us too, such as the School of Education's focus on recruiting graduate students of academic quality through good old-fashioned direct outreach and relationship-building within school districts.)

Last year our enrollment and communications teams launched new recruitment campaigns for CAS and all three schools. We'll soon know how well the new "Yours for the Making" theme has resonated with CAS prospects, and a strong emphasis on outcomes is helping cement the value of a Redlands education in families' minds. In short, we produce a great many satisfied and productive alumni. Our recent alumni survey revealed that:

- 94% of survey respondents are either employed, attending graduate school, or performing volunteer or national service (such as Peace Corps or AmeriCorps) within their first year after graduating from the University of Redlands.
- 96% say their Redlands experience prepared them for graduate school
- More than 90% indicated that attending Redlands readied them for their career.
- Our overall alumni satisfaction rate exceeds 92%.

This is evidence that our University not only educates the heart and mind, as our mission statement promises, but we do so in a way that promotes success in the culture and workforce of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Findings from the alumni survey will be shared as part of our *North Star* initiatives to better publicize and promote student achievements at Redlands. We will enrich our Web content that tells the story of our students' satisfaction with the Redlands educational experience, including opportunities to apply liberal arts skills and habits of mind to applied and immersive learning experiences valued by professional schools and employers – for example, faculty-mentored research, study abroad, School of Business consultation capstones, internships, fieldwork, and community service learning. Our recently enhanced Web presence helps us make the case for [the true value of the liberal arts](#), life-long learning that supports professional and career development, and embarking on a life of purpose.

Finally, we will amplify all of these messages through a digital campaign, due to launch any week now, designed to increase general awareness of the University of Redlands across a broad set of audiences. University Communications recently previewed to faculty, staff, ASUR leaders, and trustees the messaging foundation that the campaign will draw upon. I look forward to watching the University's profile rise through the strategic and creative outreach of this effort.

## **Faculty**

The University welcomed [22 new faculty members](#) this fall – one of the largest and most diverse groups ever, and evidence that the U of R is attracting ever more talented faculty scholars along with student scholars eager for the learning, mentorship, and inspiration they will provide. The 2016 “[Our House](#)” celebration of faculty scholars, authors, and artists continues to impress me with the breadth, depth, and sheer number of stellar research and creative activities on display. Our faculty are particularly prolific writers, with scores of [published works](#) to their name. I look forward to seeing what they have been up to as the 2017 edition of Our House approaches. We have 35 submissions so far, and most of them come from our faculty.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

Part of our ability to attract the best is to be the best stewards we can for our beautiful campus, both to serve today’s students and to preserve it for future generations. This is a very difficult charge to uphold in tight financial times. I am reminded of the standing ovation given our grounds keeping staff at the 2016 Holiday Party hosted by our terrific Staff and Administrators Assembly, when the team won the first-ever President’s Outstanding Group Award recognizing exemplary contributions by a staff or administrative unit.

### **Deferred Maintenance**

The University has contracted with consultants to conduct a detailed assessment of campus wide needs, on a building-by-building basis, to be completed this spring. With more than 64 buildings containing 1.2 million square feet on our Redlands campus alone, the resulting database will provide us with a foundation for prioritizing needs and making the best use of available funding. This information will help provide a foundation for a comprehensive capital plan.

### **Physical Plant Priorities**

Physical Plant priorities are primarily replacing failed building systems as well as updating our aging buildings, such as Grossmont Hall, where air conditioning, restroom renovations, enhancements under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and updates to building finishes are taking place. We listened to students’ needs. Completion is scheduled for summer 2017, when Grossmont will reopen as a sophomore residence with a beautiful, functional look and feel.

The University continues to plan enhancements of the student on-campus experience. In early envisioning stages are updates to the Field House, with potential to create new locker rooms, offices, a classroom, and meeting spaces for student-athletes, and to Currier Gym, where the potential is for much the same – but in addition, better spaces in which to host and recruit potential student-athletes.

### **Sustainability Initiatives**

Students recently invited me and my Cabinet to a forum, hosted by ASUR and organized by Students for Environmental Action, focused on University of Redlands’ attention to, current practices in, and future goals regarding environmental and energy sustainability. There is high student demand for discussion of this subject. And we as a University have been proactive, although of course never as progressive as we would like. In the end, the forum was a positive educational and emotional event, where we learned about sustainability initiatives already

underway at our University that many did not know about before and set still higher yet goals for ourselves. Topics included: what Bon Appétit is doing to decrease waste; new methods of composting; prospects for energy independence through co-generation power on the Redlands campus in tandem with future solar power use; the University's endowment investments in financial vehicles that are proponents of "environmental/social/governance" criteria; and campus water conservation. The forum was followed by a well-conceived and -delivered presentation to Cabinet by student advocates on these topics, Austin Tannenbaum '17 and Theo Whitcomb '19. See this [link](#) and future postings by the University Sustainability Council for updates on U of R's approach to sustainability.

## **University Village**

The final engineering design for the Redlands Passenger Rail station (part of what will be called the new Arrow Line) is under review. University Village – a three-way public/private/public development – may arise alongside that train stop on our campus, if we accept the vision and the challenge for our future. The Village can provide not only a gateway to the University we call home but also a destination itself. Imagine, if you will, a marvel of the most current, sustainable, and energy-self-sufficient college towns, with all the usual accoutrements of fine dining and boutiques, and perhaps a microbrewery, but also a wholesome green grocer; a bookstore with coffee; open green spaces where casual musicians play and groups perform in the evening; contemporary living spaces; and perhaps graced by a lake and a sculpture garden. It could be a model of an inter-generational, livable, walkable village.

Current planning, to support exploratory land development and market research, has begun for this exciting new gateway to our campus. Currently, passenger service is projected to begin by late 2020/early 2021.

## **POSSIBILITY AND PROMISE**

To bring to a close this new "President's Report," I think my theme throughout is that of *possibility*. We are an institution where, truly, anything is possible if we join, shoulder to shoulder, to make it a priority. The U of R is a place where faculty, staff, and students *invest* in each other. Investment is all about possibility.

I want to end by quoting someone who may seem a bit unlikely – someone I've never quoted before and may never quote again (!) – but whose words seem to sum up perfectly the place many may feel we are occupying right now, as an educational community and as a citizenry. Jimmy Dean, the American entertainer and sausage-making businessman, said, "*I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination.*" The University of Redlands, like the country, is feeling a forceful wind of change. We are meeting that force by adjusting our sails and keeping our eye on where we want to travel together.

Thank you for your dedication to the journey.



Ralph Kuncl, PhD, MD  
President