THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

BAKERSFIELD
CHANNEL ISLANDS
CHICO
DOMINGUEZ HILLS
EAST BAY
FRESNO
FULLERTON
HUMBOLDT
LONG BEACH
LOS ANGELES
MARITIME ACADEMY
MONTEREY BAY
NORTHRIDGE
POMONA
SACRAMENTO
SAN BERNARDINO
SAN DIEGO
SAN FRANCISCO
SAN JOSÉ
SAN LUIS OBISPO
SAN MARCOS
SONOMA
STANISLAUS

December 17, 2025

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Faculty, Staff, Students and Community
California State University San Marcos

FROM: Mildred García, Ed.D.
Chancellor

SUBJECT: President Ellen J. Neufeldt – Completion of Triennial Performance Review

The California State University Board of Trustees evaluates the performance of CSU presidents and the state of campus affairs on a three-year cycle. These evaluations are in addition to less formal annual reviews that the chancellor conducts with each president. The purpose of the presidential evaluations and annual conferences is to keep the CSU Board of Trustees properly informed of university successes and challenges, to develop and maintain alignment regarding strategic goals, and for the board and chancellor to demonstrate their commitment to and support of the university and its students, faculty, staff and leadership.

I write today to inform you that the regularly scheduled three-year performance evaluation for President Ellen J. Neufeldt has been completed.

The comprehensive feedback that the board and I received from the campus community noted, among other things, President Neufeldt's clearly communicated and widely supported vision and mission for Cal State San Marcos, her commitment to inclusive collaboration and transparency, and the university's impressive progress toward developing a more robust on-campus residential experience and richer opportunities for student engagement. The university is a true anchor institution for its region, with community outreach resulting in innovative student programming and experiential learning opportunities, as well as inspiring record-setting philanthropic support. Recognized as a national leader in social mobility, Cal State San Marcos is clearly advancing its mission despite budgetary constraints and other challenges that have impacted the CSU and public higher education nationwide.

The Presidential Review Process

The litany of tasks and responsibilities expected by the board of CSU presidents is extensive. In addition to providing leadership and management for academic, student support and administrative matters in a collaborative environment that honors principles of shared governance, the president also has responsibility for engaging with the broader community, performing systemwide duties, contributing to state and national higher education policy, and cultivating philanthropic support and stewardship – all of which advance and benefit CSUSM and its students.

To assess President Neufeldt's progress on these and other priorities, the board and I initiated the regular three-year review process during the spring term of 2025. This represented the president's first comprehensive, six-year evaluation since her appointment as president in 2019. All campus constituents and stakeholders were invited and encouraged to participate.

We received letters from faculty, staff, students and community members regarding all aspects of the president's performance. The board and I appreciate the candid, insightful and confidential feedback from the extended campus community, and offer our deep gratitude and appreciation to those who took the time to provide such thoughtful input for this review.

The points of view expressed in each letter were read and carefully considered, and a comprehensive summary of the input was prepared for the board's review, maintaining the confidence and anonymity of each participant. In addition, a team composed of CSU trustees, vice chancellors and university presidents visited the campus to conduct interviews with the president and CSUSM constituents, after which it prepared a report for my and the full board's review. Finally, the CSU Office of the Chancellor prepared its own evaluation of the president, informed by the review letters and the site team report, as well as by campus and community input, visits to the university and interactions in the normal course of business with leadership, faculty, students, alumni and staff at Cal State San Marcos.

These documents, plus comprehensive operational, fiscal and student success data, were reviewed, discussed and deliberated in closed session with the board and President Neufeldt at the September 2025 board meeting. That meeting led to a deeper understanding of the university, the relationship of Cal State San Marcos to the larger community it serves, and of the university's opportunities and challenges moving forward. (While it is understandable that there is public interest in the details of this discussion, performance evaluations for any faculty or staff member within the CSU, including our presidents, are confidential [Government Code Sec. 6254(c) and 6255].)

As a result of this process, certain goals were agreed upon by President Neufeldt and the board. They are, in no rank order:

- Continue to elevate CSUSM as a national leader in advancing social mobility, in partnership with the CSU system.

- Prioritize the expansion of CSUSM's physical infrastructure to meet the growing needs of the university's student population.

- Operationalize CSUSM's strategic enrollment plan and long-range academic master plan.

- Launch the largest comprehensive philanthropic campaign in the university's history.

- Lead and manage the university's budget and daily operations, with a focus on long-term health, stability and fiscal responsibility, while advancing key priorities.

- Strengthen the campus's culture of care by ensuring a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for all students, faculty and staff.

- Continue to engage in collaborative work and leadership across the system.

In order to remain informed of and attentive to the current and future state of affairs at CSUSM, and as noted above, the chancellor will continue to hold annual conferences with the president. President Neufeldt's next formal three-year review with the Board of Trustees and the chancellor will be initiated under current policy in 2028.

Again, thank you for your participation. Your feedback demonstrated a strong community commitment to Cal State San Marcos's success. Please know that the CSU Board of Trustees, President Neufeldt and I share this commitment.