

# Appendix A

# **Evaluation Committee Report**

## **For CSN President, Dr. Federico Zaragoza**

**May 6, 2020**

### **Introduction**

On February 27, 2020, Nevada's System of Higher Education (NSHE) Chancellor, Thom Reilly, convened the first meeting of the Presidential Evaluation Committee (Committee) formed to assist with the performance evaluation of Dr. Federico Zaragoza, president of the College of Southern Nevada (CSN). The Committee was chaired by Jaime Cruz, executive director of Workforce Connections, Southern Nevada's local workforce development board. Committee Members included: Mary Beth Sewald, president and CEO of the Vegas Chamber; Randy Robison, chair of the CSN Institutional Advisory Council; and Arnold Bell, Faculty Senate chair and professor of communication at CSN.

The evaluation process was greatly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Most, if not all meetings, interviews, public comment, and committee work were conducted virtually in accordance with Governor Sisolak's State of Emergency Directive in order to protect the health of all participants.

The Committee reviewed President Zaragoza's self-evaluation in advance and was able to interview him in-person on February 27, 2020. A subsequent debrief call was held on April 20, 2020. Chairman Cruz met again with Dr. Zaragoza on May 6, 2020 at the conclusion of the process to share the Committee's report with him. Also in attendance at these meetings (with the exception of the meeting on May 6) and instrumental in assisting the Committee were Nate Mackinnon, vice chancellor of community colleges for CSN; Sherry Olsen, director of Human Resources for NSHE; and Erin Collier, director of Organizational Development with Human Resources at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV).

As part of the evaluation process, the Committee conducted interviews with President Zaragoza's direct reports, CSN faculty and key classified staff, student leaders, community stakeholders, and other NSHE college and university presidents. The Committee also interviewed NSHE Cabinet members and a virtual Open Forum was held on campus. A faculty survey was also conducted. This report to the Chancellor and the Board of Regents incorporates results and outcomes from these sources.

The timetable for completion of this report was aggressive and challenging, especially given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The report and evaluation process could not have been completed without the assistance of Annette Lord, executive assistant to President Zaragoza. The Committee is grateful to all of those who participated and contributed to this process despite the unprecedented circumstances due to COVID-19. We received candid and valuable feedback and we worked hard to provide an accurate, fair, and balanced report.

This report will begin with the metrics as established by the NSHE Board of Regents. It will also include additional information we collectively gathered from all the listed sources during the entire process.

### **Application of Regents Performance Metrics**

The NSHE Board of Regents adopted a series of performance metrics to assist in the evaluation of presidents of NSHE institutions. The Committee appreciates the effort that President Zaragoza put into the preparation of his self-evaluation. He thoroughly addressed the evaluation metrics set by NSHE, with abundant data and valuable insight for this Committee as it undertook this important performance evaluation task. Even though he has only been at CSN for a relatively short period, it was obvious to the

Committee that Dr. Zaragoza has already made a significant impact on the performance and culture of the institution. The Open Forum results also supported that overall, CSN is moving in a positive direction and is dedicated to its “students-first” initiative.

### **Part 1: Fundamental Productivity**

Topics addressed:

- A. Academic completion-student success
- B. Enrollment-student access
- C. Grants/contracts/special events/research and development/gifts

The synopsis below summarizes Dr. Zaragoza’s key attributes in fundamental productivity in graduation rates, total number of degrees and certificates awarded, year-to-year persistence rates, and enrollment measures.

#### *Graduation Rates:*

In the past three Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) periods, CSN’s graduation rates increased from 10% to 14%. During this same time, transfer rates increased from 21.7% to 25.9%. The Aspen Rate (Graduation and Transfer) increased from 31% to 39.9% during the aforementioned time period. Notably, CSN’s Aspen student success rate of 39.9% surpasses the national Aspen average of 38.5%.

#### *Degrees and Awards:*

In terms of unduplicated and total awards, CSN has surpassed the previous institutional standards. The Lumina Foundation and Complete College America recognized CSN’s longitudinal data of degrees conferred. The Lumina Foundation has named CSN as a significant partner in the Las Vegas Lumina Talent Hub collaborative, which provides a formal framework, grants funding, and helped bring the guided pathways model to scale at CSN.

#### *Year-to-Year Persistence Rates:*

For the last three years, there has been a moderate increase in CSN’s year-to-year persistence rate for students. This is a phenomenal indicator of maintaining student persistence, especially since CSN’s part-time student population is 70%.

Under President Zaragoza’s leadership, numerous initiatives have been incorporated to effectively assist CSN’s at-risk student population. Dr. Zaragoza’s administration has introduced several supplemental programs that ensure CSN’s ability to close the achievement gap, such as the Follet Book Scholars Program and the Bump Up Initiative. Dr. Zaragoza demonstrates an unwavering commitment to ensure year-to-year persistence rates of CSN’s at-risk students.

#### *Enrollment Measure:*

By instituting robust pathways from Clark County School District (CCSD) and adult residents to CSN, institutional enrollment has increased for both degree-seeking and non-credit continuing education students. CSN’s degree seeking enrollment increased for both head count and full-time equivalent (FTS) categories. In regard to degree seeking, 36,109 students enrolled with an additional 14,315 non-credit continuing education students enrolled at CSN, for an overall total of 50,425. The unduplicated headcount moderately increased, whereas dual enrollment significantly increased in its enrollment. Overall, CSN’s recruitment has been quite effective. In particular, 22.2% of CCSD graduates attend CSN.

## **Part 2: Institutional Well-Being and Management Effectiveness**

### **D. Entrepreneurship**

Dr. Zaragoza exhibits a high degree of innovation and entrepreneurship – a trait recognized and welcomed by colleagues, staff and faculty, and, most importantly, students. At times, it seems almost effortless, though everyone acknowledges how hard he works at pushing the college to grow and improve as an institution. His success in this area can be attributed to his laser-like focus on students-first. This fundamental and foundational leadership philosophy demands consistent innovative and entrepreneurial thinking and action to help students take the next step to reach the next milestone in their personal, academic, career, and life journey. When such a deep-rooted operational principle is at the heart of everything Dr. Zaragoza does as a college president, tired old clichés like “thinking outside the box” give way to real and meaningful action on a regular basis. This has become a part of the college’s DNA, so that not only the president and his management team become more attuned to this principle, but faculty feel they have the support to unleash more of their own creative innovation in the classroom, and all to the great benefit of students. That is the result of putting students first – it creates a natural and organic and collaborative environment of innovation and entrepreneurship that constantly strives for ever-greater student success.

Examples are plentiful. Only a few are highlighted here.

- Workforce “One Stops” on campus, in collaboration with Workforce Connections, help students with the resources necessary to translate their academic success into success in the workforce – it helps them get to work.
- Instituting Career Pathways helps students focus earlier in their college experience by helping them “begin with the end in mind.”
- Improved and increased counseling services to help students stay on and, when necessary, get back on, track, helps individual students as well as the institution improve important metrics such as increasing graduation rates and decreasing the time it takes to reach graduation.
- A highly collaborative relationship with CCSD leadership is resulting in a renewed emphasis on dual enrollment and creating college academies in local high schools, helping to foster a more wide-spread college-going culture while preparing students to succeed at college-level academic work and move more quickly into the workforce.
- Another intensively collaborative partnership with HAAS Automation manufacturing company, the City of Henderson, CCSD, Workforce Connections and others will help train qualified workers in high-growth, high-demand and high-wage occupations in machining, additive manufacturing, robotics, Computer Numerical Control (CNC) operations, and advanced manufacturing. The Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance (LVGEA) projects that over 10,000 jobs will be created in the region, and CSN will be at the center of these efforts.
- This kind of innovative and entrepreneurial activity is supported by a faculty that itself recognizes the need for continuous growth and improvement, and so, after a year of planning and collaborating with CSN Faculty, the CSN Leadership Academy was launched. This innovative program helps to build a common framework throughout the college for values-based decision-making that aligns to the CSN Strategic Plan.
- In 2019, CSN successfully executed the first customized Cybersecurity “Train the Trainer” Professional Development Training Program for Mexican instructors from the state of Tamaulipas. As a result, CSN is now in dialogue with the ANUT from Mexico (Asociacion Nacional de Universidades Tecnologicas) to develop more professional development programs for Mexican Technical Instructors. ANUT is the Mexican equivalent to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), so this venture would make CSN a major provider of international training for the Mexican Technical Higher Education system. As part of the initial

training program, ANUT sent a delegation to CSN to assess its instructional capabilities which led to a ceremonial memorandum of understanding pledging to pursue future collaborative training opportunities with CSN. If successful, CSN could generate in excess of \$100,000 in profit annually from these training programs.

- And lest one thinks it's all work and no play, Dr. Zaragoza was the driving force behind the creation of *La Plata* - an on-campus Mariachi band that in its first-year became an award-winning addition to the campus, not only enhancing cultural awareness, but also providing many students an opportunity for creative expression and learning important technical and production skills that can prepare them for a future in the entertainment industry.

#### E. Campus environment and shared governance

As outlined previously, Dr. Zaragoza enjoys a high level of support on campus and throughout the community engendered by his expertise, experience, and naturally collaborative, engaging, and genuine leadership style. His clear vision and enthusiastic engagement have created renewed focus and inspiration within the CSN campus environment. He believes in an operating model of continuous improvement--The window of opportunity for a new leader of any organization is real and can be relatively short. Dr. Zaragoza is fully aware of this reality and has done much to leverage his personal leadership style to successfully improve the campus environment.

In addition to the CSN Leadership Academy previously mentioned, Dr. Zaragoza has worked closely with Faculty Senate leadership to establish a better working relationship. Together, they have instituted bi-weekly Faculty Senate Leadership meetings. By providing the Faculty Senate with an opportunity to engage any of the CSN administrators on an as-needed basis and to clarify any communications or information gaps, these meetings have fostered better communication and enhanced shared governance. In addition, he has advanced the multi-campus shared governance model, successfully placing three campus Vice Presidents and directing them to hold campus-specific informational sessions. Based on Dr. Zaragoza's direction these Vice Presidents have appointed Campus Advisory Committees. Dr. Zaragoza regularly attends a wide variety of student activities and events which allows him to personally engage with individual students, as well as communicate and personify his students-first focus. He has worked to improve campus and college communication through various outlets and, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, increased and improved communication with the college community.

### **Part 3: Institutional Relations to External Communities**

Topics addressed:

- F. Collaboration
- G. Regent strategic decisions
- H. Community partnerships and connections

Collaboration is one of Dr. Zaragoza's strengths. His primary mission at CSN is to advance the goals of student success through collaboration with other NSHE institutions and external organizations. He demonstrates significant engagement with both NSHE member institutions and external communities to deepen the relationship with CSN and the greater Las Vegas/Nevada community.

Dr. Zaragoza led the facilitation of access to the CSN Starfish Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. This collaboration leveraged other NSHE institutions and benefitted them through improved pricing and product.

He also collaborated with UNLV and NSHE on the NSHE Diversity Summit, the CSN Hispanic Serving Institution Symposium, and led the collaboration to consolidate police services in southern NSHE institutions. His other efforts include the Health and Science Building, the Prison Employment Program, Immigration Services, and the CSN Dual Enrollment Expansion.

Dr. Zaragoza has been instrumental in implementing several strategies at CSN. His passion is to achieve student completion goals, including through the Guided Pathways for Student Success. His Learning Commons model is a centralized space, creating a one-stop lab for tutoring and technical assistance. Dr. Zaragoza has raised the bar for CSN, having been engaged in, and reaching out to various Nevada legislators, Chambers of Commerce, banks, economic development agencies, and others in the Southern Nevada business community. He has paved a new way for other strategic partners that CSN did not enjoy previously, including his appointments to the Workforce Connections and LVGEA boards. Through his relationships with Workforce Connections, he is establishing a One Stop Center at each of the three CSN campuses, giving students unprecedented access to employment opportunities.

Dr. Zaragoza has gone out of his way to communicate with the business community. He regularly engages with leadership at the Vegas Chamber, Urban and Latin Chambers of Commerce, and many more. His involvement and collaboration with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored people (NAACP) demonstrates his exemplary commitment to at-risk populations.

Dr. Zaragoza is very visible in the community. He is truly the “face” of CSN and is very well-known and widely respected in the community.

#### **Part 4: Achievement of Strategic Goals**

Prior to Dr. Zaragoza becoming president, CSN faced a multitude of challenges that included: an Office of Education Audit over financial aid procedures, mid-cycle accreditation review, a legislative session with a major CSN project lacking a required \$6 million match, a stalled strategic plan, stalled Nevada Faculty Alliance (NFA) negotiations, and major resistance to NSHE’s police consolidation proposal. Since becoming the President of CSN, Dr. Zaragoza has instituted various resolutions to these issues. Below is an itemized list of the institutional benchmarks achieved at CSN with Dr. Zaragoza’s leadership.

In the areas of *accreditation and graduation*, a Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) mid-cycle accreditation occurred in October 2018, including the introduction of the students-first motto, “Graduate, Complete, Transfer and Prosper.” Based on empirical data, CSN is projected to achieve the Board of Regents’ approved graduation goal of 17.5% by 2025. CSN has successfully reached identified, incremental, and annual graduation goals to strategically track and successfully predict progress towards the 2025 goal.

In the area of *financial aid*, the Office of Postsecondary Education Identification (OPE-ID) financial aid audit was completed. Dr. Zaragoza effectively engaged the Department of Education Office of Inspector General (DOE-OIG) team, after which time it was determined that CSN was in full compliance of federal verification procedures, and no corrective action was needed.

In the area of *CSN’s Lumina and Complete College America Grant*, CSN was designated as the institution to lead the Metro Momentum Pathways region initiative that provides a technical assistance grant valued at over \$500,000. With this designation, strategies such as the “15 to Finish” and others will be expanded to better serve CSN’s student population.

In the area of *CSN's Achieving the Dream College of Distinction*, CSN was identified as one of the eleven Leader Colleges of Distinction for its work on improving student success and reducing the student achievement gap.

In the area of the *legislation*, Dr. Zaragoza's administration worked with NSHE to brief legislators, college stakeholders, and to advocate for CSN. Budget requests included a new \$70 Million Health and Science facility, Nevada Promise, and a Prisoners Employment Project for \$334,000.

In the area of *police department consolidation*, under his leadership, Dr. Zaragoza's administration worked with NSHE, UNLV, and Nevada State College (NSC) to gain support for the Southern Command Consolidation proposal. This effort culminated in the completion of the initial phase of the consolidation endeavor that is already paying dividends for all Southern Nevada NSHE institutions and our students.

*CSN's strategic plan* will be fully aligned with and promote the five NSHE Strategic Goals as approved by the Board of Regents in January 2018. A series of nine (9) community forums was held to validate the proposed CSN strategic plan with over 300 participants. The next phase will be a final "draft" version of the plan vetted by internal and external stakeholders over summer 2020 and finalized with faculty input in Spring 2021. This will then be presented to the Regents during the fall board meeting cycle.

With Dr. Zaragoza's leadership in the area of *multi-campus migration*, CSN migration from a multi-campus, unitary management model, to a multi-campus district model, with central services, semi-autonomous campuses, and appropriate administration was proposed and approved by the Board of Regents. Implementation is being achieved through a phased approach. CSN is now positioned to migrate into a three-campus system that aligns with municipal jurisdictional boundaries at North Las Vegas, Henderson, and Las Vegas.

In the area of *dual-enrollment*, Dr. Zaragoza's administrative team developed a white paper to transform the dual enrollment programs of CSN Early Colleges, CSN-Career Technical Education (CTE) Academies, and Stacked Certificate pathways for high school students. Chancellor Reilly and CCSD Superintendent Jara developed a Memorandum Of Agreement that provides the framework for this expansion.

## **Part 5: Strengths, opportunities**

### Strengths

Several of Dr. Zaragoza's strengths emerged as the Committee collected information from all stakeholders who participated and contributed to this very thorough process.

#### 1. Fundamental Productivity

In accordance with NSHE's performance-oriented system for student success, Dr. Federico Zaragoza has successfully exhibited fundamental productivity in graduation rates, total number of degrees, certificates awarded, and year-to-year persistence rates. Based on Dr. Zaragoza's Periodic Evaluation, the metrics significantly support student success at the CSN. President Zaragoza has advocated and integrated a student's first initiative of "Graduate, Complete, Transfer and Prosper." In doing so, CSN was designated as one of only 11 National Leader Colleges of Distinction by the prestigious Achieving the Dream Organization.

## 2. Leadership

President Zaragoza is collaborative, authentic and approachable. He is innovative, inclusive and an effective communicator. In a short time he has established meaningful partnerships with the business community and multiple organizations within the workforce development system in which he has a very strong background and expertise.

## 3. Campus environment

Dr. Zaragoza is dedicated to improving the campus environment for faculty, staff, and students, and strives to make them a real part of that effort and vision.

## 4. Students-first

His “student-first” vision resonates and is evidenced by his actions. Improvements to the CTE pathways with CCSD are one example of early replication of best practices he successfully implemented in San Antonio, Texas. Other examples he is currently working on are the Integrated Basic Education Skills and Training (IBEST) model and Centers of Excellence. It is common to see President Zaragoza interacting one-on-one with students and modeling “student-first” expectations for the CSN team.

## 5. Inclusive

Inclusivity is something that was mentioned over and over by all that were interviewed. His efforts across campus went beyond students, to repair and improve relationships with the faculty and administrative staff. He is caring and compassionate, as well as willing to make the hard decisions needed to implement necessary change to improve the overall culture of the institution. The results of the Open Forum presented clear evidence of the progress made under his leadership.

## 6. Diversity

President Zaragoza has made significant improvement in this area. As a Minority Serving Institution, CSN has a purposeful plan in action to ensure that all students feel welcome, valued and celebrated on campus. There is also a plan and progress being made to ensure that CSN faculty and staff mirror the demographics of the student body. The new Mariachi Band is one example of the innovative ways diversity is being better celebrated on campus.

## 7. Innovation

Without question, the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship is thriving within the college. This is a result of Dr. Zaragoza’s infectious enthusiasm, engagement, and collaboration, but most of all, his intentional and increasingly widely-shared, guiding “students first” principle. When you truly and purposefully put students first, everything else naturally aligns, and innovation and entrepreneurship flourish and become welcome imperatives. This was a reality echoed throughout the interviews conducted by the evaluation committee and re-ignited and fueled by Dr. Zaragoza.

## Opportunities

As Dr. Zaragoza noted in his self-evaluation, “As President of CSN, I understand the dynamics and complexities of creating high performing organizations.” Some of those “dynamics and complexities” of such a diverse and vibrant organization, such as a college, naturally include differences of opinion on a range of topics.

There are opportunities for Dr. Zaragoza as he maintains momentum and moves the college forward. Improving in the areas noted below will help him better achieve his students-first vision, enhance the



great work he is doing and wants to get done, and solidify his collaborative, enthusiastic, and trusted leadership of CSN on campus and throughout the community.

The Committee has complete confidence that these areas of opportunity will be addressed by Dr. Zaragoza, especially in light of his leadership effectiveness and wide-spread support on campus. Throughout the stakeholder interviews there was much optimism expressed and a high level of support from the campus community. There is a genuine feeling the college is headed in a new and right direction, and that Dr. Zaragoza, although at the helm for just a short time, has laid a strong foundation of integrity, trust, support, and principle-based leadership; that students-first is the right “north star”; and that if he continues to lead, the campus and the community will follow.

#### 1. Direct reports

President Zaragoza has too many direct reports. This reduces his bandwidth considerably and keeps him from being even more effective. At times this seems to cause inconsistency in his follow-up with external commitments and threatens to damage his credibility with community partners. It was mentioned multiple times that he would greatly benefit from a Chief of Staff that could relieve him from managerial duties so he can more effectively remain engaged at a strategic level. Some of these comments were tied to shared governance and “trusting” others to do their jobs-to be the professionals they are. Shared governance is, after all, shared management.

#### 2. Faculty

While under his leadership there has already been significant improvement of the dynamics between faculty and administrative staff, some expressed a desire for him to “lead more and manage less”; to “put the right people on the bus and then drive and let them focus on keeping the bus running”; or simply “you do your job and trust them to do theirs.” There is an opportunity for President Zaragoza to continue to improve the channels of communication with faculty. He has already demonstrated consistency in sharing “what” he is doing, faculty would benefit from hearing more about the “why” (when possible). This report considered the results of the CSN faculty survey which was conducted to assist in his evaluation. It contained information that was very useful to the committee.

#### 3. Communication

Dr. Zaragoza is a wonderful and capable communicator with a great command of the information on all things CSN; however, many noted that he could improve at “telling the story” in a more meaningful and memorable way by simplifying the message. This should be easily improved by Dr. Zaragoza as he helps others more fully embrace his student-first focus by connecting the “facts and figures” to “real-life stories” of student achievements and successes.

#### 4. Leadership and decision-making

Many of those who are highly supportive of Dr. Zaragoza and all of his entrepreneurial and innovative work wish that he would move quicker, fail faster, and take more risks. As ironic and perhaps counter-intuitive as this may seem, it is perhaps best epitomized by one interviewee who, after readily acknowledging Dr. Zaragoza’s wide-spread support on and off-campus, said, “we all want him to be successful and to be the kind of President and leader we want and need him to be.” This sentiment may perhaps best be captured by the oft-quoted political advice attributed to Abraham Lincoln: “You can please some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can’t please all of the people all of the time. Act accordingly.” Many expressed encouragements for Dr. Zaragoza to continue to “step up and dig in; make the tough decisions in a thoughtful and informed way....and then move on.”

#### 5. Local Elected Officials

While President Zaragoza has done a great job building relationships with many elected officials from the state and local level, he has the opportunity to continue to broaden his reach to the NSHE Board of Regents, members of the Clark County Commission and City Councils from Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Henderson and Boulder City. Again, he is still relatively new to Southern Nevada and with time, he should be able to better familiarize himself with the “local politics” and build the necessary relationships with all those who are elected to represent those students who live in these jurisdictions and attend CSN.

#### **Conclusion**

The Committee unanimously believes that President Zaragoza is deeply committed to the success of CSN, it’s students, faculty and administrative staff. He is passionate about the current work, future plans and tirelessly and effectively advocates in the community for the interests of CSN. He has formed effective relationships with key donors, is credited with raising CSN’s profile in a positive way throughout the community, and has achieved early success with elevating the college’s focus on workforce development that matches the local needs of businesses.

The community stakeholders interviewed expressed that Southern Nevada is fortunate to have President Zaragoza leading CSN. They believed that he not only deserves the opportunity to bring to fruition all the initiatives he has started for the institution, but that he also deserves the full support of the NSHE Board of Regents, Chancellor Reilly and the community as a whole, as he does so.

The Committee unanimously approves of President Zaragoza’s performance at CSN, and we are highly optimistic of future improvements under his leadership.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee on this 6th of May, 2020.

Jaime Cruz  
Committee Chair