The following statement is attributed to California State University Interim Chancellor Jolene Koester:

The California State University System (CSU) has a responsibility to be transparent and a good partner with media, including the Los Angeles Times. We believe the Los Angeles Times has consistently illustrated its responsibility to the public to maintain the highest level of journalistic integrity and ethics. We value our relationship with the paper.

Similar to the Los Angeles Times, we respect the privacy of our employees. As a general rule, the CSU does not release records or discuss allegations brought by or against CSU employees unless the allegation is both substantial and there is reasonable cause to believe it is substantiated or well-founded. This serves to protect the privacy of those who raise issues of concern, and to mitigate against unjustified reputational harm that often results from public attention to reports that are treated as fact although they are not well-founded.

Today we are concerned by the prospect that the Los Angeles Times may publicize unverified and unsubstantiated reports against an individual, California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) President Framroze (Fram) Virjee, which could cause irreparable reputational damage to him.

In response to the Los Angeles Times request, the CSU has released unverified and unsubstantiated “Responsible Employee” reports related to President Virjee, accompanied by contextual explanations. It is important to state that the CSUF Title IX officer evaluated these specific reports and based upon the information provided, did not find any information that violated CSU policy or Title IX, or warranted investigation under university policy. It is also the CSU’s understanding, that none of the individuals identified as possible complainants filed a complaint or pursued the matter in any way. Lastly, it is important to note that the documents released to the Los Angeles Times were not shared with President Virjee at the time for review or comment.

For these reasons and based on the CSU’s transparency and willingness to share context of these reports, we hope and expect that the paper would not publicize unverified reports, including those from individuals who were not present, and we respectfully request that should the paper choose to print such reports, any reporting is done in a fair and accurate manner that avoids misleading narratives that may cause both professional and personal reputational damage to President Virjee.

To be clear, there have been no substantiated allegations of Title IX violations or other misconduct against President Virjee during his tenure at CSUF, or when he served as the executive vice chancellor and general counsel of the CSU. President Virjee has a 30-year plus legal career during which he has provided hundreds of professional development and training programs regarding Title IX and/or sexual harassment.
As a university leader, President Virjee has excelled. Under his leadership, CSUF has thrived, receiving national attention for its work on graduation rates, in promoting diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice, and in student success. During his tenure as president, CSUF has conferred more bachelor’s degrees on women and Hispanic students than any other university in the country. Graduation rates for both first-year and transfer students have reached unprecedented heights. Based on our experience and the information known to us, President Virjee has conducted himself with integrity, and I have confidence in his leadership.

The CSU is more than a half a million people strong. We believe in accountability, collaboration and transformation for the CSU, our trustees, university leadership, faculty and staff. We believe in their unwavering dedication to serve our students and the communities across our great state. Collectively, we understand the importance of, and commit to, improving our Title IX and other antidiscrimination practices and processes systemwide, including fortifying our cultures of care and compliance -- and we are working diligently to do just that.

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