

# Senate FORUM

Volume XXVII, Number 3, Spring 2012

A publication of the Academic Senate, California State University, Fullerton

## An interview with Willie Hagan

*The outgoing Interim President talks CSUF culture and challenges facing his successor*

**What do you think will be the biggest challenges for the new President as she begins her time at CSUF?**

The budget, of course, because it impacts so many things you want to do now and in the future. How can we still provide access? How do you plan in an environment with the potential for a \$15 million budget cut for our campus — but we won't know until halfway through the year whether we have to take the cut? And look at what is happening in California to the perception of higher education, which is changing and reducing support. It's not a stable situation, but we still need to be able to plan in the face of diminishing support. Another challenge facing the new president is learning Fullerton's culture, which is different from where she is now.

**What do you think the Fullerton culture is?**

It's a culture with lots of collaboration and an expectation of shared governance. It may not be as strong as we think it is, but we are still way ahead of other campuses. There is discussion among administration and faculty. Another challenge President Garcia faces is building leadership teams. We have had acting vice-presidents for several years and are bringing in new people now. Three of the top positions will be filled with new [leaders]. No matter how talented people are, it is hard enough with one new person. If it were just a new provost, that [addition] would have an impact. And if we have a new president at the same time, that's a real change.

**Is the provost position new here at Fullerton?**

Well really it's mostly a name change. I wanted to re-name that position, which is Vice President of Academic Affairs, and spoke to President Garcia to be sure it would be appropriate. It's a new policy to make clear that, from my perspective, the provost is deemed to be second to the president, and it makes a statement about the primacy of the academic side of the university. The job remains the same, but if the president is not available, this person will be in charge.



**What other changes have you made?**

I'm here less than six months, so it's not so much a matter of policies but issues. One policy is the no-smoking policy, which I'm going to make a presidential directive. Another issue I thought we needed to address was online education. Here most of the online courses are on the state side, not the continuing education side. Most other

SENATE FORUM PRESENTS  
**CSUF Presidents Speak**

schools do it the other way, but it's somewhat political and there are reasons for doing whatever an individual campus does. We don't have a strategic plan for online education at CSUF. Where do we want to go? I'm not going to solve everything so if I initiate a strategic plan, that would be helpful. My naiveté was such that I thought we would get it both launched and completed before I left. Now I think we may be lucky to get it launched.

**Sounds as though there were unexpected issues. What else have you encountered that was unexpected?**

Well, there are always issues about the identity of committee members and the charge given to that committee. I'm happy we're going to look at the matter extensively. How will we apply online education at Fullerton? Cal State Online is important, but we still need our own programs. Reviewing the International Ed program also was important.

**Why?**

I'm looking at it as a CFO. We have one of the lowest percentages of international students in the system. We are at 3 percent, and the average is more like 5-6 percent. More international students would bring in several million more dollars. We have lots of programs, but some exist only on paper and it's not clear the good programs are coordinated. Are we doing the best we could in terms of organization? It's not for me to express my opinion — I'm just asking the question. We want to be sure it's worth looking at. I put together a list of issues before President Garcia was identified and then went over it with her so she knew what I intended. Depending on the results of the review there might be some organizational changes that can make people unhappy, so I told her to let me do it — I'm leaving. I had read books on these kinds of transitions. This was a new role.

**What else surprised you?**

The time commitment. I knew there were lots of time commitments; as VP I had to go to many events. Now there are three requests for every hour in the day. I'm trying to balance it. It's not just the workload but that you are also always on and your family is always on. I get into an elevator and the other person already knows who I am. So now I initiate conversations and they are delightful. Like the time I got to the senate early, and asked the young lady who was setting up what she was doing and we had a great conversation. I could give her helpful advice. You know, you're representing the University. It's a good place to work because it's a friendly place to work.

**Do you think that friendliness is one of our strengths?**

The faculty and staff are our greatest strengths. The university's accomplishments don't come from the administration. We bring together resources for ideas that stem from our faculty. Assessment has value, but we have lots of other evidence that our students are having great learning outcomes.


**Do we have weaknesses?**

One of our weaknesses is leadership. We have had too many vacancies for too long. People are doing the best they can but that can only work for the short term. We need better strategic planning. We plan and have good outcomes, but do we really sit down and identify goals and set action items? Somebody once said, "If you don't plan well, plan often." We have been planning often. But we do have good outcomes.

**What can the faculty do to help President Garcia?**

Well, this is not quite a wedding but it is a new relationship. Both sides are equally curious and anxious. Are we as nimble as we need to be? Being nimble means re-examining the process if circumstances change. We can get caught up in sticking to how we have done things. She will bring change and there needs to be a willingness to engage in ideas and to evaluate. She has explained how she will hold people accountable and that's fine now that we know. It's different, but we need to adapt and be open. She wouldn't have applied if she hadn't wanted to be here. People need to make the friendliness obvious. It would work well to go out of our way. She will get all the standard events; she's very engaging. But she needs to be invited to participate in other different events. She will want to do things, but the budget will constrain her.

**What can we do?**

There will be even more pressure on faculty now to do more with less. People will be asked to be more innovative. It would be interesting to have a task force on innovation and creativity that could come up with new ways of doing things. We will have to be more innovative. Resources will not drop dramatically, but we have to adjust. One possibility is system-wide coordination of activities. For example, at Bakersfield they put up a new building every ten years. We could run the designing and construction because we do those things. We do information security and Risk Management with Dominguez Hills. That campus had a vacancy in that area but did not fill it, and we stepped up and took care of it for them. What we really need to do as part of being innovative is to bring together really solid data, consistently, and present it to the Academic Senate. This is how we can solve working with limited resources. 

# An interview with Millie Garcia

*The incoming CSUF President discusses strategic plans, campus engagement and strategies to get to know Cal State Fullerton's students, faculty and staff*

**President Garcia, how would you prefer the faculty address you?**

My name is Millie. In official forums I am President Garcia, but when, for example, we are sitting here, I'm Millie.

**What are some of the highlights of your journey to becoming president here at CSUF?**

Well, I started out as a teacher at a Catholic high school in Westchester County, New York. So I think of myself as faculty first. I like administration but love research, and I try to stay on research teams of practicing scholars. As an associate director of research I worked at helping faculty get grants. A good faculty member has to do research to bring knowledge back into the classroom.

**It sounds as though you value teaching and research but also the service component that we think is important.**



Absolutely. That is part of why I wanted to come here.

**What ideas that you implemented at Dominguez Hills might you think about bringing to Fullerton?**

I want to be careful because I need to find out who you are first. Fullerton is a different institution. The question is: What initiatives will strengthen the university? Undergrad student and faculty research is essential. The more they do this, the more they learn and stay and go on to do wonderful things. I know that's important here as well.

**Could you say more about your thoughts about faculty/student research collaborations?**

I know the institution is committed to students. Learning is preeminent. The beauty is bringing knowledge to the students so they fall in love with the discipline, just as you did. Then they will want to get into it deeper, and through research they will see your passion. You help them and model that passion for them, and then they go out and give papers.

**So intramural grants are important?**

Intramural grants are absolutely essential. We need to raise money so students can get scholarships, and I am committed to this. We can look at pure research but research also can focus on teaching

SENATE FORUM PRESENTS  
**CSUF Presidents Speak**

**GARCIA** *continued*

---

or the community. We hire faculty based on the disciplines we need to strengthen, and we have to honor that, but we must look at departments holistically. Faculty members bring different interests.

**We know you are involved with Cal State Online. So what are your views about the place or roles of online instruction and Cal State Online at CSUF?**

Online is an option in learning. There are different ways of learning. High quality and accountability are essential. A strategic plan helps students understand how it works. It's not about just putting up a syllabus and having students read. Faculty need to have the opportunity to experiment.

**Is there a way to evaluate online learning?**

There are studies that show that students who go through classes online are learning as much or more, but it depends on quality, just as it does in regular courses. All ways of learning must be high quality, whether online, in-class or hybrid.

**How about Cal State Online?**

Cal State Online will supply the infrastructure. The curriculum belongs to the faculty. Cal State Online provides all the support services like animation. There is so much you can do, and the students know that better than we do.

**On a slightly different topic, how might you define collegiality in the context of a large university?**

Collegiality is a dynamic partnership that includes all the constituencies to meet the mission, goals and strategic plan to make the institution as excellent as possible.

We have a great Academic Senate and a great faculty, but everyone helps students get their education, from maintenance crews to advisors to financial aid to people who process paychecks. We need to work together to see how the systems support each other.

**Well, let's say a search committee has one view and you another. How would you handle that?**

That would depend on the position. Faculty positions are faculty decisions, and I wouldn't expect to get involved. If the position was for

a Vice President, I would listen to the committee's recommendations and then explain my thinking as to why I think it's the right match. The question is: How do we engage in civil and difficult dialogue and open up the conversation?

**What about RTP matters?**

It is very unusual that a president would deny something that has been approved all along the line. Presidents get involved only in shaky cases, and that is the way it is everywhere I have been.

**How can Student Affairs and Academic Affairs partner to enhance student success?**

I am in favor of high-impact practices, one of which is the research we already talked about. But learning communities are also important, particularly for students who are underserved or underprepared. We know that many students learn better in a cohort because they are traveling together and working together. We also know that students learn a lot outside the classroom. How do we ensure they have those different experiences?

**Do you have any ideas how to make that happen?**

I'm not here yet. It may be happening here already. It includes everything from the first year experience to capstone courses, which should connect with community service. Student affairs plays an important role in finding appropriate internships. Then how do we capture the data and use that evidence to see how our students are doing and ensure that our collaboration makes these practices work?

**What do you see as the connection between SFR and academic quality?**

As you look at the research there is nothing conclusive. We need to look comprehensively at how we do this. Some faculty members want and love to teach large classes and others don't. We have to look holistically to see how the department is doing.

**It sounds like you like departments and colleges to have some autonomy.**

Absolutely! You've started a strategic plan and have Student Learning Outcomes, so the departments, the chairs and the deans need to come together to ensure accountability. Not every department is the same.

SENATE FORUM PRESENTS  
**CSUF Presidents Speak**

**GARCIA** *continued*

**One thing the previous president did was to be very involved in senate meetings.**

My practice has been to attend the senate and meet with the executive committee about once a month. I am the internal president, but I am also the external face. I have to raise money and build friendship communities and ensure people in Orange County know what is happening here.

**What can we do to close the achievement gap?**

Well, in one program I saw faculty work across K-12. The math faculty would work with the school curriculum to be sure everyone understood the kind of math students need when they get to college. And how do we work with parents from underserved low income populations?

There's also a question of how we look at student support services. We have to coordinate and publicize resources so everyone knows where the services are. Advising is critical — especially for first-year students and even more for underserved students. Students supposedly CSU qualified may need help to succeed in math and English, and should use summers so they come in better prepared. If you provide support up front the first two years and get them into a major, they will graduate.


We need to get faculty to think about internships because students who are first generation and underserved need to see the connection between what they are learning and life afterwards.

**How do you feel about assigned time for research?**

Again, it comes back to the needs of the department. Not that I don't want people to have sabbaticals, but we need to see what department needs are. The University is a comprehensive whole, and as a whole we need to make sure we're meeting the mission, vision and strategic plan.

**People are interested to meet you.**

I would like to meet as many faculty, staff and students as I possibly can. Not just the leaders but others. I need to figure out how to meet faculty and staff who are not as engaged.

There's a reason people came here. How do we re-engage them and move the institution forward? So I go to the colleges once a year and meet with the dean, and then with the chairs, and then I hold an open forum. Another thing I do is have informal meetings with faculty — no more than 15 — because I want to get engaged in conversation, and the last 10 minutes they can ask any question they want. I also do walk-arounds. Same thing with staff. And finally I want to meet the students, maybe through pizza meetings but other times and places as well. 

## Senate FORUM

The Senate Forum is a publication of the Academic Senate at California State University, Fullerton.

It is designed to stimulate discussion, debate, and understanding of a variety of important issues that the Senate addresses.

Individuals are encouraged to respond to the materials contained in the Senate Forum or to submit their own contributions.

### CO-EDITORS

**Emily Bonney**  
AND  
**Emily Erickson**

### EDITORIAL BOARD

**John W. Bedell**  
Sociology

**Emily Bonney**  
Liberal Studies

**Emily Erickson**  
Mass Communications

**Kristi Kanel**  
Human Services

**David Kelman**  
English & Comparative Literature

# An interview with Don Shields

*CSUF's second president (1971-1980) sheds light on the history of Cal State Fullerton*

## How did you come to be on the faculty at CSUF?

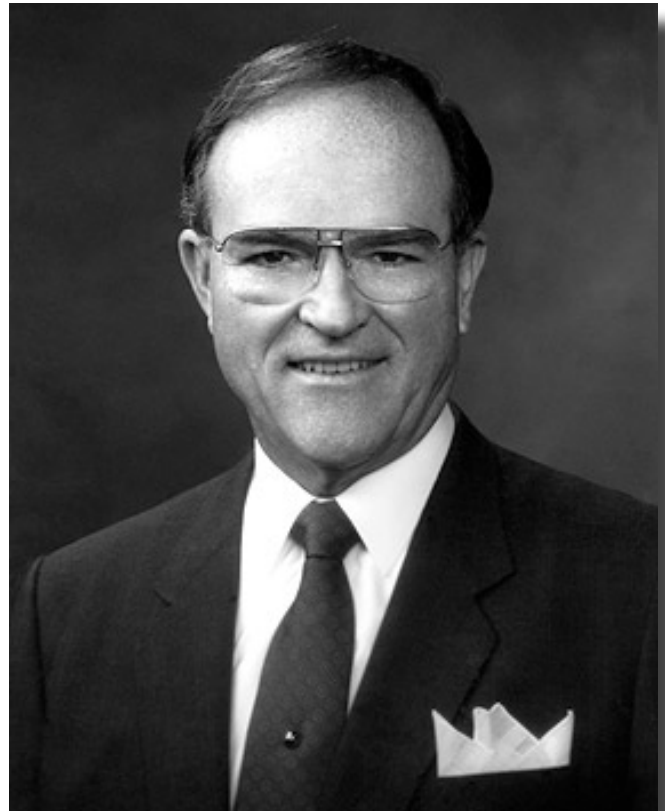
Well it was a combination of things, but principally the vision of Bill Langsdorf and Miles McCarthy. I have enjoyed doing new things all my life. I had opportunities to attend Stanford and Pomona with fellowships but I also had the opportunity to go to UCR, which was a new campus that was going to be the Williams and Swarthmore of the UC system. It had top faculty and an emphasis on undergraduate research. Conway Pierce was my mentor and his best friend was Miles McCarthy. So when I finished at UCLA I discovered a passion for helping students with personal development and looked for a place with a good mix of teaching, research and service. Pierce said, "You know, Langsdorf and McCarthy are trying to do some interesting things at Fullerton — a new paradigm."

**Many of the current Fullerton family never had the pleasure of knowing either founding president William Langsdorf or your successor, another of the founding figures, Miles McCarthy. What counsel do you think they would have for CSUF at this time of transition and budget challenge?**

Focus like a laser on the most important things — teaching and the learning environment and factors that make those happen. Both were very solid in those ways and recognized the importance of good administration.

The problems are with higher education nationally and in California. The master plan was critical to me and to three of my kids. The crafters of the master plan created a real master. I thought the whole system was very exciting and productive for the state. Seems to me it has been in jeopardy for quite awhile. No one is advocating for the ideas that were at the heart of that plan the way Sproul did when UC Berkeley was threatened in the 1930s. There are effective leaders, but I don't see anyone doing that bully pulpit stuff.

I also believe in collegial governance. I think I practiced it — I sure as hell tried to practice it. Fortunately we had faculty statesmen like Jack [Bedell], Joan Greenwood, Lee Bellott, Herb Rutemiller, Andy Foster, Bob Feldman — I didn't always agree with them and they didn't always agree with me, but they were committed to the place and we worked things out.



At the tender age of 34, L. Donald Shields became CSUF's second president. He served in that position for the next decade.

The faculty need to be really engaged. The Academic Senate always has been pivotal in trying to establish and maintain excellence at this university but you also need the cooperation of the administration.

**You were unusually young to be making the transition to president. Do you think it worked to your advantage?**

I had an interesting relationship with Glen Dumke. I was a 34-year old president. I pushed the envelope often to press my ambitions for the system. Glen had great values and standards. He wanted students to be liberally educated. I was a needle. I have sure appreciated him since.

Dumke, Sproull and Kerr were crucial. They fought for the budget. There

SENATE FORUM PRESENTS  
***CSUF Presidents Speak***

**SHIELDS** *continued*

---

were statesmen in the legislature too — on both sides of the aisle — but they came together. This isn't the 8<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world because nothing happened. This educational system was a crucial part. But we worked with them. They turned out to be advocates for the public to the higher ed system.

I admit to being biased but I think the higher ed system in this state is the crown jewel. I don't think there is enough understanding in the public as to how important this is to their futures, their children's futures, and their grandchildren's futures. I just don't see the kinds of statesmen we used to see in education. I think it's going to take determined and informed advocacy on the part of the faculty in the UC and CSU.

**What were the key factors in your decision to move from the faculty to the administration?**

I have always been interested in governance and education. Not as unusual as it might seem for a chemist to make the transition, but I probably wouldn't be selected now to be a vice president. In those days the president would talk to some other administrator and say, "Who should we hire?" I was having a great time teaching and doing some significant research, and I had just been elected chair of Faculty Council. Bill Langsdorf asked me to be a Vice President. We had student unrest, and soon after I became acting President. I always wanted to make a difference. I wasn't sure I wanted to be president of the University, but after talking with Miles and some other people, I decided to do it. Youth was not an issue with me. When I went to the final interview — we had had some unrest and it didn't blow up chiefly because of faculty leadership — I had some real support from some important people.

This budget situation is severe, and if you look at the trends for support of these two systems over the years, it's absolutely obscene that in 2012 the prisons will get 9.5 percent of GF revenue and higher education will only get 5.2 percent. You can't think short-term. You need to think long-term.

When I was on the National Science Board, I had been quite parochial. I knew California but not the national situation. In that role I evaluated perhaps 100 campuses because NSF was making major grants. My bottom line was that there had to be certain key factors — percentage of full-time faculty, percentage of tenure/tenure-track faculty, SFR — I think SFR is very meaningful and there are substantial differences. We talk about access for students — I thought the master plan did that — the question is, access to what? Access to quality faculty, inside and outside the classroom, access to a quality learning environment.

So as I see it here at Fullerton the situation is terrible. We made decisions based on the most important values, but it wasn't as good as it could have been because of budget problems. I felt when I left, because of all our efforts — faculty, students and administration — that we had a good university on its way to being a very good university. I am concerned now about the percentage of tenure/tenure track faculty here because it's hard to get engagement and commitment from even the best part-time people. In the end it all depends on the budget, and we need the chancellor to be an advocate for the students and the faculty. I really have a passion for CSUF to be the best it can be. 