

CSU Bakersfield President Horace Mitchell to Retire

I have decided to retire at the end of the 2017-18 academic year, effective June 30. While I have been contemplating this decision for some time, there are no particular precipitating circumstances that have led me to make this decision now. One of my former colleagues once said, “Being a university president is an “infinity” job. At any point in time, there are always many more things to be accomplished.” I agree with that statement. The job of being president of CSU Bakersfield will never end. However; I am now prepared to pass the torch of leadership to my immediate successor. I say “immediate successor” because there will be several other CSU Bakersfield presidents over the next one hundred years, each of whom must lead the university during his or her time of stewardship while also positioning the university for the future beyond their tenure.

For me, this feels like the right time to retire. My always supportive wife, Barbara, has been clear that I should retire only when I am ready to do so. She has been a retired educator, or “semi-retired” as she says, for

several years. She notes that she cannot fully retire until I retire due to her ongoing First Lady responsibilities. While she has left this decision entirely up to me, I know that she, too, is ready to retire.

I have been president about twice as long as the average tenure of American university presidents. In addition, June 30, 2018 will mark the end of my fifty-year full-time career in higher education at four great universities: Washington University in St. Louis (my alma mater); UC Irvine; UC Berkeley; and CSU Bakersfield. More importantly, I believe we have made significant progress toward realization of our vision, which is always aspirational: extending the excellence and diversity of our faculty and academic programs; enhancing the quality of the student experience; and strengthening our community engagement.

It has been my great honor and privilege to serve with you, our outstanding faculty, staff, and administrators, in serving our students and community over the past thirteen years, and I have enjoyed doing so. We have been dedicated to inspiring excellence among our students and transforming their lives.

I have informed Chancellor White of my decision to retire. In the near future, he will provide information to the campus and community on the process and time frame for the recruitment of my successor.

That being said, I will still be here, and fully engaged, throughout the 2017-18 academic year. So, let's continue our important work together in serving our students and community as we address significant issues, challenges, and opportunities that lie ahead and position the university for a remarkable future. Thank you.