



# The California State University

PROGRAM FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN BIOTECHNOLOGY (CSUPERB)

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Susan M. Baxter  
Executive Director

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**Date:** Monday, March 30, 2020

**From:** Soraya M. Coley, President, Cal Poly Pomona, and Chair,  
CSUPERB Presidents' Commission

**To:** CSUPERB Presidents' Commission, CSUPERB Strategic Planning  
Council, CSUPERB Faculty Consensus Group, and CSU Deans of  
Science

**Re:** Retirement of Dr. Susan Baxter as CSUPERB executive director and  
appointment of Dr. Bianca Mothé as interim executive director

As chair of the CSU Program for Education and Research in Biotechnology (CSUPERB) Presidents' Commission, I write to advise you that Dr. Susan Baxter has announced her retirement as CSUPERB's executive director, effective May 1, 2020.

On behalf of the CSU's biotechnology community, I want thank Dr. Baxter for her strategic leadership and service to the CSU. She has been instrumental in building CSUPERB into an impactful, robust, and student-focused biotechnology community. With her excellent leadership, inspiration, and oversight, CSUPERB has emerged as a prominent program within the CSU affinity groups.

In her thirteen years at CSUPERB, Dr. Baxter worked to support collaborative CSU student and faculty research, innovate educational practices, and partner with the life science industry. She built coalitions that brought in \$97 million dollars to support CSU biotechnology research and education from the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine, the Helmsley Charitable Trust, Department of Labor, Department of Commerce, and the National Science Foundation (NSF). Since 2007, CSUPERB participation doubled, bringing together a diverse, interdisciplinary community of students, faculty, and administrators from science, engineering, math, human health, and business. Indeed, over 80 percent of CSUPERB-supported students (2000-2019) continue on in life sciences career paths, accepting biotechnology jobs or entering professional, graduate, or medical school programs after degree completion. We are incredibly grateful for the programmatic advances that Dr. Baxter has led during her service as executive director.

While we will certainly miss Dr. Baxter's leadership, I am pleased to announce that Dr. Bianca Mothé, Professor of Biology at CSU San Marcos, has agreed to serve as interim executive director at CSUPERB. Given her commitment to student success, considerable engagement with CSUPERB as a faculty member, and professional experience in the biotechnology industry, Dr. Mothé is uniquely capable of leading the CSU's biotechnology community through this transition.

Dr. Mothé received her doctoral degree in Molecular and Cellular Pathology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and she conducted postdoctoral work at Epimmune, Inc., a biotechnology company in San Diego. She leads an immunology and virology research program designing novel vaccines for rapidly mutating pathogens and is just completing two terms of service on a standing

National Institutes of Health (NIH) review panel. She is the Principal Investigator for the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) Bridge program at CSU San Marcos and hosts the CIRM Bridges annual meeting. In addition to her CSU San Marcos responsibilities, Dr. Mothé currently serves as director of the Middle Leadership Academy in the CSU Student Success Network.

Dr. Mothé has a strong background working with CSUPERB as well. She joined CSUPERB as a Faculty Consensus Group representative shortly after joining CSU San Marcos in 2003. She was subsequently elected by her peers to serve on the Strategic Planning Council (SPC) for two terms. Over the years, she served as a grant proposal reviewer and as review panel chair for CSUPERB. I have every confidence Dr. Mothé will be able to lead CSUPERB through this transition, in collaboration with SPC Chairs Dr. Katherine McReynolds (CSU Sacramento) and Dr. Paula Fischhaber (CSU Northridge).

CSU Chico President Gayle Hutchinson, a Presidents' Commission member, has agreed to chair the search committee for a new executive director starting this fall. She will work with leaders from the Strategic Planning Council and partners from California's biotechnology industry in this effort.

Please join me in wishing Susan Baxter well in her next endeavors and thanking her for her many contributions. As chair of the CSUPERB Presidents' Commission, I will keep you apprised of our progress during this leadership transition, and I look forward to continuing to work with you to further CSUPERB's success and impact.