

Resolved: That the Sonoma State University Academic Senate sponsor a referendum on the resolution of no confidence in President Judy Sakaki's leadership as outlined in the ballot below.

Resolved: That the SSU Academic Senate forward the results of the referendum to President Sakaki, the California State University Chancellor, the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the California State University, Chair of the State Senate Higher Education Committee, Chair of the State Assembly Higher Education Committee, California State Auditor General, and the Governor of California.

Rationale:

Given the exceptional significance of ongoing questions about the leadership of President Judy Sakaki and the importance of permitting democratic participation of the faculty on matters of such consequence, the Academic Senate of Sonoma State University believes that such a referendum should take place.

Ballot for Referendum

Please vote:

Yes, I agree with the following resolution.

No, I do not agree with the following resolution.

Resolved: We, the faculty of Sonoma State University, express no confidence in President Judy Sakaki's ability to continue as president to serve our students, faculty and staff and to uphold the university's academic mission of teaching and learning.

Rationale:

President Sakaki's lack of active leadership at the university has led to a period of declining enrollments, budget crises, and a precipitous drop in the morale of students, staff, and faculty. These problems are likely to continue, and even be exacerbated, as long as President Sakaki remains in her current position.

- During President Sakaki's tenure, student enrollment has declined from 9408 (Fall 2016) at SSU to 7182 (Fall 2022). Although some other Northern California schools have seen modest enrollment declines, few have been as precipitous as the drop at SSU during a period when the CSU saw an enrollment increase from 478,600 to 485,500 students.
- SSU's budgets have been slashed due to the declining enrollments. In 2021, the SSU Academic Affairs budget faces a \$5.5 million shortfall.
- Morale among faculty and staff has declined dramatically as evidenced by record participation in the early exit program and high rates of attrition among tenure line faculty.

President Sakaki has failed to engage with faculty and faculty governance in a substantive way during her tenure.

- Dr. Sakaki has infrequently attended faculty governance meetings, budget forums, and other campus events. She has abrogated responsibility for shared governance, leaving

much of the work of running the university to the provost, cabinet officers, and the faculty.

- Without meaningful consultation, the Sakaki administration dismantled the Office of Faculty Affairs and moved the Center for Community Engagement to the Office of the President.
- An increasing number of faculty grievances during President Sakaki's tenure have resulted from a lack of clear policy guidance for deans and other administrators.
- When the president has come to faculty governance meetings, she has responded to faculty suggestions and questions with platitudes and deflection to other administrators rather than action-oriented leadership.
- High turnover among administrators illustrates instability at the highest levels of the university. At the same time, faculty complaints and labor grievances against administrators have increased significantly. Failure to assemble a consistent and competent leadership team is, in fact, a failure of leadership.

President Sakaki's handling of allegations involving her husband and her alleged retaliation against the previous provost have undermined enforcement of university policies, damaged the public image of the university, and cost the system financially.

- The university did not transparently address allegations of sexual harassment against President Sakaki's husband (an official volunteer at the university) as it would have another university employee. After the allegations surfaced, the president's husband continued to participate in campus events in ways that made staff and faculty uncomfortable.
- The president did not adequately address the claims that she retaliated against the former provost for alerting the CSU about the above allegations. The lack of communication about this incident further eroded trust in the president and led to negative press coverage just as SSU was recruiting new students.
- Fear of retaliation in the wake of the incident with the former provost has had a chilling effect on campus dialogue about the Sakaki administration and on trust in the Title IX process at SSU.
- The CSU's \$600,000 settlement with the former provost in the retaliation case cost the university system financially (potentially in the form of higher insurance premiums) at a time when the faculty and administrators are being asked to slash academic budgets.

In short, Dr. Judy Sakaki has failed to lead Sonoma State University. The president has overseen a decline of university enrollments and budgets. She has delegated nearly all of her responsibilities to subordinates, and she has not engaged with students, staff, or faculty in meaningful ways to plan for the future of the university.