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Rosser to retire as Cal State L.A. president

By James Figueroa, SGVN
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James Rosser, the longtime president of Cal State L.A. announced Tuesday that he would retire at the end of the school year, ending a 33-year tenure that has included multiple campus expansions, growth of nursing and science programs and a mascot change.

Rosser, 73, made the announcement at a faculty gathering on Tuesday. He will leave on June 30, 2013 as the longest-serving president in the history of the Cal State system.

"Jim has been the voice and advocate for all students for the past three decades," CSU Chancellor Charles B. Reed said in a statement. "In particular, his unwavering commitment to access and achievement of students of color and focus on helping them to realize their dream of a college degree is a hallmark of his tenure."

Reed said Rosser's "laser focus" was on students first. Diversity, retention and graduation rates "will endure as a remarkable legacy of his service to this University and to California," he said in the statement.

The chancellor's office is expected to form a search committee for Rosser's successor in November.

Rosser, a West Covina resident, won't disappear from campus once he steps down, CSULA spokesman Paul Browning said..

"He is woven into the fabric of this university, and that will remain even after his retirement," Browning said. "He also looks forward to spending time with his family."

A health care and microbiology professor who worked previously as a bacteriologist,



James Rosser, a West Covina resident and president of California State University, Los Angeles. (Photo courtesy of Cal State LA)

Rosser emphasized science and technology at Cal State L.A., according to the university. He also served on a Congressional committee and other boards to help set state and federal science policy.

Rosser took office in 1979 and two years later the university made a major change - it adopted the Golden Eagles as its mascot over the Diablos.

Also in the 1980s, the college built its first campus residences, and Rosser helped establish the Los Angeles High School for the Arts on the CSULA campus.

Another high school, the Marc and Eva Stern Math and Science School, opened in 2006.

More recently, Cal State L.A. has struggled through budget cuts that have affected the entire California public school system, sparking student protests and marches on campus in 2011 and

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Rosser was a driving force behind CSULA's Honors College, which opened in fall 2011, catering to students

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with a GPA of 3.5 or higher, officials said.

This year, CSULA will begin offering nursing doctorates as part of a CSU pilot program to encourage more nursing faculty. Under Rosser's leadership, the university's nursing program has grown to become one of the best in the nation, according to U.S. News and World Report rankings.

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