Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science

Press Release
May 1, 2009

Los Angeles-

Dr. Susan Kelly, President of Charles Drew University in South Los Angeles, today announced her intention to resign her position effective May 4. She noted in her letter to the Board of Trustees yesterday that she believed she had achieved the key goals and objectives she had set upon arriving at Charles Drew and that it was time for her to seek another challenge on the East Coast, where her husband has employment and most of their children reside.

She said, "It has been my honor to lead Charles Drew University through, arguably, its most challenging times, and to have put the key elements of its resurgence firmly in place."

In her resignation letter [copy attached], Dr. Kelly thanked the University's Board of Trustees and "all those who are truly committed to CDU's success." She also gave special thanks to Dr. Mervyn Dymally for his support and effort during her term. "I remain deeply committed to the mission of serving the medically underserved and to being a continuing advocate for Charles Drew University. I wish the University well. It deserves nothing less from any of us."

Chair of the Board of Trustees, Los Angeles attorney Bart H. Williams, thanked Dr. Kelly for her service. "We understand Dr. Kelly's desire to be closer to her children and to have some breathing space. During an extraordinarily challenging three-year period of the University's history, Dr. Kelly consistently has worked nearly 80 hour work-weeks. She brought innovative ideas and tremendous energy and dedication to her work. Her tenure is marked by some notable achievements." Williams added that, "Her most visible legacy will be the first new building on campus in 25 years. The Nursing, Research and Education building represents the largest single investment by anyone in the area for a long time. The University also established during her tenure the first new nursing school in California for many years." "I believe Dr. Kelly served with integrity and that she has been an integral part of navigating this very special institution through extraordinarily difficult times. We wish her well in her next challenge."
Los Angeles, California
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April 30, 2009

Dear CDU Board members,

While on vacation in Costa Rica in the last week, I had the time to think deeply about whether the Presidency of Charles Drew University was still the job for me after three long, hard years of 80 hours a week. I also considered whether I was the right leader for CDU at this time. It is not uncommon for organizations that have undergone sustained and major change over some time to need a different type of leader going forward. Change is hard and major change is even harder. Three years is just enough time for a President to install the essential pieces and systems of a new organization and to re-set its trajectory towards a brighter future. After much consideration, I have made the decision to resign the Presidency of Charles Drew University effective May 4, 2009.

It has been my honor to lead Charles Drew University through, arguably, its most challenging times and to have put the key elements of its resurgence and long overdue success firmly in place.

I am very proud of my accomplishments since May 2006. They include:

- Aligning the operations of CDU with its core mission of teaching, research and clinical services that transform the health of underserved communities;
- Aligning those refocused operations with CDU’s structure and systems and a more accountable work culture;
- Constructing the first new building (Research and Nursing) on campus in 25 years – (the largest single investment by anyone in the area for that long) – and its multi-story parking structure, due for completion in 8-9 months;
- Establishing the first new nursing school in California for decades and the only one in the nation focused on reducing health inequities, first students in spring 2010;
- Securing $43 million in CEFA bonds and a letter of credit for that amount from a private bank – the largest ever resource development in the University’s history, November 2007;
- Securing support from the Governor and the legislature for $10 million in Prop 1D construction funds for the new nursing and research building (August 2007), and ensuring the $7 million allocated by NIH finally came to CDU in time;
- Representing directly at the White House and through the national media, Charles Drew University’s position on health workforce shortages as an Important element in the White House Healthcare Reform Initiative, April 2009;
- Creating the first ever cafe service for CDU students and employees, “Food for Thought” is due for completion by June 2009.
- Created and led a successful rebranding initiative (stronger name, new logo, via advertisements, sponsorships, marketing materials, media reports etc.) and improved relations with the local, state and national media.

After all of this achievement – and more – my husband and I have decided to move as soon as we can to the East Coast where most of our children are located and he was a
Presidential Appointee and CEO for some 20 years. This move will allow him to pursue some strong job prospects while giving me some breathing space and the opportunity to consider new career choices at this stage in my life. It will also allow CDU to select a leader who can build on the new foundations that I have played a major part in laying.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to lead this noble institution. I have enjoyed working with everyone at the University, on the Board, and in the community while taking the lead on building the many, new alliances that the University must have if it is to prosper. I thank the Board, my colleagues on the Executive Council, all who are truly committed to CDU's success and particularly, Dr Mervyn Dymally for your support and effort these last three years. As I look forward to my next career challenge, I remain deeply committed to the mission and to being a continuing advocate for Charles Drew University. I wish it only well. It deserves nothing less from any of us.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Kelly, PhD, FAPS