100 DAYS OF LISTENING AND BUILDING TRUST

What I've Heard & What Is Resonating With Our Stakeholders So Far...

- Adela de la Torre
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Building on a Strong Foundation of Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Leading Through Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Finding Common Ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Looking to the Future and How We Will Get Where We Want to Go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Facing Challenges and Seizing Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Strategic Communication: A Key to Our Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>A Social Presidency for Greater Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Current Conversation Supporting Three Key Vision Pillars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Building on a Strong Foundation of Trust

As I listened to SDSU stakeholders, I wanted to know if they understood the significance of SDSU’s unique geographical presence and the importance of exploring new areas in which SDSU is, or could be, a regional and global leader. I asked every group I met with....

What makes SDSU distinct?

Last January when I would become SDSU’s president and the first female to serve in that role, I was overwhelmed with excitement.

The idea that I would have the opportunity to lead this flagship institution with a history of path-breaking innovative work in teaching, research, and community engagement was beyond what I could have imagined.

Looking back at my 35 years in Higher Education, being here with you is more than a dream come true. It is an opportunity for us to re-imagine and create a collective vision that will prepare our students in this global economy—whether they are first generation, adult learners, undergraduates, or graduate students.

I don’t take lightly this great privilege, to lead an institution that plays such a transformational role for more than 34,000 students each year, and that provides a platform for unprecedented national and transnational influence.

Both the geographical and distinctive attributes of the university place SDSU at the crossroads of a profound national narrative that is capturing the hearts and minds of people across this hemisphere and the world.

SDSU’s students, faculty, and staff are part of that profound narrative. As their president, it is crucially important that they have trust in me, and that they know their voices have power. For this reason, while my listening tour is at its most intensive now, it will be an ongoing theme throughout my Presidency.

Why is this important?

Because before anyone will listen to new ideas, there must be a foundation of TRUST.
It’s not about me. I’m here to listen first, to build relationships, and to build trust.
Leading Through Listening

When I think about the issues that we face today, I realize that too often the tendency is to see the barriers, the problems, and the differences that divide us. But the real opportunity—if we listen closely… if we think deeply… and if we pay attention—is to see the bonds that bind us, both as a community and as a campus.

My goal has been to model that process first, even as I ask my executive team, but also students, faculty, and staff, to do the same.

I believe that in the process, TOGETHER we can develop a collective vision for the future, as we capitalize on our unique regional position.

During the last 100 days, I have been on a listening tour. I have heard from faculty, staff, and students. I have heard their unique but always heartfelt expressions of love and concerns for this campus.

I have heard faculty and staff say that they want to see a real expression of shared governance, marked by transparency and trust.

I have heard that it’s important to honor the knowledge and capacity of our staff.

I have heard that recognizing the accomplishments of our faculty is also important—but we can do more.

I have heard that SDSU cares about serving San Diego’s community and wants to tackle our greatest societal problems like: global warming, homelessness, and educational and health disparities.

I have heard faculty, staff, and alumni say—even without tangible words—that they don’t want me to forget about the extraordinary legacy that has already made San Diego State University a crown jewel among university systems.

I could speak all day about all I’ve heard our community say… the insights they have shared over hundreds of hours of one-on-one or group meetings.

It would have been easier to show up as the new president ready to draft and communicate a new strategic plan. Listening takes more time. The relationships and trust that will be built through this process—and taking that time—will ultimately help us catch unstoppable momentum.

At the end of the day, I believe I have established my leadership style:

I Lead through Listening
Finding Common Ground

As we move forward, I will continue to ask our staff and faculty to approach this new chapter of the university with a blank slate.

I have emphasized that I don’t want us to forget all the wonderful accomplishments that have gotten SDSU to this day.

Yet, my hope is that our students, our faculty, and our staff will also show up to the conversation about SDSU’s future without preconceived ideas, and with an open mind, and an open heart.

During All-University convocation, I had the opportunity to share with our campus community that Chris Thomas, our wonderful Associated Students President, had given me a copy of The Heart Led Leader, the book he and his cabinet have been reading as they prepare to lead not just with skill but also with heart.

As I read the book and reflected on the importance of my first 100 days one principle stood out:

“Whatever the question...

LOVE IS THE ANSWER.”

What that idea says to me, as the new president of San Diego State University, is that although presidential transitions can be disruptive because we all bring diverse perspectives to the work we do, we share one thing in common:

The love we bring to this place...

- Love for our students
- Love for our work
- Love for our research
- Love for this institution

I share that love with my new San Diego State University family.

It propels me to listen. To listen intently.

The feedback that my leadership team and I are getting so far says that this message is resonating across our campus.
WE WILL GRADUATE GLOBAL CITIZENS, COMPASSIONATE LEADERS, AND ETHICAL INNOVATORS WHO WILL IMPACT THE COMMUNITY AND THE WORLD.
Looking to the Future and How Will We Get Where We Want to Go

My vision is that San Diego State University will be recognized for graduating the Global Citizens, Ethical Innovators, and Compassionate Leaders who will impact the future of the San Diego region and the world.

What Has Resonated So Far?

The working presidential vision, the mantra that has emerged from my many hours of listening: My vision is that San Diego State University will be recognized for graduating the Global Citizens, Ethical Innovators, and Compassionate Leaders who will impact the future of the San Diego region and the world.

How will we do this together as a university community?

Gleaning from what I’ve heard you say, I have identified a few ways:

☐ By collaborating as faculty and leaders in order to identify and amplify our areas of distinction…

☐ By creating synergies for shared commitment among our stakeholders…

☐ By developing exemplary relationships—nationally, bi-nationally, and internationally…

☐ By committing to a process of transparent and timely communication…

☐ By seizing the Mission Valley expansion opportunity…

☐ By growing the capacity of SDSU Imperial Valley…

☐ By ensuring our infrastructure can sustain the demands and challenges of today and tomorrow’s educational landscape…

☐ By nurturing a culture where we listen and engage in productive dialogue…

☐ And by measuring progress with a variety of metrics.
Facing Challenges and Seizing Opportunities

We all have an idea of where we want to go as a division, as a college, or as a university. Knowing who we are is crucially important before we get there.

My challenge to our community has been clear: I have asked them to join me on a listening tour of their own in the form of a guided self-assessment and visioning, as we work towards new levels of distinction as a globally recognized research university.

At the same time I have been transparent about the key challenges before us:

• First, we must recognize the opportunity to grow through the Mission Valley Plan.

• Second, we must address our growing campus infrastructure needs—both in terms of physical space and technology.

• Third, we must continue to diversify our revenue sources.

• Fourth, we must create real community partnerships that go beyond our institutional borders.

• Finally, we must recognize our regional position as the gateway to Mexico and the Americas.

The “why” may be obvious, but the “how” is where the work really begins. As we continue to work on building trust, we will have a stronger team to do the work required to get where we want to go.
We will honor the past as we build a brighter future.
When I started, I wanted our community to know that I hear them. I wanted them to know the dreams they have for San Diego State University are critically important to the new chapter that is now underway. I recognize that a new presidency can create anxiety and fears. I have been clear: We need to talk about it.

My hope is that together we will foster a culture of discourse and dialogue.

That together we will build a campus culture without silos. My hope is that this place—this university—will be a space where NO ONE will hesitate to bring up a topic that could lead to great innovation.

For that reason…

• I will continue to challenge our campus communicators to become more strategic and agile. The demands of our workforce and world change rapidly. So do the expectations and interests of our students.

• We will continue to leverage Social Media and other channels to connect with our stakeholders.

• We will seek new ways to be relevant in our rapidly changing, global landscape.

• And I will continue to empower our community to expand the borders of interdisciplinary collaboration.
We will find ways to have the tough conversations
A Social Presidency for Greater Impact

As the first San Diego State University President leveraging personal Social Media channels, it has been exciting to see the overwhelming response to date.

Here’s an early breakdown of the key audiences engaging in last 90 days:

**LinkedIn:**
Primarily Staff, Alums, Community Leaders
- 718 Connections
- 1076 Profile Views

**Twitter**
Primarily Students, Alums, SD Community
- 762 Followers

**Instagram**
Primarily Students, Staff, Faculty
- 710 Followers
Current Conversations Supporting 3 Vision Pillars

**Global Citizenry**
- Supporting US-Mexico transborder research across campus
- Exploring dual degrees and expanding course collaboration opportunities
- Capitalizing on student interest in Study Abroad Programs (SDSU ranks No. 8 nationally for the number of students studying abroad, with more than 3,000 students having international experiences each year)
- Learning from SDSU Georgia as a model for international programs

**Compassionate Leadership**
- Fostering a culture of trust through Shared Governance
- Developing a strategic approach to communication on campus
- Planning for the first SDSU strategic plan for diversity, equity and inclusion

**Ethical Innovation**
- Opening forums to collect and generate new ideas for Mission Valley
- Investing in interdisciplinary faculty teaching and research
My priority will continue to be student success...
Sigamos Adelante!