

Fresno State stays in-house for new provost, hires Lynnette Zelezny

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By Hannah Furfaro

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Fresno State has hired one of its own to the provost spot vacated last year by William Covino.

Associate provost Lynnette Zelezny will become the university's new provost and vice president for academic affairs starting on June 1, officials announced Monday.

Zelezny, 57, is a 25-year Fresno State veteran and will oversee curriculum as the university's top academic officer. She'll be paid \$220,000 in her new position. Her current salary is \$152,000.

During her more than two decades of service, Zelezny has worked as a professor and psychology department chair, an associate dean for the Craig School of Business, a dean for global education, and most recently, as associate provost -- a job she's held for the past three years.

She's currently in charge of the campus committee planning a tablet program that's expected to roll out next fall. She's on the United Way board and is also a member of the Fresno Rotary.

Fresno State President Joseph Castro said in a statement that Zelezny's broad range of experience "has earned the respect of the academic community."

"In addition, she has unquestioned integrity and a collaborative working style that has been embraced by our faculty, staff and students," he said.

Although she hasn't yet stepped into her new role, Zelezny was quick to give a road map of her priorities. She hopes to jump-start Fresno State's graduation rate -- an issue both Castro and California State University Chancellor Timothy White are keen on -- and give students more access to internships, study abroad programs and research assignments.

She also wants fewer Fresno State students taking remedial courses. The most recent university data from 2011 shows 53% of first-time freshman needed remediation in English while 50% needed to take math remediation courses.

Zelezny said she hopes to bring down those numbers by strengthening partnerships with local community colleges to offer more summer classes for incoming freshmen. Making sure students

get basic and upper-level writing classes under their belt before they enroll at Fresno State, she said, could help students graduate faster.

"We want to increase the strength of our pipeline from community colleges to Fresno State and get these students on a route of success without worrying about remediation," she said.

Zelezny earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from Humboldt State University. She has a doctorate from Claremont Graduate University and a master's in business administration from the Craig School of Business.

She is married to John Zelezny, senior vice president of communications at Community Medical Centers. The Zeleznys have three grown children.

The new provost was one of four finalists -- and the only candidate from California -- vying for the position vacated by Covino, who became president of California State University, Los Angeles in September.

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