

## EDITORIAL: Joseph Castro puts bold plans into much-needed action | Editorials

By The Fresno Bee Editorial Board



Fresno State President Joseph Castro launches the DISCOVERe program with a scissor-free, virtual ribbon-cutting at the new DISCOVERe Hub Fresno State's Henry Madden Library on Aug. 21, 2014.

FRESNO BEE FILE [Buy Photo](#)

Fresno State President Joseph Castro is putting his "Let's be bold" slogan into action — much to the benefit of the university and the San Joaquin Valley.

The Valley has needed someone with vision, experience and passion to redirect the focus from fondly recalling the good old days to aiming high for the future.

We realize that university presidents tend to enjoy a honeymoon period with students, professors, boosters and the community at large. Still, Castro has exceeded expectations.

Despite being a first-time university president, Castro has a good handle on managing his time. Like his predecessor, John Welty, he is a tireless worker. But Castro has placed greater emphasis on connecting with students and faculty and it appears that he is winning their trust.

Successful university presidents must excel at fundraising. In fact, when Castro was being interviewed by California State University system trustees, he was told that he would need to spend as much as 50% of his time searching out

donors to fund everything from research to athletics to new construction.

Castro is off to an impressive start. After Fresno State capped its first university-wide fundraising campaign — a seven-year effort that brought in \$214.22 million — in Welty's final year, conventional wisdom pointed to an inevitable drop-off. The dip didn't happen as the university received \$43 million in donations in Castro's first year.

It helps that he is a Valley native who ventured beyond its boundaries and climbed the University of California ladder. Thus he can relate to Valley residents, yet he understands how to get things done in the complicated world of California politics. This is helping him sell his goal of building Fresno State into a pace-setting university that tackles and conquers 21st century challenges — among them dramatically raising the graduation rates of students who are first in their families to attend college.

Castro has big plans for Fresno State's engineering and agricultural colleges, and its athletic program. He wants Fresno State to reach its planned capacity of 27,000 students as soon as possible, because that will enable more Valley students to attend college. Upon being hired, he said he wanted students using tablets and the first week of this semester, 1,200 students and 33 faculty were pushing the university deeper into the digital age.

We know there will be bumps and mistakes along the way, but all signs suggest that Castro is plenty capable of leading Fresno State to where it needs to go.

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