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University VP Peter Smits announces retirement

Dr. Peter N. Smits, Fresno State's vice president for University Advancement, has announced he will retire on June 30, 2014.

Smits has spent his entire 44-year career in higher education, including the past 20 years at Fresno State. He is Fresno State's first vice president for Advancement, which is a strategic, integrated method of managing relationships to increase understanding and support among an educational institution's key constituents. The primary core disciplines of educational advancement are alumni relations, communications and fundraising, all of which Smits oversees at Fresno State.

Known nationally for his work, Smits provided leadership for the Campaign for Fresno State, a seven-year comprehensive fundraising effort that concluded in April 2013 and raised \$214.2 million, more than 7% over the announced goal of \$200 million. It was the second-largest fundraising campaign in the California State University system, and recorded the largest cash gift (\$29.4 million) in the history of the CSU. Fresno State regularly ranks among the top fundraising campuses in the 23-campus CSU system.

Fresno State President Joseph I. Castro praised Smits for his "trailblazing" contributions to the university, the community and the advancement profession.

"Peter Smits is the 'dean' of advancement professionals in the California State University system," said Castro. "As the longest-serving CSU vice president in that role, his advice and counsel are regularly sought by his colleagues throughout the state and nation. I will miss his leadership, but I wish him and his wife Susan all the best."

Castro said a nationwide search for a successor will begin as soon as possible.

Smits, 66, plans to spend more time writing, consulting and leading a research effort on measuring and growing campus cultures of philanthropy that is sponsored by the international Commission on Philanthropy for the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), of which he is a member.

Smits is also a member of the board of directors of CASE's District VII. He has been a frequent speaker at CASE regional and international conferences, and for the Association of Governing Boards.

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"Dr. Smits has been a dedicated servant to Fresno State," said Ray Steele Jr., chair of the Fresno State Foundation Board of Governors. "His commitment to change the culture of philanthropy at the university is to be applauded. So, too, is the successful completion of Fresno State's first-ever comprehensive campaign, which he directed."

Clyde Ford, president of the Fresno State Alumni Association, said Smits has served the university "with honor and integrity."

"The unwavering loyalty and leadership he provided to the Alumni of Fresno State has helped to transform our mission. We will miss his presence but are grateful for all he has accomplished," Ford said.

Prior to Fresno State, Smits spent six years at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He started his career in 1970 at The College of White Plains (NY) as dean of students.

He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in student personnel services from the State University of New York at Albany, and a Ph.D. in higher education from the University of Buffalo. He completed post-doctoral work at Harvard University.

By [Kathleen Schock](#) | December 2nd, 2013 | Categories: [PRESS RELEASES](#) | Tags: [faculty/staff](#) | Comments Off

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