

Former Ohio State President Michael V. Drake Named President Of The University Of California System



Just one week removed from the end of Dr. Michael V. Drake's six year tenure at Ohio State, Drake has been approved by the University of California Board of Regents as the next president of the University of California system. The news was confirmed by the Los Angeles Times and an official statement from the University of California.

"Dr. Drake personifies the qualities we looked for in selecting a new president: He is committed to seeing the whole student and to supporting all our students. He recognizes the incalculable value of faculty and staff to the University's mission, and he understands the importance of the public and private partnerships that help us achieve that mission," said John A. Pérez, chair of the UC Board of Regents. "As the first person of color to serve as UC president, Dr. Drake returns to UC at an important point in the University's journey. This is a homecoming the University of California is very excited to be celebrating early."

Drake came to Ohio State by way of the California system, after serving as the chancellor of UC Irvine from 2005 to 2014 and as the systemwide vice president for health affairs from 2000 to 2005.

"Much has changed in the 15 years since I was given the privilege of becoming chancellor at UC Irvine, but not my absolute belief in this great University and its time-honored mission," Drake said. "I look forward to working with the regents, chancellors, students, faculty, staff, alumni, and our broader community as we, together, guide the University through the challenging times ahead. Brenda and I are thrilled to be back. Fiat Lux!"

Notably, Drake will serve as the first Black president of the system in its 152-year history.

"UC faculty, staff and students repeatedly told us they want a president who will prioritize issues of

equity and fairness and be a powerful advocate at the state and national level,” said Regent Gareth Elliott, chair of the Special Committee in charge of the presidential search. “When we needed the right person to steward UC’s global reputation, it turns out we didn’t have to look too far from home. I am very proud of this thorough and inclusive search, and I’m delighted it resulted in such a great match with Dr. Drake.”

Drake was set to serve in a year-long president emeritus role at Ohio State prior to this announcement, following what was thought to be his announcement of his impending retirement back in November. Drake’s successor, Kristina M. Johnson, is set to take over the role starting Sept. 1.

“We are thrilled that Dr. Drake has chosen to return to UC at this pivotal moment in the midst of profound global and national change,” said professor Kum-Kum Bhavnani, chair of UC’s Faculty Academic Senate and the Academic Advisory Committee. “President-designate Drake’s demonstrated commitment to undergraduate and graduate students and the work of faculty, understanding of the needs of UC employees, his commitment to social mobility, and his intimate insights into diversity, policing and inclusion ensure UC will continue to be a leader in higher education nationally and internationally as the world enters a bold new era.”

Drake will take over the role starting Aug. 1 following the departure of former president Janet Napolitano.

“Stepping down as president of the University of California is bittersweet, especially after seven wonderful, dynamic years, but I depart knowing Dr. Michael Drake will lead with experience and integrity, with the critical support and guidance of the UC Board of Regents,” said Napolitano. “Michael has my full confidence, and I am excited to see how his fresh infusion of ideas and new perspectives will shape the University in the months and years ahead.”