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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **CSUSB to award honorary doctorate degree to prominent philanthropist and foundation leader Julia Lopez**

PALM DESERT, Calif. - Julia I. Lopez, one of California's most impactful philanthropists and foundation leaders, who has made a profound difference in the lives of countless students through her work with the College Futures Foundation, will be awarded a doctorate of humane letters at California State University, San Bernardino. She will be recognized during the university's Palm Desert Campus Commencement ceremony on June 14.

Lopez cared deeply about the post-secondary college-going and completion rates in the Coachella Valley. She is a great supporter of the work of OneFuture Coachella Valley and made frequent visits to the desert community to speak about this passion. She helped construct the agenda for the Palm Desert Campus's on-going work related to increasing college going rates in

the Coachella Valley and supported that work with philanthropy and support from the College Futures Foundation.

“We are deeply honored to recognize Julia for her dedication and commitment to student success, especially in our underserved communities,” said CSUSB President Tomás D. Morales. “Her trailblazing leadership has made and continues to make a difference in students’ lives not only in college scholarships, but in helping increase college going rates and obtaining degrees.”

Through Lopez’s leadership, the College Futures Foundation awarded nearly \$20 million in grants annually and has an endowment of about \$500 million. A widely respected leader with broad and deep experience in philanthropy and government, Lopez began serving as the president and CEO of College Futures Foundation (then known as College Access Foundation of California) in 2008. She retired in June 2017.

During her tenure, Lopez led the organization through sweeping changes that shifted its strategy from a grantor of student scholarships to an organization focused on addressing the systemic challenges surrounding the crisis of the college-going and degree attainment rates in California, especially among traditionally underrepresented communities.

Through this process, she helped to change policies, practices, systems and institutions to better support college access and graduation for students throughout California. College Futures has also been bringing together educators from K-12 schools, community colleges and public four-year institutions in California for regular conversations about how best to address institutional issues that impede student success, like college remediation and two- to four-year transfer rates.

Before joining College Futures, she served as senior vice president of the Rockefeller Foundation, where she provided oversight, management and evaluation of the foundation’s strategic program grant making, which awarded an average of \$150 million per year. In her earlier work for Rockefeller, she served as director of the foundation’s Working Communities program, addressing urban poverty and education in the United States.

Lopez has lent her talents to the California Legislature, the New Mexico Department of Criminal Justice and the Department of Social Services for the City and County of San Francisco where, as general manager, she oversaw programs serving the city’s most disadvantaged residents. She has also served on the board of directors of REDF (formerly the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund).

She currently serves on the board of directors of KQED, the Bay Area’s public radio and television station, and is a member of the Statewide Leadership Council of the Public Policy Institute of California. She is a graduate of Newton College of the Sacred Heart (now Boston College) and holds a master’s degree in public policy from the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley.

Located in beautiful Palm Desert, the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus offers bachelor's and master's degrees, a doctorate in educational leadership, and teacher credentials and certificates. With more than 1,400 students, it is the Coachella Valley's four-year public university and plays a vital role in educating and training the region's growing population.

For more information about the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus, contact Mike Singer in the campus' Office of Public Affairs at [msinger@csusb.edu](mailto:msinger@csusb.edu) or (760) 341-2883, ext. 78107, or visit the campus website at [pdc.csusb.edu](http://pdc.csusb.edu).