

**Kerry Bigelow**

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**From:** Leticia Cazares [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 19, 2017 11:59 AM  
**To:** Mary Salas; Patricia Aguilar; Steve C. Padilla; John McCann; Mike Diaz  
**Cc:** Kerry Bigelow; Norma Cazares; Leticia Cazares  
**Subject:** Comments re: Item 16 (ENA w/ St. Katherine)  
**Attachments:** University St Katherine-v2.docx

Dear Mayor & Councilmembers,

I wish to provide my comments regarding Item 16 (Exclusive Negotiating Agreement w/ St. Katherine) on today's council meeting agenda.

A few weeks ago I attended the joint Taskforce between The City and Southwestern College. As with most of us in the room, I was encouraged to learn about the potential partnerships with public and private nonprofit colleges. I am in complete support of the City having discussions with all prospects; however, I urge the City to conduct thorough research and vetting with all before entering into an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement. I understand that this a 90-day agreement and that the City an solicit on the remaining property; however, I still think that this limits the City from being proactive and potentially lose out on better proposals.

As a researcher, I decided to read through their website and analyze any data I could find. What I did find raised some red flags for me and therefore, **I urge the Council to vote NO on this item and instead look at other options to continue discussions with St. Katherine.**

**My analysis and comments are below (and in attached document).**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments. I look forward to working with you on manifesting Chula Vista's dream of having viable four-year institutions!

**Regards,  
Leticia Cazares**

**Analysis**

Based on the following research findings, there is not a strong justification for entering into an ENA and limiting the City's ability to find other more promising opportunities:

- School data and reports are not clear (in some cases inconsistent) and do not provide comprehensive recent student success data including retention/graduation rates.  
<https://usk.edu/office-of-institutional-research-effectiveness/>
- Of the reports found, most troubling, is the Graduation & Completion Rates 2011-2015 report, showing that the retention rate dropped from 71% in Fall 11-12 to 46% in Fall 14-15. The justification does not thoroughly or clearly explain the significant decrease. Report is here:  
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- The student enrollment over six years as reported by USK showing 20 to 200 does not provide confidence that the school will be successful in meeting the needs of the South County community or reaching USK's vision of 1,000 students, especially given the high tuition and lack of clear, relevant academic success data.
- The tuition of \$20,500 when compared to SDSU tuition of \$7,460 or UCSD \$14,050 is unaffordable for most local students – Cal Grants are not yet available and even if they will be, will not be sufficient and could result in debt burden. In fact, debt data after graduation was not found.
- USK proposes to provide 400 dorm rooms/beds (increases revenues). Since local area students do not utilize dorms it is apparent there will be a recruitment effort of out-of-area students to fill these rooms. So how then does this help our local students?

## **City of Chula Vista and University of St. Katherine Exclusive Negotiating Agreement Analysis**

### **Background**

Recently, the City of Chula Vista was approached by the University of Saint Katherine (Saint Katherine) which is currently located in San Marcos, to establish a permanent undergraduate college on a portion of the University Innovation District located in East Chula Vista.

The proposed Exclusive Negotiating Agreement (ENA) will allow the City to review the financial capacity of Saint Katherine to construct, expand and maintain an institution of higher education.

### **About the University of St. Katherine (USK)**

Saint Katherine is a private nonprofit university that opened in 2011 in San Marcos with 20 students and now reportedly has close 200 full-time students. Accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) students may complete degree (BA/BS) programs in eleven concentrations, pre-professional studies (health sciences and graduate studies), and PK-12 teacher credentialing preparation.

**Tuition is \$20,500. Financial aid options include FAFSA and Institutional Aid; however, USK is not yet approved to offer Cal Grant Programs.**

### **Development Agreement w/ University of St. Katherine**

The City proposes to enter into an EXCLUSIVE Negotiating Agreement (ENA) with St. Katherine for an initial term of 90 days to negotiate the use of a 10-acre property near High Tech High in the UID. Key provision of the DA includes: The City agrees not to solicit alternative development proposals for the property or to negotiate with any other person or entity; however, the City does reserve the right to conduct a preliminary evaluation of unsolicited alternative proposals and can use evaluation to inform final agreements with St. Katherine.

### **Analysis**

While the proposal is merely an agreement to discuss and negotiate with the USK, there is cause for concern that the agreement is EXCLUSIVE in that it prohibits the City from soliciting other options for the term of 90 days. Based on the following research findings, there is not a strong justification for entering into an ENA and limiting the City's ability to find other more promising opportunities:

- School data and reports are not clear (in some cases inconsistent) and do not provide comprehensive recent student success data including retention/graduation rates.
- Of the reports found, most troubling, is the Graduation & Completion Rates 2011-2015 report, showing that the retention rate dropped from 71% in Fall 11-12 to 46% in Fall 14-15. The justification does not thoroughly or clearly explain the significant decrease.
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## Kerry Bigelow

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**From:** Norma Cazares [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 19, 2017 1:27 PM  
**To:** 'Leticia Cazares'; Mary Salas; Patricia Aguilar; Steve C. Padilla; John McCann; Mike Diaz  
**Cc:** Kerry Bigelow  
**Subject:** RE: Comments re: Item 16 (ENA w/ St. Katherine)

Thank you, Leticia.

All,

Please open the link below for information on the Cal-Grant financial assistance program that the majority of students rely on but has not been approved for USK at this time.

<http://www.csac.ca.gov/doc.asp?id=905>

Norma Cazares  
(Retired Community College Counselor)

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**From:** Leticia Cazares [mailto:[REDACTED]]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 19, 2017 11:59 AM  
**To:** Mary Salas <msalas@chulavistaca.gov>; Patricia Aguilar <paguilar@chulavistaca.gov>; Steve C. Padilla <spadilla@chulavistaca.gov>; John McCann <jmccann@chulavistaca.gov>; Mike Diaz <mdiaz@chulavistaca.gov>  
**Cc:** kbigelow@chulavistaca.gov; Norma Cazares <[REDACTED]>; Leticia Cazares <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Comments re: Item 16 (ENA w/ St. Katherine)

Dear Mayor & Councilmembers,

I wish to provide my comments regarding Item 16 (Exclusive Negotiating Agreement w/ St. Katherine) on today's council meeting agenda.

A few weeks ago I attended the joint Taskforce between The City and Southwestern College. As with most of us in the room, I was encouraged to learn about the potential partnerships with public and private nonprofit colleges. I am in complete support of the City having discussions with all prospects; however, I urge the City to conduct thorough research and vetting with all before entering into an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement. I understand that this a 90-day agreement and that the City an solicit on the remaining property; however, I still think that this limits the City from being proactive and potentially lose out on better proposals.

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**My analysis and comments are below (and in attached document).**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments. I look forward to working with you on manifesting Chula Vista's dream of having viable four-year institutions!

**Regards,  
Leticia Cazares**

**Analysis**

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**Sheree Kansas**

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**From:** Tom Cary [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 22, 2018 8:53 PM  
**To:** Mike Diaz; Mary Salas  
**Subject:** St. Catherine

Dear Mayor and Mr. Garcia,

Please know that I oppose the proposal to provide St. Catherine's with access to Chula Vista property. The school's "Christian" conservative principles, including their bigoted stance on abortion and gay rights, are appalling. I'm stunned they are being considered as a viable candidate for what I believe should be a secular proposal.

Please clarify your position on this important matter.

Tom Cary #145  
[REDACTED]  
Chula Vista 91911

## Sheree Kansas

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**From:** Leticia Cazares [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 22, 2018 8:41 PM  
**To:** Mary Salas; Patricia Aguilar; Steve C. Padilla; John McCann; Mike Diaz  
**Cc:** Kerry Bigelow; Norma Cazares  
**Subject:** Comments re: Item 6 (ENA w/ St. Katherine)

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

I wish to provide my comments regarding Item #6 (ENA w/ St. Katherine University) on tomorrow's council meeting agenda as I will be unable to attend.

Reading the staff report, I was pleased to read that there will be a vetting plan that will include a review and report by an independent, third party that will determine if USK can demonstrate its ability to meet the needs of the community and students. Therefore, I am not opposed to the ENA; however, I do ask that the council seriously consider the following recommendations when developing the plan for the 90-day term of the ENA:

1. Set vetting criteria to include a) financial aid options and how USK will work to help students avoid debt b) housing options for local low-income students and c) holistic support (beyond academic) such as health and mental health services, learning communities, etc.
2. Work with Southwestern College to form a Taskforce made up of faculty, counseling and support service staff, students and community members to help inform the development of criteria, review the results and provide recommendations.
3. Provide a presentation of the results to community members and allow opportunity for feedback **prior to the end of the 90 day term and/or before staff makes final recommendation to council.**

Thank you for your consideration,  
Leticia Cazares

On Tuesday, December 19, 2017, 11:58:42 AM PST, Leticia Cazares [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Mayor & Councilmembers,

I wish to provide my comments regarding Item 16 (Exclusive Negotiating Agreement w/ St. Katherine) on today's council meeting agenda.

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## Sheree Kansas

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**From:** Elva Mellor  
**Sent:** Monday, January 22, 2018 5:39 PM  
**To:** Mike Diaz  
**Subject:** University of St. Katherine

Dear Councilman Diaz,

It is my firm belief and opinion that the city is rushing into getting a university at all costs - if only to show that Chula Vista has a four year university.

Further negotiations with Southwestern College would be more likely to provide our citizens with a recognized curriculum at a much lower cost and with more probability for students to continue on in better accredited universities.

Of course, if there could be an extension of Southwestern to provide four year degrees - it already has some- that would be a much better solution educational and economically for our population.

Consideration to the needs of our community would be to provide an AFFORDABLE university for our citizens - especially our citizens who cannot afford the higher tuitions. St. Katherine shows a yearly cost of \$36,000.00 plus it is a religious institution which will be pushing its beliefs.

What is the real economic advantage to the city? \$1 a year lease!!!

Will they offer a sliding scale for our citizens in need of financial aid? Doubt it.

Why not try to get a satellite campus from SDSU? They are overcrowded.

I was disappointed with the study which was paid for before on seeking a university as the money was wasted since the results were to show comparisons with private universities and looked at out of state tuitions! Clearly they were not given the project with clear stipulations on what is needed here.

We need to stop rushing into projects just for the sake of saying "WE accomplished ....."

PLEASE reject the idea of St Katherine establishing on city property. If they are that interested, they can find their own land. Leave our land for a truly Chula Vista higher education institution.

We could use more offering degrees in computer science and the medical. fields which are the ones ready to hire and keep our citizens HERE and not commuting out of Chula Vista.

Sincerely,  
Elva Mellor

January 2, 2018

Dr. Christos Korgan

████████████████████  
Chula Vista, CA 91915

Mayor Casillas Salas and Councilmembers  
276 Fourth Avenue  
Chula Vista, CA 91910

Dear Mayor Casillas Salas and Honorable Councilmembers McCann, Aguilar, Padilla, and Diaz:

In recent time, the City of Chula Vista has engaged the University of Saint Katherine in very preliminary conversations regarding potential professional partnership and collaborative activity of mutual benefit. Indeed, the City's cultivation of a relationship between a baccalaureate-granting higher education institution would prompt vigorous socioeconomic development with the immediate area and region, and the Mayor and Honorable Council are to be commended for sustaining such interests. Regarding the present dialogue, I kindly offer an additional perspective and source of information intended to support this emergent work and the City's planning interests. It is my firm belief that my unique positionality lends worthwhile and relevant detail, as I am both a resident of Chula Vista and a member of the executive team at the University of Saint Katherine<sup>1</sup>. While the layperson and neophyte are inclined to suggest that this intersection of identities represents a conflict of interest, it is my assertion that its unconventionality has identified a more suitable lens to inspect the dialogue budding between the University and the City. Likewise, such a perspective is doubly fitting when considering the written statement of evidence – or lack thereof – presented by Ms. Leticia Cazares in her recent correspondence. While her writing strongly suggests an unidentified and withheld bias, the purpose of my piece is twofold and presented by an order of importance: 1) to exercise my civic engagement as a resident of Chula Vista, practitioner of social justice, and member of my community who deeply cares for its long-term socioeconomic condition and shared efforts to preserve its rich diversity and inheritances; and, 2) to debunk the unsupported claims previously presented to the Council without any additional focus on the prejudices and preferences of its authorship. I begin this piece with information about my background relevant to the developed perspective. Then, I advance its immediate utility vis-à-vis the unsupported claims identified in the original December 19<sup>th</sup> submission, with special attention given to context and meaning-making processes in higher education.

I was reared in poverty, but am a fortunate member of a group now comprised of a dwindling membership who have benefited by the elusive American system of social mobility. Indeed, despite world-class postsecondary training, I had previously grown convinced that I would never enjoy the benefits of property ownership due to student loan debt, a shrinking living wage, and the expensive conditions of Southern California. In fact, upon completing my doctorate at

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that I have not been commissioned to develop this piece and neither the University of Saint Katherine nor its stakeholders were aware of my correspondence at the time of its submission to the City.

UCLA, I developed long-term plans to invest abroad. Then, I happened upon Chula Vista by an unlikely chance occurrence, as nearly all other areas of San Diego County seemed financially unsustainable. I remember the first time I exited Olympic Blvd from the 805 and explored the range from beautiful Eastlake Reservoir to the haven of the Chula Vista marina. I recognized a collective interest in innovation and ingenuity that I have since appreciated more deeply. My initial frustration with San Diego County was fueled by my struggle to find a sense of community and belonging. Said frustration and discontent has evaporated, following my property purchase in Chula Vista. I am a patron of the City. All of this means to say that I hold the interests of Chula Vista near to me and see myself as its benefactor. What makes Chula Vista a "beautiful view," as it is translated from Spanish, is the healthiness of its opportunities and choices – both of which would be exponentiated by a nimble and thriving baccalaureate-granting institution.

The City has held an interest in seeding a higher education institution for many years, and its citizenry has maintained excitement about the prospect. However, relative naivete on the function and behavior of a higher education system remains a challenge for some practitioners, and understanding its nuances is further complicated by its specialized bureaucratic form with systemic organizational designs. Not to mention, the organizational and personal determinants of motivation, power, and control across the higher education landscape has a thick history of crippling effective collaboration to support the public good. Many established colleges and universities remain inflexible or intractable, stifling their service function to their surrounding communities. The realities of higher education's traditional shapes chaperone unintended consequences for Chula Vista and its highest interests. Expertise on the shaping of American higher education, as well as California's postsecondary systems, is critical when weighing the value and benefit derived from these alliances.

As a Chula Vista resident who has followed its planning endeavors, my sense was that the City carefully reflected on the fruitfulness of opening talks with the University of Saint Katherine, as it is no feeble contemplation of higher education privatization, corporatization, and accountability within the current contemporary era. In light of this, the decision seemed obvious and natural to me. It struck me as rational municipal thinking to explore a charter with a private, nonprofit university with less miles on its tires to avoid undue burden, hidden duress, or other impetuous contraindication. What is more, my nod to the movement similarly recognized the goodness-of-fit between the two entities with interests in serving the marginalized and underrepresented. I tender praise and applause to the Mayor and Councilmembers. The thought of seeding an intellectual community in the area is immeasurably exciting, and I need not delve into this wisdom here.

Nevertheless, the case of logic was unduly assaulted by the December 19<sup>th</sup> letter, which served only to distort our realities. The author purported that entering a 90-day negotiation agreement limits the City's proactiveness, resulting in opportunity loss. This seemed questionable. Chula Vista has been exploring this possibility for many years, visiting with the California State University, the University of California, and other major private institutions, including those both local and regional. It is insulting to the character and intellect of the Mayor and the Honorable Councilmembers to suggest that the team's investigative prowess is anything other than proactive and beneficial. It stands that the argument to avoid preliminary talks is

nonsensical. Unfortunately, the baselessness and deception of the author continued in the form of *argumentum ad verecundiam*, commonly known as the fallacy of an appeal to authority. As I continued to open-mindedly delve into the piece, it became clearer that its authorship was speculative, at best, and that its repetitive style was used to enhance the work's believability. The technique of its frequent proclamation as merited research appeared reminiscent of demagogues and similar rabble-rousers. At this point, I was encouraged to look closer at the writing.

The piece goes on to suggest that the school's data and reports are unclear and do not offer recent student success information, including retention/graduation figures. This seemed absurd. The University maintains a well-supported action-research agenda with both direct and indirect measures of the teaching and learning environment. More to the point, the institution has benefited from multiple modalities of communicating such data, like infographics, mixed reporting tools, or other visualizations available for public consumption. Next, the author claimed troubling graduation and completion data, while noting a sharp, observable drop. It is clear that the totality of the school's reporting information was only casually observed and, more likely, cherry-picked to make the point, as all data are updated and held in the institution's Common Data Set, which is a standardized reporting mechanism for colleges and universities. It is doubly noteworthy that when we benchmark the noted trend, which fails to reflect the institution's current state of affairs, it remains within reasonable range in comparison with many major, comprehensive institutions<sup>2</sup>. The cited rate also points to an earlier point in time in the organization's development, as the curriculum was undergoing strengthening by the faculty and academic policies were crystallized in preparation for accreditation consideration. This is a common developmental phenomenon found at emergent academies<sup>3</sup>.

When honing an understanding of organizational development in higher education, expertise in issues of enrollment management and finance is critical. Regarding the former, the author identified an unduplicated headcount and enrollment growth from 20 to 200 within a six-year period. When we consider the fact that the University of Saint Katherine has enjoyed its accreditation status only since March of 2016, analyses of publicly available data demonstrate the appreciable effect that comes with such a status. It stands that controlling for the time of the WSCUC initial accreditation award is imperative to avoid misinterpretation and misuse of the data. The same is true regarding tuition, as the University boasts highly tailored financial aid programming not often located by students at other colleges and universities in the region. These positive program effects are amplified when considering the fact that an impressive majority of the University's completers graduate much sooner than 6 years, as the national average of time-to-degree has now reached or exceeded 150% of the traditional expectation for most institutions<sup>4</sup>.

Ultimately, while the December 19<sup>th</sup> submission for the Council's consideration is respectful in that it represents a form of community engagement, it is clear that facility with data interpretation and expertise in the fundamentals of American higher education is prerequisite for

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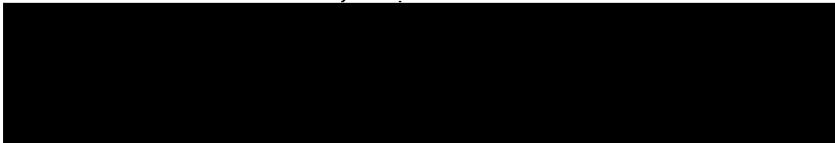
<sup>2</sup> The Data Center tools housed within in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) are useful for collecting benchmarking detail.

<sup>3</sup> Controlling for the staging variable in the development of a higher education institution, it is also important to note that similarly contextual information would be inappropriate for display on a university's institutional research page due to the problem of misinterpretation and misuse of information.

<sup>4</sup> Evidence from the National Center for Education Statistics can be found [here](#).

effective municipal decision-making. I was charmed by the final line of inquiry, which minimized and questioned the far-reaching benefits of instructional proximity and traditional residential education for students. The limited conceptualization of residential living and campus life reminded me of myself many years ago when I first thumbed through the more than 815 pages of Pascarella and Terenzini's seminal work, *How College Affects Students*. The piece is now into its 3<sup>rd</sup> edition and offers 21<sup>st</sup> century evidence on a constellation of issues in postsecondary education. It is exhilarating to think more deeply about what the City of Chula Vista is doing right now. It is more impressive to ponder the effects of such a decision, especially as literature continues to highlight the fact that students' college years significantly contribute to their cognitive skills and lifelong intellectual growth, psychosocial change, moral development, and overall quality of life. As a resident and community member, I support the Council's efforts. I encourage your affirmation of the previously mentioned item 16 on the last agenda. It is reasonable to conclude that supporting exclusivity in negotiation affords deeper consideration between parties when assessing future prospects. Thank you for your time.

To student success,



Christos Korgan, Ph.D.