

2019 Fall Welcome Address  
President Mary A. Papazian  
August 22, 2019

Thank you, Ravisha, and thank you, Branden. I know that both of you are going to do a superb job this year in your respective roles for the Academic Senate and Associated Students.

Wasn't that *Transformation 2030* video just great? Thank you to our strategic communications and marketing team for producing such a terrific piece! It will be exciting to track our progress on the strategic plan over the coming months and years, and today I plan on touching on just a few of the ways that our current and upcoming activities are aligning with the goals of *Transformation 2030*.

Let me start by assuring all of you that *Transformation 2030* is a living document that truly will guide our actions over the coming decade. In fact, just two weeks ago, the Cabinet's annual retreat focused on developing an implementation strategy. And to guide our conversation, we focused not only on the finalized goals and objectives, but also on all of the ideas that were generated by the campus community over the previous two years! I will have more to say about the specifics of the implementation strategy in the near future, but know that we are on our way—and it will be our collective journey!

I am delighted to see such a great turnout today. And a big “shout out” to those of you who are joining us via our live web stream.

I would also like to offer a special welcome to SJSU alumnus and San Jose Councilman Raul Peralaz. Raul is a close friend of the university who shares our commitment to a strong partnership between San Jose State and our surrounding region. Thank you for being here, Raul.

As is our tradition, let me begin by welcoming all of our faculty, staff, and students, both returning and new. I can hardly believe I am beginning my fourth year as president of San Jose State, and I hope you are as excited as I am for the year ahead of us. It is going to be a great one!

### Incoming class and faculty

Before I talk about the upcoming semester and the year ahead, I wanted to say just a few words about our incoming class.

Let there be no doubt: San Jose State **continues to be a place where students want to be.**

We received over 62-thousand applications for Fall 2019 enrollment—and let me just stop right there and thank all the folks in Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, the people who went through each and every one of those applications!

(PAUSE AND LEAD APPLAUSE)

For this semester's regular academic session, we are welcoming 4,050 newly-enrolled freshmen, 4,650 transfers, 175 credential students and 1,720 graduate students.

When we add in the special session enrollment, which is estimated at 2,500, we will be close to 36,000 students, one of the largest classes in our history.

As usual, our New Student and Family Programs team did an extraordinary job with a variety of orientation activities. I would like to throw out just a few numbers and “fun facts” to help show some of the things they accomplished:

They successfully coordinated **eight “Sparta Camps”** for freshmen, and **eight “Spartan Experience for Transfers”** sessions, welcoming several thousand students, parents, and family members.

With the help of our Orientation Leaders and **hundreds of gallons of coffee**, they were able stuff **10,000 bags and nametags** and show our future Spartans the ropes! There is no doubt that their efforts paid off and helped our new students develop an affinity and appreciation for our beautiful campus and all that it has to offer. Here’s what it looked like around campus on Move-In Day. **(video plays, then you continue).**

At orientation itself, we served over **280 pounds of potatoes** per session, which equates to well over **4,000 pounds of potatoes**—not to mention all the chicken and other treats. We also launched several parent initiatives and are planning a robust Parent and Family Weekend program in early October. So thanks very much to all of you who took part in this important work.

I mentioned earlier that students clearly want to be here on our campus.

And with the kind of educators and academic programs we have at San Jose State, why **wouldn't** students want to come here? I wrote a blog post in June about how San Jose State's faculty members are showing us all how to **Excel and Lead** – Goal 2 of *Transformation 2030* – and we continue to build a world-class faculty that is second to none.

Last year's search process resulted in 66 new tenure-track hires, most of whom are starting this fall. I cannot, in the interest of time, mention the names of all our new faculty members, but I would like to call out a few new and noteworthy faculty developments:

**Shaum Bhagat** has transferred from within our department of Communicative Disorders and Sciences to become the Chair of our Doctorate of Audiology program.

The Doctorate of Audiology program happens to be one of our brand new doctoral programs, so it will be wonderful to see Shaum build what I am sure will be an outstanding group of educators and practitioners in Audiology.

**Brad Porfilio** joins us as director of our Education Leadership doctoral program. Welcome, Brad!

And **Laxmi Ramasubramanian** is the new chair of our Urban and Regional Planning department. Great to have you, Laxmi!

Back to new doctoral programs for a moment. Our other new program is our **Doctor of Nursing Practice** program, which previously was a joint venture with Fresno State.

So welcome to those faculty members joining us for the new, San Jose State-specific, Doctor of Nursing Practice program, and to the program's first cohort of students.

I am also delighted to reveal for the first time—or remind those who already know—of the new Doctorate of Occupational Therapy that is in the works.

We have some very ambitious goals in our **College of Health and Human Sciences**, and this new doctoral program will help as we continue to reposition the college as a conduit to the ever-expanding healthcare industry, one of the fastest-growing sectors in Silicon Valley.

Our new faculty began Fall semester a few days before everyone else with the Faculty “Jump Start” program, which is run out of the Center for Faculty Development and the Provost's Office. This program gives new faculty the essentials to start off on the right foot and gives them access to benefits in September rather than having to wait until October. The New Faculty Development Program continues throughout the fall semester.

So thank you to **Deanna Fassett**, the new Director for the Center for Faculty Development, and her staff for all the work they are putting in to help our new faculty colleagues get acclimated here at San Jose State.

Leadership team additions

In addition to new faculty, I am pleased to report that the realignment of the university's leadership team is nearly complete.

I will reference my blog again and point you to a piece I posted back in February about **leadership and the art of team-building**, and in that blog post I wrote about how I try to hire colleagues who understand that individual success is not as vital as the success of the enterprise as a whole.

Well, the leaders we have brought here to San Jose State fit that description to a "tee."

Though you can find their full CVs and credentials online, I would like to call out several important new hires and the leadership roles they are playing here on campus.

After a long and thorough search, we were absolutely thrilled to welcome in June **Mohamed Abousalem (*Aa-boo-sa-lem*)** as our inaugural **vice president for research and innovation, or V-P-R-I**. An important and ongoing theme here at the university involves our efforts in these significant areas, and I will discuss them in more depth later on in my address.

A huge part of the broad research and innovation endeavor was the creation of this new cabinet position. Mohamed's career is full of success stories where he built or expanded upon highly impressive research and innovation initiatives, and I can tell you that he is brimming with ideas, possibilities, and enthusiasm for us here at SJSU. Welcome, Mohamed. (LEAD APPLAUSE)

In **University Advancement**, we have a new interim Vice President, **Peter Smits**, who will be holding down the fort as we initiate a national search for a permanent VP. But Peter will do much more than just hold down the fort.

He is an executive whose background in academia and the CSU system has made him a much sought-after leader by more than one campus, and we are very fortunate to have him as we begin to transition to a new permanent Vice President.

Peter will make things as seamless as possible, and in particular will guide us through the introductory phases of our comprehensive campaign. Thank you for being with us, Peter!  
(LEAD APPLAUSE)

I also want to share an important move in University Advancement that was made to drive and align strategic communications efforts university-wide.

In order to continue telling the San Jose State story, grow the university's reputation, and engage all of our stakeholders in the most consistent, integrated and effective way, the Strategic Communications and Marketing group will report directly into the Office of the President rather than University Advancement. That move takes effect on October 1.

Rounding out the new cabinet members, just last month we welcomed aboard our new **provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, Vincent Del Casino, Jr.**

I don't know how many of you have had the opportunity yet to meet Vin in person, but you are in for a treat. A geographer by training, Vin is bursting with energy and ideas for our campus, and you should know that he has been deeply involved in teaching and research throughout his academic career. I hear he plans to teach a course next year, as he has done throughout his academic and administrative career. Welcome, Vin! (LEAD APPLAUSE)

I also wanted to make mention of another individual who is now playing a very important role for the university.

**Gina Di Napoli** recently came on board as our new Chief of Police, and we are so happy to have her with us. She began her career in the United Kingdom—and you will know that just by speaking to her!—and she worked in law enforcement in Sacramento for more than 30 years. Having successfully served diverse populations in the past, she is an ideal fit here at San Jose State and will help us in our goal to be the safest, most welcoming campus in the country. Welcome, Chief!

(PAUSE TO TRANSITION TO NEXT SECTION)

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### Student Success

So, as I was thinking about today's Fall Welcome and the academic year ahead, I kept coming back to **Student Success, Research and Innovation, and Community Engagement**, three essential pillars in our new strategic plan, *Transformation 2030*.



**Student Success** is and will remain our first priority. I do not need to remind you that our students are the reason we all are here, so a large focus of my time here today will address our Student Success efforts.

For those of you who might not be aware, this fall's incoming freshmen are the class that will determine our success with three of the six metrics for the **CSU Graduation Initiative 2025**. Those three metrics include the **six-year graduation rate** and the **two equity gap measures**.

Because the national as well as the San Jose State-specific data show that students who take 15 or more units a semester do better academically, we soon will be launching a **15-to-Finish Campaign** to encourage students to take 15 units or more each semester in order to ensure they make timely progress toward their degrees.

You may have seen the recent announcement that **Colleen Haight** has joined the Office of Undergraduate Education as Interim Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education.

An economist by training and recently chair of the Department of Economics, Colleen has served in a number of administrative and leadership roles in academia as well as in industry and nonprofit organizations, and she has provided important contributions in curriculum development, assessment, accreditation, strategic planning, and student success programs.

Colleen, we look forward to your leadership as we seek to improve our academic programs and the educational experience for our undergraduates.

One of the most exciting achievements we recently have seen in Student Success, something of which so many of us here today can be proud, is how we have responded to the CSU's **Executive Order 1110**, the directive on academic preparation and placement into first year courses.

Just to re-cap, the initiative essentially directed all CSU campuses to end their remedial courses immediately, so for us that meant a complete re-vamping of our **mathematics** and **writing** courses.

This was a very big challenge, but frankly one that we embraced since we knew there had to be a better way to prepare all of our incoming freshmen for college-level math and writing.

Every student in the CSU system who hopes to graduate, of course, must complete “basic skills” classes in these two areas. But previously, we had students who would finish their first year with up to 20 non-college level remedial course units, and only 5 or 10 units of college-level courses!

Obviously, they were not progressing toward graduation with this model. That was bad for our graduation rates, bad for the students, and simply not the way we want their academic careers to unfold.

So when we received the directive from the Chancellor's office two years ago this month, we understood that if we did this with the best interest of the students in mind, it would be a positive change on many levels. But the challenge was that we had to implement these changes by Fall 2018. Not much time, to say the least! By definition, all of this required adjustments to our course catalog, class schedules, advisor practices, publications, assessment, faculty development, and even changes in PeopleSoft.

Most important were changes in how we would support these incoming students to ensure that they were able quickly to develop the basic skills they were lacking, skills that would enable them to be on track for the rest of their academic journeys.

One of our goals for the 2018-2019 academic year was for **every freshman** successfully to complete their required writing and math courses before the end of their freshman year. We know this is a success marker for them, one that will help them in achieving their academic goals.

So how did we respond to the challenge?

Like San Jose State Spartans, that's how!

First, with writing: This past academic year, **91 percent** of incoming freshman successfully completed their freshman

writing course. **91 percent!** The previous year was only 72 percent.

We have improved by leaps and bounds in developing the writing skills of our incoming students to a level where they can continue on to their upper-division courses with the confidence and know-how that they need to be successful.

THEN, there is math. Now, I realize this is not a competition, but if it is possible I would say our improvements there have been even **more** remarkable than in writing.

Let me just remind you. In roughly two months' time, we needed to design new math courses, new support courses, and a completely new curriculum.

Well, that is precisely what we did. The year before all of this happened, just 54 percent of our incoming freshmen were able to complete their math requirement by the end of the academic year. This year, **82 percent** of them did! That is just an incredible advancement in student achievement and sets those students up for future success in a way that even they might not have thought possible.

In all, **78 percent** of our freshmen completed **both** their math and writing requirements.

So we can all pay a fond farewell to remedial coursework!

I cannot tell you how proud I am of this development and the collective effort that made it happen. So how **did** it happen?

Though I hate the thought of leaving anyone out, I would like to call out some of the individuals and offices around campus that played a role in this:

Let me start by recognizing the faculty in the **English and Math** departments and those other departments on campus that teach these essential skills courses. They all put so much thought and effort into redesigning their courses.

**Tom Reisz** and his Academic Preparation Programs team led this effort and provided the vision and project management to ensure that the right people were talking to each other in this major cross divisional effort.

There is **Deanna Peck** and her **Peer Connections** team, who work so effectively to develop student mentors and tutors.

Our advisors in all of our colleges and the staff in **Enrollment Management** ensured that students and parents had the correct information to understand the new curricula and then placed close to four thousand students in the courses that best met their academic needs.

There was support from **Institutional Effectiveness & Analytics** to help assess how well the changes were working. I mentioned our **Information Technology** team, which had to implement sweeping changes in PeopleSoft.

There was the **Center for Faculty Development, the Provost's office, Academic Scheduling**, and so many others.

And last but certainly not least, I must acknowledge the members of the EO-1110 implementation team. These are the folks who met weekly throughout the year, rolled up their sleeves, sorted out various complexities, and did the really hard work not only to get this done, but to get it done the right way, **a way that would help our students succeed.**

**THANK YOU** to all of you for this tremendous achievement, for caring about our students, and doing all that you do to help them to be successful. **THIS** is what Spartan Pride is all about. You are a model to other CSU campuses and to other educators within our region, our state, and throughout the country.

Please, let's give a **BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE** to all of those who played such important roles in this Student Success achievement!

(PAUSE and LEAD APPLAUSE)

Now, even with all of that great news, we still have work to do, namely in our equity gaps. Those gaps persist, and we need to lower them and eventually eliminate them altogether.

So there is tremendous effort taking place in that arena. **Kathy Wong-Lau** and others in her **Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion** are working with colleagues across campus to develop strategies for faculty development in order to change our classroom pedagogy and create the most welcoming, most inclusive teaching environments possible. We anticipate doing some tweaking around the edges this year to help rid ourselves of any equity gap once and for all.

Also in the area of Student Success, our **Educational Opportunity Program [E-O-P]** is 50 years old this year! The EOP, through activism and social justice, has helped shaped higher education for the past five decades, and at SJSU we currently have nearly 3,000 EOP students in a variety of majors and disciplines. We are very pleased to be sending staff and students to the EOP 50th Anniversary Conference in Long Beach next month!

So we have been doing tremendous work in support of Graduation Initiative 2025, and in Student Success overall.

But you know what? **This** is the year when we really have to step it up and put it all in place.

Student Success is the **entire** university's responsibility.

It does not reside in any one office, nor is it "owned" by any one Cabinet member, any one group of advisors, or any one set of faculty members. We saw this play out very clearly with our response to EO 1110.

Think about what you do in your day-to-day role here, and how it contributes to student success. What you do **matters**. It matters to our students, to their academic and personal success, and to their futures.

Student Success is an **attitude**. It is a way of life, a mindset, a standard operating principle for **all of us** at San Jose State. So I

would **encourage** and **challenge** everyone on this campus to focus on Student Success this year, and every year. And I know that you will.

(PAUSE FOR REFLECTION BEFORE MOVING ON)

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### Research and Innovation

Earlier I mentioned the appointment of Mohamed Abousalem as our new VP for Research and Innovation, and that endeavor is one I would like to discuss further, as growing our investment in research, scholarship, and creative activities is a big part of what we are aiming to do here at San Jose State.

Our approach to research and innovation is **directly** tied to our commitment to student success, to having meaningful impact on the questions that align with our values, and to supporting our faculty and staff in creating an engaging and dynamic intellectual environment so critical to any higher education institution.

Just under a year ago, we launched the **University RSCA Assigned Time** program, which is designed to provide all research-active faculty the time they need to engage in their scholarly and creative activity as part of their assigned workload.



All tenure-track and 35 percent of tenured faculty currently participate in the program, and we expect that number to climb each year.

So we are **finally** acknowledging—with actual resources!—that engaging in RSCA is **part of a faculty member's academic responsibility** at SJSU. This will continue.

Simultaneously, we are investing in the expansion of our RSCA support infrastructure. For example, we are recruiting **Research Development Officers** to help faculty identify and apply for external funding.

These Research Development Officers will focus on a set of strategic and proactive capacity-building activities designed to support faculty members in identifying and attracting extramural research funding, creating productive relationships, and developing and implementing strategies that increase institutional competitiveness.

The whole point, of course, in growing our RSCA activities is to position our faculty and students so that they can develop opportunities for innovations that we can then bring to society.

That is precisely why our new division for research and innovation will be setting up an **Office of Innovation** to provide facilitation and coordination services that help our campus bring their inventions, ideas, and methodologies to practice for the benefit of our local and global communities.

And what a foundation we already have to build upon! I would like briefly to mention just a few of the notable research and faculty achievements we have seen of late:

**Monica Allen and Laurie Drabble** from the College of Health & Human Sciences are working with **Carlos Garcia** from the College of Social Sciences and **Folarin Erogbogbo** from the College of Engineering to explore innovative strategies to reduce isolation, increase social support, and improve access to healthy food and exercise among underrepresented minority males.

This truly is a multi-disciplinary effort that will lead to the development of a mobile app that helps improve the number and frequency of health promotion behaviors among minority males. Great work, everyone, and a real team effort.

In the College of Science, I am pleased to report that 18 grants involving 14 different researchers from our **Moss Landing Marine Laboratories** were awarded during the last six months alone, valued at more than six million dollars!

A sampling of the projects includes Analysis of Zooplankton in Alaska; Seaweed growth testing; Leatherback turtles; Monitoring the San Francisco Estuary; Testing ballast water treatment systems; Pesticide remediation; and Nutrient cycling in kelp forests. Wow!

In our Department of Geology, **Kim Blisniuk** received a CAREER award, the National Science Foundation's most prestigious award in support of early-career faculty.

This award came with a \$314,000 grant, which will further Dr. Blisniuk's research in re-evaluating the seismic hazard potential of individual faults that make up the southern San Andreas Fault system.

The project also will include the recruitment of minority students -- especially underrepresented minority and women students -- toward STEM literacy and will enhance and sustain the capability to support geosciences at SJSU.

From the College of Engineering, **Wencen Wu** has been awarded a \$300,000 grant by the National Science Foundation to develop an integrated research, education, and outreach program.

She will do this by providing graduate students with interdisciplinary and challenging research experiences covering robotics, control theory, sensor networks, and partial differential equations, **and** by providing undergraduate students with the opportunity for early involvement in research activities through algorithm development and testbed experiments.

Wencen will work to motivate K-12 students through the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Engineering Ambassadors program by providing them with first-hand robotics experiences. Congratulations, Wencen!

And from our College of Humanities and the Arts, **Roula Svourou and Chris Donlay** in the Linguistics and Language Development group are partnering with external colleagues to research and preserve Domaaki, which is a severely endangered language spoken only in northern Pakistan.

As with many endangered languages, Domaaki has no written system, so the Pakistani team captures the language, area history, stories, songs, and recipes in audio and video recordings.

They collaborate remotely with their SJSU counterparts, who are analyzing the data and developing a digital compilation of the language.

Isn't this amazing? The fact that language is inextricably intertwined with one's identity and culture makes this research so important on a humanitarian level. Great work, folks!

One of the exciting things we are doing this year (something we have done once before in the area of cybersecurity) is what we call a **Cluster Hire**, or in this case, more specifically, a **Cluster Hire in Fire**.

Many of you are aware of the tremendous success we have seen in our **Fire Weather Research Laboratory**. Once we began to recognize the very special level of expertise that we possess in this vitally important area, we decided to prioritize this research discipline and embark on a dedicated effort to hire even more great scholars with backgrounds in fire studies.

The effort will be interdisciplinary, it will have a strong research focus, and it will connect our science, social science, and engineering colleges. For starters, we will hire a fire ecologist, a wildfire social scientist, an engineer, and a meteorologist, and these new hires will be just one element—though obviously an important one!—of our overall Cluster Hire strategy.

And that is an important point to make—that an effective Cluster Hire is not just about hiring new people.

In some ways, that is the easy part! The challenge will be in the collaboration, and the back-end work that happens afterwards. We want to be a national leader in this space, a model for how it can work effectively. And we will be.

I should add that Vin, our new provost, has an ambitious agenda, and this is part of it. He wants to get to the place where we have multiple “Cluster Hires” each year in a variety of topics and research disciplines. So the Cluster Hire in Fire is merely the beginning.

This is a good time briefly to discuss our **College of Graduate Studies** and the great work interim Dean **Marc d’Alarcao** is doing. This new college is a vital part of what we are trying to accomplish here in growing our graduate programs, and the success of our graduate students will be a centerpiece this year of our overall student success goals.

It might come as a surprise to some of you that 22 percent of San Jose State’s students are graduate students.

So, although we have a goal with our new College of recruiting some great grad students, the fact is that **we already have** great graduate students! So we will be implementing some new strategies and making new investments to ensure our graduate students are successful, particularly our diverse students. Stay tuned for future developments in this area.

I would like to close out this section of my address by mentioning three delightful and innovative projects that showcase the creative side of San Jose State, and the impact that creativity and the arts can have on our society.

One is a project of which I am sure many of you are well aware, as it has garnered a tremendous and well-deserved amount of national and even international media coverage over the past weeks.

I think I can sum up this project with one phrase: **“Pink Seesaws!”** (PAUSE FOR APPLAUSE AND LAUGHTER AS YOU LOOK UP TO BIG SCREEN GRAPHIC)

Virginia, are you here in the audience?

For those of you who may not know her, **Virginia San Frantello** is an architect, artist, and educator in our Department of Design. She and a colleague at UC-Berkeley designed and installed what they call a **“Teetertotter Wall”** along the U.S.—Mexico border. It was an instant hit and has attracted attention all over the world.

The great thing about this work, I believe, is that it is both functional and beautiful. And it brings people and cultures together, which aligns so well with San Jose State's mission and purpose. Thank you for this inspiring work, Virginia, and congratulations on the well-deserved accolades you continue to receive.

Secondly, I wanted to offer a shameless plug for a short film that our **Spartan Film Studios** just shot a couple of weeks ago. The part that I find special about this particular film is that it is based on a John Steinbeck story called "**Breakfast**," and its themes include things like gratitude, personal struggle, determination, contentment, and kindness.

So, like the pink see-saws, this is a project that underscores many of the same values and characteristics that we subscribe to here at San Jose State.

My hat goes off to Spartan Film Studios directors **Barnaby Dallas** and **Nick Martinez** for securing the rights to this Steinbeck story, and to the various instructors, industry professionals, students, alumni and actors who all are bringing it to life.

We hope to have a screening over at the Hammer Theater at some point soon, and the film also will be used by the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas. So, again, great work, everyone.

Finally, I wanted to mention this year's **Campus Reading Program**.

The book title and sub-title is “*Spare Parts*” – *Four Undocumented Teenagers, One Ugly Robot, and The Battle for the American Dream.*”

That should give you an idea of what it is about, but basically this is the story of a group of Phoenix teenagers who took down a team from MIT in an underwater robotics competition. It is inspiring yet sobering at the same time, and a reminder that talent is everywhere – but I don’t want to say too much, as everyone should read it for themselves!

Every one of our incoming freshmen will receive a copy, of course, and there are a variety of events taking place over the next few months related to the book and its themes. I encourage you to check out the Campus Reading Program website to learn more.

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### Culture, values, and community engagement

Before I continue on the topics of culture, values, and community engagement, I want to take a moment to reiterate a message that I shared with you earlier this week via email. We truly are going through some difficult and troubling times as a nation.

San Jose State is not immune to the kinds of hateful incidents that we seem to see on a regular basis now throughout the country and the rest of the world.



Just this month, we experienced a few incidents on campus that were completely inconsistent with our core values of diversity, inclusion, respect and understanding. And unfortunately, we may continue to experience them in the future.

Our community **will not tolerate** bigotry, hatred, discrimination or other forms of social violence against individuals or groups on the basis of their race, ethnicity, immigrant status, religion or other identities.

So as we kick off the start of the new semester, I want publicly to re-affirm our shared values of inclusion, equity, fairness, acceptance, and respect. Thank you.

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Governor Newsom's revised budget proposal in May continued with proposed increases for the CSU as well as additional increases for students' **basic needs**.

We are grateful to the Governor for his support of higher education, as well as the ongoing support we continue to receive from state legislators such as state senator **Jim Beall** and Assembly member **Ash Kalra** and all members of our South Bay delegation.

Senator Beall and Assembly Member Kalra deserve special thanks for the roles they have played in supporting our efforts to secure the Alquist Building to address much-needed affordable

housing for our campus community and revitalization of the Paseo area.

We currently are in deep discussions with the state's Department of Governmental Services, and we are hopeful that soon we will be given the opportunity to plan more intentionally for the repurposing of the Alquist Building. The obvious starting point would be to conduct a study to determine the particulars for how we can develop the property in such a way that benefits the university the most.

I can tell you that it likely would be a multi-purpose project that will result in much-needed mixed-use housing – **affordable, below market rate** units that we absolutely must have at this university if we are to continue attracting top faculty and talent—and especially diverse talent—to our campus.

Many of you responded to the survey on this topic that we conducted last winter, so we know that a cluster of affordable apartment units in downtown would easily be occupied by our faculty and staff.

If the development of the Alquist Building follows these plans, it would very well be one of the most important projects ever completed at San Jose State.

If done well, it would help our faculty and staff, it would help in the revitalization of downtown, and **ultimately it would help our students.**

Now, regarding **student housing needs**, we are going to continue clustering student housing around the southeast

quadrant of our campus, where we currently have more than four thousand students living. This strategy enables us to grow and build upon our residence life programs in a safe and controlled environment.

As we begin the planning for **Campus Village 3 (CV-3)** and look ahead to a possible **Campus Village 4**, our focus will be on ensuring affordable housing for our students at all levels, with special attention to the needs of our homeless or housing insecure students.

As you know, the “stickiness” of the campus has continued to take effect with the opening of S-RAC, the **Spartan Recreation and Aquatic Center**, this past spring.

That facility and others on and around campus will make student life rich and rewarding not only for the 4,000-plus students living here, but also for the 15-thousand additional students who live within a three-mile radius of our central campus, as well as our thousands of commuter students who brave the transportation challenges of the Bay Area to come to campus each day.

Speaking of facilities, we will launch a new **Campus Master Facilities Planning** process this coming year. This comes right on the heels of our *Transformation 2030* strategic plan and will be just as forward-thinking. Although we update our facilities plan each year, this will be the first comprehensive, full-scale campus master facilities plan since 2001.

**Ashraf Fouad** of our Facilities Development and Operations team is spearheading this project, which we hope will begin by early October after an external design vendor is selected. This will be a very big effort, and—like *Transformation 2030*—will be visionary and far-reaching in scope.

As you can imagine, it will entail all campus stakeholders, particularly on the academic side, since we need to anticipate the kinds of programs and curricula that may be developed over the next few years or even decades. That kind of information will inform what we need to plan for in terms of facilities, buildings, classrooms, laboratories, and other physical structures on campus. So we look forward to the Campus Master Facilities Plan and the process that will lead to its completion.

Along with the Master Facilities Plan and the Alquist study to which I alluded, there are two additional studies I anticipate taking place this year about which you should be aware.

One is a **Campus Climate Study** we will be conducting during the spring of 2020.

This will be an important university-wide assessment of learning, living, and working at San Jose State and will help us to understand the current climate that exists here. We have done similar climate surveys before, but this will be the first since 2015.

This will be an opportunity—**your** opportunity—to describe your experiences, your observations, and your suggestions that can help us to create and maintain the most welcoming and inclusive campus environment possible.

You will learn much more about this study in the weeks ahead, but one thing I want to emphasize is the anonymity of the project.

Though approximately 25 staff and faculty members and students are part of the planning committee, neither my office nor any top-level managers are administering the climate survey.

Instead, it is being run by a highly-respected external vendor, Rankin & Associates, that has conducted 130 similar studies with other institutions across the country.

We truly want your candid feedback so that we can uncover any challenges facing our campus community in order to address those head-on. So please watch for more details on our campus climate study, take part in it, and encourage others to do so as well.

The other study I am very much looking forward to this year is an **Economic Impact study**. I believe this may be the first such undertaking at San Jose State.

We talk so much about our campus being an important hub for the City of San Jose, particularly the downtown area, so we anticipate that this study finally will start to put some tangible data around that, and demonstrate once and for all that San Jose State University not only is a preeminent 21<sup>st</sup> Century public urban university, but one that serves as one of this region's biggest and most important economic assets.

So, all of these endeavors are very much tied together as we continue to create a safe, inclusive, welcoming campus environment where our students can live, work, study, recreate, and thrive.

We have done tremendous work in this regard over the past few years, as you know, with things like the Interdisciplinary Science Building (ISB) groundbreaking and construction, the opening of S-RAC, the enhancements to our dining program, our new and ongoing safety features, our efforts to create a more green and environmentally sustainable campus, and the upgrades to South Campus and our athletics facilities – that’s right, **Go Spartans!**

We have done robust work with our **SJSU Cares** program to ensure that students have a central resource to turn to for whatever basic needs issues or concerns they may have. Please, everyone, help get the word out to all of your students.

Assistance and resources are available in abundance, but they do not do much good if students don’t know how or where to find them.

In the broader area of **community engagement**, this year we also will be developing a comprehensive community engagement plan that will enable us to be strategic, purposeful, and thoughtful when it comes to our community outreach. We know that many, if not most, of you engage with various organizations. They may be civic groups, business endeavors,

educational organizations, industry-specific affiliations, or even recreational or artistic groups.

We want to **leverage** those relationships, and we also want to build new ones that are very intentional and meaningful in ways that benefit the university and our students. That is what our community engagement plan is all about.

Our students, by the way, are in some ways a great role model for us in the area of community service.

Our Center for Community Learning & Leadership is celebrating its 20-year anniversary this year, and based on reports from the Chancellor's Office, at least 80,000 San Jose State students have contributed more than 1.4 million hours of service in the last 20 years through service-learning alone. So we want to follow their lead.

### Closing

In closing, I would assert that this is **our** year, San Jose State. This is the year we step out, in a very intentional way, with the guidance of our collective vision represented in *Transformation 2030*, and make ourselves heard here in San Jose and in the broader region.

Whether we are being named by MONEY magazine as one of the **Most Transformative Colleges** in the country, by PayScale and CollegeNET as one of the **best universities for upward**

**mobility**, or by FORBES as one of the nation's "**Best Value**" colleges, San Jose State can no longer be called "underrated" or the "best kept secret" in Silicon Valley.

No. The cat is out of the bag, as they say. The secret is out! Thank you all so much for coming today. Subscribe to my blog or follow me on Twitter for continual updates about SJSU's achievements and accolades.

Please enjoy refreshments and conversation with your friends and colleagues. Have a fantastic semester and a great year! I look forward to the transformative work we will do together.

*End*