

Spring 2019 State of the University and Strategic Plan Unveiling

President Mary A. Papazian
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Thank you, Stef and Walt.

Let me begin by welcoming all of our attending faculty, staff, students, external friends and partners, alumni, and all of those joining us via live stream. Welcome back from Spring Break. I hope you found time to relax and recharge. Thank you all for being here today.

A special welcome to Mayor Sam Liccardo and alumnus Councilman Raul Peralaz, two special friends of San Jose State who share our commitment to a strong partnership between the university and the city in which we live.

Given the everyday bustle of our lives and responsibilities, it would be understandable if at times we forget all that we have accomplished.

But we should all pause on occasion, take a step back, breathe a little, and celebrate what we have done! And collectively, we have done remarkable things.

I hope you see today as a chance to reflect on all we have accomplished as we look forward to our future.

In fact, today marks the start of what I hope will be a new tradition here at San Jose State: a springtime State of the

University address to reflect on and celebrate our accomplishments throughout the year and prepare for the next steps in our development.

And, for this inaugural address, we have an added bonus, which, as Stef and Walt described, is a sneak preview of our new Strategic Plan, the full copy of which is available online as of today. The Executive Summary, which you should all have, should give you a good overview of the plan's high-level objectives, though I will touch briefly on the five principle goals at the close of my remarks.

In addition, I hope to take a brief look at how far we have come, where we currently find ourselves, and how we have arrived at our collective vision and plans for these next several years.

Let me say in brief that the state of our university is strong, and we are gaining momentum on many fronts. It is an exciting time to be at San Jose State University!

Change – past and present

I know it will come as no surprise to anyone here for me to report that we are in the midst of great change at San Jose State, which builds on the strong foundations built by generations of faculty, staff, and students who have come before us.

In fact, that is one of the reasons we have entitled the new strategic plan, *Transformation 2030*. But change is nothing new for us, and certainly not unique to my administration.

Throughout our history, from our early beginnings in 1857 as a promise to bring education to the developing frontier, we have changed and evolved with regularity to meet the emerging needs of the times.

In my Fall Welcome address last August, I anticipated the continuation of a change agenda, one that is meant to align with the ambitious strategic plan that is now completed. But we transform ourselves as a university only as the needs of our students change, as the region and world around us continue to evolve—not just for the mere sake of change.

I am sincerely appreciative to the people of this university and to our partners in the community for the patience you have shown in the midst of all the changes we have seen in the past few years. I know it has not always been easy.

Change can be unsettling. With every realignment, adjustment, or new approach, individuals, programs or departments can feel like they may have lost something. This is an inevitable, very human emotion. Some may feel that change brings about a sense of “winning” and “losing” in terms of programs that remain untouched vis-à-vis those areas that might experience modifications.

But this is not about what we gain, or what we lose.

Well, actually, it *is* about gaining. It is about what we do to ensure our university, our students, our faculty, and our community all gain. It is about our commitment to excellence, and how that commitment leads to opportunity for our students. Talent, desire, and aspiration are all around us, but opportunity

is not. Opportunity only emerges when we commit to excellence and become the very best that we can be.

So change needs to happen in order to achieve all of this, particularly as the world around us changes at increasingly chaotic speeds. Again, I am grateful to all of you for your patience, understanding and willingness to work through this change agenda of ours.

Research, graduate, and doctoral studies

We have seen a number of important advancements since concluding the university's last strategic plan, *Vision 2017*, including a strengthening of our academic programs, improvements in graduation rates, stronger recruitment of tenured and tenure-track faculty members, and concrete steps toward the creation of a more unified campus community. I would like to touch on just a few of these recent developments and successes.

You may have noticed that I have written a great deal in my blog about our efforts to help prepare our students to be global citizens and community leaders once they graduate and embark on careers. Our core mission is to ensure that our students graduate with the tangible skills and knowledge they will need to be successful and to thrive in their post-collegiate careers and in service to their communities, particularly in the innovative economy in which we find ourselves.

So we have worked closely with our teacher-scholars and industry and community partners to do just that, to ensure that curricular and co-curricular learning experiences offered to our

students prepare them to work in a global and ever-evolving workforce.

We initiated a five-month process in late 2017 that has set the foundation for investing in an essential initiative on research, scholarship and creative activity, or RSCA, as we affectionately call it.

We then began to partner with the Division of Academic Affairs, campus stakeholders and external consultants from the Council of Graduate Schools to examine the organizational structure and administration of graduate education and the formal establishment of a graduate structure to support these efforts. My appreciation to interim Provost Joan Ficke for her leadership in this effort.

I am pleased to report that those efforts have come to fruition. We appointed Marc d'Alarcao as Interim Dean of this newly created **College of Graduate Studies**, which will serve as a single, central university office and focal point for advocacy for graduate students and faculty.

This was a critical next step in recognition of SJSU's 7,600 graduate students and the university's offering of more than 70 graduate degrees and credential programs among eight colleges plus what soon will be four doctoral degrees, three of which will be housed in our newly configured **College of Health and Human Sciences**.

Student Success

Because our core mission is to educate a diverse student population for professional success and engagement in our democracy, we continue to be **bold** in our efforts to support CSU's Graduation Initiative 2025. The results to date have been very promising, and I am proud of our collective efforts in this area.

Our graduation rates have been steadily climbing. Currently our four-year graduation rate is 19 percent for freshman; five years ago we were at 9 percent. Our six-year graduation rate is 65 percent; five years ago we were at 48 percent. Most students are taking 4-and-a-half to five years to graduate.

Our two-year graduation rate for transfers is 32 percent, compared to 19 percent just five years ago, and our four-year rate is 74 percent, up seven points from five years ago.

While these may just seem like numbers, they are important and reflect tangible improvement!

In addition to graduation rate improvements, we have implemented a number of other changes that demonstrate our commitment to student success:

- Thirty professional advisors have been hired in the last two years to support students in their efforts to remain on track for timely graduation.
- SJSU hosted its inaugural Student Success Symposium last year, with our second one scheduled for next week. More than 200 students, faculty and staff members attended our first

symposium, which included a number of guest and student representatives who shared their stories of resilience.

- In 2017–18, SJSU launched Smart Planner to assist students in mapping out their entire academic path to graduation. To date, more than 8,000 students have used this tool to help plan their degree path.

- In addition to the launch of our Student Success Centers, SJSU implemented Faculty Fellows in our MOSAIC Cross Cultural Center, Pride Center, Gender Equity Center and Military & Veterans Center to connect faculty with more students outside of the classroom.

Deep partnerships between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, as well as others across the university, are key to our student success efforts. But our work is only beginning, as we strive to improve outcomes further and eliminate all achievement gaps along the way.

To this end, we have spent much time this year examining our structure in an effort to provide better access and clear pathways for our students.

Among other organizational changes within the Division of Academic Affairs made earlier this year, we announced last month that Dr. Sharon Willey will now serve as Senior Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management.

Any of you who know Sharon know that she is widely regarded as a valued partner, insightful thinker, and content-expert who believes in our students and the mission of our historic institution. I have every confidence that she will continue to

build on the collective work already in place around student success and will help advance a highly coherent and integrated strategy to improve student retention.

Thank you, Sharon! And thanks as well to our new VPSA Patrick Day for his leadership in this area.

I also would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Stacy Gleixner for creating the foundation upon which we now build. Stacy's dedication to SJSU and our students is reflected in the programs and processes she has implemented these past few years. Thank you, Stacy!

Basic Needs

No discussion of student success is complete without addressing the basic needs of our students.

As I know you are all aware, there continues to be challenges confronting our region as well as the nation as a whole around affordable housing and the high cost of living. The impacts of homelessness, our exorbitant cost of living, food insecurity, and other issues are felt by our students and members of our community on a regular basis.

The success of our students goes hand in hand with their academic and personal well-being and can only be achieved when we help them to alleviate the various stresses and challenges that we know many of them experience. We will continue to collaborate with the City of San Jose, our students, and other regional partners to find sustainable, long-term solutions to these issues.

The good news is that the list of resources and help we offer continues to grow. They are largely housed under our SJSU Cares program, which offers individualized support by connecting students experiencing economic crisis, housing or food insecurity to a number of resources.

On Thursday, April 18, we officially will open the Spartan Food Pantry, our very first full service, staffed, walk-in food pantry that now offers perishable goods, fresh produce and refrigerated goods. The new pantry is an expansion of our campus's commitment to supporting students who are experiencing food insecurity and is a partnership between SJSU Cares, Second Harvest of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties (SHFB), and private donations.

One particular challenge we face revolves around communication. How do we effectively inform our students of the resources available and accessible to them? I would ask all of you here today to help us with this, particularly those who directly engage with our students on a regular basis. Let them know about *SJSU Cares*. Remind them about our new Spartan Food Pantry. Let them know we want to work with them to ensure that their basic needs are met.

SJSU – convener of important conversations

Another update on which I am pleased to report involves the university's important role as convener of timely, sometimes-difficult conversations.

What we aim to do at San Jose State is to provide a framework and structure that enables and empowers voices from diverse

viewpoints to engage in important dialogue. We have a long, proud history of that, as one of the enduring values here is our commitment to purposeful student engagement. We strive to be a place that allows these important conversations to take place, with diverse voices and viewpoints.

In the past six months alone, here are just a few of the ways in which we have manifested those values:

- Through our Institute for the Study of Sport, Society and Social Change, we welcomed a number of luminaries and successfully staged another of our Town Hall gatherings, which included discussions around the landmarks and legacy of athlete activism and civil rights.

In this context, let me take a moment to acknowledge the concern expressed over this past week about the fate of the historic track that Tommy Smith, John Carlos, and many other extraordinary athletes trained on back in the 1950s and 60s.

While the track long has been dilapidated and has been unused as a venue for track and field for decades, the **memory** of that historic site remains important for our history and everything it represents.

We very much appreciate the variety of voices we have heard in recent days, and indeed we will be creating a proper tribute to Speed City and its legacy near the new parking structure that appropriately will preserve the memory and historic significance of the track site and the extraordinary individuals who brought that track to life;

- We presented CNN's Jim Acosta with our Hearst Award for excellence in professional journalism and heard him speak about the importance of free speech and media ethics;
- At the Hammer Theater, we hosted economists and social commentators Robert Reich and Ben Stein for a riveting yet entertaining discussion about the current political climate and the future of the U.S. economy;
- We organized a number of events that celebrated the legacy of Frankenstein and its creator, Mary Shelley, including a panel discussion around what it means to be human in the digital age;
- Finally, the university's Institute for Metropolitan Studies and the Rotary Club of San Jose recently co-hosted an event that brought together a "Who's Who" of stakeholders from throughout the city to seek solutions to the homelessness crisis.

I should add that we are partnering with the Rotary Club on other projects related to the homelessness crisis that will enlist the help and creative energies of our own students. Thank you, Councilmember Peralez, for your opening remarks at last month's event.

There are a host of challenges and issues currently facing our region and nation, and San Jose State remains a place that encourages serious dialogue and listens to myriad voices in hopes of finding solutions. We look forward to convening many more such events, so stay tuned!

Other organizational and staffing changes

Organizationally, we realigned and re-energized our senior leadership team, moving the critical areas of Information Technology and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion into my Cabinet. Our search for an inaugural Vice President for Research and Innovation, who together with our deans and faculty will lead the RSCA initiative I mentioned earlier and thus help shape the university's quality research initiatives and growing innovation portfolio, is progressing well; finalists will be visiting campus in the next few weeks!

We also have filled vital Dean vacancies and leadership positions at all levels across all divisions over the past couple of years, and with all of these critical hires, we have added leaders who check their own egos and agendas at the door while aligning their work with our values.

In the recent months, we have welcomed **Dwane Anderson** as Associate Vice President of Development and Executive Director of the Campaign, **Christine Hutchins**, as Senior Associate Vice President for Strategic Communications and Marketing; and **Lisa Millora**, as my new Chief of Staff. Dwayne, Christine, and Lisa, please rise to be recognized.

Physical environment and facilities

There also is the physical environment of our campus. When we look around now and assess our surroundings, we can see a number of new facilities and buildings such as our expanded Diaz Compean Student Union that we opened in fall 2016; the establishment of our Chicanx/Latinx, African-American/Black

and Undocumented Student Success Centers; and our Student Health and Wellness Center.

In just two and a half weeks, we will have the formal groundbreaking of our much-anticipated Interdisciplinary Science Building!

The ISB will be just the first element of an ambitious, long-term plan to create state-of-the-art learning and research spaces in the southwest quadrant of the SJSU campus, something we are calling the Science and Innovation Complex.

But make no mistake: the ISB will be the **anchor facility**, a forward-looking blend of teaching and research that is sure to enhance our interdisciplinary STEM education, expand our research capabilities, and provide even more opportunities for our students and faculty to collaborate with industry partners.

Perhaps best of all: occupancy is scheduled to begin just three years from now. The ISB is going to be a game-changer for San Jose State.

I know that everyone also is anticipating the new Spartan Recreation and Aquatic Center, which is slated to open on April 18, and those of you who walk past the construction site have had a first-hand view these past few months as the facility continues to take shape.

This contemporary facility will provide another important gathering spot for our university community—especially our students—to recreate, swim, exercise and keep fit.

My thanks to Cathy Busalacchi, executive director of our Student Union, and to everyone working to ensure this new facility is up and running on schedule.

We also opened the Campus Village 2 apartment tower, the centerpiece of the broader Campus Village complex. And we are in the planning stages for Campus Village 3, about which we will have more to say next year. Though adequate student, faculty and staff housing continues to be a difficult issue, we are in active discussions with community and regional stakeholders in an effort to find solutions, and the student experience will always guide our work.

And we have made significant improvements in our South Campus athletic fields, which will support not only our intercollegiate athletic program, but also our students and community at large.

Developments, investments, and improvements such as these enhance our ability to fulfill our mission, but everything comes at a price, fiscally-speaking.

Our first comprehensive fundraising campaign, completed six years ago, raised more than \$208 million.

Philanthropic support for the university continues to soar, as we have brought in more than \$105 million in new gifts and pledges in the past three years—the largest three-year sum of philanthropic support in our storied history!

But to support and enable our new strategic plan, we need even more investments in our extraordinary students, faculty, and staff members to help our bold vision take shape. That is why

we are preparing for our next comprehensive fundraising campaign, which you will hear more about in the near future.

Community and partnerships

We have intensified our efforts to strengthen partnerships with our local community, including collaborations with industry, K-12 education and community colleges, government, and civic organizations. Tangible successes have included our award-winning CommUniverCity program and our East Side Promise partnership, to name just two examples.

Our operation and management of the Hammer Theatre also continues to be a resounding success. Audiences regularly enjoy student productions, poetry readings, topical panel discussions, and a variety of vibrant multi-cultural events. We should be very proud of the role San Jose State has played in revitalizing the downtown San Jose arts scene.

So, San Jose State knows the value of innovative projects and partnerships with government and private businesses. Members of my senior cabinet and I, as well as our students, faculty, and staff are deeply invested in and committed to the future of downtown.

We are well informed about the challenges facing the city and the region, as well as the many remarkable opportunities for inclusive and profound growth being considered by government and industry.

Let me pause for a moment and point out that we are making progress in creating an appropriate presence in this community of ours, despite some challenges along the way.

While we have some terrific partners and collaborators at City Hall and elsewhere, old habits sometimes are hard to break. Important people and organizations at times still forget that we are here, and the influence and resources we offer are still not intuitive to some of those stakeholders.

So we have been working very hard to change that, but it requires a great deal of time and energy, including personal effort on my part.

When I am not on campus, I can be found at a community or civic event, working to establish our presence and ensuring that our collective voice is heard.

This also may be a good time to remind you that I introduced some new presidential communications platforms over the past several months in an effort to communicate the university's activities and priorities regularly.

I have a new blog that I post to every two weeks, and believe it or not I am finally on Twitter! I actually love how social media is enabling me to communicate and connect with people both internally and externally. So if you have not yet done so, I invite you to subscribe to my blog and to follow me at my Twitter handle, "at" PrezPapazian.

So San José State has stepped up and now takes a leading role in the transformative change that is happening right here, all around us, in our own backyard. Looking ahead, growing San José State's dynamic research and innovation environment will allow us not only to adapt to but to **set the pace** of change.

With our ongoing commitment to excellence, the campus is poised to bloom and innovate, strengthening our connection to the surrounding San José and Silicon Valley communities and further fulfilling our social justice mission of access, equity, inclusion, opportunity, and success.

Other accomplishments and accolades

Those of you active on social media probably know that two of our favorite hashtags are “SpartanPride” and “SpartanUp.” And, I would like to take a moment to celebrate some of our exceptional students who are excelling under the guidance of our dedicated faculty and staff.

Later this month, San Jose State will send two teams of two students each as well as eight individuals to compete against hundreds of students from across the CSU system for top honors at the CSU Student Research Competition. This is just tremendous!

The student competitors include Richard Bridges, a grad student in the SJSU College of Health and Human Sciences, who has a research project around the treatment of Hepatitis C as prevention for end stage liver disease.

Eric Anderson, in our Charles W. Davidson College of Engineering, is a finalist for his project on 3D Printing. Also from the Davidson College of Engineering, Sky Eurich and Shivangi Agarwal, have a project focused on Semi-Autonomous Vehicles.

And I really got a kick out of this one – Sambhav Gupta, in our Lucas College and Graduate School of Business, is competing with a project called “Artificially Intelligent Tutors in the Classroom: A Needs Assessment Study of Designing Chatbots to Support Student Success.” We all know that A.I. is coming, so I hope our great faculty members aren’t worrying that they might one day be replaced by chatbots! Think of them as partners in our work!

Speaking of engineering, I am always pleased when I have the opportunity to attend or speak at a student-centered conference, as I did last month when we once again hosted the Silicon Valley Women in Engineering Conference. Dean Sheryl Ehrman and former dean Belle Wei did a great job organizing the event, and it was wonderful to see and visit with so many future women engineers from a variety of engineering disciplines.

It has been a great few months for women at San Jose State, and around the country.

In addition to the Women in Engineering conference, our Lucas College of Business hosted the 3rd annual Women in Leadership conference in March, where we welcomed a number of industry leaders to campus to talk with students about preparing for the workplace.

Our faculty, of course, is world-class here at San Jose State, and they continue to rack up accolades.

Craig Clements, in our Fire Weather Research Lab in the College of Science, quickly has established himself as the “go-

to” expert for the news media on matters related to wildfire behaviors.

Similarly, David Schuster, in our Human Factors lab in the College of Social Sciences, studies the human aspects of cybersecurity, obviously a vitally important topic.

Our faculty continue to have a global impact in their fields, including Chemical Engineering Professor Claire Komives (Ko-Mee-ves) who will travel to India in the fall as a Fulbright Scholar. She will be engaged in teaching faculty and administrators the active learning techniques that make our own engineering students so successful.

On a related note, San Jose State was named a Fulbright Top-Producing institution by the Chronicle of Higher Ed recently, for the number of international scholars who chose our university as a place to continue their research. This year, we have hosted three faculty members, a leading researcher in Artificial Intelligence from the country of Georgia, and an expert on human capital management from China.

There are so many more examples of student and faculty success and achievement, and I truly wish we could spend the next few hours talking about all of them! The strategic plan itself will lay out some of those I did not have time to mention here, so I would encourage you to take a good look at those when you have the opportunity to do so.

Shaping our Journey, and the Plan’s Goals and Desired Outcomes

So, as we launch our new 10-year strategic plan, *Transformation 2030*, I would remind us all of what its implementation really means, and what it is meant to achieve.

To ensure that the plan is as achievable and as realistic as possible, we have laid out five specific goals, each of which is mapped to desired outcomes.

1. First, we want to **engage and educate**. At San Jose State, we are ideally positioned to examine the essential questions facing our community and our world. We enjoy a breadth of academic programs, research and applied learning, and an extraordinary legacy of education and opportunity.

So with this first goal in our strategic plan, we aim to be a university of first choice, where we bring together exceptional people—students, faculty and staff members, and our community—to do extraordinary things as learners, creators and champions.

2. Our second goal is to **excel and lead**. I am already inspired by our superb faculty, whose scholarship and teaching rival any university, and whose support of our students and the development of knowledge is unparalleled.

So with this second goal, we want to be a leading academic institution where faculty, staff and alumni are regional, national and global leaders in their fields. Among the desired outcomes with this goal, we will excel in the engagement of people from underrepresented populations as thought leaders in scholarly activity, and we will foster cross-disciplinary collaborations across our academic programs.

3. **Grow and Thrive.** That is our third strategic plan goal, and it speaks to our desire to be an inclusive, welcoming and well-balanced community and institution that ensures long-term financial sustainability and effectiveness while also attracting, retaining and sustaining faculty, staff and students.

Earlier, I alluded to our upcoming, comprehensive fundraising campaign. Smart investments, properly allocated resources, opportunities for professional development, and key infrastructure decisions on matters like housing, transportation, and environmental sustainability all are important elements of this third goal.

4. The fourth goal of the strategic plan is to **Connect and Contribute**, which means that we need to be an engaged and dynamic urban university with strong connections locally and globally. Earlier, I spoke about our current efforts in this area, which are significant and ongoing.

We are building a dynamic future as a major 21st century urban public university that is recognized not only here in Silicon Valley and its surrounding cluster of innovation, but also nationally and internationally. We will be the nation's most underrated university no more!

5. Finally, Goal Number Five: **Rebuild and Renew.** We aim to be a flourishing, modern campus with state-of-the-art infrastructure, campus spaces, and technology to support learning, research and community.

We can see already—with the upcoming ISB groundbreaking, the pending grand opening of our Recreation and Aquatics

Center, and the new Diaz Compean Student Union how we are well on the way to achieving this goal. This goal also speaks to our digital transformation efforts and our many IT goals and improvements. Like Goal Three, our long-term ability to Rebuild and Renew is largely contingent upon the success of our next comprehensive fundraising campaign.

Conclusion

So these are the five principal goals laid out in our new Strategic Plan.

With this plan, we are taking the longer view, looking forward 10, 20 years, even longer into the future. We will ask ourselves: How are we contributing to solving the world's problems? Are we constantly reinventing ourselves, adding or modifying programs that are relevant to the changing and emerging economy that we see around us? Are we addressing these essential questions with solutions that reflect our core values?

We will draw on an emerging understanding of the relationship between technology and the humanities, and we should all be excited to be at the forefront of exploring the intersection between pure learning, application and impact.

As a university, we must be transformational for our students and our community. Students are at our core, and our community is our home.

While our strategic plan contains new directions and guideposts, you should also be able to see these values laid out plainly in each section.

I want to express my deep appreciation to all of you who participated in the strategic planning process thus far, whether through service on the steering committee, the taskforces, or participation in the campus conversations. We could not have done it without you!

Thank you for all you do. And now the adventure begins!