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Alexander Gonzalez

Inauguration Greetings

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Joshua Wood
Associated Students

It is an honor to be here today in the presence of so many inspiring people from our campus community and around the state. As we inaugurate the 11th President at California State University, Sacramento we do so with a shared vision for our campus a vision of a Destination campus. As the Student Body President in deference to this occasion I have prepared the following remarks to be shared today.

As the eyes of this State lay heavily fixed upon the future of higher education, the piercing burden to carry the weight of the expectations, constantly causes us to examine our policies, our leaders and even ourselves with the hope of bettering this system which has been charged with the daunting task of providing a rich educational atmosphere while constantly fighting for the resources needed to meet these goals. This sense of preservation and constant self-examination has led many leaders around the State in all facets of education to adhere to a tradition of seeking the status quo, to just do what we have to do to maintain the norm. But here at CSU, Sacramento we gather to Inaugurate a President who will not be satisfied with fulfilling the state quo, but will reach beyond with ambitious goals for a better future for our Institution.

President Gonzalez has embarked upon this challenge by displaying

vast leadership qualities, which have revived community interest in our campus, and created a new tradition, one that is defined by his ambitious goals for the future. On this day of celebration on behalf of the students of this campus I would like to instill upon you our Inaugurating President one point of information to remember through your years here at CSU, Sacramento.

Let us work in partnership to Continue toward a the Destination campus, let us continue to display leadership and promise, let us continue to make this campus better one student at a time, but most importantly let us continue to fight towards the greater goal of a campus where every student has the opportunity to be retained and graduate. Together we can foster excellent academic and student programs that will increase the retention and graduation rates of all students, and thus empower a community, which will be defined by ambitious goals as well as success. The realization of the Master plan for California education is in your hands we put our trust in you and give you our support.

Larry Cook
Alumni Association

On behalf of the Sac State Alumni Association, I would like to offer our congratulations to president Alex Gonzalez on the occasion of his inauguration as the eleventh president of California State University, Sacramento. During his short tenure president Gonzalez has been very supportive of the Alumni Association and the programs and events that we are involved with. In addition he has shared his plans to increase awareness of our university in Northern California and the Nation.

President Gonzalez is driving to do much more than that, he is willing to put his full effort on the line to accomplish what we need to take our university to the next level in education, excellence, facilities and accomplishments. However he can't do this alone, he needs all of us; Faculty, Staff, Students, Alumni, Business and Community Leaders, City and County Officials, and many others, to accomplish this goal. With our support and with the drive and direction President Gonzalez brings with him to our campus we can develop Sac State into the outstanding education facility we all know it can be.

In the business world it is not often we are able to find a leader that is willing to give so much effort to the task at hand. In President Gonzalez we have that dedicated leader. We can't miss the opportunity he is giving us to create the best University in the CSU system. So I urge all of you to make every effort to assist President Gonzalez in any way you can, and to be a part of the progress and advancement of our fine University.

Cindy Collins
University Staff Assembly

Good afternoon and welcome President Gonzalez, Gloria and honored guests. My name is Cindy Collins and I am the president of the

University Staff Assembly. It is a distinct honor for me to participate in today's inauguration ceremony as the staff representative. President Gonzalez will be receiving a gift from staff of a set of bookends that were designed and created by one of our colleagues, Rod Sorenson. Rod used a very special and rare wood because it came from a tree that once lived on this campus. We chose to give bookends for the practicality as well as the beauty of the gift. The bookends themselves are very symbolic of the working relationship between the staff and faculty who together as a unit support the students who are the reason the university exists.

The tree itself is also a reminder of how a university is structured. The trunk of the tree is likened to the Administration - there to support the entire structure. The branches surely are the faculty - without them the tree would have no form. Certainly the leaves are our students - multitudes of them in all different shapes, sizes and colors, dancing in the wind and changing with the seasons. They give evidence to the ever-altering nature of life. However, no tree can live long without a strong and healthy root system - this is the role of the staff. Through our work we bring the essential nutrients to every part of the tree. Underground, unseen, quietly and oftentimes without much tangible reward, we do our jobs proudly, with dignity and strength, for the good of the tree. As Master Gardener it is your job, President Gonzalez, to nurture and care for our tree.

It is with great Pride in the Past and Promise for the Future that the staff welcomes you to our university.

Murray L. Galinson, Ph.D.
Chair, CSU Board of Trustees

Good afternoon.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to welcome all of the members of the CSU Sacramento family who have joined us here today.

I am honored to be here to celebrate such an important milestone for Alex Gonzalez and for this university.

CSU Sacramento is a dynamic institution that embodies the California State University mission.

This university is a vibrant part of the community and the surrounding region. In fact, one out of every 26 people who live in this region is a CSU Sacramento graduate.

This university has an incredible impact and touches many, many lives.

Alex, the Board of Trustees believes that you and CSU Sacramento are well matched.

In your short time here, you have already demonstrated outstanding intellect, talent, and experience in building university-community partnerships.

You have a host of new projects on tap, including an ambitious campus master plan.

You have a keen sense of this university's role in the community, and you have the enthusiasm and "can-do" spirit to inspire others to excellence.

In your fall convocation address, you told the university that your administration is focused on leading and on cheerleading.

You help bring out the best in your employees and students.

Alex, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, I congratulate you on your successes to date.

We look forward to many more years of working with you and watching this university reach new heights of accomplishment.

Thank you very much.

Charles B. Reed, Ed.D.
Chancellor, California State University

I have often said that choosing a president is one of the most important responsibilities given to the chancellor and the Board of Trustees. It is a decision that carries a great deal of weight because it affects the campus as well as the entire community.

We recognize the important consequences of this decision – and we take this responsibility very seriously.

That is why, when it came time to choose a leader for CSU Sacramento, we chose Alexander Gonzalez.

Alex brought with him the leadership, the values, and the vision that made him such an outstanding leader when he served at Cal State San Marcos.

His combination of experience, talent, and forward-thinking optimism turned out to be an ideal match for this dynamic institution.

He has a passion for helping the kinds of students that we serve at CSU Sacramento and at the California State University.

One of the most impressive things about Alex is that he always sets high expectations for himself.

In the next few years, this university will face a host of new challenges and demands in meeting the goals of the new campus master plan.

These challenges will require a skilled leader who knows how to craft a vision, juggle priorities, and build partnerships.

President Gonzalez has shown us he can do all of this and more.

Under his leadership, I am sure that this university will meet those challenges and surpass our expectations.

I am now pleased to give him the “official” title of president so that he can continue all of his important efforts.

It is now time for the investiture.

Alex, will you please join us at the podium?

By the authority granted to me by the Board of Trustees of the California State University, I hereby invest you with the Office of President of California State University, Sacramento, with all the honors, privileges, and the responsibilities thereunto pertaining.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to present President Alexander Gonzalez.

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Inauguration Greetings

Reaching our Potential: Destination 2010 Alexander Gonzalez Inaugural Address October 4, 2004

Introduction

Chair Galinson, Trustees, Chancellor Reed, fellow presidents, community members, elected officials, family, distinguished guests, faculty, students and staff I bid you welcome.

I want to thank all of you for being here today, especially in the heat. It means a lot to me and to everyone here at Sacramento State. And I want to thank the campus and community for making Gloria and me feel right at home over the past year.

It is fitting that this inauguration is taking place during homecoming week at Sacramento State. And I say that because the ceremonies today are not a celebration of just one person. Rather, this is a celebration of the entire institution, a salute to the achievements of the talented and dedicated people who teach, work and learn here at this campus.

The ceremonies today offer us at the university an excellent occasion to recall our past and celebrate our present – even as we envision our future together. And these ceremonies offer all of us here today an opportunity to reflect on where we've come from as well as on our broader connection to the higher education community.

I've been at Sacramento State a bit more than a year now, and in that time I've developed a pretty good sense of the place. I'd like to tell you a few things I've learned: What you find here is a faculty and staff who are highly dedicated to student success and to the future of this institution. Together, we must continue to foster a culture that is, above all, about teaching and learning.

And make no mistake, our students have big dreams, and they're working hard to achieve them.

Most of our students work at least part time. And one-third also serve as volunteers, contributing a combined 2.3 million hours a year to the community. Since our founding in 1947, most of our graduates have chosen to live and work in this area, and now, as Trustee Galinson has pointed out, 1 in 26 of this region's residents is a Sacramento State alum. In fact, a recent survey found that 90 percent of the region's adults said we're vital to the area's prosperity, while three-

quarters indicated that they had been to the campus at least once.

Sacramento State is clearly a great regional university, a fixture in the life of the communities surrounding California's capital city. But let me tell you this: You'll hardly recognize it five years from now. The people of this university have grand ambitions for this campus – and over the last year they've asked me to be a leader who helps their goals become reality.

Together, we will be agents of change, and I plan to do all I can to fulfill your expectations and dreams. And we will bring about that change in an environment of great diversity that stretches our minds and yes, opens our hearts, so that we pursue the future with great synergy and common purpose.

Now I'd like to share with you our plan, what we call our Destination 2010 initiative.

Under Destination 2010, we're going to become a much more vibrant, residential campus – a premier metropolitan university. We'll foster excellent academic and student programs that will build our reputation throughout the West. There will be new student apartments, new classroom buildings, a recreation center, a new events center, a Space Science Center and more. And I know that community support will grow quickly.

You might say: Those are big ideas, Mr. President. Those are big ideas for a campus that has gone about doing very good work, excellent work, but doing it quietly for so many years. But what's different and how are you going to get there? Well, that's what I'd like to tell you about today.

Main

Let me begin by making it clear that we're not going to get there because I said so. I wish it were that easy. I think Destination 2010 and the campus master plan it includes is creative and solid. It builds on the strengths of this University and it fits with the dreams and aspirations of our constituencies.

And that's why people are going to make it happen. We must all be engaged in a process of discovery and creativity to ensure we succeed in our core mission: academic excellence and student achievement. Our people are the key.

As Bob Levine pointed out, I'm a psychologist, and I'm one of those psychologists who thinks individuals should be encouraged to flourish and reach their potential, to become all they are capable of becoming. I think society is fulfilling its most important function when it creates the conditions for that to happen. And I think institutions are most successful when they do the same thing, allowing their people to strive to be their best.

Although I'm a social psychologist, I'd like to borrow a concept that developed out of the humanistic psychology movement. This striving to reach potential I'm talking about was given the term "self-

actualization” by Abraham Maslow, one of the founders of humanistic psychology. He studied healthy, highly functioning individuals to see what made them tick – quite different from the usual approach of studying psychologically impaired and struggling people to discover our collective shortcomings. Later another leader of the humanistic movement, Carl Rogers, came to believe that everyone has this inborn drive to reach their full potential. The trick, he said, was giving them the environment and freedom to discover themselves.

Maslow described self-actualization this way, and bear in mind this was in the 1950s before gender-neutral writing came around. He wrote: "A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately at peace with himself. What a man can be, he must be."

That is the essence of self-actualization. It is a process, and maybe one that never ends. What is clear is that we are more fully human, more fully alive, the closer we get to achieving it.

Of course, Maslow was talking about individuals. But I believe it can work for organizations as well, that large institutions like universities are capable of self-actualization. In fact, I think universities are among those most capable of it because they are some of our society’s most enlightened organizations. What it takes is for the individuals within the organization to be energized to strive to achieve to their full potential. The people here need to be encouraged to and allowed to thrive if this university hopes to be its best. And Sacramento State will grow ever closer to becoming a self-actualizing institution as more of its people take the initiative.

The prerequisites for this have already been attained here. Maslow believed that self-actualization was at the top of a pyramid of needs and accomplishments – starting with simple survival and then security, then progressing to social acceptance and self-esteem. In other words, once people have basic survival needs taken care of and feel safe, and once they are securely part of a social structure and have a strong sense of self-confidence, then they can begin the process of self-actualization. They can begin focusing on being the very best version of themselves possible – which involves quite a bit of personal reflection as well as direct action. It sounds so simple, of course, but we all know how very difficult it is to be truly honest with ourselves about ourselves, and how difficult it is to act decisively on what we know.

Well, this University is definitely a secure organization, despite the cycles of state budgets that sometimes make it difficult to maintain stability and plan ahead. We’re here for the long haul. And we’re definitely a full and accepted member of our community. We’re socially established. We’re self-assured, confident in our ability to do well.

We just need to take that last and ongoing step. We need to look closely at ourselves and our values. We need to honestly judge what makes us unique as an institution and we need to become the very best Sacramento State University possible.

Part of that task is developing a clear sense of identity. There's been some talk around here of branding – Sacramento State, it is said, needs to brand itself. We have no clear identity.

I would agree because branding, or establishing a clear, recognizable identity, is a key component to achieving self-actualization for an organization. Branding is not some slogan or a choice of colors or a fancy logo. It's much more than deciding what name we should use. At its core, this process is an expression of an organization's most basic and important characteristics in everything it does. It is, like self-actualization, finding and living out the most fundamental things about an organization, of fulfilling that organization's promise. The logos and taglines will simply shine a light on that, helping to share Sacramento State's core identity with the world.

Let me say also that it's too simple to say Sacramento State will strive to be the best. The more appropriate goal is for us to continuously work to be ourselves. That is enough for any person, and it is enough for any organization.

When Sacramento State grows into a self-actualizing organization, it will know its own strengths and be clear about its mission. It will set its own agenda and be independent of passing fads and trends – even as it becomes much more able to respond creatively and effectively to the needs of our community, our state and nation. Our faculty and staff will be willing to try new things, not afraid of temporary setbacks. The programs they expand or build will be innovative and reflect the core mission of this institution.

And let me say this clearly: I don't know the many paths Sacramento State may follow with its academic programs or with its student service programs. I don't know more than a fraction of the groundbreaking projects or research waiting to be done. I can't guess all the small changes that will make life in the small town we have here on campus a bit better. But I do know this: a clear sense of purpose, a clear sense of identity and a rising tide of excellence and creativity will indeed lift us all.

The best that my administration and I can do is to create the type of organization that encourages people to make all that happen. That's the self-actualizing organization that I see.

That's what I believe, and it affects how I do my job every day. It means that my work as president isn't telling people what exactly they ought to be doing. It is primarily clearing out a safe space, providing the conditions and resources, and doing the cheerleading that helps our students, faculty and staff achieve their very best.

Conclusion

"To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

That's the stirring final line of Alfred Lord Tennyson's "Ulysses." It's a call, I believe, to realize our potential, to discover who we really are, to live out our identity – and to surmount any obstacles in getting there. It's a call to self-actualization. "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

For all of us, that is the effort of a lifetime. And because we have dedicated ourselves to the service of higher education, the work of our lifetimes resonates throughout society. Every year, students put their hopes and dreams in our hands. Our state and nation depend on us to pass on knowledge and wisdom, to provide guidance to our policymakers, to generate new understanding about the world. And we have met that challenge and delivered in a big way. To the extent that we evolve our institutions so they harness the potential of all our people, we'll find even greater success.

And now I'd like to present to you an example and focus on someone who has dedicated his life to reaching his potential and helping others to self-actualize by providing them with inspiration and support and living the words of Tennyson: "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." Mr. Alex G. Spanos is someone most of us know as a successful businessman and the owner of the San Diego Chargers, or for his philanthropic works. But more than anything, Mr. Spanos is a model of someone who has sought to be all he can be and strived toward self-actualization, while at the same time helping others. His philanthropy is well known as is some of the story of his life. He had to overcome many obstacles yet believed not only in himself but the power of others and in the importance of working together as a family and a team.

Today, I want to tell you that Mr. Spanos believes in this University and in each and every one of us that are a part of it. He knows we can achieve what we set out to do and knows our plan, Destination 2010, is our destiny. To that end, he has committed to provide \$10 million to launch the renovation of our stadium and to provide the lead gift for the construction of the Recreation, Wellness and Events Center (RWEC). Although he has supported our efforts in the past, this latest gesture is one of the clearest expressions of affirmation for what we do and what we hope to achieve. We thank you, Mr. Spanos, for your confidence and generosity. We won't let you down. Thank you.

Thank you all, once again, for being here today and for being part of this ceremony, but most important for sharing with me the good fortune of being part of this great institution.