

Fall Address 2018

August 23, 2018

Sacramento State: Sacramento's Anchor University

To all those who have been gone for the summer, welcome back. I hope that you are ready for another great year—I certainly am.

To all those who were here over the summer teaching our record 4,283 students (an 11% increase), to those who were taking care of our campus, to our staff who kept the campus running, and to those who were leading orientation sessions for our new class of 7,584 first-year and transfer students, thanks for all you did this summer.

Last year, we set a record and graduated 7,883 students, fulfilling our mission: “As California’s Capital University, we transform lives by preparing students for leadership, service, and success.” Everyone in this room and everyone at this University deserves applause for this remarkable accomplishment.

There have been so many accomplishments, not the least of which is Parking Garage 5...finally. Can you believe how fast the science building is coming up? The Student Union will be finished by January. Communication Sciences and Disorders has finished its move into Folsom Hall. The mathematics faculty are getting new offices in Shasta Hall.

And speaking of Shasta Hall, it has an amazing new mural spelling out S-A-C-R-A-M-E-N-T-O by 12 local Artists in collaboration with Wide Open Walls. August 28th, we will be celebrating the opening of Sacramento State Downtown at 304 S Street. Shortly, you will see more construction as we begin to expand the WELL and as we move the McAuliffe ball fields and prepare to add 1,100 more beds for student housing.

I see progress everywhere at Sac State. For the first time in our Division 1 history, our football team is nationally ranked in two FCS polls—19th and 23rd. Softball and Volleyball both won their respective Big Sky regular season titles.

Yes, I see progress everywhere, but nowhere more than with the 5 imperatives that are the driving forces behind what we are trying to do for our students, faculty, and staff:

1. The Graduation Initiative
2. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
3. Philanthropy
4. Community Engagement
5. Safety

Today, I want to give you an update on our progress with and, frankly, our shortfalls within these imperatives. We have come a long way, but we still have a long way to go.

Let's begin with the Graduation Initiative, and let's begin with great news.

Our projected 4-year graduation rate for this year is 14%--no longer are we talking about our woeful 8's. Our projected 2-year graduation rate for transfers has increased to 37.5%, three percentage points higher a year ago.

Our Finish in Four and Through in Two campaigns are working. And the nation is taking notice. On October 28th, Sacramento State will receive the 2018 American Association of State Colleges and Universities' Excellence and Innovation Award for Student Success and College Completion for our Finish in Four Campaign. This award was won by the faculty who taught 726 additional sections, providing 13,000 extra seats for our students. This award was won by the Deans, Associate Deans, and Department Chairs who scheduled these 726 sections. This award was won by all the advisors and faculty who have implemented integrated advising.

This award was won by everyone including faculty and staff in Information Resources and Technology, Student Affairs, the Registrar's Office, Academic Affairs, and Business Affairs who implemented Ad Astra, Platinum Analytics, Smart Planner, and all the other software. This award was won by the custodians and facilities personnel who clean our classrooms and offices and maintain our beautiful campus. This award is huge and well-deserved.

We have also made progress with our 6-year graduation rate—improving from 47.3% last year to a projected 51% this year—the first time ever that the rate has exceeded 50%. Nearly 75% of our first-year students are taking 15 credits or more—which is a huge leap from 21% in 2010. Unfortunately, only 38% of our transfer students are taking 15 credits—we have much more work to do there.

We also have a lot of work to do if we are going to reduce our achievement gaps to zero. Our Pell-eligible achievement gap is -5%. Our male achievement gap, relative to female students for native freshmen, is -10%.

Our 6-year graduation rate achievement gap, relative to white students, for our African-American students is -10.54%, -1.3% for Asian-American students, and -0.35% for Latinx students. We can and will do better—the next award that we must and will win will be for Excellence in Eliminating All Achievement Gaps, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or economic disparities.

Doing so will require even more intrusive advising based on predictive analytics, using tools like EAB and Illume. It will require utilizing all the tools that the Math Department is developing like PLUM (Placement, Learning and Understanding Mathematics) as we eliminate remedial math courses. It will require us to find innovative solutions like Arts and Letters' Directed Self Placement program and the creation of stretch courses. It will require all eligible students to plan at least four semesters of courses in Smart Planner in order for us to predict demand and schedule classes.

I know that we can succeed because I see success all around us with the Graduation Initiative. We have increased the number of our academic internships to 2,629—and we know that getting these internships dramatically reduces the time to degree for our students. We also know that supplemental instruction dramatically reduces time to degree.

Last year, we increased the number of courses with supplemental instruction by 39% and the number of students served by 43%--we can and we will do more.

We also know that our underrepresented minority students will most likely be retained and graduate sooner if the faculty who teach them and the people who work at the University look like them, which brings us to the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion imperative. It is hard to believe that the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion is over 2 years old. The Office has recently changed its name to the Office for Inclusive Excellence.

The Executive Director of Inclusive Excellence, Diana Tate Vermeire, as a member of the President's Cabinet, has the same authority and responsibility as all other Cabinet Members, the Senior Leadership of the University, because that is how important the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Imperative is to the campus.

Inclusive Excellence can only be achieved through collaboration amongst all sectors of the campus. The Executive Director and the Diversity Council are committed to working with the Colleges, the Faculty Senate, the Committee on Diversity and Equity, the Office of Faculty Advancement, the Office of Equal Opportunity, and others on facilitating training and helping the campus understand best practices, especially with hiring. This summer, the Office for Inclusive Excellence collaborated with the Office of Faculty Advancement to publish an updated Faculty Recruitment Guide in order to give search committees the tools that they need to recruit successfully and to create robust, diverse hiring pools. And frankly, we need both of these Office's help.

In 2016-17, 45 tenure-track faculty were hired. In 2017-18, 78 tenure-track faculty were hired. For 2018-19, we are welcoming 58 new tenure-track faculty. That's the good news. Now the bad news.

Of those who reported their ethnic background—and not everyone did—46% of those hired were faculty of color in 2016 when we started this initiative. In 2017, that number dropped to 38%. This year, only 35% of the new faculty reported that they were faculty of color.

These numbers are unacceptable, and the Office of Faculty Advancement and the Office for Inclusive Excellence need to work hand in hand to reverse this surprising and disappointing downward trend.

Equally disturbing, our staff and administration are not representative of our community or our students. 7.7% of our staff are African-American; .5% are Native American; 15.3% are Asian American and Pacific Islanders; 19.4% are Latinx. These numbers do not reflect our community, nor do they reflect our values as a Hornet Family. They must change, and they will change because of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion imperative, because of the teamwork of the Office for Inclusive Excellence, the Office of Faculty Advancement, the Office of Equal Opportunity, and Human Resources—because of all of you who serve on hiring committees, who are making hiring decisions, who are ensuring that we have robust, excellent pools of candidates. Diversity is not only about ethnicity and color.

It is also about sexual identity, gender, abilities, religion, experiences, and many more distinguishing factors. I am very pleased that a new director of Services to Students with Disabilities has been hired. I am also pleased that we have a new Coordinator for the Pride Center.

We are currently seeking a new director for the Americans with Disabilities Act. And we have a task force report on transgender students, faculty, and staff that must be (and will be) acted upon.

I want to reassure you that I personally and the University as a whole, and I am certain everyone in this room, we are all committed to supporting the mission and the goals of the Office for Inclusive Excellence and the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion imperative.

The University and I, in particular, are also committed to raising more philanthropic dollars for the University, to doubling the number of scholarships for our students, to rebuilding our reserves, to improving our facilities, to building an events center, which is why the 3rd imperative, Philanthropy, is so critical. We made substantial progress with donors and donations last year. The CSU System set a fundraising goal for Sacramento State of \$15.5 million. We actually raised \$23.89 million.

Thanks to the generosity of Ernest E. Tschannen, we raised \$9 million for the science complex. We have a goal of raising \$11 million more for the science complex in order to replenish our reserves from which we borrowed \$20 million so that it could be built.

Colleges, Athletics, and even Student Affairs will now have directors of development assigned to them to help raise funds. I got to watch one of the college directors work her magic a couple of weeks ago when she brought a donor to campus, showed him the crime lab, and introduced him to students. By the time the donor left, he had committed to establishing a scholarship in his son's name for criminal justice students.

We hope to announce shortly our first-ever eight-figure gift—yes, we will see a gift of more than \$10 million. So here too we are seeing true progress, but the actual number of donors dropped last year. So here too, we must do more.

I would like to skip to the 5th imperative to focus on the progress that we are making with safety on campus. I want to keep community engagement until last because we will be rebranding and remaking that imperative in a way that will have a major impact on the University.

I think that everyone is aware that we have had three major incidents in the two most recent years involving safety on campus. First, absolutely most frightening, there was a chemical spill in one of our chemistry labs. Then, there was lead in Santa Clara Hall from years of making lead hammers many moons ago. And then, there was the discovery of elevated levels of lead in our drinking water.

Safety, the safety of our students, faculty, and staff, is paramount at the University. The potential harm from these incidents could have been prevented. They prompted a safety audit by the State Auditor. I deeply regret that these incidents happened, but I do not regret that we had an audit as

a consequence of them—we now have better practices because of that audit. Since the audit, here are some of the things we have done.

Let's start with the coolest—the 8-2020 safety hotline. 8-2020—the number is easy to remember, and anyone can call at any time during working hours to report a potential or real safety hazard. It can be as simple as a dangling tree limb or water spilled in a hallway. It could be a bad smell in classroom or office.

It could be a trip hazard on a sidewalk or debris in the roadway or garages. Heaven forbid, it could be a chemical spill. What I want to remind you is that we are all safer when everyone is empowered to report safety issues.

Almost as cool are the QR (Quick Response) codes at every drinking water source. All you have to do is scan them with a QR app on your phone, and then you will know the test results for the fountain or spigot. All fountains and drinking water sources are now below the EPA action level. We are retesting a quarter of them each year. And we now have 37 filtered water bottle filling stations on campus, with more to come—more signs of progress.

A new campus-wide policy is now in place to improve safety in labs and shops. The policy requires that any student who has a class where Personal Protective Equipment such as goggles or gloves are needed must be trained by their instructor on safety and that training must be documented. Departments must maintain training acknowledgement forms and will be audited from time to time to make certain that the training is taking place.

Departments must also perform periodic self-audits to address safety and health issues. We have inspected all labs' safety equipment, and we have even added eyewash bottles in the Art Sculpture Lab. Sadly, we found that the Art Sculpture Lab required significant upgrading to meet current safety and health codes. The CSU System has concurred that we need to improve the conditions in the Art Sculpture Lab, and we were allocated \$3.92 million to make major renovations which will start shortly.

It is easy to change day to day operations; it is much more difficult to address the safety and health issues caused by deferred maintenance. We currently have \$590 million in deferred maintenance on our campus, and it is growing each year. I am very grateful that we were close to being fully funded by the State this year—I want to give a shout out to the Legislature, to the faculty, staff, and students who rallied for full funding, to ASI and CSSA, and to the CFA.

Unfortunately, we received only \$189 thousand in line item funding for the maintenance of our campus—a drop in the bucket. Without additional money from the State or the CSU System, we need to be very strategic with attacking our infrastructure needs, but we remain committed to attacking them. Indeed, the President's Cabinet has just finalized the 2018-2019 budget.

The budget is balanced, even though we were able to do very little to rebuild the reserves. Still, the Cabinet dedicated an additional \$1.8 million to fund repairs and deferred maintenance issues that are safety and health related. Now, we need everyone to step forward, to call 8-2020, to train our students, to use safety equipment, to make Sacramento State a safe place to work.

And stepping forward is the theme of the final imperative, Community Engagement. Community engagement is in the very DNA of the University. I can see it in the University's commitment to the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

I can see it in the Capitol Fellow's program. I can see it in the millions of hours in service that our students provide the community each year. Yet it remains only as Goal 3 in Sacramento State's Strategic Plan.

It is time to institutionalize community engagement, but not as community engagement per se. It is time for Sacramento State to become a truly engaged university with community engaged scholarship.

When I arrived, I didn't ask that we do so because I knew that we had to put all our energy first into the Graduation Initiative—as I said, there has been great progress there. I didn't ask us to become an engaged university because we needed to focus on becoming a caring campus where everyone belonged—and we are getting there, though you will see that we still have work to do when we release the results of the climate survey this fall. I also knew that we had to begin a major fundraising campaign to support our students. Now it is the time to begin to focus on becoming an engaged University.

Even though community engagement is at the heart of who we are as a University, it lacks purpose and focus. It is spread throughout the corpus of the University, but it is not coordinated. It is starting to coalesce, especially with the advent of Sacramento State Downtown.

All the Colleges have come together in that building to solve problems, whether it is racial healing through the arts or mental health solutions for the homeless or increased voter turnout. Sacramento State Downtown will be truly multidisciplinary—faculty and researchers dedicated to improving Sacramento, dedicated to our mission of transforming students for leadership, service, and success. Sacramento State Downtown not only validates our University as California's Capital University; it also ensures our place as Sacramento's University, as Sacramento's Anchor University, of which I will speak more in a moment.

It is also coalescing in the work of the Community Engagement Task Force. The task force's proposal brings together a variety of partnerships, volunteer efforts, community service initiatives, internship opportunities, and more. The proposal is strong and promising. It is multidisciplinary. And it too is an important step to declaring Sacramento State as Sacramento's Anchor University.

At the same time the Community Engagement task force was doing its work, a group from Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies has been working on establishing a Center on Race, Immigration, and Social Justice. This Center will be multidisciplinary and dedicated to the cross-fertilization of ideas and solutions. In the wake of Stephon Clark's death and the racism that all too often raises its head in Sacramento, this Center has the chance to heal Sacramento and to help fulfill Sacramento State's obligations to the city and the region as an Anchor University.

I cannot pretend that there is new money in this year's budget for expensive initiatives to move us forward as we become an engaged university. A huge portion of the budget had to be used to fund compensation and benefits. The Graduation Initiative will remain our top funding priority, and the \$3.67 million allotted to it will go to hiring new faculty and advisors, adding classes, and improving technology directly related to student success.

To become an engaged University, to become an Anchor University, we will need to pool our resources. We will need all divisions to contribute and to join together. We will need to end silos and eliminate duplications.

So, what is an Anchor University? An Anchor University is the opposite of the ivory tower. An Anchor University is driven to improve the community in which it lives—it aims at long-term solutions and improvements. While it relishes in one-time wins that can happen through service learning and community projects, an Anchor University wants to see true, lasting change through civic engagement.

It seeks solutions to poverty, hunger, inadequate education, unemployment, and health deficiencies. It overcomes the fragmentation of departments, colleges, divisions, and disciplines; and, instead, it marshals all the University's knowledge and expertise to solving real world problems. And in solving those problems it creates new knowledge, advancing research, learning, teaching, as well as service.

An Anchor University is committed to community and place. Sacramento State is committed to our region, to Sacramento, to the Promise Zone, to Del Paso Heights, to Meadowview. We are committed to solving problems where our students live. And we can solve those problems through the arts, through business incubation, through tutoring, through school counseling, through community health services, through economic development.

Thus, we have renamed and morphed the Office of Research Affairs into the Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Development. Thus, we have created the Carlsen Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship which will create the jobs that will transform neighborhoods and communities. Thus, the faculty from the Nutrition and Food/ Dietetics programs; the Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism; and the College of Business met with the California Grocers Association Educational Foundation to discuss a degree program that would focus on community nutrition – a major step in ending hunger.

We are on the cusp of meeting our moral obligation to make a difference in the lives of everyone who lives in Sacramento and the Sacramento region. We are on the cusp of meeting our obligation, as servants of the community and of wisdom and knowledge, to transform Sacramento. But we cannot get over that cusp if we remain in our silos, if we cannot combine the existing strengths, power, creativity, and genuine goodness in all departments and all divisions. I am confident, I believe, that if we pool our resources and work together as an Anchor University, and if we apply our economic, intellectual, and human capital to improving Sacramento, then we can truly transform Sacramento.

We can make Sacramento stronger, overcome historic inequity and injustice, create new knowledge through civic engagement, educate and better prepare our Future Hornets, and advance the public service mission of Sacramento State.

Just as we did with the Diversity Task Force, I am calling for the creation of a university-wide Anchor University Task Force. The first charge of this Task Force is to inventory what service and engagement efforts are happening not only at our University, but also in the Community. The second charge is to perform a community needs assessment (including a community health needs assessment).

This assessment should include an economic leakage and impact survey. The Task Force, just like the Diversity Task Force, will be open to anyone who wants to participate, and we will be sending out a request for names of those who want to contribute shortly. The larger charge for this Task Force will be to establish a permanent Anchor Institution Committee with an appropriate and effective reporting structure that will develop a plan for and will oversee the long-term and short-term investments in our community. This committee will also make recommendations on potential programs and centers.

Creating this Task Force will take us beyond goal 3 in the Strategic Plan. It will take us beyond community engagement to being a permanently Engaged University, an Anchor University. We are, and we must always will be, Sacramento's University; we must be the anchor for our communities; we can realize our community's dream. The mural on Shasta Hall is not merely symbolic.

As Sacramento's Capital University, as Sacramento's Anchor University, we are Sacramento. We are Sacramento because we know that it is our obligation to serve Sacramento and Sacramento State's students. We truly are No. 1. Stingers Up!