

2020 Fall Address
WHAT'S NEXT? – SACRAMENTO STATE

What's next?

That's what I find myself asking every morning when I wake.

I open the shutters on my window expecting that I will see, but hoping that I won't,
a plague of locusts.

I take a shower, grateful that I don't find any boils.

And then I drive to campus, but I drive past Carlson Drive so that I can drive over the
American River to see if it has turned into a river of blood.

Every time, the river is still crystal clear.

With the killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Stephon Clark and last week's shooting of Jacob
Blake,

with the 183,000 national deaths from COVID-19, 274 in Sacramento County,
with California fires and the closing of the University because of smoke once again,
with our students, faculty, and staff losing their houses yet again to fire,
with a spring semester without classes on campus,
and with the fall semester beginning with only 7.3% of our
classes on the campus,
with spotty internet in my house and in your
houses and with me and my colleagues frozen
on Zoom,

with the Governor cutting our budget by \$18M,
with an ugly national election coming at us this fall,
with me not being able to hug anyone but Jody (and I am a hugger),
and with Jody having rotator cuff surgery so I have to hug her very
softly,
it's easy to think that these are apocalyptic times, that we are
either in the midst of the apocalypse or racing upon it at
death-defying speeds.

Not so. This is not an apocalypse.

My infantile hallucinations each morning are not whom we are.

Hornets are resilient.

Hornets fear no challenge.

Hornets swarm to protect what we care about most:

our students, our faculty and staff, our ideals, the integrity and excellence of a
Sac State education.

Our mission is simple:

As California's capital university, we transform lives by
preparing students for leadership, service, and success.

Racism, pandemics, budget cuts, elections will not move us away from our mission.

We must be a swarm. We must be Hornets.

Legend has it that when the Board of Trustees and the new president drove onto what would be Sac State, everything was muddy.

The fields were hops fields, and cars got stuck, bogged down in the mud.

In the muddy frenzy, someone drove a car into a tree.

Hornets do not live in hives.

Hornets live in nests.

40,000 angry hornets swarmed out of the nest inside that tree.

They were the first Hornets.

Last year, we had 31,156 human Hornets.

This year, in spite of the pandemic, racism, and fires, we have 31,735 students enrolled, 579 more students than last year – a record enrollment.

Why? Especially when other universities are seeing unprecedented drops of more than 2,500 students, why?

Because we are Sac State.

Because we are you.

Because we are everyone on this livestream.

Because we are there, even when we can't be there in person.

Because some day, maybe not soon, we will match those original 40,000 hornets on our campus.

And because we are here to serve every Hornet who enrolls at Sac State—every Hornet.

The students believe in you, in Sac State.

In 2015, only 44% of our students believed that they could graduate in 4 years.

Today, 72% believe that they can graduate in 4 years.

Our duty, our responsibility, is to make that possible.

I know that there is no one out there who wants to disappoint our students.

But during this pandemic, we have to ensure that our students' education is excellent, that it is Sac State quality—

that is my message today, that the education must be fully accessible and that it must be antiracist.

I am confident that we, that you, will deliver.

Why?

Because of what I have seen.

In four days, we transitioned from over 95% face-to-face instruction to 100% virtual.

Everyone expected that the change would be traumatic, and for some it was.

But far fewer students dropped out than in a traditional spring semester.

And over 9,500 students, my unofficial count was 9,778, were eligible to graduate this spring, and virtually (pun intended) every one of them did graduate.

Compare that with last year's approximately 9,000 who were eligible, which was a record year for us, the most students who have ever qualified to graduate from Sac State.

I often talk about the “miracle on J Street.”

These last six months, we have had miracles taking place in living rooms, kitchens, bedrooms, and even closets throughout the Sacramento region.

I am blown away by the 9,500 or more miracles who now have Sac State diplomas.

But I am even more blown away by the 151,285 Zoom meetings that took place from February to May this year.

1,082,339 Zoom participants.

46,587,962 Zoom minutes.

An apocalypse? No, a Sac State miracle.

And this summer, I saw another miracle.

According to Chancellor Tim White, each summer, 20 to 40 faculty on each of the 23 System campuses are involved in faculty development.

Sac State never does anything small.

This summer, almost 800 faculty members participated in “Teach On! Summer Camp” to hone their skills for the inevitable continuance of the pandemic in the fall.

800, another miracle, but not really a miracle.

Our faculty care.

Our faculty have big hearts, and they have always had big hearts.

And our staff have equally big hearts.

Let’s consider just one division: Information Resources & Technology. IRT had to make a huge pivot.

The first day that we shut down, no one ate lunch.

They were too busy repurposing laptops so that they could be used at home, at our students’ and faculty homes, so that education could continue.

The second day, I watched yet another miracle as socially distanced lines of faculty and students wound around the AIRC.

One after another, each got a computer, or a hot spot, or a camera, or whatever they needed.

In the back offices, IRT was purchasing a million dollars of additional computers.

I will never forget the faculty member who came into the AIRC to pick up a computer for one of her students who was working at the cash register at a local grocery store and couldn’t get to the AIRC.

The faculty member personally guaranteed that she would pay for the computer if the student didn’t eventually return it.

Another miracle on J Street?

Yes, but miracles are routine here.

The network team, in the meantime, deployed a software phone tool so that our computers at home could be phones, so that we could stay in touch with each other and with our students.

Who knew that was possible?

Another miracle? Probably not.

But IRT has been miraculous during this crisis.

I bought everyone pizzas.

The Dominos' pizza guy got lost, but we tracked him down, and we wheeled the pizzas into the AIRC on the empty carts that had been full, just hours before, with the loaner laptops.

In between giving out more and more computers, people wolfed down the pizza.

Food in the AIRC, unless smuggled in, that probably was a miracle.

But I will never forget IRT's dedication, and I will never forget the sense of relief that so many people had when they clutched their new computer in their hands.

A computer today is life-link to education, the most precious possession and achievement in today's world.

The only possession and achievement that today's politics and today's pandemic cannot take away from our students is their education.

Pizza is not a miracle, but the education that we provide from Sac State is.

And everyone at Sac State is providing that education.

From the custodians who are moving from night custodians to be day custodians to clean labs, classrooms, residence halls.

To the grounds crew who are managing the devastating effects of the heat waves we are experiencing.

To the facilities' folks who are keeping the air conditioning running so that research can continue, and so that faculty can come to campus to record lectures in their labs and classrooms.

And then there are all the support services.

More miracles are occurring in the support services.

The Peer Assistance Resource Center, or what we call PARC, is fully involved with our most under-resourced students.

PALS, Peer Assisted Learning Services, is still offering our students problems to solve so that they have the skills to solve complex problems in their academic courses.

Supplemental instruction, in my opinion the number one booster of academic success, is up and running virtually.

The Dreamer's Resource Center is providing legal and emotional support for our undocumented students.

Full Circle continues to support our Asian and Pacific Islander students.

And our Guardian Scholars are supporting each other, creating the family that they have often never had.

I met recently with the new staff in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center.

They are preparing for a record number of returning and new Black students.

The Pride Center, The Women's Resource Center, The Multicultural Center, as they react virtually, are all miracles—

they are there to support our students and to help them to graduate in a timely manner in order to fulfill their dreams.

Miracles are everywhere but so are stressors and, worst, dangers.

COVID-19 has made us change as a University.

George Floyd and Breonna Taylor are making us change as a University.

Some of those changes began with the brutal murder of Emmet Till, but the legacy of slavery is well over 400 years long.

What's next?

None of us know for sure.

Certainly, asynchronous and synchronous virtual instruction are not going away.

Hybrid courses will become a regular part of instruction on campus, with half of the students attending one day and half the other day, alternating being online.

We already have plans to turn 155 classrooms into smart classrooms.

At \$22,000 per classroom, it will cost us \$3.4 million—

Now we just have to find the money.

Let's hope that Congress gets its act together and federal dollars arrive to help.

COVID-19 forced us to go paperless.

Finally, you will be able to go online and get your W2 form.

The state is doing away with paper pay stubs.

Graduate Studies automated all of its forms this year.

Student Affairs and Academic Affairs have come together to automate admission and registration processes.

We have electronic safety plans for almost every department on campus.

So there have been some positive outcomes out of the pandemic crisis.

The Hornet Launch is a perfect example.

Because Orientation had to be virtual this year, we had to rethink the whole process, especially advising and enrolling first-year students into classes.

We surveyed our students to find out what their interests were, what they thought that they wanted to study, and what careers that they might want to consider.

And we began early advising, reaching out to the students virtually.

Using their preferences and using SmartPlanner, we pre-enrolled the students in 15 semester credit hours.

Of course, we gave them options;

we gave them the ability to change courses;

we gave them the ability to take fewer courses.

91% of our incoming first-year students are enrolled in 14 semester credit hours and as such are taking their first steps to graduating in 4 years.

91% is truly a miracle.

It is even more of a miracle that only 252 students chose to take the “undeclared” route.

Our second-year students are taking an average of 14 credit hours and our juniors are above 13 – both are a record for Sac State.

Of course, some of these students will find that a full load of 15 credit hours is too much for them.
Many of them may find that the major that they chose is really not right for them.
They may very well want to explore other majors.
Not everyone needs to, or even should, graduate in 4 years.
College—an education—is not only about careers.

Going to college is a rite of passage for young as well as adult learners;
education at Sac State is, as our mission statement that I have already quoted once says,
about “transforming lives for leadership, service, and success.”

Every student deserves the chance, the possibility, of graduating in four years.
We have to do everything that we can to make it possible.
And we, as educators, have a duty to believe in our students, just as they believe in us.
In 2015, 28% of our first-year Hornets enrolled in 15 or more semester credit hours.
In 2019, 73% took 15 credit hours.

And to drill down more explicitly regarding the abilities and desires of our students, from 2015 through 2019, our first-year Black students increased from 19% taking 15 credit hours to 68%.
And our Latinx student increased from 23% to 75%.
Our Asian American and Pacific Islander students increased from 29% to 71%.

These numbers tell me that we are heading in the right direction, that our students want to take a full-load so that they can graduate in four years without an extra two years of additional tuition and debt.

Quite literally last year, I am told by OIREP, our students who graduated in 4 years instead of 6 years, saved over \$50 million.
Sadly, until the last couple of years, over half of the students who attended Sac State never got a degree.
That is part of the reason why there are over 63,000 people in Sacramento who are within 5 courses of receiving a degree.
That is a large part of the reason why the College of Continuing Education with the help of the other colleges have launched ProjectAttain!, a degree completion initiative for adult learners.
Not all the jobs that COVID-19 has eliminated are coming back.
But, thanks to ProjectAttain!, Sac State is ahead of the curve.

And we are ahead of the curve for those students who can't, or chose not to, take 15 credit hours.
We have seen a 72% increase in undergraduates enrolled in summer sessions.
3,449 students enrolled in summer courses in 2016.
In 2020, this summer that we have just completed, 5,931 undergraduates took one or more summer course.
Yes, there is more than one way to graduate in 4 years.

We cannot simply take a defensive position against COVID-19, against racism, against a faltering economy, against budget cuts.

We must lean in; we must be progressive; we must fight for our students' success.

And we cannot lose what we have already won.

Sac State is a miracle.

What we have accomplished through the Graduate Initiative is miraculous.

Four years ago, our 4-year graduation rate was 9%, after hovering around 8% for over thirty years.

This year, our 4-year graduation rate is 22.4%

Four years ago, our 4-year graduation rate for our Black students was an abysmal 4.3%.

This year, our 4-year graduation rate for our Black students is 15.6%.

Four years ago, our 4-year graduation rate for our Latinx students was 8.6%.

This year, our 4-year graduation rate for our Latinx students is 21.9%.

Four years ago, our 4-year graduation rate for our Asian and Pacific Islander students was 5.2%.

This year, our 4-year graduation rate for our Asian and Pacific Islander students is 17.6%.

Finally, we are closing the infamous “achievement gap,” or more rightly what Ibram Kendi teaches us in his bestselling book, How to Be an Antiracist, the opportunity gap.

Dr. Kendi will be with us virtually September 29th for our antiracist convocation, “Advancing our Commitment to Antiracism,” where, I am certain, he will teach us even more.

Four years ago, our 2-year graduation rate for transfer students was 27.1%.

This year, our 2-year graduation rate is 47.5%

Four years ago, our 2-year graduation rate for our Black transfer students was 19.8%.

This year, our 2-year graduation rate for our Black transfer students is 40.1%.

Four years ago, our 2-year graduation rate for our Latinx transfer students was 25.5%.

This year, our 2-year graduation rate for our Latinx transfer students is 48.1%.

Four years ago, our 2-year graduation rate for our Asian and Pacific Islander transfer students was 20.6%.

This year, our 2-year graduation rate for our Asian and Pacific Islander transfer students is 39.4%.

These numbers do not lie—our pathway is bright before us.

For four years, we have embraced five imperatives as our strategic guiding principles:

- (1) Student Success,
- (2) Philanthropy,
- (3) Diversity and Inclusion,
- (4) Community Engagement, and
- (5) Public Safety.

Just as we must not veer from our core teaching mission, we will not, and must not, veer from these core principles.

COVID-19 makes safety and philanthropy even more important to achieving our objectives.

The deaths of so many Black people in our streets and in our backyards,
the rise in white supremacy,
the virulent politics in our nation,
Black Lives Matter,
all point toward the work that we need to do related to student
success, community engagement, and diversity and inclusion.

Our faltering economy, the budget cuts we are undergoing, the loss of jobs that our students and their families are experiencing are real, and we must address them with the guidance of all five of these imperatives.

We are in a crisis, but, as I said in the beginning, we are Hornets.

We must swarm and attack all systemic factors that are contributing to this crisis.

COVID-19 and the limits our frail healthcare system, especially for people of color,
are not going to disappear with the coming of winter.

Racism will not be resolved in the coming year.

The budget cuts cannot be resolved by cutting one-time funds or by
encouraging people to retire.

There is no magical pool of all university expense funds, and
we are quickly spending down our reserves this year to pay
for COVID-19 expenses and to add additional sections.

These cuts will require us to resize the University.

We must learn to do less with less.

We need plans B, C, and D, not just a pivot plan, as we tackle COVID-19.

We must lead and learn from a virtual perspective, just as our faculty campers
did this summer.

We must, as one Vice President said in his self-evaluation, act quickly
while thinking long term.

So far, we have been managing by crisis.

We can no longer simply accept that we are in a recovery phase.

We must enter into a renewal phase, or, better put, a renewal mindset.

That renewal mindset will require us to redefine, refocus, and renew the five imperatives.

Actually, we have been doing that all along—these five imperatives have morphed and
evolved considerably over time.

The safety imperative came about as a reaction to a chemical spill in a lab, lead dust
in Santa Clara Hall, and elevated lead levels in many drinking fountains.

ADA, deferred maintenance (especially in our arts facilities), and grounds
maintenance, including tree maintenance, have become critical over the most
recent two years.

This year we must refocus on safety in the classrooms, labs, buildings, residence halls, athletic fields, gyms, even our offices.

COVID-19 will be here for years to come, even if we get a vaccine and even if we get cheaper tests.

So will the flu this coming semester and the next, which will exacerbate the deadly effects of COVID-19.

Will we have athletics, or will we not?

Will we have musical, theatrical, or dance performances or not?

I don't know.

What I do know is that we must dramatically refocus our student success imperative in light of COVID-19.

How do you deliver an excellent education to students whom you have never met?

What student learning outcomes need to be revised?

What changes that we made during this first round of virtual education were merely temporary, and what changes should we keep and even improve?

What will we do about grading?

How will we maintain our integrated advising model that has had so much to do with all the success toward which I pointed with the numbers above?

How can virtual tutoring and all the other support services be improved?

Student success has to be about student and faculty success in the virtual world.

We must avoid burnout; we cannot simply ask for more and more of our faculty or our staff.

As I said, we must do less with less, but not at the sake of diluting the curriculum or excellence itself, especially the excellence of Sac State.

We also have to avoid cultural taxation, not only as part of our student success imperative, but also as part of our diversity and inclusion imperative.

The only place where I see more and where I see asking for more is philanthropy.

Our success with this imperative is demonstrable.

You can see it in the Ernest E. Tschannen Science Complex, or the theatre with the new seats with all the names of donors on the backs of them.

With annual giving, we have gone from 1,705 donors giving a gift to 2,265 since 2017.

And 45% of those donors have given a subsequent gift.

There are many loyal Hornets out there, including an unprecedented number of faculty and staff.

Overall, we have seen a growth of \$23.9 million in donations to a total of \$50.57 million this year. Fifty million – a Sac State Record.

Now before you gasp, the truth is that this huge growth is because of the gift of Placer Ranch that has been in the making for many years.

We have actually been growing at about 15% a year, averaging closer to \$26 million per year.

Thanks to those individuals who gave to the President's Circle, in the past two years,

we have made available an additional \$40,000 to house homeless students,
over \$100,000 for emergencies that our students are experiencing,
and \$20,000 for the Food Pantry.

Because of the generosity of our donors, many of whom are our alumni, retired faculty, and staff, we have steadily increased our scholarships.

In 2016, we gave out \$1.119 million in scholarships.

In 2017, we provided our students with \$65K more in scholarships.

In 2018, we added \$185K.

In 2019, we gave out an additional \$408K.

And in this COVID-19 year, we were able to provide our students with an additional \$147K—for a total \$1,925,885 for our students.

Before the comprehensive campaign is finished, we will reach our goal of doubling the amount of scholarships that we award each year.

Additionally, in honor of George Floyd's life, we are working with the Cooper-Woodson College Enhancement Program to establish the George Floyd Emergency Grant, and have already received an initial endowment of \$60K.

The grant will offer financial support for students who are experiencing trauma crisis – meaning a student who finds themselves in crisis due a trauma.

I am incredibly proud of the work of Cooper-Woodson and University Advancement to make this idea a reality for our students.

Unfortunately, too many, especially in government, assume, philanthropy is the easiest way out of this crisis, but, in truth, it is merely a lifeboat for some of our students.

Sadly, I do not expect the state to restore our funding this year or next.

And I don't see a warming of the hiring chill nor of the travel and conference ban.

People talk of the new normal, or the new abnormal.

Any such thoughts are misleading.

I have tried to avoid this phrase, but "it is what it is."

And we are bigger and stronger than whatever "it" is.

Which brings us to Community Engagement.

There has been a general misunderstanding that as we progress to becoming an Anchor Institution that all the other imperatives disappear.

Wrong. Absolutely wrong.

All five imperatives are working in support of each other, and all are moving forward simultaneously.

No imperative trumps another imperative.

Over the most recent two years, the community engagement imperative has evolved into the anchor university imperative.

With the death of Stephon Clark,

with the Black Lives Matter marches,

with the financial crisis in Sac City Unified School district,

with growing unemployment,

with the homeless population increasing,
the need for Sac State to be involved in our
communities is even more critical.

Our curriculum needs to be attuned to the needs of Sacramento and the Sacramento region.

Hence, ProjectAttain!, Inclusive Excellence, CRISJ, the California Mobility Center, most importantly, the appointment of the Anchor University Council.

Earlier this week, there was a call to faculty, staff, and community members to apply to the Anchor University Council, and I fully expect dozens and dozens of applications, because I know how much our University cares about our community in these pandemic and overtly racist times.

The Placer Ranch gift will expand Sac State's influence and positive impact into the only region in California that can support the growth of higher education through creative partnerships.

The California Mobility Center's growth, a ramp up factory and research center for electronic vehicles on the Ramona property that we have been using as a parking lot, will transform the region and offer our students unique learning experiences.

But the real work has to be done at the granular level.

We have to be in our communities making a difference.

75% of Sac State's purchasing (except for construction) is from 5
local counties—

we are reinvesting in our community.

We have rejoined the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities and are deeply involved in collective impact with other anchor universities.

We are more vital than ever to the Sacramento Region as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and as we fight racism and become an antiracist campus.

Collaborating, making all 5 imperatives work together, is the only path forward.

Which brings us to the final imperative where we can make the most progress, and where we can make the quickest and most promising progress if we work together.

To use another cliché, but one that means a lot to me, "Together, we stand. Divided, we fall."

Watching George Floyd die—"I can't breathe"—

seeing Jacob Blake being shot in the back, learning that he was handcuffed to his hospital bed while paralyzed,

and please forgive me, but I don't care about what the circumstances were, these deaths, these shootings, are about humanity,

they are about Black Lives Matter,

all these deaths, all these shootings, are shredding my heart,
and are shredding the hearts of all Hornets and of the Hornet Family.

I was so proud to join all of you at Sac State, at the 4th most diverse university west of the Mississippi.

And I still am proud, but pride, as the scriptures teach, is not necessarily the best thing.

Pride can lead to blindness, and we cannot be blind to the racism that we see in our country, in Sacramento, and, yes, here on our campus.

When the diversity and inclusion imperative was announced, it focused on inclusion, on being a Hornet Family where everyone felt that they belonged.

Over the years, at the urging of the students, the imperative changed its focus to creating a caring campus, a campus where we didn't just celebrate our diversity, but where we cared for each other.

The deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd literally changed the diversity and inclusion imperative overnight into an antiracist imperative.

On May 30th, I acknowledged in a SacSend that there is racism on our campus and that it is the responsibility of white people – including myself– to fight racism and to end this pervasive culture that allows for such significant harm, especially against black communities.

The status quo, I wrote, what we have done in the past, must change.

Words matter, but words alone are nowhere nearly enough.

In the SacSend, I promised 9 actions, many of which are already on their way, including hiring an advocate in the Division of Inclusive Excellence for people experiencing racism and bias on our campus.

The position description for that person is currently in HR, being vetted.

Thanks to the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Division of Inclusive Excellence, in Summer Camp, we explicitly addressed antiracist curriculum and anti-bias pedagogy.

The implementation of AB 1460, the bill that will require all 23 CSU campuses to have a mandatory Ethnic Studies component in general education, will be a historic step in deepening our curriculum and will truly transform our students and prepare them for leadership, service, and success.

And the September 29th convocation will not only advance our commitment to antiracism but also help us learn how to be an antiracist.

My May 30th SacSend also promised an antiracism and inclusive campus plan.

Such a plan cannot and should not be created top-down.

If it is to be inclusive, it must come from all stakeholders, from the faculty, the staff, the students, and the community, from bottom up.

The plan has to be operational; it must contain goals and measures; and it must lay out how our campus, its culture, policies, environment, can be the antiracist campus that we want it to be where all people, especially people with marginalized identities, belong.

As the President's Cabinet met to talk about what would actually be contained in such a plan, it became clear that we needed a very targeted approach.

Many people on our campus have been working on antiracism and belonging for many years.

But much of that work has been done in silos, and it has not permeated the University.

It quickly became clear that we needed to bring people with all their passion and expertise together.

No one owns this work—and it is hard work—it cannot be done alone; we must all work together. We must all own the work.

To define what the work actually is, we turned to the work that has been done by the USC Race and Equity Center, whose Director, Shaun Harper will also be part of our September 29th convocation.

In Spring 2019, our students participated in a climate survey designed by the National Association of Collegiate Campus Climates and administered by the USC Race and Equity Center.

The survey focused on mattering, inclusion, engagement, institutional commitment, learning, and racial climate.

Using the survey, the President's Cabinet, led by Diana Tate Vermeire, examined itself and asked itself a simple question: What are we striving to be when we say that we want to be an antiracist, inclusive campus?

We, specifically, me, a white privileged male, don't have the answer.

But the survey gave us a way to look more precisely at the question.

To put it in the most naïve way possible, we want our students to have a positive score on the survey, a positive experience on our campus.

Using the points of reference in the survey, we defined a series of content areas where we know we need to create goals and action items.

Rather than establishing yet another large task force with a simple charge to create an antiracist plan, the survey helped us create a framework for a series of smaller committees who will help create the final plan in a systemized way.

We are proposing 7 committees, each with a very specific focus.

1. Mattering and Affirmation
2. Cross-racial and Inclusive Engagement
3. Antiracist Learning and Literacy
4. Antiracist Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Assessment
5. Encounters with Racial Stress and Bias
6. Institutional Commitment
7. Impact of and on the Sacramento Region

These committees will work to identify specific goals and strategies that can be used to move us toward our vision, and they will come to life as we bring the expertise bottom up from our campus.

Each committee will have 2 co-chairs, one of whom will run the day to day work of the committee and the other who will help but who will also serve on the Antiracism Planning Council.

There will be an application process for the committees, and a short white paper will be released in the next couple of weeks that provides details about the 7 committees content areas so that people can apply to the committee that appeals to them most.

The framework should be used as a guide for work across campus, within divisions, colleges, and departments, to create more localized antiracism and inclusive plans.

So that's what's next.

We have a lot of hard work before us, and we will be doing this work in a very strange world.

The locusts may eventually get here, but we will overcome their attacks.

Sac State will continue to prosper.

Our students will continue to transform the world.

Our progress over the most recent 5 years is tangible, is phenomenal.

We will continue to move forward, educating one student at a time.

Let me talk from my heart.

Jody and I chose to come to Sac State because when we came to “secret shop,” we saw the diversity of our campus as we ate Pho outside Saigon Bay by the library (I can't wait to eat Pho there again).

We saw a University that truly cared about its students.

We saw a city and a region with over 260,000 alumni, alumni whom we knew we could reconnect to Sac State and who would pay back what Sac State had given them in the form of scholarships and gifts.

We saw a football field that just needed the right coach to win.

And we saw trees; we saw beauty.

We will be back on campus.

We will survive this pandemic.

We will see our students graduate with less and less debt—my dream is no debt whatsoever.

But most of all, we will be together as a Hornet Family, as an inclusive and caring community, as the anchor for the Sacramento region, as the model for the nation of what it means to be an antiracist campus.

I don't pretend that it will happen overnight.

Miracles happen only through hard work.

Just developing our antiracist plan will take time and patience.

But as I hope that you have heard throughout this too long address, I believe in you.

Sac State is number one! Stingers up!