

2018 Fall Welcome Address
President Mary A. Papazian
August 20, 2018

Thank you, Dr. Frazier.

It is wonderful to see all of you here. I also appreciate that so many of you have tuned in via our live web stream.

Let me begin by welcoming all of our faculty, staff, and students, both returning and new. I hope you had a summer that was productive and fulfilling, and that you are ready for what I expect will be an energizing year for you personally and for our university. I couldn't be more excited as I begin my third year as your president. While we have accomplished much, the best is yet to come!

Welcome and New Additions

Let me start with our students, the reason we are all here!

I am pleased to report that we are welcoming more than 3,800 new first-time freshmen, another 3,800 new transfers, 1,600 new graduate students and 135 new credential students joining us this fall! Our thanks to our hardworking colleagues in the admissions department and throughout our Enrollment Management division for their unceasing work in bringing such a strong class of diverse students to our campus.

Overall, we anticipate that our enrollment will be just under 33,000 regular academic session students—both graduate and undergraduate—and 2,500 special session students, so nearly 35,000 in total, one of the largest classes in our history.

In addition, I am delighted to welcome 65 new tenure track faculty members who are beginning with us this fall. Of the 23 campuses in the CSU, I am told that our number of new faculty hires is almost certainly in the top three of CSU campuses, which shows our unceasing commitment to building the strongest full-time faculty we can.

Congratulations to all of our academic colleagues in their successful efforts to recruit our new faculty colleagues. We look forward to all that they will contribute to our campus, to our students, and to the profession more broadly, in the years ahead.

Our Weeks of Welcome schedule is in full swing, and when all is said and done we will have welcomed back both returning and new students with more than a **hundred** events.

Thank you to all of those around the campus for all you have done to support our new students in their transition to San José State, as well as returning students eager to continue their Spartan journey.

We are still finalizing final grades of our incoming freshmen as official transcripts were just due July 15th, but preliminary results show the average grade point average of our incoming freshmen students is 3.53 compared to 3.36 for Fall 2017.

Our incoming students, then, are as well-prepared as ever for the academic rigor that awaits them.

We also continue to walk the walk when it comes to inclusion and expanding opportunities for local students. The Spartan East Side Promise program provides a good example of our commitment to the students in our community.

We are in the second year of that partnership. As a result of this collaboration, we have seen a 39 percent increase in applications and a 47 percent increase in enrolled students from the East Side Union High School District.

We also are in active conversation with Mayor Sam Liccardo and his team on developing a Silicon Valley Promise program to support and encourage a college-going culture within our local schools, thereby ensuring that a college degree is within reach and affordable to the students in our community.

So, there is good news on all these fronts as we continue to strengthen our ability to deliver on our promise and our mission.

Last year in this venue, I chose to preface my more hopeful, forward-looking remarks with some sober observations about current events that needed to be addressed.

Though there have been, thankfully, no Charlottesvilles this past month, I must acknowledge that times remain unsettling for many people across the country.

Issues such as immigration, diversity, free speech and family separations all have captured the nation's attention at various points this past year. As a result, we have seen an uptick in protests, marches, and calls for change.

We are not immune to any of the challenges facing the country and our region. Members of our own community feel the impacts of homelessness, rising cost of living, uncertainty about the future for our undocumented families, and even a lack of basic needs.

These are daunting issues, and they will not go away any time soon.

When hard issues like these confront us as a university, I would ask that we remind ourselves of the values we wish to affirm for this campus.

One of those values is our commitment to social justice and purposeful student engagement and ensuring that our students play a positive role in helping to shed light on the critical issues of our time.

I will speak more about that later, with a focus on how this particular year affords us a unique opportunity to reaffirm those values.

And so as I begin my third year as President of San José State, I am proud of all we have accomplished together during these last two years and enthusiastic for what the future will bring.

Let me start by highlighting just a few of our accomplishments.

We have realigned and re-energized the leadership team, bringing the critical areas of Information Technology and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to the Cabinet level. We are exploring doing the same in the areas of Research and Innovation, as well as strengthening our support for and identity as an important graduate institution to complement our strong undergraduate programs.

We also have filled our Dean vacancies with the best that academia has to offer.

With all of these critical hires, we have added leaders who dream big, who think and act like visionaries, and who align their work with our values.

Today, I am delighted to introduce to you the two newest members of the cabinet, Dr. Joan Ficke and Patrick Day. Joan and Patrick, please stand and wave so everyone can see you!

I know you have probably seen their CVs online, so I will not repeat their many impressive credentials here.

But I will say that Joan and Patrick each bring with them a rich background and set of experiences that I know will bring tremendous value to our leadership team as well as to our university more broadly.

Joan will be serving as interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. She is a New Jersey native and brings with her a no-nonsense, can-do approach that I think all of us will come to appreciate. I saw this first-hand when we served together at Montclair State University more than a decade ago...Joan as Senior Associate Provost and me as Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. With deep experience in higher education as a faculty leader, accomplished administrator, and Hall of Fame athlete, Joan is a formidable presence who I am confident will provide strong, experienced leadership for our academic affairs division during the course of this transition year.

Accompanying Joan on this trek west of the Mississippi is her husband Dr. Joe Moore, himself a distinguished scholar and teacher of history who, rumor has it, has educated two-thirds of the social science teachers in the State of New Jersey. Additionally, Joe authored the definitive biography of Larry Doby, who followed Jackie Robinson's example and broke the color line in the American League. Welcome Joan and Joe. We hope your year here in California is memorable and fulfilling.

To fill the position permanently, we now have an exemplary search committee in place which will be meeting for the first time this very week to kick off the search process.

Dr. Melinda Jackson, who chairs our Department of Political Science, kindly agreed to chair the search committee for this important position. I know she will do a superb job in that role. Thank you, Melinda, and all search committee members for your service on this important search.

Patrick Day, who joins us as our new Vice President for Student Affairs, most recently served as Vice President for Student Life at the University of the Pacific in Stockton. Patrick has worked in public, private, and urban universities on both coasts and at points in between. Prior to coming west to California, Patrick held a similar student affairs leadership position at the University of Massachusetts-Boston, an important urban institution with many parallels to San José State. I know many of you learned about his work and his approach to student success when he was here for an open forum in June.

Patrick tells me he is truly excited to be at San Jose State University. As much as he is looking forward to the milder climate, he says he is still mystified at how, in Northern California, the temperature outside can shift 40 degrees over the course of a mere 50 mile drive. He wonders if our faculty in meteorology can share some insights!

A warm welcome as well to our new deans, Shannon Miller (Humanities and the Arts) and Michael Kaufman (Science), who joined us in their permanent roles midway through the past academic year. And welcome to Heather Lattimer, our new dean of the Lurie College of Education, who has just arrived on our campus. Welcome home to San José, Heather, the place where your teaching career began. We are delighted to have you take on the leadership of our original academic unit!

Budget and Advocacy

This has been an important year for us and the entire CSU system. When the budget was announced in late June, we learned that the CSU received one-time funding of more than \$160 million and an ongoing increase of nearly \$200 million.

I would like to offer a sincere thanks to those of you who played such an important role in advocating for a budget that, in the end, might be considered better than expected, though it doesn't meet all of our needs. This certainly includes the staff and faculty who advocated on all our behalf.

It includes the students themselves who stepped up and helped explain to legislators just why a healthy and sustainable San José State and CSU require healthy and sustained **funding**.

And it includes the legislature itself, that—in the end—did the right thing. There is a long list of legislators who played important roles, but I will mention just a few.

I am particularly grateful to Senator Jim Beall, dean of the Silicon Valley delegation and a San José State alum himself, who provided leadership and an effective guiding hand.

Senator Bob Wieckowski focuses much of his legislative efforts on technology, job creation, and social justice, issues that are all well-aligned with the mission of San José State. His support for CSU in the budget will allow us to make genuine progress in these areas.

Assembly member Evan Low has proven to be a strong advocate for education, and as an alum of San José State, his familiarity with our mission has been a great help in winning support.

Finally, Assembly members Kansen Chu, Marc Berman, and Ash Kalra are all long-time advocates for public higher education, and their efforts and votes are much appreciated. Assembly member Chu is an alumnus of the CSU system, too.

A round of applause for all whose advocacy had such an impact! [Pause]

But we can't rest on last year's success, as this coming year will require continued efforts to tell the San José State and CSU story, so important in our efforts to ensure sustained and sufficient support for the CSU, as well as an affordable education for our students.

Notable Accomplishments

As I lay out some of our goals and aspirations for the forthcoming academic year, I would like to start by highlighting a few of the truly exciting and inspiring accomplishments of our students and faculty. They and the thousands of students and faculty members they represent illustrate why I am so proud of the dynamic intellectual community that is San José State University.

Indeed, our **students, faculty and research communities** continue to shine.

Flor Sario is an intern at the newly established Chicanx/Latinx Student Success Center, and she recently shared her immigrant story as part of Immigrant Heritage Month.

Flor was born into very challenging circumstances in Mexico, circumstances that included poverty, hunger, and separation from both her parents as both her father then mother came to the U.S. in hopes of a better life for their children.

Flor was eventually able to rejoin her parents here in the U.S. Through her and her family's perseverance and hard work, she made her way to San José State. Today, she is an MIS business major expected to graduate in 2021, and she is an intern at the Chicanx/Latinx Student Success Center. We are proud of all that you have achieved, Flor, and proud you are a Spartan.

Israel Juarez Contreras is a chemical engineering graduate student. He placed **first** in the CSU Student Research Competition in the engineering and computer science category.

His research project, "Expression of Snake Antivenom Peptide Change in Pichia Pastoris," could have a dramatic impact for developing nations where snake bites are a common -- and expensive -- ailment to treat.

Now this is what I call research to action on a very real problem, indeed!

I would like to thank **Professor Claire Komives**, of our Department of Biomedical, Chemical, and Materials Engineering in the Davidson College of Engineering, for serving as Israel's faculty adviser. Congratulations to you both!

Professor Komives is an example of our excellent faculty, who continue to excel in their scholarship and teaching and whose support of our students and the development of knowledge continues to inspire me.

I am pleased to announce that two members of our faculty have been appointed as **U.S. Fulbright** scholars this fall!

Dr. Cathleen Miller, a professor of English and director of the Center for Literary Arts, will serve as the **first distinguished chair of humanities** at the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom, where she will teach creative non-fiction and continue research into the phenomenon of women's migration throughout the world. Congratulations, Dr. Miller.

Dr. Victoria Rue, a lecturer in the Department of Humanities, has been awarded a United States Fulbright Scholar appointment to the Palestinian Territories in the West Bank. Her work in the field of comparative religions is exemplary, and this appointment serves as a testament to her leadership in the broader field of humanities. Kudos, Dr. Rue.

In April, you might recall that we recognized Judo Coach **Yosh Uchida** for 70 years of service to the university. A bench was dedicated in his honor outside Uchida Hall. Coach Uchida remains an incredible inspiration to all of us.

Craig Clements, associate professor of meteorology and climate science, and director of the Fire Weather Research Laboratory, has been actively engaged in research this summer with the many wildfires in California.

Craig and the expertise and insights he and his colleagues have provided have received regional and national media coverage these past few months in the New York Times, Washington Post, Time.com, CNN.com, USA Today, Rolling Stone, Buzzfeed News, and locally in the San José Mercury News and KQED Radio. Unfortunately, it has not been a quiet summer for Craig and his team, which includes many San José State University students, as fires continue to devastate our region and our state.

Craig, the people of California thank you for your commitment to public service and education, and for enhancing our collective understanding of fires through your cutting-edge research.

Kristen Rebmann, from our School of Information, is investigating **TV Whitespaces**, a new wireless communication technology that has the potential to improve internet access and inclusion. Fascinating stuff, Kristen!

And **Matthew Spangler**, in our Department of Communication Studies in the College of Social Sciences, is exploring how immigrants and undocumented people, refugees, and asylum-seekers are represented through the literary, performing, and cinematic arts.

Specifically, he is looking at these issues through the lens of public policy as it relates to these immigrant communities. Timely work indeed!

Congratulations to all, who represent our faculty's strong commitment to learning and discovery across a wide span of disciplines.

Physical Improvements

The beginning of a new academic year provides us an opportunity to look around and assess the changes in the **physical environment** of our campus and consider what these developments and improvements mean for our ability to fulfill our mission.

I am so pleased to have inherited many of the new facilities and buildings we are seeing on campus, such as our expanded

Diaz Compean Student Union that we opened in fall 2016, and I hope we can build on these successes – quite literally – because of what they mean for our students, staff, faculty, and community members.

One of the most exciting of these is the new **Spartan Recreation and Aquatic Center**.

Our current hope is to have a grand opening sometime in early April, though we should be able to provide membership information to staff and faculty by mid-to-late fall.

This state-of-the-art facility will provide yet **another** gathering spot for our university community—and especially our students—to recreate, swim, exercise and keep fit.

I know you are all familiar with the term “sticky” as a way to describe our efforts to keep students on campus as much as possible as a place that gives them a sense of belonging, a place where they can gather, study, dine, play, and enjoy the full student experience.

This new Recreation and Aquatics Center will be a cornerstone of that effort, so it is very gratifying to see it come together so beautifully. My thanks to Cathy Busalacchi, executive director of our Student Union, and to all of the others who are working to ensure this new facility is up and running on schedule.

We also are making outstanding progress updating our athletics facilities at South Campus.

Golf, tennis, softball and soccer facilities all have been completed, with volleyball, baseball, track and field and football all next in line.

These facilities serve not only our university students, whether or not they participate in intercollegiate athletics, but the larger community as well, as our recent hosting of the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Mubadala Silicon Valley tournament illustrated.

On the academic side, another very important building project that continues to make progress is the **Interdisciplinary Science Building (ISB)**, the first academic building in 30 years for San José State. The new science building, or ISB for short, will serve as the anchor of a four-building Science and Innovation Complex that eventually will be situated on the southwest quadrant of the campus.

Next month, I expect that the CSU formally will approve the design of the ISB. This much-needed science facility—an innovative and forward-looking blending of teaching and research—will enhance interdisciplinary STEM education and provide more opportunities for students and faculty to collaborate with our industry partners. Occupancy is scheduled to begin just three years from now.

Our current science buildings house laboratory classrooms built in the 1950s and 1960s—so, many decades ago. As we design this new space, we are striving for a cutting edge, modern building that is forward-looking—to the future of our students, of education, of research, and of Silicon Valley.

Imagine a building where each floor has a mentoring hub for students to work on interdisciplinary projects, connect with faculty, and meet with industry partners.

Imagine a space that turns the hallways between classrooms and research labs into a collaborative core that allows student and faculty researchers to brainstorm and plan out their projects.

Imagine a high-performance computing suite for astronomers, physicists, social scientists, health professionals and more—where students and faculty from different disciplines can share their work and improve their research techniques.

This is our vision for the new Interdisciplinary Science Building.

As Dean Michael Kaufman has said, the basic research done in our College of Science **builds industries** – from nano-diamonds and the physics of galaxies to fire weather and climate change.

With the new Interdisciplinary Science Building and the eventual completion of the entire Science and Innovation Complex, we will be able to build even **more** impactful and innovative industries.

In this context, we recently launched the **Innovation Design Collaborative (IDC)** in the lower level of the Martin Luther King, Jr. library.

The IDC is an interdisciplinary place for students, faculty, entrepreneurs and corporate collaborators to work, where designers, engineers and artists can all work **together**. It is a space where it is **okay** and even **instructive** to make mistakes.

In true Silicon Valley style, its current location in the King Library lower-level acts as a startup space of sorts, a place to grow and learn to determine what collaborators need. There are plans for this temporary space to expand before it is eventually expanded into the new Science and Innovation Complex.

Research, Scholarship and Creative Activities (RSCA) and Strategic Partnerships

These developments in our academic facilities align with our increased support for research and innovative partnerships, an important focus that aligns with our emerging strategic plan. I am looking forward to another year of progress, research, and development as we move toward our goals.

Support for the research, scholarship and creative work of our faculty, whether the discovery of new knowledge or the application of existing knowledge to real world problems, is critical to ensuring that our faculty are true scholar-teachers, able to share their love of learning and discovery with their students.

Our commitment to enhancing support for research, scholarship and creative activity (or RSCA) for our faculty is at the core of ensuring we have a dynamic intellectual environment for our students and the entire community. We thus must ensure we are providing appropriate support to stay current and enhance our impact in the area of RSCA. The work of our faculty ensures a strong learning environment for our students on both the graduate and the undergraduate levels.

In this spirit, I am pleased to announce support for the initiative developed by the Provost's Office in partnership with our academic deans, to support our faculty in their research, scholarship and creative activities (RSCA).

This year, will take our first steps toward implementing a new initiative in support of our faculty and, by extension, our students, as we ensure that our faculty have the time to focus on their scholarly efforts more intentionally, while at the same time ensuring that we provide the coursework our students need to make timely progress in their academic programs.

I am confident that our support of an engaged faculty will have enormous positive benefits for our students, particularly in the areas of retention and graduation.

This year, we will see the launch of the new 10-year strategic plan, which I anticipate will be finalized by the end of the Fall term, with our work on implementation strategies occurring in the spring. While the plan will contain new directions and guideposts, you also will be able to see SJSU values laid out plainly in each section.

My appreciation to all who have participated in the strategic planning process thus far, whether through service on the steering committee, the taskforces, or participation in the campus conversations. The final phase of the strategic planning process will be led this year by Professor Stefan Frazier, Chair of the Academic Senate, and Dean Walt Jacobs, from the College of Social Sciences.

A core thrust of our new strategic plan is the importance of developing an innovative approach to teaching and learning, one that connects well to our efforts to strengthen our partnerships in our local community and throughout the business community.

In this context, I hope to use my involvement in AAC&U, with its focus on strengthening the intersection between the liberal arts and professional preparation, as well as my engagement with the Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF), the nation's oldest membership organization of Fortune 500 CEOs, college and university presidents, and other leaders dedicated to the creation of a highly skilled future workforce, among others, to bring new ideas to our campus for consideration and in support of our academic mission and student success initiatives.

In both cases, the focus is on preparing our diverse students to live fulfilling and productive lives, both professionally and for our democracy.

Many of you know the approach of AAC&U, as San José State has responded to its work on high-impact practices and educating for democracy as we strengthen our undergraduate experience and ensure our students have the best opportunity for success, both at the university and throughout their lives.

The Business Higher Education Forum's membership is quite diverse. We are working together to create undergraduate programs to increase baccalaureate attainment, particularly amongst underrepresented students, in emerging areas of need such as cybersecurity, data analytics, and artificial intelligence (or A.I.). In order to be effective, we must improve the alignment between higher education and talent development, and prepare diverse, highly skilled graduates ready to meet industry demand.

I am very much looking forward to sharing ideas that are emerging in the national conversation about how best to serve our students and communities with my colleagues and industry leaders, and hopefully explore ways to implement the most promising of these ideas for our campus and community, as San José State becomes a national model for change.

These questions ask us to consider, as a campus academic community, how we may best ensure that we are effectively preparing our students to take steps upward on the ladder of opportunity. How do we best take advantage of this most unique of urban campuses, the most significant anchor in the City of San José, the only comprehensive, public university in Silicon Valley?

One of the ways to foster our impact in this arena is to align our academic organizational structure with our strategic directions and regional needs. In this context, I am pleased to highlight the renaming of our College of Applied Science and the Arts to the **College of Health and Human Sciences**.

One of our goals with this name change, the first step in reconceptualizing this important college as a leader in health sciences, is to reposition the college as a direct conduit to what we know to be an ever-expanding industry—and, according the recent Silicon Valley Index, the second fastest growing industry in our region after IT—bursting with opportunity for San José State and our students.

Specifically, the college addresses health and wellness across the lifespan and prepares **globally minded** public health and human sciences professionals ready to take on the greatest challenges to health and well-being.

To achieve those ambitious goals, Dean Mary Schutten has emphasized the interdisciplinary, global connections that we aim to make across our academic programs. There is a requirement, for instance, for all students to participate in an international experience prior to graduation.

San José State's contributions to health-related industries at all degree levels—undergraduate and graduate—is a priority and will remain so into the future.

Another of the big questions of our time that requires an interdisciplinary approach is the area of **sustainability**. And in this area, too San José State continues to be an innovative leader, particularly in our buildings and facilities, but also in our academic programs and co-curricular initiatives led by our Division of Student Affairs.

I am pleased to share that, just this month, our campus received the Association of Physical Plant Administrators' 2018 Sustainability Award at its annual conference. The award is especially meaningful as we were evaluated on both our operations and our curriculum.

The award is a testament to the holistic approach we have taken, with the support of our Sustainability Board.

In addition, San José State received a 2018 Silicon Valley Water Conservation Award and was designated as one of the Best Workplaces for Commuters in 2018 by the National Center for Transit Research at the University of South Florida.

Our ongoing efforts have been recognized by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education in its 2017 Sustainable Campus Index, with San José State ranking second in the United States and Canada for reducing waste and receiving a Gold ranking based on the association's Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System.

So, thank you very much to those of you working to make San José State one of the most environmentally sound college campuses in the country.

Engagement, Student Success, and Graduate Initiative 2025

As our core mission is educating a diverse student population for professional success and engagement in our democracy, we must continue to be **bold** in our efforts to support CSU's Graduation Initiative 2025.

As Carol Geary Schneider, the former president of AAC&U, wrote "It will take comprehensive redesign, not just tinkering around the edges of standard educational practice, to help the nation's aspiring new majority learners reap the full benefit of an empowering education.

Practices invented a century ago, like a menu of disconnected broad survey-type liberal arts and sciences courses in the first two years (termed *breadth*) and an isolated, stand-alone major (termed *depth*) in the final years, do not work for today's students (in her "Forward" to Elaine P. Maimon's *Leading Academic Change: Vision, Strategy, Transformation*, 2018: xi)."
These are our students....and this is our challenge!

Indeed, our theme engagement and student success reminds us that the more effective we are in re-examining our curricular pathways and at creating a tight-knit community for the students who live here, the more effective we will be in creating a successful, more civic-minded student population ready to **engage** and **succeed** in the world around us.

I would assert that we must embrace our role as public educators. This means we must rethink our design of our academic programs, with particular focus on the intersection between general education and the major, while looking at ways to frame student and community engagement as an **extension** of the academic curriculum.

As part of our **core educational mission**, we must strive to develop students who are encouraged and equipped to ask questions, form views based on the truth and on their values, and engage actively in some kind of public service, whether that be at the national, local, or even neighborhood level.

I like to think of this as the "public good" aspect of public education and a way to challenge our students as they prepare for the future. This is also an important dimension of our becoming an engaged university that serves as a resource for our community.

In my colleague Elaine Maimon's words, "vision and strategy can transform any university from an ivory tower to a public square—an *agora*, where, as in Athens, citizens civilly create common ground and share public space for work, governance, and cultural participation. All universities should be public squares (xix)."

We aim to be such a public square here in the heart of the City of San José, with a focus on educating students as to how they can most effectively influence change on issues that matter to them. Indeed, it is up to **students** to identify the issues about which they care most deeply.

We want to give them the **toolbox and the environment** where true discourse can occur.

So, we should all think differently about how we approach education, not only in terms of civic engagement but in other disciplines as well.

How are we actually challenging our students and preparing them for the workforce of the future? How do we ensure we are educating *local* students for *global* futures? What is it about our curriculum that needs to be adjusted or changed altogether?

What is the optimal relationship between liberal arts and professional education? How are they best "braided" together, regardless of the specific discipline each student pursues? And how does our enhanced focus on research—and especially interdisciplinary research—foster the

dynamic intellectual environment so important to supporting an engaged faculty and student body.

Occasionally, we academics end up working in silos and instead need to remind ourselves to work collaboratively as we think about the kinds of experiences we want our students to have.

We hear a lot about the need to develop ‘soft skills’ for our students, but I am afraid the phrase is used in a rather dismissive way at times. (And I don’t say this just as a humanist!) Well, I believe students who lack those *soft* skills will find a *hard* road ahead!

Dan Moshavi, Dean of our Lucas College and Graduate School of Business, spearheads a wonderful “Career Readiness Program” that can really serve as a template for the rest of us. That program nurtures these kinds of skills that employers are looking for today.

Our Career Center also is doing a great job in this area, offering a variety of programming for students to develop these skills. I am sure its new enterprise-wide online mentoring platform will also prove to be very effective.

When we talk about these “soft” skills, we mean things like teamwork. Collaboration. Working in diverse environments. Critical thinking. Asking insightful questions. Listening. We know that the world is changing all around us, and that the employers of both today and tomorrow will require these kinds of skills and approaches among members of their workforce.

We have so many wonderful examples of collaboratives on campus—so many, in fact, that there will be a feature story in an upcoming issue of Washington Square about several of them!

As you will learn about in that article, San José State is truly **modeling** the collaborative approach and providing students with **tangible opportunities** to exercise those kinds of skills and immerse themselves in those environments. Our Innovation Design Collaborative. Human Rights and Ethnic Studies. Frankenstein/Deep Humanities. Health and Human Sciences. And so many more.

All of us involved in higher education hold immense power to make meaningful change in the way our country views our responsibilities toward our fellow citizens and neighbors. Colleges and universities and those who lead them are uniquely positioned to accomplish things that government or business cannot.

In our efforts toward meeting the objectives of Graduation Initiative 2025, we established three new student success centers serving specific members of our student community.

We developed and launched numerous programs and learning opportunities through our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Office and our new University Personnel unit.

CommUniverCity has continued its invaluable work in the community.

We have tackled the hard questions of gender and race in sports through our Institute for the Study of Sport, Society and Social Change.

We have made significant progress toward our first ever comprehensive campaign in support of our academic mission, whose silent phase we hope to launch this coming year.

We were selected as one of only **five** Microsoft Centers of Excellence, and the **only** such center in northern California.

This is just a brief snapshot of the ways we have grown together over the last few years.

This all maps directly to the 50th Anniversary this fall of the iconic medal stand protest by student athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico.

Throughout October, we will celebrate the legacy of social justice and student activism it cemented for San José State University.

Our very own Institute for the Study of Sport, Society and Social Change will host its next town hall meeting that month, “Words to Action: Landmarks and Legacy of Athlete Activism,” and I would encourage you to attend.

There will be other activities leading up to the Town Hall, including a film series on athlete activism and an exhibit housed in King Library’s Special Collections and Archives titled “The Power of Protest: Speed City and the Olympic Project for Human Rights.”

As we enjoy these events and celebrate our role in athletic activism, we need to ask ourselves this question: how exactly does higher education and teaching intersect with student engagement?

And let us also remember that the San José State community’s commitment to social justice extends from our vibrant, inclusive campus to an international network of more than 260,000 alumni.

Tommie Smith, John Carlos, and several other athletes from the 1968 U.S. Olympic Team went on to become educators themselves. They set the bar on how to pay forward the power of education. What an admirable and noble legacy! Fifty years from now, which of **our** San José State students will have risen to the challenges of **today**? What will be *their* legacy?

Housing and Basic Needs

We cannot talk about buildings and facilities or faculty and student success without addressing one of the more critical issues facing our campus today, and that is the issue of housing for both our students and for our faculty and staff.

This is a regional issue, of course, not merely a San José State issue. But it is one that cries out for solutions.

For our students, help is on the way.

I am pleased to announce plans for **Campus Village Three (CV-3)**, which will feature sixteen-hundred beds on the grounds of what is now Washburn Hall. Two-thirds of those will be apartment-style units earmarked for juniors and seniors, while the remaining third will be for first-year students.

While this new residence hall will not address all of our students' needs, it should go a long way in providing much-needed housing for our students. We will continue to explore additional solutions as well.

For our faculty and staff, affordable housing solutions are much thornier challenges.

We are considering every conceivable idea for creating more affordable housing for our faculty and staff.

We are examining a variety of creative options, and we will keep you informed as we progress on some of the ideas.

My appreciation to Charlie Faas, our Vice President for Administration and Finance, for his leadership and creativity in this area.

Our need for more housing reminds us that students are just like the rest of us: they concern themselves first with their **basic** needs, and only when those are met can they pursue any **higher** needs – like their studies and education. This is well-articulated, of course, in the CSU's Basic Needs Initiative.

Providing a comforting and supportive environment that helps provide for the basic needs of our students is a must for our campus and the success of **all of our students**, including our undocumented students, students of color, veterans, African-Americans, Chicanx, Latinx, Native American, and any others who may be feeling societal stresses.

Frankly, we may have lost some of these students in the past on those occasions when they felt unsupported. We all have a role—whatever our role at the university—in ensuring each student's success.

Indeed, we are working hard to create an inclusive campus community where everyone feels safe and supported, and there are signs that we are making strides in this regard, as we work to nurture a sense of belonging for all students on our campus.

And, because a hungry student cannot be a successful student, we also have a new and **permanent** food pantry that will open soon to serve our students. There will be no questions asked and thus no stigma tied to "needy" students. We have partnered with Second Harvest Food Bank on this important initiative.

In addition, I am pleased to report that proceeds from the October “Inspiration to Innovation” gala will benefit our efforts to combat student food insecurity. The gala will take place the day after our Athlete Activism town hall, which is appropriate since food insecurity can rightly be considered a social justice issue.

Looking to the Future

Meeting our campus community’s basic needs is just the first building block leading to student success and closer connections to our immediate community.

A more engaged and well-prepared student population at San José State will go a long way toward connecting us more closely with Silicon Valley and our surrounding communities.

This year, my fervent hope is that we will witness the continued transformation of both San José State University and the City of San José, and the growing and reciprocal relationship between the two.

This university **must be seen** as the lifeblood of its community. The City of San José should **want** to invest its time, energy and resources into San José State.

We are a uniquely positioned urban campus that offers extraordinary value to this region.

We need to be a robust ‘player’ in downtown’s ongoing development, rightly seen as the anchor institution that brings expertise, vibrancy, diversity, and energy to our downtown community.

Downtown—our college town—is vital for our 35,000 students and for friends of the University, so we need to be active participants in, contributors to, and shapers of what is going on here.

One way for us properly to be seen as an integral component of San José is to be seen, literally, in other important venues. I am referring to our external branding efforts, and specifically I would encourage all of you to check out our new “Power Suite” seating area at Norman Y. Mineta International Airport.

We are now leveraging this global gateway to Silicon Valley and the Bay Area in order to increase San José State’s visibility and build brand recognition.

The “Power suite” offers a unique San José State experience to travelers, giving passengers a glimpse of what it means to be a Spartan.

The wall display shows how our people impact Silicon Valley, and it all resides in Terminal B, just opposite Gate 18.

Just imagine: hundreds of thousands of airport passengers now have an opportunity to relax and work in this environment while learning about the impact our campus is having on the region.

So, as we reflect on our focus for this coming year, we recognize that as Silicon Valley's only comprehensive, public university, we aspire to be and do many things:

We are San José State University.

We are here in downtown San José, the heart of Silicon Valley.

We are this city's biggest asset, perhaps all of Silicon Valley's biggest asset.

As a strong, dynamic institution committed to robust partnerships, student success, faculty excellence, and intellectual vitality, San José State is focused on becoming an exemplary 21st century public urban university.

And so, we need to be part of **every meaningful conversation** that takes place in this region.

I cannot do this all by myself.

I need you. I need my Cabinet. I need the faculty, the staff. I need you to be out in the community, reminding people that we are here.

We are a resource, a pipeline for talent, a reservoir of creativity, a diverse community of innovators and game-changers, a force for change.

And perhaps most of all, I need the students. We are not a university without our students. Our students need to be at the heart of every conversation that takes place and every decision that is made.

Members of our faculty interface with students each and every day. But student success must be owned by all of us, not just the faculty. Whether you work in Finance and Administration, Athletics, Information Technology, Tower Hall, Food Services, Custodian Services, University Police, or anywhere else on campus, we need to be thinking about creating a **student-centered campus** in every respect.

I am so happy to see all of you here today. This could very well be the most meaningful, transformational year in San José State's storied history.

Thank you for being a part of it.

This afternoon, I hope you can join your friends and colleagues on Tower Lawn at 3:30 today as we film an exciting new SJSU commercial. We need as many Spartans as possible to show the world who we are! In the meantime, please enjoy refreshments and conversation. Thank you all for coming.