It’s not my intention to deliver the customary state of the university address. There’s good reason for that. It would seem to me to be presumptuous for someone who has been here not quite seven weeks to tell you what he thinks the state of the university is. You all would be better prepared for that kind of an address than I am. However, I would like to offer you, based on my experience - which has been pretty intensive these almost seven weeks - some impressions that I have of this institution, strengths, or some of them, and the challenges and opportunities that we face here. I hope you will notice that I said “we.” I have had some trouble getting from “they” to “we,” learning that “we” is San José State and “they” is the University of Nevada, but my performance is improving and I have learned how to deal with the “we-ness.”

I also want to talk about how I see my role during the short time that I will be with you.

I am very happy to be here. The people of this institution and people in the community have been unbelievably welcoming to my wife, Joy and I since we arrived. People have gone out of their way to be friendly, to give us some helpful advice, to answer a ton of questions. My wife is also very happy to be here. She feels like this is kind of a sabbatical for her and I assure you that I would not be here in this
position had I not had her consent. She is really having a good time exploring the region. I need to point out that she is not here today. She has in my 23 years at Nevada had occasion to listen to perhaps millions of speeches from me. More than 20 state of the university addresses, and night before last, she developed a toothache. That was her claim, and she is sticking to it! We have a daughter-in-law who is a dentist. So Joy flew to Reno yesterday. So, she’s not here, but you’ll have a chance to see her around later. She’s a very sociable person, and she shares my feelings about this institution and about the area.

I am here only for a short time, as you know, six months or until the new president takes office. There is a presidential search going on. As I understand, the schedule calls for the committees to bring finalists in by early November and then to make a recommendation as to the next president to the Board of Trustees at the Board’s meeting in November, it is hoped that there will be a new president installed in this hall on January 1. There is also a search firm. That’s the way the business tends to get done these days. The principal of the firm that is conducting the search, a gentleman I know and can assure you will do a fine job, will be on campus soon. He’ll be meeting with various campus constituencies, including me. So I will be able to provide some input to him as well.

**Budget and Enrollment**

Well, let me say a few words about budget and enrollment, much of which is probably familiar to you. I am sure you know that the State of California after much agony and anguish, weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth, concluded its budget deliberation and passed the budget in late July. So that by now, the CSU and its institutions have been fairly well along in their budget development. I am told that this campus has worked for the last ten months under an operating budget with the expectation that there would be a reduction in state revenue. Therefore, state funds for the CSU and for this institution have been reduced. The budget that has now been assembled and is still being refined, is reflective of a number of principles. These basic principles would include the protection of instruction as the first priority in achieving our enrollment goals for the year. Another priority is to avoid lay-offs. We are avoiding lay-offs and I hope we can continue to do so. We had to incorporate a significant net-reduction in state dollars and also absorb additional expenses that the state customarily takes care of. We are required to pay these expenses and this is no small bill. Expenses include things like health premiums and risk-management premiums and the like. We’ve also attempted and succeeded, I think,
in offsetting a substantial share of the reduction with some role forward funds one time fund. There are some risks involved. The budget advisory committee of the university has been involved in these deliberations over the past months and will continue in the course of the next couple of weeks. We will be meeting with that committee as well as with the Senate Executive Board and the full Senate to provide particular information about the budget and get reaction from those groups.

It appears likely, based on the data available thus far, that we will not meet our budgeted enrollment figure for this fall. The extent to which we will fall short we don’t know. In an environment where there have been substantial fee increases, where the area economy has been suffering and there have been massive job losses, we are experiencing decreased credit loads by the students who are enrolled. I suppose that it is not surprising that we have not yet reached that goal; however, there are some strong efforts going forward to recruit students for spring. We will not have to stop the enrollment period at the end of August, so we can continue to strive to reach our budgeted figure. There is a fair degree of confidence that we can get that done. We can make up most of the short fall in enrollments with those who come to us in the spring.

Additionally, there is the economic situation in California and indeed across the nation, and the uncertainties that result from this state’s peculiar approach to gubernatorial elections and un-elections, to consider. Well, we have some uncertainty, clearly, as to whether we’re going to have a new governor and what his or her idea might be about the budget. So, we need to prepare for the possibility of mid-year reductions and we’ll also be looking toward the possibility of further reductions next year. We will work on that contingency this fall and I’m sure in the spring as well. We know this much, that like CSU in general we can not exceed in 2004-05 the budgeted enrollment figure that we have for 2003 –04, so if we reach that figure this year, we’ll allow no additional enrollments above that number for next year. If we don’t reach the figure we will be able to work and enroll toward that number. We know enough to say, looking at it system-wide, as well as in terms of this campus, that we seem to have arrived at a historic turning point in this state. Beginning this year, as I’ve just suggested, and continuing next year, and who knows how long thereafter, thousands of qualified California high school graduates and others entitled to be admitted to California institutions of higher education will not be admitted because of enrollment caps. So that a basic path, an historic path, an allotted path, if you will, to higher education in this
state will now be closed. That is policy. I don’t have to tell you that California has been a leader for decades in following its celebrated master plan for higher education by providing access to its colleges and universities. This is, in my opinion, a nation that has built the most ambitious, even prodigious and productive higher education system in the world, on the foundation of a commitment to access. We are in danger of doing damage, not just in California, but around the country, to that historic commitment. If the worse continues to happen, we will no longer have that foundation of access to support the system of higher education and that gives one pause.

**Points of Pride**

There is a whole lot to celebrate about San José State University. As I’ve been making the rounds of late, I’ve asked people, chairs, deans, and others, to send me information about other points of pride that we might talk about. The response has been overwhelming and I was very gratified to see this. It was a learning experience for me. I decided to pick a few and let them represent the much larger universe while doing my best to cover all of the colleges. So here are some additional things to celebrate.

I really don’t have to tell you that the library is one of them. I had such a good time at the dedication, joined by a cast of thousands, last Saturday. I hope you were all there, as well. This is the type of collaboration that may influence library construction around the country. I know that it’s a controversial issue, but I’m just being honest with you. I think it’s terrific.

The remodeling of Clark Library, which I’m sure is of interest to many of you, is intended to be an academic success center. It will have a lot of faculty offices. It will have some smart classrooms and student services; folks will be there to join academic people. International partnerships - I have learned we do a lot of that here and that’s a good thing – have been established in six countries: China, India, Ireland, England, Spain, and France, with the seventh, El Salvador, due to sign an agreement in October. These are faculty exchange agreements and student study abroad agreements. I’m a great believer in that, both as a father and as a president. The Cypress Spring Quartet, a world class group, will be in residence for the entire fall semester in our School of Music and Dance. I’ve had occasion to learn a lot about the MUSE program and its success that
has resulted in the creation of some partnership initiatives between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.

The first of the joint doctorates, which have been under discussion for some years, a doctorate in educational leadership, has now been officially approved. That involves this institution, UC Berkeley and other CSU campuses. Another will be on the books shortly involving UC Santa Cruz and other CSU institutions.

College of Social Work, as I’m sure you know, does a lot of internship programming that is of tremendous value to the community as well as to the students. I am told that the value to service organizations in the Bay Area will exceed two million dollars.

The College of Science has launched the first of its kind, master of biotechnology program and will collaborate with the College of Business to offer MBA courses.

We have a new processed food institute that is at home in the College of Applied Sciences and Arts and involves other colleges; Business, Social Science, and Engineering.

And finally, just in time to start the academic year, we are introducing a new, improved Web site at www.sjsu.edu which is a product of Academic Technology as well as a number of departments and colleges working together.

**Role as President**

Let me talk about my role here. I’m with you for a short time so it would not be my intention to launch any major initiatives during that time or make major changes or dramatically alter the way the institution does its business or, as the saying goes, “clean house.” I’m not here as a house cleaner for sure. I will certainly carry out the basic responsibilities of the job, so if there are major decisions to make, I will make them. I will do that with considerable consultation. I will help protect the institution in honoring its historic commitments. Sometimes, for example, as you know as well as I, academic freedom, one of those historic commitments, is threatened from one source or another and the president must be the person to step forward and protect that commitment, so I promise you I will do that. While I’m here I believe I owe you a lot of listening and indeed I’ve been trying to pay off that debt during these first seven weeks. I’ve made a little
progress there. I need to do this in part because there is so much to learn about this large and complicated institution. I promise you that I will continue to be a generous lender of my ear, either in my office, or where you all hang out in the buildings in which you work or wherever people invite me. I will be candid with you and would wish that you would be candid with me. That’s part of the learning experience, so I owe you that and I owe that to the next president. It won’t be wholly ripened but it will be a considered judgment not so much about the state of the university but about some challenges that I think the institution faces. It will also be about the strengths of the institution as I see them and about some opportunities that may come our way. So, you can expect that from me and I define that as a very large part of my role here.

I’ve learned a lot already — enough to know that I have a whole lot more to learn. I’ve had a number of those candid conversations so I’ve developed some impressions of this place. They kind of get refined as I move to the next conversation and learn that I have rushed to judgment. That’s good and healthy.

Campus Snapshot

So what I’m going to give you today is, I guess, a kind of snapshot as of today, it could be different tomorrow, though I don’t think radically different. You may disagree and you may send me e-mails telling me that you disagree. You may say I’ve missed the bigger picture or you may wish to question whether my mental machinery is in good working order or perhaps call my attention to the flight schedule back to Reno. Send me e-mail if you feel that way or if you don’t. I promise to read them.

Here are some thoughts - beginning with the strengths - that seem to me to be really big plusses for this institution. I’m sure they come as no news to you but I feel good about communicating them to you as my impression of the strengths of this place.

By the standards of the west, this institution has some very deep roots and there is a lot of good stuff that comes with those roots. Pride comes with roots that are deep from a long history as well as the ability to adapt to changing demands, changing times, and changing circumstances. This institution has had occasion to redefine its fundamental role a time or two and may be in the process of doing that right now even as we speak. You just can’t buy the kind of strength that comes from that kind of experience, that length of
experience, that rooted-ness, that’s a big plus, at least so it seems to
me.

A second big plus would be the dynamism of this place. There may be
a better word to describe it but this is one dynamic institution. It just
exudes a feeling of excitement, of energy, of a sense of movement
and of bounding ideas, many good and some not so good. And some
of those not so good ideas come from the president’s office. I have
learned to expect this over time. But all of that dynamism and energy
and movement emanate from the place and that’s you. You have a
really dynamic institution here and you should be proud of that. I don’t
know if you thought about this but I must tell you I’ve been struck by
it. This plus is affection. Since I arrived here, I have spoken to all
kinds of people—faculty and staff and alums, friends of the university
and the community. As people will when they meet the person in
charge of the place, they tell me about some things that concern them
or disappoint them or make them unhappy. But, early on in the
conversation, this phrase almost always appears, “I love San José
State.” I’ll tell you, it makes a deep, deep impression. And part of that
comes, too, from people who have been here a long time. They stay
here for a long time because they love the place and they become
repositories of institutional memory.

Diversity, we have a rich mix here. It’s evident in this room, it’s
evident around campus, its evident in the young men and women that
I had occasion to introduce to you earlier, who are the leaders of the
student body of San José State University. I know there is always
room for improvement in this area. It’s a continuing challenge, but it’s
a challenge that’s a pleasant one to take because it seems to me that
the institutional commitment to diversity is evident here and that the
campus environment is welcoming. Another big strength.

Let me say a few words about shared governments, which I take to be
imbedded in the culture of the university. I hail from such a culture at
the University of Nevada. I am pleased to say that I was able to help
solidify that culture in my days as a faculty senate chair though I,
parenthetically, did take some actions that when I became president I
later regretted. By and large in my presidential years as well, I did my
level best to sustain that culture of shared governance. We had it at
Nevada and you have it here. It’s a big plus. It’s simple; it’s a practical
matter. The enterprise just works better when it’s jointly owned and
that’s what shared governance is all about. There is no class of owners
of this institution. It belongs to all of us and that ownership must be
manifest in the way the institution does its business. I’m happy to be a beneficiary in my time here of that shared governance culture.

This is an institution with great promise and great potential to get from where it is to somewhere even better. That famous next level that we hear so much about doesn’t do it justice - doesn’t do the potential of this institution justice. There are some challenges and some obstacles - that will need to be surmounted if that promise, that potential, is to be realized. So let me talk about the challenges that I have discerned, again in the short time that I have been here in the conversations of which I have been privileged to be part.

**Priorities**

Challenge number one, not in priority order, is priority setting. I have heard a lot about how we do priority setting or perhaps more accurately how we don’t do priority setting. This large institution does a lot of its business as a university should in the departments and other units but we don’t cross the borders enough to develop campus wide priorities and I don’t mean to say that’s an easy thing to do. It’s a very hard thing to do. But this campus is going to have to do a better job and find a way to do a better job of setting its priorities campus wide. That’s one impression that I have. Resources, obviously, are always a challenge but if you’re going to set priorities, you’ve got to put some resources behind them and so where do we find resources? There are probably not a lot of resources coming out of Sacramento. We are now active in Washington. The vast dollars that make their way out of the capitol, may be ours to claim.

**Fundraising**

A bigger, better source over time, certainly, is private dollars. And in my view that is the way that this institution needs to go. It can’t get much beyond where it is without giving some serious attention to structural changes. We are not organized here to raise a lot of private money. We could raise a whole lot more than we have been raising were we to be organized. We don’t have an annual fund at this institution. I was quite surprised to learn that. An institution with how many? 130, 140, 150 thousand living alumni, some of them living very well and we’re not adequately in touch with them. That’s not a criticism. We don’t have the resources to be in touch with them. San José State needs to have an annual fund. There is gold in those hills. And I believe that that day will come. This institution also needs a private fundraising foundation. We have a very good foundation but it does other things. It handles grants and contracts and a bunch of other moneymaking operations and those are good, but we don’t have
a private fundraising foundation. A foundation governed by a board of
directors that represents heavy hitters in the region and San José
State people from around the world who have answered to that
description. I believe that has got to happen sooner or later. It won’t
be easy; I can speak from experience on that score. A foundation is a
place to go for resources to put behind those priorities that will help
get the institution from where it is to where it has the potential to go.

**Research and Graduate Education**
Research and graduate education, this is a growing mission here
obviously, but there are some structural problems there as well. It
appears to me that the institution wishes to grow that mission and I
think there will need to be some attention given to the organizational
problems that stand in the way. And, of course, there are more
resources available at the end of that rainbow. Technology and all of
its diverse manifestations provide a structural issue to confront, as
well. I believe that we can do a better job here than we are doing if we
get a better structure. That is not a criticism, again, it’s an observation
that we’re not well organized to do what we can do with information
technology and academic technology. Dare I say it, heaven forbid, in
which we may wish to seek some help from consultants so we’ll be
talking about that. And don’t forget, access back to that critical
mission again. I was having a conversation yesterday with the council
of chairs and we got on to that and talked about access and I was
asked if I had some answers to that question and I don’t. I don’t but
it’s worth a lot of thinking and a lot of discussion and ideas in finding a
way to do honor to that fundamental commitment of San José State
University.

**Planning**
Planning, an easy challenge to talk about because we don’t have a
strategic plan. We’ve got a lot of plans around, but not a strategic
plan, and I suspect that the next president of this institution is going
to want to have a strategic plan. That’s good as long as it is a plan
that arises from the people who need to own it. Planning only works if
that is the way the plans are developed so that it becomes an
intensive conversation with the campus. A campus, judging from my
own experience, may be skeptical about the planning effort because it
may be another one of those projects that gathers dust on a shelf
somewhere. But serious strategic planning is done in universities these
days and this institution needs to do it. Meantime, you have a vehicle.
It’s not precisely strategic planning, but it’s a vehicle for examining the
institution and for looking at the institution, for deciding where the
institution needs to go from here and for looking at some of these
challenges. The self-study that is being assembled by a very competent team chaired by Bethany Shifflet with many other excellent members, is a great source of staff support and data and so on. I hope that the campus will join that effort in the months ahead.

**Athletics**

Finally, it’s really not quite finally, it’s just the final challenge and then there will be some real finality in just a moment. There is the challenge of athletics. I have some experience in that area growing out of years of volunteer work with the National Collegiate Athletic Association. I had the wonderful experience of being part of the reform movement of the 80’s and the 90’s when a series of real reforms for athletics including NCAA programs like accreditation, intercollegiate athletics, gender equity, minority opportunity and presidential control of the NCAA were developed. This sends a symbolic message that athletics needs to be under presidential control as well as faculty control at the institutional level. I continue to be interested in reform in athletics. I recognize that there are very serious problems out there. I did take the liberty of signing up this institution for what might be described as the Tulane Initiative started by the president of that institution, which is now gathering the support of more than 40 institutions around the country. The initiative will take a close look at what is happening, what is wrong with the way intercollegiate athletics at the division one level, particularly in the sport of football, has come to be administered. So we’ll be part of that effort, as well. I know this is contentious stuff. Any institution that has a significant athletic program has some built-in opposition to it. I know that that is the case here. I am a defender of the continuation of division 1A status for San José State University. This means that the institution needs to prepare itself as best it can to meet the new standards for classification that take effect next year. Whatever I can do that’s reasonable I will be doing to try to help the process along. The challenge is a larger one than that certainly. Anyway, I appreciate that there are those who oppose, who may see me as a jock of some sort. I’m certainly not that. I do believe that there are some persuasive reasons that go well beyond athletics per se for this institution to remain at the division 1A level. And for those who may be here today who would like to engage me in a conversation about that, I’d be delighted to have a chat with you.

**A Healthy Future**

Two more considerations: Another thing I’m in favor of preserving here is civility in the campus-discourse-in what the late Bart Giamatti
wisely called the “constant conversation” that universities engage in. It probably becomes a greater challenge to maintain civil discourse as an institution grows, as it becomes more complex, as it involves itself more, and engages itself more in the life of the community it serves. I think it is more difficult to protect, sustain and advance civil discourse in an age when we find ourselves so much dominated in public discourse by the shouters amongst us. Where the airwaves have come to be great admirers of noise and where more and more listeners and viewers seem to join in that admiration and where people actually aspire to careers as shouters. I don’t think that is very healthy and I think it can creep in the side door of the college campus if we’re not looking, if we’re not alert. So, I hope we will not follow that trend here and that we will be sustainers of the traditional ideal of university life, which means lots of discourse, lots of assertive discourse, lots of disagreement, but civility as we approach the result in discussions.

In conclusion I want to offer you an intuitive judgment that is born of my seven weeks here. I’ve had a chance to visit a lot of universities around the country as an accreditor, a consultant or a guest or a speaker. If people feel threatened for whatever reason you can tell if a campus feels good, you can tell. I want you to know it’s my informed intuition that this campus feels good. Thank you. I enjoy walking to work in the morning. I don’t have to walk very far. It’s about a 3-minute walk but I enjoy that walk. I just enjoy the feel of the campus as I take it in and again when I go home in the evening and on the weekends when I have a chance to really walk, the place where I walk is this campus. I enjoy the quiet and the solitude and the contemplative nature of the place at its quiet moments, but I enjoy the buzz of the place as well. It does feel good and the reason for that is a simple one, that good feeling emanates from the campus community, from the people who maintain the place and from the others who are part of it. So I’m glad I came. I haven’t, in all honesty, reached the stage of love yet, but I can tell you that San José State University and I are having a world-wind courtship. Well thanks for putting up with me for so long and thanks for that good feeling.