

Spring 2020 State of the University

President Mary A. Papazian
March 9, 2020, 2pm

Thank you, Brandon. And thank you to our entire Associated Students team for all that you do.

I want to extend a warm welcome to our attending faculty, staff, students, alumni, external friends and partners, as well as all of those joining us via live stream. I am glad you could all be here today.

I am pleased to welcome Teresa Yoloti Gomez, field representative for Assembly Member Ash Kalra, for attending on his behalf.

Though I hesitate to begin on a rather serious note, I wanted to start by saying a few words about our response to the **coronavirus outbreak**.

Our primary objective with this crisis is to provide **timely, thorough, and credible information** to the campus community. Indeed, we are doing everything we can to provide the necessary information to our students, faculty, staff, and others.

If you go to our main website, **SJSU.EDU**, you will see that we now have a link **on the very front page** that will take you directly to a site where we are organizing the pertinent updates and information. Here, you will find a variety of links, travel advisories, a running list of announcements, and everything else you may need to know as things unfold.

We are updating this site frequently, so **please help us** by letting your students and other stakeholders know that there is an easy-to-find place on our website where they can go to remain informed. Thank you.

I would like to begin my presentation with a bold but simple assertion: **we are doing well these days at San Jose State, aren't we?**

Indeed, the state of the university is quite strong, largely due to the efforts of many of you here today. For the next 30 minutes or so, I am delighted to offer an update on the university's progress.

Transformation 2030 updates

Roughly one year ago on this stage, Stefan Frazier and Walt Jacobs joined me as we unveiled our new, 10-year strategic plan, *Transformation 2030*.

We have said all along that this would be one strategic plan that would **not** sit on a shelf and collect dust. So I am delighted to say that our implementation of *Transformation 2030* is well-underway!

However, I am not going to spend a lot of time here going through the strategic plan again and our implementation efforts to date. I would encourage you to follow my blog, where I have slowly been making my way through each of the five goals of *Transformation 2030*. I will continue to reference the strategic plan in my blog posts and other communication vehicles for the foreseeable future.

Various references to *Transformation 2030* will be sprinkled in throughout my presentation today, however. That should give you a pretty good sense of how we have been moving forward.

Commencement

In December, we conducted our second series of **Fall Commencement** ceremonies. They were beautiful and inspiring events that demonstrated how our graduates shine so brightly, even in the midst of the dark and sometimes gloomy winter months.

I am so pleased that we are now honoring our summer and fall graduates each year in the same way that we traditionally have honored our spring graduates. I look forward to continuing that tradition, both in the spring and in the fall.

Housing and Basic Needs

I suspect you all know by now about the **comprehensive housing solution** that we announced in late January. All the details of that comprehensive plan are available on our website, including a video of the full press conference, so I would encourage you to review that if you have not done so already.

But just like *Transformation 2030*, our comprehensive housing solution **does not consist of mere words on a page**. Though the housing insecurity crisis will not be solved overnight, we are already seeing tangible progress on several fronts.

Part of our plan is to open a dedicated **SJSU Cares** space in Clark Hall, for instance, and we are well into the design stage for this move. We are aggressively – but thoughtfully – creating a welcoming, inviting space for those students who choose to visit us there, and we are getting direct input **from our students** as we proceed. Our hope is that we can open that new SJSU Cares office by the end of this semester. So keep an eye out for an announcement on that.

Our comprehensive housing plan aligns well with *Transformation 2030*, and it specifically maps to Goal 3, which outlines how our campus community will continue to **Grow and Thrive** into the future.

A significant piece of that goal is to look at more ways in which we can expand housing and transportation options for our students, faculty and staff. To that end, we are working very closely with a pair of Bay Area startup companies on programs that will help San Jose State employees purchase homes more affordably. These programs also will connect participants to useful home-buying resources.

Like the other elements of our comprehensive housing solution, these new programs – for which we can thank our *Transformation 2030* Goal 3 implementation team! – came about through **external partnerships**. So I really want to reinforce how important **collaboration** is if we are going to tackle successfully the housing insecurity crisis on this campus.

With our sweeping, comprehensive housing solution we are both grateful and fortunate to have a number of civic and governmental partners—as well as our own student groups – who are passionate about and devoted to these issues.

So I want to extend my sincere thanks to **all** of those people at San Jose State – **including many of you here today** – who have been behind the scenes, for years, creating concrete solutions to **all** of our students’ basic needs concerns. We would not have a fully-stocked, permanent **Spartan Food Pantry**, for instance, without the tireless efforts of many people. So please know that all of us thank you, most especially the students of SJSU.

Conveners of important conversations

Over the past few years, we have worked thoughtfully and intentionally to position this university as a place where complex, sometimes even sobering conversations can take place. Where others might **run** from this responsibility, we **welcome** it as part of our role as public educators.

Just in these few months since the academic year began in late August, we have seen – and embraced – several such opportunities.

- In December, for instance, we welcomed the courageous and inspiring **Malala**, along with Apple CEO **Tim Cook**, who spoke with our students about the need to provide educational opportunities for girls around the world. For anyone who would like to see it, a video showing the event in its entirety is available on our website.
- We welcomed more than **80 university presidents and chancellors** from across the country to our campus early last month to talk about ways we can all prepare our students more effectively for the jobs of the future. We did this in partnership with **LinkedIn** and the **Education Advisory Board**, and even took our guests on a private tour of LinkedIn headquarters.
- Just a few weeks ago, we were delighted to host an **Election Security Town Hall** event over at the Hammer Theatre with several elected officials in advance of this year’s elections.

This came the same day, I should add, that we cut the ribbon on our new **Voting Center** over at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library. It was a special and important day for democracy here on our campus, and I am so pleased we were up and running with the new Voting Center well in advance of last week's "Super Tuesday" elections.

- We convened a "**Future of Learning**" event on campus, where our College of Education brought together educators, researchers, and policymakers to help reimagine what learning really entails.
- And later this week, our Lucas College and Graduate School of Business is hosting the **Women in Leadership** conference, where representatives from Salesforce, Cisco, PayPal, Wells-Fargo, and many other top-tier organizations will come together to discuss tangible, concrete tools and strategies for women in leadership positions.

These are but a few current examples, and there are so many more! San Jose State is **truly** living up to its reputation as a convener of important conversations and a place where people of various walks of life and experiences can come together to solve problems and address the compelling issues of the day.

I want to continue for a moment with this theme of community partnerships and civic engagement, as it truly has been an extraordinary past few months in this arena.

In particular, we celebrated two wonderful anniversaries that showcase our commitment to our local and regional communities, and the remarkable impact that San Jose State students have had and continue to have.

The first came in November with **CommUniverCity's** 15-year anniversary of work to create healthy and vibrant neighborhoods. CommUniverCity does this by partnering the university with underserved communities in the City of San Jose.

CommUniverCity executive director **Kathering Kao Cushing** has done a wonderful job with this program, and I believe it is as strong today as it has been at any time during the past 15 years. I congratulate her and her team and look forward to continuing CommUniverCity's exceptional work and impact.

Another anniversary took place just last month with our **Center for Community Learning and Leadership**. For **20 years**, C-C-L-L has been developing curriculum-based service learning, with more than 80-thousand Spartans contributing nearly **one-and-a-half million** hours of service to the community as part of their coursework.

C-C-L-L director Elena Klaw and her team are doing phenomenal work, and I was particularly delighted when they held their anniversary celebration at our Bowling Center in the Student Union and thus leveraged the classic book, "**Bowling Alone**," by Robert Putnam.

As Elena has pointed out, Putnam’s book demonstrated how Americans often bowl alone nowadays rather than joining leagues or clubs, thereby missing out on civic discussions and other forms of public engagement.

Not only did the Center just celebrate an anniversary, but it also is very much involved in the **California Volunteers AmeriCorps Service Fellowship Pilot program** announced just recently at the State Capital.

Our campus will receive more than **a half-million dollars** in state and federal funding for this pilot year of the Fellowship, providing 44 fellows with a living allowance and an education award. Our specific Fellowship program, the **AmeriCorps Civic Engagement Fellows**, will build on our current Cyber Spartans program and will address educational equity needs within the City of San Jose.

It will do this by teaching computer programming to underserved third to sixth grade youth attending after school programs. Fellows also will engage in Mayor Liccardo’s **ServeSJ initiative**.

I cannot express just how exciting and inspiring all of this is, and what it says about the service-oriented outlook that our students and faculty possess. I think this deserves a big round of applause!

So, what are some of the other ways in which we have been working with the leaders of this city these past few months and having a say on city and regional issues? Here are some other examples:

- We took part in the **“Future of Downtown San Jose”** event and engaged with Google on its development plans here, reminding them of the role our students and faculty can – and should – play with that project. We are now having conversations with Google executives to identify strategic partnership opportunities beyond ongoing recruitment and sponsorship programs.
- We were Gold Sponsors of the **2020 Joint Venture Silicon Valley “State of the Valley”** conference, thus having a strong presence there with other influencers and decision-makers.
- We continue to have a strong and influential voice with the **Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)** on the BART-to-San Jose project.

In fact, I have had one-on-one conversations with Mayor Liccardo about this very topic, and rest assured, he is now **well aware** of our views on the significance of this project to San Jose State and its students, faculty, and staff!

- Finally, if you follow my blog, you may recently have noticed that I referenced a new activity we are planning called “**Spartan Town and Gown Week.**” This maps **directly** to *Transformation 2030*’s Goal #4, “Connect and Contribute,” and is essentially an expansion of our annual “Weeks of Welcome” when students are returning to campus.

This new initiative will debut in August, and the idea around the program is to encourage the City of San Jose to welcome back our 35,000+ students and 7,000+ faculty and staff upon their return to campus after the summer break.

Our intent is to partner more closely with local businesses to help demonstrate to our students that San Jose is **aware of** and **supportive of** their return to campus. Our traditional “Weeks of Welcome,” as wonderful and successful as it has been, has typically been limited to campus activities and programs.

So we are looking forward to expanding that effort in a way that involves our City partners and colleagues, particularly the business community.

Research, graduate, and doctoral studies

Now, I would like to shift my attention to our progress in research, graduate, and doctoral studies.

Firstly, our **Division of Research and Innovation** has been making great strides as it establishes new functions while expanding others.

The Research Development team will reside in the Office of Research under the leadership of Julia Gaudinski, who is in the process of hiring three research development specialists. Together, this team will focus on helping new faculty establish their funding lines, while assisting senior faculty with securing significant new grants.

For its part, the Office of Research is in the process of recruiting a **director of research compliance** to help support the growing research activities on campus. Our VPRI, Mohamed Abousalem, is also looking at specific ways to initiate and grow a number of innovation and entrepreneurship support programs that are in development.

There was another research-oriented development that may have flown under the radar when it announced a few months ago, so I wanted to be sure to call this out here.

For the past 10 years, the **Timpany Center** has served its core mission well, providing valuable non-profit educational and therapeutic services to community members through a partnership between the SJSU Research Foundation and the County of Santa Clara.

In late November, the Research Foundation **renegotiated** and **extended** the partnership agreement with the County for **three more years.**

The important thing to note is that the agreement is now based on terms that make the operation of the center **operationally and financially viable**. We are very pleased to maintain this partnership so we can continue to offer the educational training to our students and the services to our community. I congratulate the SJSU staff who worked behind the scenes to make this happen.

Finally, as you hopefully have seen in your in-boxes, Mohamed and his team are planning a bigger and better **Celebration of Research** this year than we have ever seen before. This annual event—which is coming up later this month—is designed for the **entire** SJSU community and will recognize and celebrate the great research, scholarship, and creative activities from all across our campus. We also will, for the first time, open our doors to our **external** stakeholders, including alumni and community partners.

Why not, right? Let's invite **everyone** so we can really show off our great scholars, researchers, and artists! It should be a fantastic event, so I hope you can all join us. I plan on being there to say a few words!

Graduate Studies

Now, in late January, our new **College of Graduate Studies** celebrated one year since its inception, and you can imagine how busy Dean d'Alarcao and his team have been.

As the **first graduate college** in the California State University system, the new college has been developing ways to elevate the educational experience for our more than 8,000 graduate students. Just let me repeat that: we have **more than 8 thousand graduate students** here at San Jose State!

We now have programs to support graduate students in a variety of ways:

- Many may need to travel to engage in or present their research or creative activity. As one former presidential candidate might say, **we have a plan for that!**
- Some might find value in attending a networking event just for graduate students. We have a plan for that!
- Other grad students might need expanded opportunities to develop their presentation or writing skills. And yes, we now have a plan for that.

In fact, we are sending the winner of our first-ever **Grad Slam** three-minute thesis competition, **Odiri Maku**, to represent SJSU at the western regional competition in Albuquerque. Odiri is a 2019 MS Nursing graduate and won our campus competition with her thesis presentation about the factors leading to higher maternal mortality among Black women in the United States. Congratulations, Odiri!

The College of Graduate Studies also has been working to expand the array of graduate offerings available at SJSU.

We are welcoming our first class of **audiology doctoral students** this fall and are developing an **occupational therapy** doctorate. We also are exploring a few Ph.D. programs to be offered in collaboration with University of California campuses.

Finally, we have **five new master's degree programs** being developed this year, including three in the area of **data science and analytics**, a burgeoning field for which Silicon Valley employers rely on San Jose State to educate the next generation of doers and leaders.

So not only is San Jose State renowned as Silicon Valley's **Public University**, we can now say it is truly the Silicon Valley's **Public Graduate School**, and a place where graduate students flourish!

Technology

You may have noticed that I have written a fair amount in recent months about technology in my blog and in some speeches away from campus.

There is a reason for that: We continue to transform the role of technology at our university, whether it be for academic uses, campus safety, workforce preparation, or other purposes. It is critically important that we get the role of technology right at this university.

We want to **lead** on this issue and create an environment on campus where technology is **effortless, transparent, and predictable**. We want to do this in a way that leverages our Silicon Valley location and gives us and our students a competitive advantage.

So, to this end, we signed an agreement in October with **IBM** that will deliver **\$5 million worth of advanced technology** to our students, faculty, staff, and researchers, including IBM's first-ever Cyber Security Training Center. Our IT team is now working with the Office of Research and Innovation and with Academic Affairs to build the processes and procedures necessary to implement this partnership and realize its benefits. We also will share these technical gains with collaborators throughout the CSU and UC systems, community colleges, K-12 schools, and any other higher education institution that asks for our help.

We also are now working closely with another Bay Area tech company – **LinkedIn** – on workforce development issues. We are one of only two institutions in the country that are receiving customized insight and university-specific data from our friends at LinkedIn. **This is big-league stuff!**

As I mentioned earlier, we shared our vision of the future of workforce development with some **80 visiting university presidents** during a 2-day event in January. So we are **setting the trends and leading** on these topics. We will continue to do so.

Athletics and the Arts

Now, going back for a moment to how we engage with the City and the broader community, there are **two significant ways** in which we do that routinely.

I think of these as the **two major bookends, or front doors to our campus**, that excite our alumni base, get people talking about San Jose State, and show off the variety of talent we possess here at this university. And both of these areas are FUN!

I'm referring, of course, to both our **Athletics programs**, and our **artistic and creative** endeavors!

When it comes to our Athletics program, we talk about building successful and winning teams and doing so with an emphasis on our student-athletes.

A high bar was set last spring by our student athletes and cheer squad members, 90 of whom were honored at Honors Convocation – a **record** for our Athletics department and **more than a 20 percent increase** from the previous year. I have high hopes that we will meet or exceed that mark this spring!

These same student-athletes earned **263** conference and national academic awards based on academic success and athletics performance. So they are doing well off the playing field.

On the playing field, let's have a shout-out for the **Spartan Women's softball team!**

They entered the season as favorites to capture the Mountain West championship, and this optimistic outlook is manifesting itself early in the season. They lost their first two games, but get this: they then proceeded to rattle off **17 straight wins in a row!!** At this writing, they are 19-4!

Most of you probably know by now that we will be hosting the **Mubadala** women's tennis tournament for the **third straight summer** this August. But how many of you knew that San Jose State was the **only school** that hosts a nationally-televised college golf tournament **live** - the Western Intercollegiate? That tournament is now in its 74th year and is broadcast by the Golf Channel. So that's another feather in our athletics cap!

Speaking of golf, we have not one, but **two nationally-ranked** amateur golfers!

Sean Yu and Natasha Oon – remember those names. They may be the next Ken Venturi, or the next Juli Inkster or Patti Sheehan, and add to the **131 victories** that Spartan alums have earned in the professional ranks nationwide over the years. Well done, Spartan golfers!

And how about the **Spartan Football team?**

They really turned a corner this past season, with some spectacular wins over Arkansas, Army, and Fresno State. They **just** missed out on a bowl game, but make no mistake: Spartan Football is back!

Finally, a big announcement: In less than two weeks, our legendary judo coach, **Yosh Uchida**, will celebrate his **100th Birthday!!**

Yosh is an amazing man and coach, and we are so lucky to have had him as part of the Spartan community for so many years.

There will be a big gala to celebrate his incredible career and achievements on March 21, and his actual birthday is on April 1. Be sure to wish him a happy birthday if you see him around campus!

Now, what about the **arts**?

There are so many things happening over at the Hammer Theatre that I cannot even begin to go through all of the upcoming offerings there. Our next mainstage event is the **Threepenny Opera**, which will run from April 24 through May 1st, and I know this is going to attract many fans of the arts.

Faculty members in our School of Music and Dance and Theatre & Film secured a grant from the **Kurt Weill Foundation** to help stage the production! Kurt Weill was the German composer of Threepenny Opera, and some of our university's finest performing artists are involved in this production. I really encourage you to check this out!

Not to be outdone, our **dance students** had a wonderful opportunity to be involved in a residency with the Gallim Dance Company early last month, followed by a public performance. We can thank a donor from our College of Humanities and the Arts for helping to fund this.

Looking ahead to springtime, our Spartan **vocalists** will be over at the Hammer for a performance called **Considering Matthew Shepard**. That promises to be an inspiring production that I am sure will feature some very powerful music.

There is just so much more going on with our arts and humanities group that I simply cannot go through them all!

But just know that there are so many wonderful and entertaining activities to enjoy like those I have just described. Whether it is **art, design, theatre, music, poetry, or other kinds of creative talent**, our Spartan creative community takes a back seat to no one! And in the Hammer Theatre, we have a fabulous venue in which we can stage many of these productions.

Enrollment

I would like to mention a few of our enrollment numbers and the team of people who work so hard on this, because there is such a great story for us to tell in this regard.

Our total enrollment has grown from **just over 35,000** in Fall 2015 to **just over 36,000** in Fall 2019, or **three percent over a five-year period**. This may not sound like a particularly impressive number, but when you consider the current plight of other campuses around the country, **it really is remarkable**.

A report just last month in the online site, *Education Dive*, points out that, quote, “**The last few years have been tumultuous ones for colleges and universities in the U.S. Increased regulation and reduced enrollment continue to be among several factors contributing to the closure or consolidation of thousands of colleges and campuses around the country.**”

So we feel very fortunate to have demonstrated growth—not decline—over these past five years. This has been through a combination of growth on the regular academic session as well as special session.

San Jose State continues to receive more qualified applicants than we have available space. In some ways, that is a good problem to have, although it is always difficult to say no to hardworking, dedicated prospective students!

One final highlight I will mention is that our **4-year graduation rate** for incoming freshmen has improved **15 percent** over the past four years. Our vice provost for undergraduate education, **Thalia Anagnos**, recently testified before State Senator Steve Glazer's Student Success Committee, and **San Jose State was commended for our efforts** to improve our graduation rate.

Thank you for representing us so well, Thalia, and thank you to all of the people helping to ensure we continue to enroll as many students as we can here at SJSU and ensure their success once they join our campus!

Academics

On the academic front, I wanted to mention a very exciting new endeavor that Provost Del Casino has spearheaded on the university's behalf. It is called **The OpEd Project**, and specifically the **Public Voices Fellowship** in which we are participating.

In a nutshell, the Op-ed Project works with hundreds of universities, foundations, non-profits, and community organizations, and it involves the selection of thought-leaders – in our case, academics and faculty members – who are trained to take thought-leadership positions in their specific fields. They do this not only through written op-eds, but also through other communication vehicles.

The Op-ed Project's Public Voices Fellowship is a national initiative first piloted at Yale, Stanford and Princeton universities, and it is now rolling out in partnership with top universities and foundations across the nation.

This Fellowship program is thought to have the deepest impact of all the Op-ed Project's initiatives, so it is very exciting that we will soon be just the second west coast university to become a Public Voices Fellowship university.

And we are in good company – I mentioned Yale, Stanford and Princeton, but other universities that take part in this Fellowship program include Dartmouth, Columbia University, and Cornell.

I will offer a quick “shout out” to **Provost Del Casino** for moving this project forward for us – and for finding a way to fund it! Thanks, Vin!

Campus safety

It is always important at these types of occasions to talk a bit about campus safety. It is our goal to be the safest and most secure campus in the United States, but we know we will need to be diligent and even creative if we are to come up with the kinds of strategies that will allow us that distinction, particularly given our location in the heart of the 10th largest city in America.

We continue to work strategically to improve campus safety in several ways:

- We are improving the safety of our card access system and door locks.
- We are improving building security after hours by doing things like requiring the use of the Tower Card to unlock during those hours.
- We are enhancing our video surveillance system on campus.
- We are enhancing our Emergency Broadcast capabilities
- We are even looking at the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to Alert UPD to potentially dangerous situations.

I cannot emphasize enough how important all of these safety enhancements are for this university. We want to keep everyone safe and secure.

Campaign

Developments, investments, and improvements such as some of those I have described above enhance our ability to fulfill our mission. But everything comes at a price, fiscally-speaking.

So we need even more investments in our extraordinary students, faculty, and staff members as we continue to implement *Transformation 2030*. These are the underpinning factors behind our next comprehensive fundraising campaign, the early stages of which currently are unfolding.

During the summer and early fall, campus and volunteer leadership explored the university’s readiness to mount a multi-million dollar comprehensive campaign, one that would be our second in the past several years. To do this, senior campus leaders, including my Cabinet, Deans, Associate Deans, Chairs and Development staff, engaged in a priority-setting process that yielded seven university-wide goals. You will hear more about these priorities in the weeks ahead.

In addition, a number of unit-based priorities were developed in three major areas: investing in student success; ensuring academic distinction; and engaging our community.

Furthermore, our fundraising consultants conducted an external feasibility and market positioning study on our behalf that tested a campaign statement of intent, the anticipated scope and scale of a campaign, our potential target goal of \$350 million, and the University's current priorities for the campaign.

Roughly four dozen individuals were interviewed, including past, current and prospective donors; past and current members of the Tower Foundation Board; community stakeholders and influencers; volunteer leaders, alumni and faculty.

The results of the feasibility/market positioning study will be presented to the President's Leadership Council, the Tower Board and the Alumni board later this month.

So we are marching forward with our comprehensive campaign, but we are doing so thoughtfully and intentionally. We need to get this right, and when we do, we should see results that will benefit our students and other members of our campus community for years to come.

Close – the Campus Climate Survey

To close my presentation, I wanted to say a few words about the Campus Climate Survey.

At the outset of today's State of the University speech today, I made the bold assertion that we are "doing well" these days at San Jose State. And I really believe that. I have only scratched the surface of all that we are doing, and all that we are accomplishing on this campus. The evidence seems indisputable: **we are doing great things at San Jose State.**

But you know what? We cannot **truly** know how we are doing without some **corresponding data**. And that, fellow Spartans, is where the **Campus Climate Survey** comes in to play.

The survey was launched campus-wide on **February 25** and will remain open until the **20th** of this month. I **strongly** urge everyone to take this important survey, and to encourage others to do so as well.

I must reiterate: the survey is **completely confidential**. There is no way to track you or your personal information – it was intentionally designed that way. Even the server hosting the survey and its data is hosted **off campus**. Completing the survey should only take 20 or 30 minutes of your time.

The only way we can make systemic change here at this university, indeed the only way we will know what change needs to be made, is through research-based, theoretically-sound data. That is precisely what this survey will produce: data with a high degree of validity and reliability, data that will help inform the leadership around the campus on what we are doing well, and what we may need to change.

So please take our Campus Climate Survey. Thank you.

That concludes my State of the University address. Thank you all again very much for being here today, and for all that you do to help make San Jose State the **best public university in the country**. I hope you can stick around for a bit and visit with your friends and colleagues. Thank you again.

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