

**2008 State of the University Address**

**President Daniel S. Papp**

**Kennesaw State University**

**February 27-28, 2008**

**Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the 2008 State of the University Address. Thank you for taking time to be here today as we discuss how the university is doing across a wide-range of activities and undertakings and talk about plans for KSU's future as we strive to make KSU the best learning-centered university in the United States.**

**This address is part of a continuing effort to enhance communications within the KSU community. Related to this, I will soon begin another round of visits to academic departments and operational units to receive feedback from the campus about the performance and direction of the university. I'll conduct these visits the rest of this semester and on into Maymester. As you may recall, after I was named president two years ago, I visited many academic departments and operational units to discuss with faculty**

**and staff their views of what was going well and what needed improvement. I conducted a second round of visits last year during spring semester and Maymester. I will continue these visits throughout my presidency and as appropriate incorporate feedback from them into planning efforts.**

**Two years ago this month, I was named president of KSU. Each day I still become more impressed by the willingness of our students to learn ... by the quality and commitment of our faculty and staff ... by the beauty of our campus ... and by the interest and support of the community in KSU. We are fortunate to be in Cobb County, in Northwest Georgia, and near Atlanta. Our location gives us a host of advantages that many universities do not have. We also have a variety of challenges that other campuses do not have. I'll discuss both our advantages and challenges today. Let me begin by reviewing some of the highlights that KSU enjoyed over the last year ... and it's been quite a year.**

**First, in December, the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools reaffirmed our**

**accreditation for another ten years. This culminated a multi-year process that included a detailed self-study, a visit to campus last March by a team of accreditation experts, and continuing dialogue with SACS all the way through December. Many people played major roles in this, but today, let me recognize and thank only a few: Dr. Ed Rugg, who directed KSU's overall SACS effort; Drs. Akanmu Adebayo and Val Whittlesey, who led the development of our Quality Enhancement Plan; and Dr. Nita Paris, who headed the team that undertook the substantive change review necessitated by Kennesaw State's first doctorate, the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership.**

**A second highlight of the past year was the enrollment of our 20,000<sup>th</sup> student. Indeed, last fall, we enrolled 20,607 students. KSU has been the third-largest university in Georgia for the past three years, but passing the 20,000 student mark is a notable milestone. It is also noteworthy that KSU's Continuing Education program taught almost 23,000 students this year.**

**A third highlight was the addition of an array of new degree programs, including our first doctoral program, the aforementioned Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. Other programs that came on board last year were undergraduate degrees in Anthropology, Geography, Information Security and Assurance, and a completely on-line bachelors in Business Administration. KSU also added a Masters in Applied Statistics and a Masters in Applied Exercise and Health Science. More degrees are to come. Indeed, if things go as planned, the Board of Regents in March will approve a new KSU BA with a major in Dance as well as our second Doctoral Degree, the Doctorate in Business Administration.**

**A fourth highlight was the opening of two major new facilities, the beginning of construction of three structures, and planning for two more buildings. The new buildings are the Social Sciences Building and the Dr. Bobbie Bailey and Family Performing Arts Center, both incredible facilities being fully utilized by our students, faculty, and staff. I add as an aside that when the Performing Arts Center was dedicated, Dr. Bailey surprised everyone by announcing she**

**would provide funds to make KSU an all-Steinway university. All 30 pianos on campus are now Steinways, making KSU one of only three all-Steinway colleges and universities in Georgia and one of only 61 in the United States.**

**What about the three facilities under construction and the two being planned? The three going up are a 913 bed residence hall, which means next fall we will have 3,200 students living on campus; the new Central Parking Deck, which will have space for 2,600 cars when it opens this summer; and an addition to the Wilson Building, begun earlier this week, that will house a black-box theater and several performance rooms. In addition, planning is under way for our Health Sciences Building and a 1,000-seat dining hall. Construction on both should begin in the next four months or so.**

**The fifth highlight is actually a series of awards and recognitions that KSU and its students, faculty, and staff received. As I often tell the Regents, the Chancellor, our**

**legislators, and anyone else who will listen, we have incredibly capable students, faculty, and staff. Let me list just a few of the awards and recognitions that KSU and members of the KSU community recently received.**

**Last month, KSU was one of only three universities in the country that received the Council for Higher Education Accreditation's award for Institutional Progress in Student Learning Outcomes. This award recognizes institutional success in developing, applying, and maintaining evidence of student learning outcomes.**

**Also, the Princeton Review and Entrepreneur Magazine named both the Entrepreneurial Education program and the Cox Family Enterprise Center of the Coles College of Business as being among the top 50 programs of their kind in the country.**

**KSU faculty members and programs also won two of the University System of Georgia's prestigious teaching awards this year. Professor Mary Garner of the College of Sciences**

**and Mathematics won the University System’s individual award for her outstanding teaching, and the Professional Sales Degree program of the Coles College, led by Professor Terry Loe, won the Regent’s Outstanding Program award.**

**In addition, KSU received not one, not two, but three of the Governor’s Customer Service Awards. Ms. Linda Lyons won the top individual award for her service as KSU’s “Customer Service Champion,” KSU’s Financial Aid Office won the award for its team based approach to improving financial aid, and Governor Perdue recognized KSU itself for its emphasis on improving service to students.**

**As a sixth highlight, we also kicked off a \$75 million comprehensive fund-raising campaign last year, KSU’s first-ever comprehensive campaign. The good news is that we are doing well. The even better news is that we have already passed the \$30 million mark.**

**A final set of highlights of the past year comes from our women’s athletic teams. Both the women’s softball team and**

**the women's soccer team won Atlantic Sun Championships. I would be remiss if I did not mention the KSU Competitive Cheer team, which finished third in the nation, beating every Division one university except Louisville and Maryland.**

**Like I said, it has been one heck of a year, but what about the future? Let me begin by discussing four important administrative changes that will soon occur, and then discuss KSU's future under three broad categories: 1) the view from the Regents, to include programs, capacity, facilities, and the budget; 2) the KSU Strategic Plan, namely, where we are on it and where we are likely to go on it; and 3) the KSU Foundation and what it means to this university.**

**First, the four administrative changes ...**

**The first change already has been announced, the creation of the position of Associate Provost and the appointment after a national search of Dr. Teresa Joyce, Dean of the Graduate College, to this new position. In her new capacity, Teresa will manage strategic planning for Academic Affairs and**

**supervise institutes and centers such as the Institute for Global Initiatives and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Provost Black will begin a search for a new Dean of the Graduate School in the near future. Please join with me in welcoming Teresa to her new position.**

**My second announcement has two parts. First, with deep regret, I must inform you that after over thirty years of service to KSU, Vice President for Student Success and Enrollment Services Dr. Nancy King will retire at the end of this semester. During her time as Vice President, Nancy initiated many programs and activities that have made Kennesaw State one of the leading universities in the country in terms of freshman experience programs, student advising, and admission and registrar activities. We will, however, retain Nancy's services on a part time basis next year as she works on several projects she is leading, such as the NCAA Athletics Self-Study and the refurbishment of Financial Aid. In March, the Georgia legislature will recognize Dr. King as a "Shining Star" for her devoted service to students and to Kennesaw State.**

**The second part of this announcement I make with pleasure. I have asked Dr. Jerome Ratchford to serve as Interim Vice President for Student Success and Enrollment Management after Nancy retires, and he has agreed. Dr. Ratchford will hold this position for at least a year as we later in 2008 initiate a national search for a permanent Vice President for Student Success. Join me once again, this time in congratulating Dr. Ratchford on his soon-to-be acquired new responsibilities.**

**The third major administrative-related announcement I would like to make is that we have recently initiated a national search, chaired jointly by Faculty Executive Assistant to the President Dr. Sarah Robbins and Dr. Jerome Ratchford, for a Special Assistant to the President for Diversity. Serving as KSU's Chief Diversity Officer and reporting to the President, this Cabinet level position will have administrative faculty responsibilities that include fostering a campus climate that respects and values diversity among students, faculty, and staff; developing systemic**

**structures to recruit, retain, and promote diverse students, faculty, and staff; promoting and coordinating research, curriculum, training programs, and grant initiatives on diversity and inter-cultural competencies; and teaching through a faculty appointment consistent with the CDO's background in teaching and scholarship.**

**I would also like to thank several folks who worked over the last year under the auspices of the Diversity and Equity Forum to help detail the responsibilities of this position and finalize responsibilities, namely, Professors Kathryn Epps, Thierry Leger, Jorge Perez, and Ivan Pulinkala. Thank you.**

**Hiring a Chief Diversity Officer also will allow Special Assistant to the President for Legal Affairs and Diversity Dr Devine to devote all her time to the university's legal matters. This is a good thing, since as a growing university, we find ourselves increasingly needing answers to a host of legal questions on contracts, purchasing, intellectual property, trade marks, personnel, and so on. Reflecting this,**

**Dr. Devine's title will be changed to University Attorney and Special Assistant to the President for Legal Affairs.**

**Fourth, I would also like to announce that we have initiated a national search, chaired by Professor Tim Hedeem, for a Director of Sustainability. Reporting to the provost, this position will have administrative faculty responsibilities that include assuring that KSU pursues environmentally friendly policies and practices, employs environmentally-friendly technologies when and where possible, and teaches the KSU community in both formal and informal settings about environmental issues and needs.**

**Let me turn now to the three categories that I referenced earlier that are critical to the future of this university: 1) the view that the Regents have of KSU's future, to include programs, capacity, facilities, and the budget; 2) where we are on the KSU Strategic Plan and where we are likely to go with it; and 3) the KSU Foundation and what it means to this university. First, the view from the Regents ...**

**Last August, the Board of Regents adopted a new Strategic Plan, and it generally contained good news for Kennesaw State. Several parts of the plan require close attention.**

**Goal Two of the University System’s Strategic Plan is to “create enrollment capacity [in the University System] to meet the needs of 100,000 additional students by 2020.”**

**That is only 12 years away. Those 100,000 additional students will attend USG colleges and universities and be more or less evenly divided among five primary areas: 1) the Georgia coast from Savannah to Kings Bay; 2) Atlanta’s “Southern Crescent” roughly from Hartsfield-Jackson Airport to Henry County; 3) the 316 corridor from Atlanta to Athens; 4) the I-75 corridor from Atlanta to Chattanooga; and 5) the rest of the state.**

**Three of these areas are near Atlanta. Recognizing this, the Board of Regents in December initiated an Atlanta-area capacity study to guide decisions on how growth will be handled. The study is scheduled to be discussed at the March Board meeting. So what does this mean for KSU?**

**Obviously, we are one of only four USG institutions, and one of only two comprehensive universities, in the I-75 Atlanta-Chattanooga corridor. This means under most conditions KSU would be expected to grow, and to grow substantially. But the reality is that after we build a few more buildings and grow by a few more thousand students, unless more land is acquired, we will run out of land and space.**

**So even before the study is released, KSU, the KSU Foundation, and the Board of Regents are exploring ways to ameliorate the coming crunch and to meet student need. We are looking for more land, both near campus and further away. We are examining possible new partnerships that will have Kennesaw students studying and Kennesaw faculty teaching at more off-campus sites, even as business students and faculty are already doing at the Galleria and in Dalton, as nursing students and faculty are doing in Jasper, and as education students and faculty are doing in Fulton and Paulding Counties. And we also are ramping up our ability to offer on-line programs, witness the on-line BBA and the**

**Web MBA in the College of Business. So stay tuned in the near future for the results of the Regents Atlanta-area capacity study.**

**The Regents Strategic Plan also says under Goal Two that it is the Board’s intent to “create a more robust sector of comprehensive universities and further delineate their missions within the sector.” KSU has been tapped as one of the four comprehensive universities that will be in this “more robust sector.” (The other universities in this sector are Georgia Southern, West Georgia, and Valdosta.)**

**While the exact meaning of what it means to be in this “more robust sector” is yet to be determined, two dimensions are clear. First, starting last year, the four universities in this sector are permitted to charge slightly more for tuition than other comprehensive universities. Second, starting about four years ago, the universities in this sector were permitted to begin planning for new applied doctoral programs. It was under these auspices that KSU’s Ed.D. was approved, that the DBA hopefully will be approved in three weeks, and that**

**the Doctorate in Nursing Sciences, currently with the Regents Staff for review, will be approved in the near future.**

**Just to illustrate how rapidly things may change, a month ago, the presidents of the four robust sector universities were informed that the Board might look favorably on one Ph.D. program at each of the four universities -- if it was focused on a university strength, interdisciplinary, did not require new facilities, and fit within the university's mission. The Board also said it would set money aside to initiate such programs. Dean Rich Vengroff in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences has begun working on some ideas in this regard.**

**What about facilities? Last year, the Board changed its facilities policy, and KSU will benefit. In the next five years, KSU will receive over \$100 million in new buildings from the state, not including the \$47 million we will receive from the state of the \$60 million needed for the new Health Sciences Building. This \$100 million in state funds will be used for a new laboratory building, an addition to the Coles College of**

**Business, more classrooms and offices for the Bagwell College of Education, and much needed electrical and utility infrastructure improvements. We need these facilities sooner than we will get them, but at least we will get them.**

**This brings me to the budget. Those familiar with KSU's budget know that this university is one of the two lowest-funded comprehensive universities in the University System of Georgia, as measured by state allocations per full time equivalent student. And it is not that we are close to the average or close to the rest of the pack. We are not. We, and Clayton State, are far behind.**

**Last week, we made our budget presentation for Fiscal Year 2009 to the University System office staff. The presentation and the discussion that followed was candid, frank, and loaded with facts. We used the System Office's own numbers, which clearly demonstrate how under-funded we are. I know that what we said was heard. I am guardedly optimistic that KSU's budget next year will be increased to**

**help us respond to the need that the System Office's own numbers demonstrate exists. We shall see.**

**Let me turn now to our Strategic Plan, adopted a year ago. It is an ambitious plan, with five main goals and 50 actions steps. Over the past year, we have made real progress in many areas, but in other areas, we are lagging. Let me provide my perspective on how we are doing, commenting on the same Action Steps I referenced last year and, in the interests of time, skipping over a few as well.**

**The first goal is straightforward, to enhance and expand academic programs and delivery. Let me address just a few of the 11 action steps under Goal 1.**

**First, we intended to decrease the student/faculty ratio. Put simply, this means we had to add faculty at a faster rate than we have in the past. Because of budgetary constraints, we were not able to make progress on this in Fiscal Year 2008.**

**Second, we intended to fully implement the QEP. We are making good strides here, but again, we are budgetarily constrained. However, I am optimistic that the Board this year will approve our request for a new student fee targeted toward globalization and internationalization.**

**Sixth --yes, I know that I skipped 3, 4, and 5, but I figured I'd try to convince you to re-read the plan and I know you didn't want to be here the rest of the day-- we intend to make faculty and staff salaries competitive with appropriate peers. To do this, we are comparing our salaries to those at other universities and the market place, identifying issues of equity and compression, and working to address these issues where they are found.**

**We have taken two steps in the last year to move in this direction. First, last year, one third of the raise pool we received from the state was devoted to addressing issues of equity and compression. More recently, earlier this month, KSU made market adjustments in the classified staff salary structure with 167 staff members receiving additional raises**

**as a result of this adjustment. But to make truly meaningful progress on this action step, we need more money.**

**Turning to Action Step 8 --adding degree programs that are strategically important to the local community, to Georgia, and to the nation at both the undergraduate and graduate levels— we are making good progress on this. For example, as I already mentioned, we now offer undergraduates the opportunity to study environmental sciences and policy, Anthropology, Geography, and Information Security and Assurance. More will come, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels.**

**Tenth --and again as last year, I skipped 7 and 9-- we have made good progress on increasing the number of courses offered off-site and on-line. For example, the WellStar College of Health and Human Services now offers its nursing program not only on campus, but also in Rome and in Jasper. Similarly, the Bagwell College of Education is teaching classes in Paulding County, and the Coles College of Business now offers its MBA program at the Galleria and**

**in Dalton, and is developing a site in the southern suburbs of Chattanooga on the Georgia side of the border. The Coles College also offers its Bachelor of Business Administration not only on campus, but also completely on-line.**

**We would like to take additional steps in this direction, especially in north Fulton, Cherokee, and Paulding Counties, but before we undertake any new steps, we will await the Atlanta-area capacity study that will be presented to the Board of Regents in three weeks.**

**Finally under Goal 1, Action Step 11, under the leadership of Arlethia Perry-Johnson and her team, KSU has worked hard to realign KSU's strategic marketing to emphasize academic quality, faculty and student successes, and the strengths of the university. You have probably seen the billboards located about town and the ads placed in magazines that focus on KSU students. Hopefully you have also seen the growing coverage of KSU in the Atlanta and Marietta print and electronic media. And we are unifying the messages that appear about KSU, making sure that**

**Kennesaw's twin mountain logo appears in all print adds and as many TV shots as possible. We are making progress.**

**I also have good news on our second goal, improving retention, progression, and graduation rates while maintaining high quality. Without discussing in detail the 10 action steps under this goal, suffice it to say that this has been and will continue to be a high priority. We have implemented, are implementing, or will soon implement and expand a host of programs such as mandatory advising, multi-semester course planning, around-the-campus, around-the-clock advising kiosks, expanded residence-life programs, an early identification and intervention program for at-risk students, team-based advising, student peer tutoring and advising, and expanded merit-based and need-based financial aid to help improve our RPG rates.**

**And we are improving. Indeed, over the last three years, our fall-to-fall freshman retention rate increased four percentage points from 72 percent to 76 percent. At the same time our six-year graduation rate climbed in 2007 to an all-time high**

**of 33 percent, after having fluctuated between 28 percent and 32 percent during the previous three years.**

**Goal 3 states we will expand campus resources and enhance the campus infrastructure. We need to do this to better serve our 20,000 students and 2,200 faculty and staff, and to accommodate the additional growth that we expect. Indeed, even though the Atlanta-area capacity study is not yet out, we know that the Board of Regents expects us to grow to meet the demands of Northwest Georgia and Atlanta. The question is “how much?” Let me discuss a few of the ways we plan to expand resources and enhance infrastructure.**

**First, as earlier mentioned, in October we kicked off KSU’s first comprehensive capital campaign, with an ambitious target of \$75 million. We are seeking funds for student scholarships and endowed chairs, faculty and staff support and development, land and buildings, and student and athletic programs. We have already raised over \$30 million.**

**Faculty and staff also have increased their efforts to gain more external funding. In 2007, KSU faculty and staff submitted \$28.5 million in grant proposals, up \$5.6 million from 2006. More importantly, the value of grants awarded in 2007 increased to \$5.9 million, up \$1.5 million from 2006.**

**I'd like to highlight two grants, both from the National Science Foundation to the College of Sciences and Mathematics. The first is a \$750,000 Noyce Scholars grant, led by Professor Greg Rushton in Chemistry, which focuses on recruiting undergraduate science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) majors to pursue Masters of Arts in Teaching degrees in chemistry or physics education. The second is a \$550,000 NSF grant, led by Professor Ana-Marie Croicu in Mathematics, to recruit incoming freshmen to pursue STEM degrees.**

**KSU also has sought to make the process of finding grant opportunities, submitting grant applications, and managing grants once received easier. Thus, just recently, KSU created the Kennesaw State University Research and Service**

**Foundation as a 501C3 foundation. The first meeting of the Research and Service Foundation occurred last week.**

**Similarly, as already discussed, we are making the case to the University System Office to increase KSU's allocation of state funding per full-time-equivalent student and to expand campus facilities. On the facilities front, as already discussed, we are succeeding. On the funding front -- again as I said previously -- I am guardedly optimistic, but we shall see.**

**Goal 4 in the Strategic Plan addresses student life and the preparation of student leaders. The 10 action steps listed here all are important for KSU since they will enhance the quality of student life and add to the university's vitality. We are making progress in most areas, some faster than others. Activities like expanding study-abroad programs, increasing the number of students engaged in internship and cooperative programs, and developing faculty/student community action activities are addressed here. So, too, are intramurals, club sports, and intercollegiate athletics.**

**I'll begin with the number of students engaged in internship and cooperative programs. We are enjoying significant growth here. For example, in Spring 2006, 388 KSU students held either internships or co-op jobs. This spring, stewarded by Karen Andrews and others, the number has climbed to 498. While this is a low percentage of our overall student body, it is an impressive growth rate of 28 percent in only two years. We are on the right track.**

**Let me also dwell for a moment on intramurals, club sports, and intercollegiate sports, all of which aid in retention and graduation by engaging students in campus life. We now have at least fourteen officially recognized club sports, ranging from climbing, cricket, and cycling, to ice hockey and roller hockey, to wakeboarding, rugby, wrestling, and men's and women's lacrosse. The growth of club sports has necessitated hiring a Coordinator of Club Sports, Ms. Laura St. Onge, in the Office of Student Success.**

**But, with 20,000 students, we have only one small outdoor intramural and club sports field and a small indoor activities facility. To meet the needs of active and energetic students, we must find ways to expand venues available for students for intramural and club sports. The KSU Foundation is actively working to resolve this dilemma.**

**As for intercollegiate sports, KSU is in the third year of a four-year transition from Division II to Division I. The magnitude of the jump regarding quality of competition, resources required, and facilities needed is considerable. Indeed, just looking at the dollars KSU spends on athletics-- which by the way, come exclusively from student fees and non-state sources-- KSU spends about half as much as the average spent by other Division I non-football universities.**

**Even so, we have done well, with a championship women's soccer program, a championship women's softball program, a championship Competitive Cheer team, and highly competitive teams in other sports. I also need to praise our Competitive Cheer team, which for the second year in a row**

**finished third in the national competition, beating every other Division I team in the country except Maryland and Louisville.**

**I'll now turn to the fifth and final goal in our Strategic Plan, improving service, strengthening accountability, and establishing a stronger sense of community. Let me again discuss a few of the action steps.**

**Important initiatives are underway to foster a stronger sense of community. One such step was the creation of the President's Planning and Budget Advisory Committee, which played a key role in creating the Strategic Plan, helped develop the 2008 and 2009 budget requests, and is making end-of-year budget recommendations. Another is emphasis on shared governance, including the establishment of faculty advisory committees to chairs and deans. Our over-all campus governance structure, now in its second year, also is working well.**

**Another important action step points to the need to assess, refine, and implement review systems for personnel, programs, and processes to assure accountability. With this in mind, at the Cabinet level, we have initiated both a “management by objectives” system and a 360-degree personnel review system. These accountability tools are being introduced gradually throughout KSU.**

**In another step to strengthen accountability, Vice President for Operations Dr. Randy Hinds, Assistant Vice President for Financial Services Dr. Ashok Roy, and our internal audit team led by Clay Dean are strengthening our internal financial and process-control structures. We need to do this to protect the integrity of our operations, processes, and financial reporting, and to comply with Board of Regents, state, and federal policies, laws, and regulations.**

**We had ground to make up in several areas, but we are making excellent progress. We still are not perfect, but one indication of our progress came late last year when State and Board of Regents auditors reviewed our P-card controls,**

**processes, and expenditures. Their exit report said that KSU's P-card controls and processes were among the top two or three they had seen in the state.**

**Let me turn now to the KSU Foundation, led this year by Mr. Norman Radow and a group of 34 other trustees -- men and women who volunteer a considerable amount of their time, talent, and resources to this university. The impact that these trustees and their predecessors have had and are having on this university is incredible. I'd like to highlight a few of their contributions to KSU as I conclude this address.**

**I've already discussed our \$75 million comprehensive campaign, so I won't provide details of it again other than to say, without the Foundation, this campaign would not be possible. Even before its completion four years from now, it is providing KSU funds for student scholarships and endowed chairs; funds for faculty and staff support and development; funds for land and buildings; and funds for student programs and athletics.**

**As I was researching the Foundation's history, I came across a statistic that I found absolutely incredible. Over the last ten years, the KSU Foundation has provided the university with almost \$300 million dollars in land and buildings including houses, residence halls, parking decks, and offices. The Foundation is exploring ways to provide KSU even more. And here is the astounding part: during the same ten years, the State provided KSU about \$150 million, including the soon-to-be-constructed Health Sciences Building. Suffice it to say that without the Foundation, we would not be the university we are today.**

**Let me offer one other example of what the Foundation does for us. Last year, the Foundation provided \$135,000 in awards to faculty for outstanding teaching, research, and service. This total will climb to \$175,000 next year as a result of a \$1 million contribution to the comprehensive campaign from a trustee to create an endowment for faculty development awards. To the best of my knowledge, this \$175,000 total is greater than that provided to faculty by any other foundation in the University System. The Foundation**

**also is exploring ways to create funds for staff awards. Clearly, we have a large debt of gratitude to the KSU Foundation.**

**What, then, is the state of Kennesaw State University? Put simply, from my perspective, even though we are incredibly stretched -- and stretched painfully -- in many areas, we are blessed with students, faculty, and staff who are doing a phenomenal job as we strive to make KSU one of the best learning-centered comprehensive universities in the country. We have hard-working and impressive students, and a strong faculty and staff. Our new Strategic Plan is in place, and our first comprehensive capital campaign is underway. New degree programs are on board. More are over the horizon. We have an active, strong, and supportive Foundation.**

**To be sure, there are some areas in which we must improve, and in many areas we are stretched painfully thin. But I am confident that we will succeed in making KSU the best learning-centered comprehensive university in the country.**

**I will conclude this year's State of the University address with the same words I used to conclude last year's address ... We are fortunate to be here, at this time, and at this place, at Kennesaw State University.**

**Thank you for your attention.**