

President's Address – Faculty and Staff Assembly

California State University, Fresno

Monday, January 22, 2001

Part I: The Strategic Planning Process – 2000-2001

Good morning and welcome back to the Spring 2001 semester. I hope you had a restful and joyful holiday season – and that you are looking forward to the year ahead.

This semester we will undertake a campus-wide review of our strategic plan – our “Plan for Excellence” - that we developed together four years ago. In that Plan, we set a vision to become recognized as one of the “premier regional interactive universities in the state, and one of the best in the nation.” And since the development of our Plan for Excellence, we have been moving at lightning speed to implement our Plan’s goals. In a short time we have made great progress on most of our stated goals. Let me take this opportunity to outline a few of our major accomplishments.

- We established the Smittcamp Family Honors College that is now receiving applications from its third class of students. And due to the great demand for this program, we are expanding admission to the Honors College from 50 to 75 students per year.
- We have completed the redesign of our General Education Program. The new G.E. program will provide our students with a strong academic foundation that will serve them well in the years ahead.
- We have made great strides in the area of assessment of student learning outcomes. Over the past three years, 35 academic departments have developed assessment programs which is a major achievement in such a short time.
- We have expanded faculty professional development activities. The Center for Teaching and Learning and the new College for Instructional Innovation have developed a number of high quality programs to support faculty in the area of teaching and learning – including programs on a variety of pedagogies, instructional technology, and assessment of student learning.
- We have allocated approximately \$600,000 over three years to support faculty assigned time for teaching, research, and service activities.
- We have made excellent progress in the number of service-learning courses that we offer to our students. Our faculty have developed approximately 51 service-learning designated courses that involve more than 2,500 students.
- We have made a quantum leap in serving this region through university-community partnerships. Faculty and staff in our Schools and Colleges have established over 30 university-based centers and institutes that have an applied research and service mission. Some of our most recent initiatives in this area include the Maddy Institute, the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, the Water Research Institute, ISIS, the Institute for the Study of Children and Families, and the expanded role of CATI.

- We have significantly increased our collaborations with the region's public schools. The School of Education and Human Development has taken the lead on a number of initiatives designed to improve the quality of teachers in our region.
- Faculty have doubled external grant and contract funding over the last two years. Last year the total grant and research funding awarded to our campus exceeded \$26 million. This is an extraordinary accomplishment.
- Over the past three years, we have also significantly increased our private gifts and donations to the university. Last year our fund-raising total was \$37.3 million, which is a 50 percent increase over the previous year.
- We have made major progress in the implementation of new administrative systems. During the next six months, we will go live with our PeopleSoft human resources and financial systems.
- Our staff have participated in hours of staff development and training programs which has allowed us to improve service to students and others. These improvements have been documented in student surveys over the last two years.
- We have made significant progress in the area of facilities improvements. Over 71 classrooms have been renovated and upgraded with new equipment. Last spring we completed construction on the Downing Planetarium and the Smittcamp Alumni House – and we have completed renovations on McLane Hall. Later this year we will begin plans to move forward with our new Science II project and we are scheduled to hold the ground-breaking for our new Savemart Center and Recreation Center later this spring. In addition, our infrastructure project is nearing completion, which will allow us to further improve the appearance of the campus.

There are many additional achievements related to the goals outlined in our strategic plan and each division of the university has prepared a major progress report, referred to as the Milestones #4 reports, that outline progress made. This information is now available on the Strategic Planning Committee's new website: www.csufresno.edu/plan. I encourage all faculty and staff to review these documents and become familiar with the progress that has been made. An outline of our current strategic plan – the Plan for Excellence – is also available on this web page for your review and information.

We should be very proud of what we have accomplished by working together to achieve these goals. We have made incredible progress! Thank you for all of your sacrifices and hard work.

It is now time for us to pause and to reflect on what we have accomplished and examine where we need to go over the next three to five years. This semester we will work together to develop a revised Plan that will prepare us for our WASC accreditation review which occurs in 2003 and 2004, and establish the groundwork for our centennial celebration in 2011. The new Plan will also guide us in developing a major capital campaign for additional academic program support in the coming years.

Following my presentation this morning, I will introduce you to Max Tadlock, our strategic planning consultant who has been working closely with the university's Strategic Planning Steering Committee. Max helped us on our last plan. During this past fall semester, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee established ten task forces and appointed task force co-chairs who will guide the strategic planning process this spring. Max will introduce you to the themes of the task forces and he will also let you know how you can participate in the planning process this semester.

Part II: External Scan – “Big Picture” Issues Confronting Higher Education

During the fall 2000 semester, the Strategic Planning Committee identified a number of external challenges that are having a significant impact on higher education. This morning I will comment on several of the key issues which emerged from this external scan. As we move forward with the planning process this spring, these are some of the external – or “big picture” issues –that we need to keep in mind.

One of the major issues confronting our state and nation **is the need for a well-educated work force to support the new “knowledge” or “information” economy.** Governors and legislators across the nation are increasingly calling upon colleges and universities to do their part in educating the work force that is necessary to support the new economy. In our own state, the foundation of the economy has changed radically over the past decade. We are no longer a defense and aerospace-based economy. California is now one of the world's leading information, idea, and knowledge-based economies. We have emerged from the worst recession since the Great Depression by re-tooling the economy. The Governor and state legislators continue to remind us, that we play a critical role in sustaining the economic well being of our state and that we need to do our part to respond to these dramatic changes.

The situation is even more critical in the Central California Valley. As all of you are keenly aware, our region has not participated in the economic prosperity experienced throughout the state. The Central Valley faces enormous economic and social challenges, with double-digit unemployment and significant workforce development needs. The Central Valley lags far behind the rest of the state in the number of students who receive a baccalaureate degree – and the number of students who go on to graduate education. If the Valley is to attract the kinds of businesses that will flourish in the new economy, we will need to do our part in helping to prepare a well-educated work force for our region.

The preparation of a highly-skilled workforce will require us to **develop new academic programs** that prepare students for careers in the new economy, and academic programs that meet national, state, and regional needs. The mandate we are being given by state legislators from the Central California Valley is equally clear -- we need to build upon existing academic programs and create new programs to help transform and develop this region. In a recent report prepared by the Great Valley Center, a number of opportunity

areas were identified to enhance the future economic development of our region.¹ These “new economy initiatives” are designed to build upon our region’s strengths in agriculture and manufacturing – and include a number of new fields, such as precision agriculture, infomatics, logistics, computer engineering, biotechnology, telecommunications, and entrepreneurship. The economic future and quality-of-life of this region will require an educated workforce, innovative academic programs, and the commitment and collaboration of all sectors of the community, including higher education, K-12, business, government, and the non-profit sector. In recent focus group discussions with over 50 leaders in our community, it is clear that this region looks to our campus to lead the way. To quote one participant “the university is our hope, we look to you for vision and leadership in our community.”

In addition to the social and economic needs of our nation, state and region, there are a number of **policy issues that have a significant impact on higher education**. Higher education is increasingly being held accountable in a number of ways by the various publics we serve. Access, affordability, and accountability are the three “watchwords.”

The “access” challenge in our state relates to “Tidal Wave II.” We are now in the midst of this Tidal Wave. 714,000 additional students will seek admission at California’s public colleges and universities between 1998 and the year 2010. This will include an increase of 130,000 students in the CSU, which is an increase of over 37 percent. The Legislature’s push to move campuses toward year-round operations is one way the state seeks to address this increase. The increased emphasis on distance education is another way to address the access challenge, both in relation to Tidal Wave II, and to reach site-bound students across the state, particularly those students in rural communities.

The projected opening of UC Merced will provide an additional higher education resource for our region – and increase access for Valley residents to a baccalaureate and graduate degree. However we can not afford to wait until UC Merced is fully operational to meet the Valley’s higher education needs – the need is too great. For this reason, we must continue to plan select joint doctoral programs with the UC and others, and work with policy-makers, including CPEC and state legislators, to revise the current Master Plan so that it serves all the citizens of California, including the citizens of our region.

Throughout the nation, **the “affordability”** of higher education is also a major concern of state legislators. A number of surveys undertaken over the last few years indicate that the general public is greatly concerned with the cost of higher education. In our own state, fees and tuition at the community colleges, the CSU, and the UC have not been increased over the last six years.

In addition, the Legislature and Governor acted last year to make the Cal Grant program an entitlement program for all students who graduate from high school with a C average and demonstrate financial need.

¹ “The Economic Future of the San Joaquin Valley,” January 2000, available on the internet at www.greatvalley.org under publications.

In spite of the low cost of public education within our state, however, recent surveys show that Californians continue to over-estimate tuition prices and believe that colleges do not work hard enough to keep tuition at levels that are affordable for most families. We have work to do in this area to communicate the affordability of a college education in our region – and the availability of financial aid. Today, in California, any qualified student can get a higher education regardless of their financial situation.

In the area of “**accountability**,” assessment of student learning outcomes has become one of the key priorities of state legislators, higher education coordinating boards, and state accreditation agencies. We are all familiar with this mandate and our campus has made significant progress in this area. Other accountability measures required in our state include Governor Davis’ mandate for the UC and CSU to increase community college transfer rates. The Governor and state legislators are calling for increased intersegmental collaboration to achieve this goal – particularly in the area of articulation related to general education requirements. Currently, in the state of California, 48 percent of students enrolled in higher education are attending a community college.

In order to address the increased demands for accountability by state legislators and the Governor, the CSU developed a number of accountability measures that are outlined in the Cornerstones document, which is part of the CSU’s strategic plan. Cornerstones principle #9 outlines the accountability measures that CSU campuses have begun to report on annually – including the quality of our undergraduate programs, student persistence rates, graduate rates, time-to-degree, and a number of other measures. This initiative is the CSU’s attempt to respond to increased demands for higher education accountability.

As we prepare for the future we must recognize that **students continue to change**. Last fall we invited Dr. Alexander Astin to our campus to share with us the results of a number of surveys which he and his colleagues have undertaken at UCLA’s Higher Education Research Institute.²

In the fall of 1999, in a national survey of entering freshmen at 462 institutions throughout the country, it was reported that an all-time high of nearly a quarter of respondents are working full-time while attending college. In addition, the number of students entering at age 19 or older is the highest ever reported, and there are significant increases in the number of students who show signs of being academically underprepared. More respondents are also first generation students in postsecondary settings. The survey also reports that there is an increase in the percentage of students who start out full-time, but soon shift to part-time enrollment. Respondents also indicate a decrease in time spent studying, and students are increasingly focused on the career potential of their education.

² See “The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 1999,” Cooperative Institutional Research Program, Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA; and “How Service Learning Affects Students,” Alexander Astin et al., Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA, January 2000.

According to Dr. Astin, one of the most troubling features of this new generation of entering students is the **students' degree of disengagement**. Astin noted that first-year students around the nation are increasingly disengaged from both their academic studies and campus involvement. In order to address the decline in students' inclination to get involved, Astin recommends that universities expand their service-learning programs. During his comments, Astin noted that our campus is on the right track to improve student engagement by increasing our emphasis on active learning - through service-learning designated courses, internships, co-ops, and the creation of learning communities for our first year students. Astin also emphasized interdisciplinary courses and other innovative pedagogies that emphasize active and experiential student learning.

Astin's recent study on the impact of service-learning on 22,000 college students indicates that participation in service-learning shows significant positive effects on academic performance - including GPA, writing skills, and critical thinking. It appears that service-learning is an effective learning strategy in the attempt to re-engage students. This is an important finding as we work together on our campus to improve the academic success of our students who are presenting us with similar challenges.

Student attrition is another pressing problem confronting higher education. Nationwide, 41 out of every 100 students leave college or university without earning a degree. Most students depart during the first two years of college - and withdrawal is highest during the first semester. Engaging students during this critical period is important to their educational success.

Another area of significant change in higher education throughout the nation is the **shift from an emphasis on teaching to learning**. Approximately ten years ago, the late Ernest Boyer of the Carnegie Foundation, introduced the concept of the "scholarship of teaching" in order to bring greater recognition and reward to teaching in our colleges and universities.³ Over the last five years, this conversation has broadened to include the question - "what about the student?" Boyer's original concept of the scholarship of teaching has evolved to include reflection on issues of student learning and in recent years the Carnegie Foundation has enlarged the concept to include "the scholarship of teaching and learning." The scholarship of teaching and learning calls for reflection not only on teacher methodology, but also on the character and depth of student learning.⁴ This shift is having a significant impact on the role of faculty and how instruction is delivered, and it is important that we address this issue in our new strategic plan. Three years ago the university's Faculty Scholar Blue Ribbon Commission prepared a report on faculty roles using the original Boyer model, and this report can continue to provide us with guidance as we begin to think about what changes we need to make as we seek to develop new models for teaching and learning on our campus - and to develop the appropriate balance between teaching, research and creative activity, and service.

³ Ernest L. Boyer, Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990.

⁴ "The Scholarship of Teaching: New Elaborations, New Developments," Pat Hutchings and Lee S. Shulman, Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, September/October 1999, 13.

Finally, the most significant change in the higher education environment is in the advances made in **information technology**. On a recent trip, I had just checked in to my hotel and was checking my voice mail and logging on to email when I noticed that the cover article of the U.S. News and World Report read “High-Tech Overload.” I couldn’t help but think of how quickly the higher education community has had to come to terms with rapid technological changes, from student online registration to staff administration and faculty instruction, and just about every other area of the way we do our work and communicate with one another in our daily lives. But this change has only just begun!

According to the results of a student survey conducted last fall, two-thirds of our students either own a personal computer or have access to a personal computer off-campus.⁵ Increasingly, today’s students are becoming known as “Generation D,” the digital generation. Our own students report they are competent in software programs such as word processing, but at the same time, they report that they are lacking in competence in where to find information and how to use it.

Wireless technology and other information technology infrastructure is important to our campus as we make every effort to increase accessibility to online resources for faculty, staff and students in both the classroom, laboratories, the Library, and offices. But information technology is a “big ticket” item and the costs of implementing an adequate infrastructure – as well as the cost of equipment upgrades, training, and support – will require us to seek creative partnerships with business and industry.

These are some of the key challenges that face the higher education community today across our state and nation. For many years now, the higher education community has been living in a state of constant and rapid change, what many educators refer to as living in a state of “permanent whitewater.” This is not likely to change.

As we find ourselves in the midst of this rapidly changing higher education environment, it is important that we remember to focus our energies on building community on our campus. Over the last few years we have set ambitious goals, and faculty and staff have worked tirelessly to ensure that these goals have come to fruition. But as we move forward with our ambitious agendas, we also need to take the time to celebrate our achievements, and nurture the relationships among our faculty, staff, and students. We must care for, and support each other, as we experience this period of dramatic change.

⁵ The California State University Student Needs and Priorities Survey (SNAPS), Spring 1999.

Part III. Revising Our Vision and Identifying New Themes - Some Considerations for Future Planning

Let me conclude my comments this morning by identifying a number of new themes that we should consider as we move forward with planning for our future. These themes were identified by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, following a review of our environmental scan and discussion by the Cabinet and Deans' Council. These overarching themes are presented today as a "work-in-progress" in order to stimulate discussion as the campus-wide community begins to identify future directions for the university. They are not an all-inclusive list and, undoubtedly, they will be expanded and modified as we do our work this semester.

In addition, a number of suggestions have been made regarding possible revisions to our vision statement. The Strategic Planning Steering Committee will be recommending changes in the vision statement within the next two weeks and these changes will be made available to the task force groups for further discussion.

The seven themes identified by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee are:

1. **Develop an engaged student learning community with graduates who possess a broad general education, communicate effectively, are mathematically literate, appreciate the fine arts, are committed to the principles of tolerance and freedom, and are concerned about the welfare of others and society.**
 - Involve of students in their academic programs by creating and providing dynamic learning environments, such as internships, collaborative learning, service learning, co-ops, and research, etc.
 - Develop learning communities.
 - Develop an excellent advising system.
 - Design excellent support programs to meet the unique needs of a diverse student population.

2. **Build upon existing academic programs and create new programs to help transform and develop the region.**
 - Develop academic programs to support expansion of "new economy initiatives" in the region such as precision agriculture, infomatics, logistics, computer engineering, biotechnology, telecommunications, innovation and entrepreneurship, and others.
 - Develop select joint doctoral programs to respond to regional needs.

- Develop interdisciplinary programs.
 - Address major workforce needs in the region.
- 3. Improve the technology infrastructure and technology support to enhance instruction; support scholarship, research, and creative activity; and facilitate the delivery of support services for students, staff, faculty, and alumni.**
- The university's Information and Educational Technology Coordinating Committee has been working hard during the last ten months to develop an updated technology plan to support teaching and learning on our campus. Last spring IETCC held a planning retreat to review our progress over the last few years, and to begin planning for our needs during the years ahead. I encourage you to review the Committee's recommendations which are on the web at www.csufresno.edu/ait - and to provide any feedback you have to Dr. Lynda Harding or Dean Ellen Gruenbaum who will report your responses back to the full IETCC committee.
 - Utilize the web to support instructional delivery and access to support services.
 - Provide training and technical support for technology.
- 4. Establish partnerships and alliances that serve the region, state, and world with an emphasis on the region.**
- Emphasize transformational scholarship and problem-solving research.
 - Develop additional partnerships in the arts and sciences to enhance the quality of life in the region.
- 5. Recruit and retain a high quality, diverse faculty who are dedicated to teaching, research and creative activity, and recognized for their active involvement in the application of knowledge.**
- Provide professional development support for faculty.
 - Support research and scholarship which encourages practical transformational outcomes.
 - Basic support for faculty.

6. Work with the region's educational institutions to improve the commitment, quality, and value of education in the Central Valley.

- Increase the college-going rate.
- Address remediation issues.
- Meet the quality and quantity needs of regional schools for personnel across all areas of staffing.
- Be the leading Central Valley partner with school districts in school reform initiatives.
- Set a national standard for the creation and operation of community learning centers embodying interprofessional collaboration.

7. Demonstrate and communicate the quality of university programs and students, faculty, staff, and alumni; such that we will be recognized as one of the nation's premier interactive universities.

- Enhance internal communication of qualities and strengths.
- Expand understanding of the university programs and people to the nation, state and region.
- Build pride and loyalty among university employees in our accomplishments

In conclusion, let me say that our university is strong and vital today and these are exciting times! I urge everyone to get involved in this planning process in some way, by serving on a task force, by sending your ideas to a task force co-chair, or by planning to attend the "charrette" roundtable discussion on May 9, right here in the Satellite Student Union, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Four years ago we created our Plan for Excellence together, and our achievements during this period illustrate what can happen when a university community collaborates to plan its future. Thank you for your great work. It takes an entire university community to build a great university. Please join me in that effort!

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