

**2010 State of the University Address**

**President Daniel S. Papp**

**Kennesaw State University**

**March 25, 2010**

**Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the 2010 State of the University Address. Thank you for being here today to discuss the university's progress, and challenges, across a range of activities and undertakings as we strive to make this institution the best learning-centered university in the United States.**

**This has been a challenging year for KSU, and next year promises to be difficult as well. Despite the challenges we faced this year, we have continued to make progress. In a few minutes, I'll discuss the challenges we face, the progress we have made, and the steps that we are initiating to prepare for Kennesaw State's second half century, but I'd like to begin this year's State of the University address in a different way, by viewing the present in long-term context.**

**This institution is now 46 years old. We started as a two-year college with eight buildings, a small number of associate degrees, a thousand students, 37 faculty members, and 4,200 books in the library. We also had a reputation that barely extended to the borders of Cobb County.**

**Today, as we near the end of our first half-century, much has changed. We are a doctoral institution with over 70 degree programs, several of which are nationally recognized. We have many excellent buildings, with more on the way. We have almost 23,000 students from 142 countries, and 789 full-time faculty. And we are no longer a local college, but a well-respected institution on the verge of becoming a national university.**

**We have come a long way in 46 years. As faculty, staff, and administrators, we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. And we are not yet done.**

**In four years, we will be a half-century old. In five years, we will begin our second half-century. So the question I pose**

**today is straightforward: what must we do during the next four years, as we close our first half-century, to make Kennesaw State a national university by the first year of our second half-century?**

**I'll start this morning by addressing the major challenges we face as I see them. As I address the challenges, I'll also comment on what we are doing now, and what from my viewpoint we need to do in the future, to address these challenges as we move toward being a national university. We have four years to get there.**

**In the near term, the biggest challenge is the budget. Over the course of the last two years, KSU has lost over \$17.1 million in state funding. These losses have been offset to a degree by increases in formula funding, higher tuition and fees, and federal stimulus funding. Even so, the fact remains that as our student population grows, faculty and staff are doing more and more with less and less. This cannot continue. If funding reductions continue, at some point we will unavoidably begin doing less and less with less and less.**

**The good news is that I genuinely believe that most people, including the Governor, most legislators, and the Regents, understand this. Proof of this is what has happened in the last two or three weeks when draconian budget cuts were suggested for the University System.**

**Due to strong support from Governor Sonny Perdue, Speaker David Ralston, Representative Earl Ehrhart, and other friends of the University System in the legislature and elsewhere, the doomsday scenario for the rest of Fiscal Year 2010 and Fiscal Year 2011 that we discussed in depth at February's Town Hall meeting has been averted. Here, I need to thank everyone who contacted their legislators to help make this more benign outcome a reality.**

**For the rest of this fiscal year, that is, from now through the end of June, we have a clear picture of our budget situation. We will make it to the end of this fiscal year without any additional cuts, budget reductions, or need for additional austerity measures. I thank all of you for the sacrifices that you have made to enable us to get to this point so well.**

**What about Fiscal Year 2011, starting on July 1? For next year, the picture remains sobering, but the good news is that the doomsday scenario is no longer on the table. Even so, unknowns remain.**

**For example, even though Governor Perdue has proposed a \$117 million reduction for the University System for next fiscal year instead of the \$300 million reduction that was previously proposed by some legislators, we do not definitively know the amount by which the University System's or KSU's budget will be reduced next year. The legislature will decide that during the next several weeks.**

**Even though Governor Perdue proposed to fund fully the \$113 million increase in the University System's formula, we do not know how much new workload funding the University System and KSU will receive next year. The legislature will also decide that over the next several weeks.**

**Nor do we know what Kennesaw State's specific state funding allocation will be for Fiscal Year 2011, nor how large a tuition increase the Board of Regents will put in place for next fiscal year. The Board will decide both of these, again sometime over the next several weeks.**

**Even so, I am confident that the draconian cuts of \$300 million for the University System and \$14.1 million for Kennesaw State that were being discussed in some quarters as recently as a month ago will not occur. Because of this, earlier this week, I lifted the hiring freeze that was instituted in response to the possibility of the doomsday scenario.**

**These uncertainties should disappear by mid-May. At that time, we should know what our state allocation for Fiscal Year 2011 will be, how much new work load money we will receive, and the percentage of the tuition increase for next year. I will provide you this information as soon as it becomes available and is analyzed.**

**The news for Fiscal Year 2012, starting on July 1, 2011, is not as good. In Fiscal Year 2012, federal stimulus money disappears. That means that the University System's budget will have a \$140 million hole. While we do not know how much of that hole will reside in KSU's budget, we do know that this is the monster that will lurk under the bed 15 months from now.**

**To cope with these uncertainties and challenges, we will remain fiscally conservative. We will continue to work closely with the Board of Regents and the System Office to redress Kennesaw State's historical shortfalls in funding. We have had some success here, but not nearly enough. Our state funding per full time equivalent student still trails behind that of other comprehensive universities in the USG.**

**We will also continue to seek support from our friends in the community, from businesses and corporations, and from foundations. We have had considerable success here. We are now three years into a five year \$75 million comprehensive campaign, and we are over two thirds of the**

**way to our target. Indeed, despite the recession, last year was KSU's most successful year ever in fund-raising**

**Similarly, we will continue to ask faculty and staff to attract external support via their teaching, research, scholarship, creative activity, and service. One of the highlights of the year in external funding occurred in November when the Bagwell College of Education received KSU's largest grant ever, a five-year, \$8.9 million grant from the U.S.**

**Department of Education to establish a teacher preparation program in high-need urban schools in Cobb County.**

**External funding generated by faculty has climbed for each of the past several years, going from \$4.9 million in Fiscal Year 2007 to \$8.5 million last year. And we are on track this fiscal year to set another KSU record.**

**And we will also continue to listen to the advice provided by faculty, staff, students, and friends of Kennesaw State so we more efficiently do the things that we do and so that we better serve the needs of our students, faculty, staff, and**

**surrounding community. And over time, we will emerge from the economic problems that currently loom so large.**

**Beyond the budget, we face other challenges that complicate our path toward becoming a national university. Perhaps the largest of the additional challenges are the tasks of defining who we will become, establishing our identity as we become the KSU of the future, and positioning and branding ourselves in the higher education marketplace.**

**These are not inconsequential tasks. Let's take a look at our student body and the programs we offer to see how much different we are today from the Kennesaw State of twenty, ten, or even five years ago, and then lets imagine what we could become five, ten, or even twenty years into the future.**

**Obviously, the biggest change is the number of students enrolled at KSU. Today, we have 22,400 students. Five years ago, in 2004, we had fewer than 18,000 students. Ten years ago, in 1999, we were at 13,200 students, and 20 years**

**ago, our students numbered only 9,100. This is incredible growth any way you cut it.**

**Our students are not only more numerous; they are also better prepared academically. The average SAT score for KSU freshmen climbed from 1,024 ten years ago in 1999 to 1,076 in 2009. This is over 60 points above the national average and 95 points above the state average in Georgia.**

**Equally impressive are the changes that have taken place in our student body. While the female to male ratio has stayed constant at about 60%-40%, our student body today is approximately 22% minority. Ten years ago, our student body was 16% minority. Twenty years ago, we had scarcely 7% minority enrollment. Similarly, KSU's number of international students has climbed from 800 students ten years ago to about 1600 students today.**

**In the last decade, we have also become a major residential campus. Ten years ago, KSU had no students living on campus. Today, 3,100 students reside in KSU's modern**

**upscale student apartments and suites, with more student housing on the way, as I will discuss later.**

**As a result of being more attractive to traditional college students, the average age of our undergraduates is moving downward. Ten years ago, the average age of KSU undergraduate students was over 26. Today, it is under 25.**

**Course taking practices of our undergraduates have also changed strikingly. Ten years ago, only about half of our undergraduates took a full course load. Today, three-fourths of our undergraduates do. A decade ago, 20 percent of our students were exclusively evening students. Today, that percentage is 14%. Conversely, the percentage of students who take only day classes climbed from about 35% ten years ago to 45% today.**

**We are now a destination campus. Students want to come to KSU, stay at KSU, and graduate from KSU. This is a place where students want to be.**

**What about our academic programs? Twenty years ago, in 1990, KSU offered 39 bachelor's programs and 3 master's programs. By 2000, KSU had 40 bachelor programs and 12 master's programs. Today, we offer 48 bachelor programs, 18 master's programs, and four doctoral programs, including our first Ph.D. More degrees are on the way at all levels. Clearly, this university has come a long way.**

**KSU's growing contributions to creating a better educated Georgia are easily demonstrated. For example, in 2004, we awarded 3,000 degrees. Last year, we awarded almost 5,000 degrees. Put differently, between 1966, when KSU's first class graduated, and 1989, a grand total of 7,500 students received KSU degrees. Eleven years later, by 2000, we were up to about 22,000 alumni. And today, ten years later, we are approaching 60,000 alumni.**

**Or let's take a look at masters degrees. In 1990, we had bestowed 88—yes, only 88— master's degrees. Last year alone, we conferred almost 1,000 master's degrees. Indeed, we now award so many master's degrees that we have a**

**separate master's commencement ceremony each semester. And our first doctoral hoodings will occur later this year.**

**I quote these statistics for a simple reason: to drive home the point that Kennesaw State University and its graduates have changed considerably over the last 20, 10, and 5 years. We will continue to change over the next 5, 10, and 20 years.**

**But what should KSU be in four years, at the start of our second half century? What should we be in 14 years, ten years into our second half century? What capabilities do we want our university to have? What identity do we want it to have? How should we position and brand ourselves in the higher education marketplace? These are difficult questions to answer, but as we prepare for our second half-century, we must answer them, and soon. As management expert Peter Drucker said, "Strategic planning is not about the future, but about the future of present decisions."**

**That is why I have asked Provost Lynn Black to assemble immediately a Strategic Thinking and Planning Committee**

**to assess what the university needs to do in the next four years to become a national university, and then over the first decade of our second half century, to become a notable national university. This analysis has already begun with discussions that Provost Black recently had with the Council of Academic Deans. These discussions will now become formalized, and much more extensive and inclusive.**

**When the committee is formed, I will charge it to identify the game changers that we need to initiate now and in the near and mid-term futures, so that KSU can become a national university by the close of its first half century. As the committee undertakes this task, I will also ask it to recall Michalengelo's call to action, roughly paraphrased as: "The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it."**

**This will not be the committee's only tasking. It will also be charged with the creation of our next Strategic Plan for 2012-2017. It seems hard to believe that we are nearing the end of our current 2007-2012 Strategic Plan, but we are. It**

**is a living and useful tool, and I will be the first to admit we have not accomplished as much of it as we hoped when it was finalized over three years ago. Much of our inability to be where we had hoped to be is the result of our budget difficulties, but I thought in this address it might be useful to examine where we are with our current Strategic Plan.**

**Last year, as many of you will recall, the President's Planning and Budget Advisory Committee met on several occasions to recalibrate the plan since with the reductions to the university's budget, some action steps were no longer achievable. Actions steps eliminated or put on the back burner included, but were not limited to, reducing the student/faculty ratio to 25 to 1, decreasing the student/staff ratio by a corresponding amount, increasing on-line and on-site library holdings by 25% over five years, implementing a phased program to expand and replace technology, and increasing the proportion of courses and programs offered off the main campus. All these action steps, and others as well, were eliminated, scaled back, or otherwise modified to reflect fiscal realities.**

**Other parts of the Strategic Plan remain in focus, and we continue to move forward with them. The Global Learning Quality Enhancement Program is being fully implemented. We initiated our \$75 million comprehensive campaign, as already noted, and over \$50 million has already been raised. The percentage of students involved in internships and cooperative programs increased by 21%, study abroad programs send almost 800 student to study outside the U.S., and membership in registered student organizations increased considerably. Our advising center is operating, and a two-year-into-the-future course calendar will be up by the end of this year. The action step of having KSU become a more diverse and inclusive community has been elevated to the level of being a strategic goal.**

**Managing our enrollment growth is another challenge. Over the last decade, KSU's student body has grown by about 900 students per year. As we have already seen, our students during this time have also improved. But as resources**

**become increasingly constrained, we may well have to be even more diligent in managing our enrollment growth.**

**We have already raised our admission standards once, in 2004, and the results were counter-intuitive; student demand increased. Frankly, we would like to raise KSU's admissions standards once again, and we are in discussions with the University System Office about the possibility of doing this. However, the outcome of the discussions is not yet clear.**

**At the same time, most major universities manage their enrollments from offices situated within Academic Affairs. With this in mind, when KSU's long time Dean of University Admissions and Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Services Joe Head retires on June 30, we will transition both Enrollment Services and Advising from the Office of Student Success and Enrollment Services to Academic Affairs, and promote Kim West to Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services. While the final details of this transition are yet to be worked out, this will place virtually all functions related to academics and admissions in Academic**

**Affairs, and virtually all functions related to non-academic student affairs in Student Success.**

**Beyond the budget, strategic thinking and planning, and enrollment management, another of our major challenges is at the heart of our core competencies, namely, the rate at which we retain, progress, and graduate students. Being blunt, KSU's retention, progression, and graduation rates, also called RPG rates, are simply not what they need to be. In some areas, we have improved and are doing reasonably well, but in others, we lag behind. Let me provide examples.**

**Freshman to sophomore retention rates, that is, the percentage of students who begin KSU as freshmen in one fall and who are still in school at KSU the following fall, have lingered in the 73% to 76% for the last eight years. Many of our peer institutions whose student profiles are similar to ours have retention rates in the 80s.**

**Conversely, our freshman to sophomore progression rate, that is, the percentage of students who begin KSU as**

**freshmen in one fall and who return to KSU the following fall as sophomores, has soared. Of those freshmen who entered KSU in Fall 1999, only 17% progressed to become sophomores by Fall 2000. Compare this to those freshmen who entered KSU in Fall 2008. A year later, that is, seven months ago, an astounding 61% had progressed to become sophomores. This is a superb improvement, but again, many of our peer institutions have freshman to sophomore one-year progression rates in the 70s.**

**This pronounced improvement in progression rates has not yet translated to significant improvement in graduation rates. We expect that it soon will. However, the percentages of where we are at the present time are not pleasant. For example, regarding the freshman class that entered in 2000, only 7% graduated in four years, by 2004. For the class that entered in 2005, the four-year graduation rate, that is, those students who graduated by last year, had only climbed to 12%. The six-year graduation rate is better, but still not where it should be. For the freshman class that entered in**

**1998, only 31% had graduated by 2004. For the freshman class that entered in 2003, only 38% graduated by last year.**

**There are many reasons for these less-than-desired four year and six year graduation rates, including but not limited to the level of high school preparation, a lingering part-time commuter mentality, and an insufficient number of faculty, advisors, and classrooms. Even so, several of our peer institutions graduate much higher percentages of students both in four years and in six years. We must do better.**

**With that in mind, I have asked Dean of the University College Ralph Rascati to undertake a detailed study of our RPG rates to see if he can decipher what the causes of our lower-than-needed RPG rates are. I am not giving him much time to do it. I have told Ralph I would like to provide to you some preliminary observations on his study in my August “Opening of the University” remarks.**

**Let me now turn to yet another challenge that complicates our ability to become a national university, the challenge of**

**insufficient facilities. Georgia's budget woes have also had an impact in this area. Indeed, when the legislature adjourns, it is probable that not a single building in the Regents building list for Fiscal Year 2011, or any other long-term capital project for any state agency, will be funded. This is because Georgia is understandably concerned that its credit rating might slip and has decided, almost for sure, not to sell any long-term construction bonds.**

**This is bad news for many colleges and universities, including Kennesaw State. We had been in the Regents' building list for \$1.3 million in design funds to expand the Bagwell College of Education's building, but unless a miracle occurs in the next month, these funds will not be in the budget. However, we have been assured that the Board will support a renewed request for these funds next year.**

**Here, I must interject some good news about facilities. The Board has so much confidence in KSU and its faculty and staff that it has approved the addition of a fifth floor to the expansion of the College of Sciences and Math laboratory**

**building. The Board believes that over time, we will develop enough external funds to fully equip the labs there.**

**At the same time, the new Health Sciences building is proceeding well and should open this summer. It is also on budget. We have received all \$47 million of the promised state funds, and we are nearing the \$13 million target for private funding required for the building as well.**

**To be sure, we need more academic buildings and facilities, but we also need to think of other ways to respond to our shortfall in academic buildings.**

**Are more hybrid courses part of the answer? This is something I believe we need to explore with due diligence at the department and college level.**

**What about additional on-line courses? The Coles College has had tremendous success with its on-line Bachelor of Business Administration program, and we have a committee in place to further our forays into on-line education.**

**And I am fully convinced that more fully utilizing space that we have available on Friday is part of the answer. Based on information from the Banner Database Reports for Fall 2009, KSU offers over 1,000 courses each day Monday through Thursday, and just over 150 courses on Friday.**

**As a second cut, let's just look at 11 AM classes, the peak classroom utilization time every weekday. Monday through Thursday, we average over 400 sections a day at 11 AM with an average number of 4,650 students registered for class at that hour. On Friday at 11 AM, we offer 39 sections with 1,100 students registered for class.**

**As a third cut, 94% of our students take classes Monday through Thursday. Fewer than 6% take classes on Friday.**

**As I said, I am convinced that more fully utilizing space on Friday is part of the answer to classroom shortages. I don't want to belabor the point, but I assure you, when the**

**Chancellor, Regents, or legislators visit campus, we make every effort to make sure they do not come on Friday.**

**Beyond academic buildings and facilities that the state pays for, KSU for years has had a serious shortage of residence halls; dining facilities; and athletic fields and facilities, that is, buildings and facilities that the state does not pay for. In recent years, we have advanced light years in addressing these needs. Two years ago we opened a new 1,000-bed residence hall and filled it immediately. Last August, we opened the Commons Dining Hall to rave reviews. In September, our intramural and club sports programs moved into their new fields and facilities, the Owls Nest, on the east side of I-75. On May 2, the new Kennesaw State Stadium will open, and on May 9, the Atlanta Beat, the women's professional soccer team that will share use of the stadium with our Lady Owl's soccer team, will play its first game there. Later this year, weather permitting, the entire nine field KSU Sports and Recreation Park complex will open.**

**All these were built, or are being built, without state funds. A combination of student fees, dining plan charges, rents, and private gifts and donations are paying for all these facilities. And more are to come.**

**For example, for several years, our master plan has included building additional housing sufficient to bring our on-campus student population to approximately 5,000. The demand is there, as evidenced by the fact that ever since we opened the new residence halls two years ago, all 3,200 on-campus beds have been filled. Both years, we have also had a several hundred person waiting list. Next year, all beds will be filled again, and our waiting list will be even longer.**

**With this in mind, John Anderson, Michael Sanseviro, and other KSU planners have begun working with KSU Foundation officials, architects, and contractors to plan additional housing to bring us to the planned 5,000 beds. This will be a three phased project over four to five years. The first phase most likely will be in the southern part of the woods, the second phase in the surface parking lot along**

**Chastain Road, and the third on the northern fringe of campus where the older low density apartments are.**

**From facilities and housing, it is a simple segue to two other major challenges, parking and traffic. Obviously, parking and traffic at KSU are immense concerns. Put simply, if KSU is to continue to be a destination campus, as we continue to grow we must ameliorate the parking and traffic crunch in and around the university.**

**The opening of the Central Deck two years ago provided a temporary reprieve from most parking concerns, but our growth is forcing us again to plan for more parking in the near future. The Parking Committee is looking at a variety of responses to the impending need, including additional decks either on the main or south campus, a shuttle system to remote lots, limiting the ability of residential freshmen to park on campus, and working with Cobb County Transit to expand campus service. No decisions have been made, but parking is again under discussion.**

**Traffic is another issue, and one project to help lessen our traffic crunch is already underway. This is the Big Shanty Extension, which will go under I-75 from the south end of Town Pointe and connect to Big Shanty on the east side of I-75, on the southern edge of the Sports and Recreation Park. You have probably seen the earthmovers and bulldozers at work. This project will greatly lessen congestion on Chastain Road. Weather permitting, this project should be completed late next year.**

**A second project is also under discussion, a fly-over going from Frey Road across I-75 to Busbee Parkway. This will provide an additional entrance to and exit from campus. Much remains to be done on this before it becomes reality, but we are in cordial and constructive discussions with Cobb County government, the Town Center Community Improvement District, the University System Central Office, and members of the Georgia legislature to make this happen.**

**To this point, I have dwelled on the challenges we face and how we will meet them as we close our first half century and**

**strive to become a national university by the beginning of our second half century. Overcoming budget shortfalls; establishing a national identity; positioning and branding ourselves; managing our growth; improving our retention, progression, and graduation rates; acquiring requisite facilities; and overcoming parking and traffic congestion ... these are all challenges that we must surmount.**

**But lest we become transfixed by our challenges, let me spend a few minutes discussing some of our successes this year. They are considerable, especially considering they were achieved under conditions of financial stringency.**

**Perhaps most importantly, Kennesaw State conferred almost 5,000 degrees last year. This is our core competency, helping to create a more educated Georgia, and we do it well.**

**We brought two new innovative collaborative degree programs on board, across three colleges, as the Regents approved a dual Master of Business Administration/Master of Public Administration degree, and a dual Master of Business Administration/Master of Science in Information**

**Systems degree. The Regents also approved new options for the Ed.D. in the Bagwell College of Education, and, three weeks ago, our first Ph.D., in International Conflict Management. We now have four doctoral programs, with at least one more being planned.**

**All our programs up for re-accreditation also passed with flying colors. In October, KSU's Computer Science and Information Systems programs were re-accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, and in December, the Coles College of Business had its accreditation reaffirmed by AACSB International.**

**The university in December also opened a new educational site in Paulding County, in downtown Dallas, in conjunction with Georgia Highlands College.**

**KSU's international efforts also proceeded apace. Our Quality Enhancement Program, "Global Learning for an Engaged Citizenship," continues to be on track and successful. Last year's "Year of Turkey" program was very**

successful and well-attended, this year's "Year of Korea" program is opening the eyes of many to an important part of the world, and planning is proceeding for next year's "Year of Romania." KSU's Confucius Institute opened in August. We conferred our first Global Education Certificates to graduates who demonstrated a commitment to global learning and citizenship. Almost 800 KSU students participated in study abroad programs. The KSU College of the Arts trilingual adaptation of Herman Melville's Moby Dick won "Best Performance" in the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Festival International de Theatre Universitaire de Casablanca hosted by Haman II University in Casablanca.

Other KSU programs, faculty, staff, and students, and the university itself, received prominent recognition elsewhere as U.S. News and World Report recognized the university itself for the second year in a row as an "up and coming" university. The same publication for the seventh year running honored our "First Year Experience Program" as a national program of excellence.

**Meanwhile, CEO Magazine ranked the Coles College of Business's Executive MBA program as a first tier program, in the same ranks as the EMBA program at Harvard and the Wharton School, while The Chronicle of Higher Education identified KSU as an "Excellent Place to Work" in three categories, professional career development, collaborative governance, and a third category that I won't mention since it sounds self-serving.**

**The University System also recognized the excellence of KSU programs and faculty as the First Year Experience program and Associate Professor of Theater and Performance Studies Karen Robinson brought home awards. The First-Year Experience program received the USG's highest annual honor for teaching excellence among departments and programs, while Professor Robinson was recognized as the "Educator of the Year" among faculty at the System's 15 comprehensive universities.**

**In the three years that the Chancellor's and Governor's programs for customer service have existed, many KSU programs and people have received recognition. Indeed,**

**some people believe that the customer service awards should be retired permanently to Kennesaw State in general and to one person at KSU in particular.**

**In the three years the awards have existed, Linda Lyons has won or helped win five Chancellor's Awards, most recently receiving the 2009 Outstanding Customer Service Team Gold Award. She also has won three Governor's awards for service, most recently the 2009 Governor's Commendation for Customer Service Excellence.**

**Lest you think Linda is the only KSU employee who wins customer service awards, Dr. Michael Sanseviro must be applauded for winning the 2009 Governor's Commendation for Outstanding Customer Service in Leadership. In addition, the Association of Georgia Housing Officers in 2009 also bestowed three out of its six statewide awards on the KSU Housing Department, led by Dr. Sanseviro.**

**Finally, I must comment on Athletics. Last year, KSU completed the four-year transition from NCAA Division II to Division I. Last fall, our Lady Owls once again won the**

women's Atlantic Sun Conference championship for soccer. In December, the university announced both a partnership with the Atlanta Beat, the Atlanta entry into the Women's Professional Soccer league, which will host its first game in the Kennesaw State Stadium on May 9, and the formation of a Football Exploratory Committee, headed by former University of Georgia Athletic Director and Football Coach Vince Dooley. The committee will submit its report to me in September about the possibility of starting football at KSU. And more recently, in February, KSU's indoor men's track team won the Atlantic Sun indoor track championship.

What, then, is the state of the university? We are four years away from the end of our first half-century, and we are on the verge of becoming a national university. We are stretched painfully thin, but we have many strengths. We are blessed with many students who want to learn. We have a highly qualified faculty dedicated to their students and their professions. We have staff doing a phenomenal job under often trying circumstances.

**Despite our challenges, then, I ask again, “What must we do as we near the close of our first half-century, to make Kennesaw State a national university by the beginning of our second half century?”**

**With this question in mind, I close with an appeal to you, an appeal framed, to be politically neutral, from the words of both a former Democratic Attorney General and a former Republican president.**

**Let us look not at things the way they are and ask, “Why,” but dream of things that never were, and ask, “Why not?” And then let us act, so we are sure that those who come after us, will say of us, that in our time, we did everything that could be done to make this a better place.**

**Thank you for your attention today, and thanks for everything you do for KSU and its students.**