



Office of the President

**2011 State of the University Address
President Daniel S. Papp
Kennesaw State University
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Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the 2011 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 KSU a nationally-recognized university by the beginning of our second half-century, only four years from now.

That was the challenge I made to the university community in last year’s State of the University address, and over the past year, we have received quite a bit of national attention, although not always in the way that I would have hoped.

This year, I will leave temporarily the challenge of becoming a nationally recognized university on the table, and focus instead on three words: university, contrarian, and academic.

First, from where does the word “university” come? According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word entered the English language about 1300, meaning a “community of teachers and scholars.” It was derived from either the medieval Latin term “universitatum” or “universus,” meaning “whole” or “entire.”

As president of Kennesaw State, I have the good fortune of being able to view the whole and entire scope of activities that take place at KSU. I recognize that I have a unique perspective on a daily basis of what is happening here, and I am extremely pleased by what I see. Admittedly, we are not perfect, and we have room for improvement, but today, let me share with you some of what the “universe” of this university is all about on a daily basis. It is impressive.

Before I begin, however, I want to praise the faculty and staff of KSU for the fine work that all of you do in educating our students; in conducting research, scholarship, and other creative activities; in service; and in providing for the diverse needs of our almost 24,000 students.

How good are we? Let me provide one frame of reference. Last Saturday night, at the University System of Georgia's annual gala, one of our faculty members won a University System award recognizing excellence in teaching. This is the fifth consecutive year that a KSU faculty member has been so honored.

Please understand: all 7,000 faculty members in the University System of Georgia are eligible for these awards. No more than four or five faculty are honored each year. So the fact that five KSU faculty have garnered these awards for five years running is an incredible accomplishment. I am extremely proud of this faculty.

Four years ago, Randolph Smith from Psychology won the Regents Outstanding Teaching Award. Three years ago, it was Mary Garner from Math and Math Education. Two years ago, Matthew Laposata from Biology and Physics won top honors. Last year, Karen Robinson from Theater and Performance Studies was recognized. And this year, it was Sabine Smith from German Studies.

I'll repeat what I said a few seconds ago ... I am extremely proud of this faculty and staff. This faculty and staff is among the best I have ever seen in the University System, and I have been in the System for 38 years, six of which were in the position of the System's chief academic officer.

With that having been said, it's time to take a look at some of the many activities that the universe of Kennesaw State University includes. I won't comment on everything that takes place here, but I will provide some representative examples. I'll begin with the nine colleges in Academic Affairs, and then provide an overview of other operations that I have the opportunity to see on a day-by-day basis.

I'll start with the Bagwell College of Education, which graduates annually the second largest number of teachers in Georgia. The Bagwell College has many programs, but today I'll highlight only two, the Professional Teacher Education Unit, or PTEU, and the Doctors of Educational Leadership and Teacher Leadership programs.

The PTEU, headed by Dean of the Bagwell College Arlinda Eaton working in conjunction with other deans, is an umbrella organization that brings together education professors with faculty from other disciplines. The PTEU includes 15 academic departments and five colleges that collaborate on design, delivery, and accreditation of teacher preparation programs. Recently

winning national recognition for its quality, the PTEU assures that KSU's education graduates have the tools of their education profession and the content knowledge of a discipline.

At the graduate level, in addition to its masters programs, the Bagwell College launched KSU's first doctoral programs four years ago. Last year, the college hooded KSU's first doctoral graduate, Dr. Clint Stockton. The Ed.D. is designed for experienced educational professionals, with 65 students currently pursuing their doctorates.

Meanwhile, the Coles College of Business concentrates on educating the country's and the world's next generation of business leaders. The Coles College has a host of nationally recognized programs, including but not limited to the Center for Professional Selling, which each year runs the leading student sales competition in the United States; the Cox Family Enterprise Center, widely recognized as one of the top centers focusing on what it takes to run a successful family business; and the Small Business Development Center, which does exactly what its name suggests, helping small businesses, the core of the U.S. economy, succeed in providing needed services and being financially profitable.

Two other programs in the Coles College, the Coles Executive MBA and the Coles Doctorate in Business Administration, deserve mention. The Executive MBA was recently ranked by CEO Magazine as one of the top 25 EMBA programs in the country, while the Coles Doctorate in Business Administration has as its core mission educating businessmen and businesswomen who wish to join the ranks of the professoriate to help educate the next generation of business leaders.

In the WellStar College of Health and Human Services, students, faculty, and staff are still smiling since they just moved into the new Prillaman Building, which houses technologically cutting-edge nursing and health science laboratories. The WellStar College also just landed a \$2.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of Defense to study how to overcome the effects of brain trauma.

Off-campus, the WellStar College plays a major role with its Center for Community Health Care at MUST Ministries, which helps provide nursing services to those in need throughout Cobb County.

And no one in the WellStar College would be pleased if I did not mention the Doctorate in Nursing Sciences, which seeks to educate more collegiate nurse educators so KSU and other colleges and universities can graduate more nurses.

Meanwhile, the College of the Arts is also home to a wide array of activity. For example, in January, the entire KSU Orchestra traveled to China, where it performed several concerts in three major cities to packed houses. Before the trip, the KSU Confucius Institute and the Institute for Global Initiatives helped the students prepare for the trip by providing classes in Chinese language and culture.

More recently, less than two weeks ago, the College of the Arts presented a concert entitled "440 Keys: A Reunion," which brought five Steinway grand pianos and the KSU orchestra to the Bailey Center stage. The concert celebrated the generosity of donor Dr. Bobbie Bailey, who has made significant gifts to both the arts and athletics, and who also gifted KSU with 44 Steinway pianos, thereby earning KSU the coveted "All-Steinway" designation.

The College of the Arts also just received a \$2 million challenge grant from Mr. Bernard Zuckerman, a long-time KSU benefactor, to build a museum in memory of his wife Ruth, a well-known Atlanta sculptor.

One final spotlight on the College of the Arts is the new dance studio opened earlier this semester at Chastain Pointe for our nationally recognized program in dance. The 8,000 square foot facility is the largest dance studio in Atlanta. And it is notable that KSU dancers have already performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Meanwhile, KSU's largest college, Humanities and Social Sciences, hosts an incredible diversity of educational, scholarship, research, creative activity, and service opportunities. Today, I'll highlight six conferences sponsored by six different programs in HSS, all of which have either taken place or will take place in the seven weeks between February 24 and April 15.

The first occurred on February 24-25, co-sponsored by the Ph.D. program in International Conflict Management and the U.S. Army War College. The conference focused on the U.S. government's recently adopted whole-of-government approach to regional conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Over 70 professors, diplomats, government officials, military officers, and other observers participated.

As an aside, since this conference was co-sponsored by the U.S Army War College, I note here that KSU also has one of the largest Army ROTC programs in Georgia, and is home to the largest student veterans' organization in the state.

The second recent Humanities and Social Sciences conference took place last Friday, on March 25, the annual KSU Peace Conference. This year, the Peace Conference focused on Peace and the Arts, with keynote speaker Dr. Melody Milbrandt from Georgia State University addressing an audience of about 50.

Also last weekend, on March 25 and 26, KSU hosted its Eighth Symposium on New Interpretations of the Civil War, sponsored by the Center for the Study of the Civil War Era. This symposium, entitled "From Civil War to Civil Rights," featured nationally renowned speakers from the University of Virginia, the University of Illinois, and UGA.

Fourth, tomorrow, the African & African Diaspora Studies Program will conduct its annual Student Conference, "From Hegemony to Hip-Hop: Narratives of Race, Identity, and Power." This conference will bring together over 300 students, staff, and faculty, and also provide undergraduate and graduate student researchers the opportunity to work with faculty in expanding their intellectual horizons.

Fifth, on April 8, Kennesaw State's Asian Studies Program will sponsor its Symposium on Asia-USA Partnership Opportunities, called SAUPO. SAUPO will highlight partnership opportunities between the U.S. and China, India, Japan, and Korea. At SAUPO, government officials, professors, corporate managers, and non-profit leaders will address issues about the businesses and communities they work with in the U.S. and Asia in this age of globalization.

Finally, on April 15, the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice will host its 9th Annual KSU Suburban Conference. Entitled "Love, Marriage, and Family in the Suburbs," the conference will feature Dr. Elijah Anderson, Yale University's William K. Lanman Professor of Sociology, as its keynote speaker.

Moving on to the College of Science and Math, faculty and staff last week celebrated the groundbreaking for their new Laboratory Science Building. At the same time, Science and Math faculty are attracting impressive levels of funding from the National Science Foundation and elsewhere.

For example, five Science and Math faculty combined recently to win a \$2.85 million Noyce Grant for recruiting and training lead teachers in physics and chemistry; three other faculty won a \$200,000 grant for “WIKI’ed Biology;” and another Science and Math faculty member won another \$200,000 grant entitled, which I quote but do not fully understand, “RUI: Investigating Novel Mechanisms of MAPKAP Kinase 2.”

Continuing in Science and Math, yet another faculty member for the 18th consecutive year received a Georgia Space Science Consortium grant to pay for research stipends and materials for ten Kennesaw science and math students. What an incredible accomplishment this is!

Meanwhile, the University College, which has as its primary task educating students during their first few semesters at KSU, strives among other things to improve our retention, progression, and graduation rates. The Supplemental Instruction Program is one of many efforts in University College to improve retention, progression, and graduation.

Now in its sixth year of operation, the Supplemental Instruction Program has grown from 2 sections in Spring 2006 to 63 sections this semester. Serving over 1400 students, it concentrates on courses that have D-F-W rates of over 30 percent. During the last four semesters, the Supplemental Instruction Program lowered the average D-F-W rate for students who attend 3 or more sessions from an average of 38 percent to an average of 18 percent.

Transfer students also receive a considerable amount of attention in the University College, as they do across campus. However, the University College itself is a primary point of contact for KSU’s participation in the Foundations of Excellence Transfer Focus Study, facilitated by the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education. This effort seeks to understand the needs of transfer students so we can provide them what they need to make a successful transition to KSU.

The final University College program I’ll highlight is the President's Emerging Global Scholars, or PEGS, program, an option within the Honors program. This is a four-year program for high achieving students that begins in their freshman year with an intense international experience that continues in a different country in each of their next three years as well. PEGS students also undertake domestic civic engagement projects in each of their four years at KSU, participate in leadership development workshops and activities, work on undergraduate research projects with

faculty mentors, and have the opportunity to access targeted academic planning tailored to the aspirations of each student. The goal of this program is to prepare students to win Fulbright, Truman, Marshall, and Rhodes scholarships.

At the graduate level, the Graduate College coordinates the operations of masters and doctoral programs and helps expand efforts in research, scholarship, and creative activities. I have already commented on several research successes, but here I'll add one more, the effort to obtain World Bank funds to assist in enhancing science, technology, and mathematics education in Africa. Graduating STEM educators for Georgia is also a major thrust of both the Bagwell College of Education and the College of Science and Math, so these two efforts are quite complementary.

KSU teaches over 23,000 students per semester in the eight colleges I've discussed. Our ninth college, Continuing and Professional Education, teaches another 23,000 certificate and not-for-credit students each year. This means that KSU's educational efforts reach about 46,000 people a year.

In addition, Continuing and Professional Education recently received from the Osher Foundation a \$1,000,000 endowment for scholarships for students who return to KSU to complete their academic degrees. The college now has \$4 million in endowments, the second highest at KSU.

I'll conclude my comments about our educational programs with an update on KSU's Quality Enhancement Program, "Global Learning for Engaged Citizenship." KSU's approach to internationalization includes the Institute for Global Initiatives, which coordinates global engagement activities and programs; an intensive "Year of" country study program; a Global Engagement certificate that assesses and certifies students' global competencies; a study abroad program in which 800 students participated last year; extensive partnerships with universities, governments, and non-government organizations around the globe; and an active global admissions department that attracts students from over 140 countries. The Global Learning Coordinating Council of administrators, faculty, and students helps shape policy and guides global learning opportunities.

In recognition of the quality of these and other activities, KSU in the last seven months has received three major national awards. In September, KSU won the U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy's 2010 "Top Citizen Diplomacy Program" award. In January, the university received the Institute

for International Education's 2011 Andrew Heiskell Award for Innovation in International Education. And earlier this month, KSU won the most prestigious of all internationalization awards, the Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization.

This, then, is an overview of the academic and educational universe of this university, our core competency. I am extremely proud of this university and what its faculty, staff, and students do, and how we do it. Anyone who takes the time to look objectively at what KSU does in its entirety cannot help but be impressed by the quality, breadth, and balance of what takes place on this campus.

What about KSU operations beyond academics? We also have a host of critical activities going on here, all designed in one way or another to support and enhance our academic and educational operations and capabilities.

For example, its no secret that traffic congestion and parking are major issues at KSU. We have three projects underway to help alleviate these concerns. First, this semester, we initiated a trial shuttle system to off-campus parking sites, which we hope to make permanent next fall. You have also probably seen the construction on I-75 as the Big Shanty Connector underpass gets built. When finished, this will greatly reduce traffic congestion on Chastain.

The third bit of good news on congestion and parking is the passage of the Cobb County SPLOST earlier this month. One project in the SPLOST is an overpass of I-75 coming directly out of the East Parking Deck, going across I-75, and connecting with Busbee Parkway on the east side of I-75. This will reduce traffic congestion on Chastain even more.

It also is no secret that KSU faces serious space and facilities constraints. These too are being addressed. In addition to the recent opening of Prillaman Hall, we broke ground earlier this month on a new \$20 million Laboratory Science Building. I also remain cautiously optimistic that we will receive funding to expand our Bagwell College of Education Building. Other projects on the near-term horizon include more residence halls, another student dining hall, Phase III of the Sports and Recreation Park, a new Student Activities and Recreation Center, and the Student Academic Learning Center and Business Education Building.

Behind the scenes, but not too far behind the scenes, Student Success, Intercollegiate Athletics, University Advancement, Fiscal Affairs, External Affairs, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and Legal Affairs are also accomplishing much to aid our primary purpose, educating students.

For example, Student Success has the challenging and critical task of helping KSU students stay connected to KSU and succeed as students and citizens. The Office does this in many ways, but I will comment on only two.

The first Student Success effort I'd like to spotlight is our emphasis on non-traditional students. At Kennesaw State, we have an excellent mix of non-traditional and traditional students, and earlier this month, in recognition of the important place that non-traditional students hold at KSU, we hosted the National Conference of the Association of Non-Traditional Students in Higher Education. Nearly 200 representatives from colleges and universities across the U.S. attended the three-day training and networking meeting.

Second, KSU's Club Sports programs, also an integral part of Student Success, continue to grow. The campus now has 23 recognized Club Sports programs, and they are very successful. Nine KSU club sports teams are ranked nationally or qualified for national level playoffs. These include the women's rugby club and softball club, both in their first year of competition; competitive cheer, which last year won the national club competitive cheer championship; men's ice hockey, which also is regularly ranked high in its division; the fishing club, which over the last two years has won several national competitions as well as \$38,000 in scholarship support; equestrian; paintball; and men's lacrosse, ranked ninth nationally among club lacrosse sports teams. Our club wrestling team is ranked fifth nationally, with one student, Kendall Albert, holding the number two national ranking in his weight class.

Discussing Club Sports provides an easy segue to Intercollegiate Athletics. Two years ago, we completed the transition to the NCAA's Division I, in which we now offer 8 women's intercollegiate sports and 6 men's intercollegiate sports, with the possibility of more on the way.

It was well reported last fall that the Football Exploratory Committee, chaired by former UGA Athletic Director and Head Coach Vince Dooley, issued a report overwhelmingly favorable to the possibility of beginning football at KSU. A subsequent student vote supported the move as well. However, significant funds must still be raised before football becomes a reality. And if we do start

football, we will also begin additional women's intercollegiate sports programs to assure compliance with Title IX.

I am also pleased to report that the search for a new Athletics Director is proceeding well. Hopefully we will name a new AD within the next couple of weeks.

KSU's first-ever comprehensive capital campaign also deserves kudos. We are only three and a half years into the five-year \$75 million campaign, but as of last Friday, we broke \$70 million. The campaign has generated the largest single private contribution and the largest-ever grant that the university has received, as well as 14 new gifts of at least one million dollars each, 28 endowed scholarships, and 22 Clendenin Graduate Fellowships for KSU faculty members.

As for the Office of Fiscal Affairs, it continues to guide us successfully through the budget maelstrom of the last few years. At the same time, it also achieved once again a state audit report of no findings and no misstatements.

Business processes have also been improved. For example, last year at this time, we were six weeks behind in HOPE scholarship processing. This year, we had no delay, even though the number of scholarships awarded increased by 11 percent. At the same time, student walk-up volume in Financial Aid decreased by 12 percent. Meanwhile, the wait for IDs for new employees, or those of us already employed by KSU who lost our old ones, was reduced from 48 hours to less than 24 hours.

I must also praise everyone in Culinary Services. While most of us in January stayed home during the ice storm, the good folks in Culinary Service were here every day, living in a near-by hotel so they could keep The Commons open for students living on campus. They provided over 9,000 meals to on-campus students during the storm, made sure that access was safe to and from residence halls, and provided transportation to students who required it.

Another mark of the quality of The Commons is that during its 18 months of operations, Culinary Services has established an incredible benchmark related to food safety. Over a million and half meals have been provided since The Commons opened with no food borne illness incidents.

Meanwhile, in External Affairs, a university-wide visual identity program was unveiled last fall that helps KSU present a single face to the broader community. External Affairs also plays an invaluable role in positioning us with the Georgia General Assembly and the Governor's Office.

External Affairs also is responsible for the University System of Georgia's African-American Males Initiative, which last year won a \$500,000 grant from the Lumina Foundation. That grant helped expand AAMI throughout the University System and contributed to the USG's 56 percent increase in black male enrollment since AAMI's inception.

Regarding the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, KSU is one of five institutions within the University System that serves on the Board of Regents' diversity advisory committee, which promotes diversity and inclusion throughout the USG. The office also coordinates five commissions on diversity and equity to help make KSU a more welcoming and inclusive place for all who wish to be members of this community.

Finally, Legal Affairs supports our operations by handling legal issues for faculty, staff, and administrators. This year alone, Legal Affairs has vetted almost 600 contracts; negotiated for campus shuttle services; helped develop a more stream-lined grade appeal process; assisted with KSU's first-ever patent filing; created the framework for a new athletic association that will soon be initiated; and provided professional development workshops for faculty, staff and administrators to raise KSU's "Legal IQ."

In a nutshell, then, this is an overview of both the academic and support services sides of the "universe" of this university. To reiterate, I am extremely proud of this university, and what its faculty, staff, and students do. Anyone who takes the time to look objectively at what KSU does in its entirety cannot help but be impressed by the quality, breadth, and balance of what takes place here.

I'll now turn to my second word of the day, "contrarian." In the last few weeks, a number of faculty members have expressed sharply differing views in public media forums about who and what a "contrarian" really is. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the definition is straightforward: it is someone who "opposes or rejects popular opinion" or who "goes against current practices."

I will complicate the discussion even more by saying that personally, I do not agree completely with any of the viewpoints that have been expressed, nor do I disagree completely with any of the viewpoints that have been expressed. Each professor argues for points with which I agree, and each also argues for points with which I disagree. But this is not the place to discuss my personal views about the debate.

Rather, I refer to this debate because it well illustrates what should take place at a university. Ideas and outlooks get discussed. They get debated. They get dissected. And sometimes the discussions, debates, and dissections get heated. Sometimes the discussions, debates, and dissections even take place in the public media.

But all of this is OK, because a university should be a marketplace of ideas and outlooks, and people should be able to freely discuss, debate, and dissect them. This is what academic freedom, and more generically, freedom of speech and the other First Amendment freedoms, are all about.

Eventually, over time, the weight of evidence and argument in the market place of ideas and outlooks tips in one direction or another. That is what happens at universities, and that is what happens in American society as a whole, as well.

Here, let me hasten to add another point, and it's a vitally important one, especially for universities. After the weight of evidence and argument in the market place of ideas and outlooks tips in one direction or another, especially at a university, new evidence can come to light. New arguments can be presented. And new perspectives can be developed.

This means that even after conclusions are reached, especially at a university, conclusions need to be reviewed, refined, and re-debated.

That is why we in university communities must be open to the free flow of ideas and outlooks. That is why we must continually discuss, debate, and dissect what we believe and what we know. We must search for new conclusions, re-examine old conclusions, and most importantly, not become locked into a single way of thinking.

This is what universities are all about, this is what academic freedom is all about, and this is what the First Amendment is all about. Indeed, the French Enlightenment author Voltaire said it best,

way back in the eighteenth century: “I disagree strongly with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.”

Let me now turn to my third word of the day, “academic.” I’ll begin by exploring what has happened to the word “academic” over the course of our lives, or to be more accurate, over the course of my life, since I am probably older than most of you who are here today.

When I was in my twenty’s and thirty’s, back in the prehistoric days of the late 60s and 70s, “academic” was a word that denoted something worthy of intellectual respect, a word that indicated that a person or a thought was enlightened, wise, or involved intellectually with deep thought and understanding.

Now, let’s cycle forward thirty or forty years to the world of today, of 2011. What does the word “academic” mean today? Think about it for a second.

“Oh, that’s just academic.” How many times have you heard that phrase and thought about what it means? Today, to many people, if you say something is “academic,” you mean it is irrelevant; that it is not worthy of serious thought or consideration; or as one on-line dictionary puts it, and I quote, “having no practical purpose or use.”

This is not good news for academics. That having been said, we must ask an even more important question, namely, “How and why did this change in meaning take place over the last 30 or 40 years?” How did “academic” over time change from a word that meant “enlightened” to a word that, to many, means “irrelevant?”

Let me offer an answer ... it may be because we academics have spent too much time talking with each other, and not enough time talking with people in the broader community. We have not spent enough time, nor devoted enough effort, to talk with folks in the broader community about what it is that we do. Consequently, in the eyes of many, we have become, to borrow a phrase, “pointy-headed academics who don’t have a clue about what goes on in the real world.”

We need to change that, and to begin changing it now. And I have a proposal about how to do that, just in time for additional debate, dialogue, and discussion by the KSU community as we move forward in the early stages of developing KSU’s 2012-2017 Strategic Plan.

As part of this proposal, I'll quote a message I received two weeks ago from a KSU faculty member who graciously agreed to let me include the message in this address. As this faculty member said, we at KSU must, and I quote:

... strengthen our commitment to popular education, university-community partnerships, civic education, and public dialogue. Our neighbors have no idea what we do as scholars, and we've given up trying to explain it to them. Working with ... our communities will go a long way toward creating constructive relationships and productive partnerships.

This is a good opportunity for our institution to re-focus its attention on educating students and community members for constructive participation in civic life. After all, we couldn't ask for a better laboratory.

So my proposal is this ... we at Kennesaw State University will continue to strive for the goal that we set last year of becoming a nationally-recognized university by the beginning of our second half century, only four years from now, and we will do this by, among other things, being a university fully committed to engagement, engagement with our local community, with our state, with our nation, and with our world.

We will re-double our efforts in every area to understand others, and to help others understand us. We will re-double our efforts to help others understand who we are and what we do as educators, as scholars and researchers, and as servants of the public good.

We will become nationally-recognized, and we will be known in the local community, in Georgia, in the nation, and in the world as "Kennesaw State: Georgia's Engaged University."

And that is the kind of recognition about which we can all be proud. Thank you for your attention today.

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