

President Robert S. Nelsen's Fall Address 2015

(as prepared)

By now, everyone has heard this story, but it is the perfect story to begin my first Fall Address, my first time to talk to the faculty, staff, and students at Sacramento State. It is the story of Sac State.

Last Friday, August 21st, one of our students, Anthony Sadler, and two of his Sacramento friends saved the lives of countless persons on a high-speed train between Amsterdam and Paris.

Anthony is a senior in Kinesiology. He is a member of the Philosophy Club and of the Kappa Sigma fraternity here at Sac State.

And Anthony and his two friends, Spencer Stone and Aleksander Skarlatos, are heroes.

The three Americans with the help of others subdued a shooter with an AK47, a knife, and a handgun.

The shooter had eight magazines filled with bullets — there is no telling how many people would have been killed if it weren't for the actions of Anthony and his friends.

I ask all of us to applaud Anthony, to applaud his bravery, to applaud his parents and Sac State for what he did and what his parents and Sac State taught him.

I am certainly learning from Anthony. He is teaching me what it means to be an American. He is teaching me what it means to be human.

Today, we are launching a website to collect funds to pay for his tuition this year and to help pay off whatever loans he may have accumulated to pay for his education.

Two years ago, Sacramento State adopted a new mission statement:

“As California’s capital university, we transform lives by preparing students for leadership, service, and success.”

Anthony Sadler is the embodiment of that mission statement. In subduing the gunman, he risked his life for others.

Leadership, service, and success are precisely the qualities that Anthony exhibited on that train.

Leadership, service, and success are the qualities that I see every day at Sac State — that I see when I meet our faculty, when I talk to our staff, when I do a selfie with our students.

I am proud to be a Hornet — I am proud to be part of the Hornet Nation.

I left one Valley, the Rio Grande Valley, for another Valley — the Sacramento Valley.

What the Rio Grande Valley and the Sacramento Valley have in common is some of the biggest-hearted people that I have ever met.

In both Valleys, they care about our students, and they care about our universities because they truly understand that we are “transforming lives.”

People ask me time and again what has surprised me about Sacramento.

What has surprised me is how warmly the people in Sacramento and the Sacramento region have embraced my wife, Jody, and me.

They have reached out and embraced us because they love Sacramento State and because they believe in our mission — Sac State truly is all about our students.

In this transition to new leadership, we cannot forget that we are all about our students.

Unfortunately, most of you do not know Jody and me.

And frankly, I would be lying if I said that I knew you.

I have much to learn about Sacramento State — and I am fully aware that Sacramento State is not UT Pan American, and that what worked in the Rio Grande Valley may not work here at Sacramento State.

I greatly dislike how the search process for new presidents works nowadays. I hate that I didn’t get the opportunity to meet all of you during the search and that I am only meeting you now.

And I don’t like it that you are only meeting me now and that the huge majority of you had no say in whom your next president would be.

When I was interviewing for the presidency at UT Pan American, I had the chance to meet not only with Student Government, the Staff Assembly, and the Faculty Senate, but I also had the chance to speak at an open forum and to answer some very tough questions.

The hardest question of all in the forum was from a member of the Faculty Senate. She said, and I quote: “Convince me in Spanish that I should send my son to your university. And do it with passion.”

She was Hispanic, and 89 percent of the students at UT Pan American were Hispanic. Over 70 percent of the students were the first to go to college, and over 60 percent of the students primarily spoke Spanish at home. And there I was, a white bald guy, wanting to lead a university on the border between the U.S. and Mexico.

Well, fortunately, I had my first Spanish class in fourth grade in Montana, and unknown to her, I am fluent in Spanish — I have already appeared three times on Univision here in Sacramento.

So I gave a passionate plea to the audience to send their sons and daughters to UT Pan American because we would take care of their sons and daughters, and because we would transform the lives of their sons and daughters, and because we would lift their sons and daughters out of poverty and thereby transform the entire Rio Grande Valley.

When I finished, I got a standing ovation, and the faculty member became a good friend and a confidant.

I am not going to get a standing ovation today, and I have a long way to go before you and I become friends and confidants.

But I want you to know that I believe in the Hornet Family — I believe in Anthony Sadler, and I believe in you.

Most of all, I believe in our students; I believe that they can and will succeed.

And I know that you believe that they can and will succeed — that is why you have come to and have remained at Sac State.

I am entirely student-centered, and I chose to come to Sacramento State because of its laser-like focus on students.

As most of you know, I worked myself out of my job at UT Pan American because of my students.

My students didn't have to take their science class and their science lab in the same semester — we simply didn't have enough labs.

They sometimes had to wait two or three years to take their labs.

You see: We had not had a new academic building on our campus since 2001.

Our students had less than half the space that the students at the University of Texas at El Paso had.

Why?

Because UTEP and all the other universities in the UT System had access to the Permanent University Fund — \$14.98 billion in West Texas oil money, money that could be used to build buildings.

We discovered a loophole in the Texas Constitution that would give us access to that \$14.98 billion if we abolished two sister institutions, UT Pan Am and UT Brownsville, and created a new university.

I knew when we discovered that loophole that it would probably result in my not having a job if we succeeded.

But I also knew that we had to succeed for the sake of our students.

We got a unanimous vote in the House and Senate — something that very rarely happens in Texas — but the Legislature knew that we had to do something for the students in the Rio Grande Valley.

And today, there is \$348 million in new construction happening at the new university, UTRGV.

There is a new medical school that will be accepting 200 MD students per year.

And there is a new science building with 42 new labs being constructed as I speak.

Yes, I worked myself out of job — UT System believed that they needed someone not associated with either campus as they combined the campuses together, someone who would be neutral.

But I did it for my students — and I would do it here, too, if there were some way to get \$348 million worth of new buildings for Sac State students.

As I said, I am, like Sac State, student-focused.

Because of my focus on students, I have gotten several requests that go something like this: “If you really care about students, you will fix X, Y, and Z that happened in the past.”

Although I hate to admit my fallibility, I can do very little about the past.

My first and foremost request of everyone here today is to look to the future, to work for our students’ future, for their success.

In most convocation speeches, now would be the time where the president would first introduce the new people at the University and then go on to laud a lot of individuals for their amazing accomplishments during the last year.

And there have been amazing accomplishments — but I want to focus on the future, and I want you to get to know me.

I need to lay out the budget, because the budget will determine much of that future.

And then I want to provide you a look into my work plan, what I am telling Chancellor Tim White and the Board of Trustees that I will be doing this year and what I hope to accomplish.

First, the budget:

Martin Luther King once said that a budget is a moral document. I concur. We are allocating more than \$1,000,000 in this year’s budget for equity raises, and we are being aggressive with enhancing safety, and even more so with supporting student success and completion initiatives.

Overall, we will have a balanced budget of \$286,592,137 in which our projected source of funds matches our projected expenditures.

In other words, we will be spending every dollar that we receive, so there is no margin for error.

After reviewing UBAC’s recommendations, I have approved two tiers of divisional increases.

Because Academic Affairs and Student Affairs are so focused on students, they will receive 1.9 percent increases to their budgets.

Academic Affairs will also receive approximately \$1.36 million in permanent baseline funding for instruction (i.e., hiring faculty) associated with enrollment growth, which is expected to be 460 new students.

The remaining divisions (Advancement, IRT, HR, Public Affairs, etc.) will receive a 1.5 percent augmentation.

\$1.56 million has also been allocated to help attain the university's strategic goals and address the Student Success and Completion Initiatives.

Given our priority to increase our retention rates and our graduation rates and to decrease our students' time to degree, we will be advertising for and hiring someone, a graduation czar or czarina, to evaluate, oversee, coordinate, and improve our student success programs and initiatives.

We will also be adding additional professional and faculty advisors.

And we are enhancing support centers for our Dream Act students and for our African American students while continuing to support our Full Circle Project for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

In the budget, we also added supplemental funding on top of the 1.5 percent increase to two divisions (Athletics and University Advancement) for new, needed personnel.

To help meet NCAA reporting, Athletics is receiving funding for two Business Office positions.

And to protect the safety of our student athletes, we are also adding a trainer to Athletics' budget.

We are gearing up for the University's first Capital Campaign, so gift officers have been added to Advancement's budget to ramp up the campaign and to supplement the colleges' fundraising efforts.

We also added \$100,000 in one-time funding for operating costs associated with the Capital Campaign — we will not be able to raise money without appropriately investing in the campaign.

With regard to the One-time Project Funds, of the \$31.6 million in requests, I have approved \$16.5 million in total projects.

Upon reviewing the initial recommendations, I believed it was important to fund some very serious deferred maintenance items such as hazardous waste abatement and water exposure problems.

We also addressed items that directly affect the safety of our faculty, staff, and students such as trip hazards and firewalls.

Finally, because we're going to grow our FTE student body by 2 percent, we are supplying Academic Affairs with an additional \$1,000,000 in one-time funding to add additional sections and courses.

In other words, Academic Affairs will have \$1.36 million for permanent tenure/tenure track hiring.

Plus it will have \$1 million for lecturers, or as we call them temporary faculty.

I wish that we could have dedicated the \$1 million for permanent hires, but as I said, it is one-time money that will not be recurring.

Still, the good news is that we are adding to Academic Affairs' budget \$2.36 million in instruction in addition to the 1.9 percent overall increase in its budget.

I am asking the Provost to put a priority on maximizing the number of faculty hires this coming year, and we will continue to increase the number of tenure-track hires in the coming years.

I greatly appreciate the work of the UBAC and the Office of Budget Planning and Administration in preparing this year's budget.

In the fall, we will be reinstituting an annual budget presentation during which we will roll out the budget in more detail.

At the end of the fiscal year, we will also be instituting and inviting the entire University community to an annual financial review, where we will discuss how the actual budget was spent.

We have important work to do as we increase freshman and transfer graduation rates, decrease the time to degree, provide the classes that our students need, and close the achievement gaps.

This budget will allow us to make substantial progress.

So onward to my work plan — I think it will show you what my priorities are and what my vision for Sac State is.

First and foremost, I intend to work with the faculty, staff, students, and community to improve graduation rates.

We are doing a lot of good work at our campus, but too much of that work is happening in silos.

And we aren't necessarily measuring the effectiveness of what we are doing.

We have been working on the Graduation Initiative for several years, yet we haven't moved the graduation rate needle.

A 9 percent graduation rate for our four-year students is unacceptable.

And our 46 percent graduation rate for our six-year students is not acceptable either.

Both rates drop even further with regards to our underrepresented minority students: 7 percent and 38 percent, respectively.

Please believe me that I know that graduation rates are artificial measures created by the NCAA to try to force athletic departments to monitor student athletes and make sure that the student athletes graduated.

Not every student is or should be on a four-year or six-year track.

Every student needs to be treated as an individual.

And we should never lower our standards or the quality of the education that we provide for our students just so that they graduate sooner.

Still, graduation rates do help to paint a picture, no matter how flawed or fuzzy about how our first-time, full-time students are doing.

We need to make certain that we are not just spinning our wheels when it comes to reducing our students' time to degree.

Hence, as I mentioned earlier, we will be hiring a Graduation Initiative Czar or Czarina to coordinate and oversee our efforts. He or she will report directly to me and will be on the President's Cabinet — that's how important I believe these initiatives are and how critical this person will be to our success.

I have only been here in Sacramento for a couple of months, but I have picked up on a mantra: The word that I have heard most often here at Sac State, by both faculty and students, is "bottleneck."

We have bottlenecks everywhere, whether it is with registration, the absolute lack of courses, or extremely difficult gateway courses.

The Graduation Czar or Czarina will be charged to identify and conduct an inventory of the bottlenecks and to work with faculty, deans, advisors, chairs — with everyone in the University — to eliminate those bottlenecks.

We need a multiple-pronged approach.

Online courses can help in some instances, though many classes are not well suited for online courses.

We need to support those who choose to teach online courses.

We need a Center for Online Learning and Teaching where faculty can receive training and incentives such as laptops for teaching online.

We need to vet all courses through Quality Matters, a national rubric, to make certain that the courses are sufficiently rigorous.

I intend to establish as a priority the filling of slots for bottleneck courses before staffing any other courses.

Doing so requires that I help make connections with the various hospitals, for example, so that we can have more clinical rotations for our practicums.

That is why I have been meeting with Kaiser Permanente, Dignity, and Sutter Hospitals during my first weeks here.

I also need to provide the deans and the faculty with the means to know what courses the students need and how many students need those courses.

Hence, we will be purchasing SmartPlanner — a degree-planning software that will allow students to see online their degree plans and their progress toward graduation.

This software will allow our students to run “what if” scenarios, and faculty and advisors will be able to communicate with the students regarding their progress.

All of that is nice, but there is a more important reason why we are purchasing SmartPlanner: SmartPlanner will help us know who needs what classes and when in order to graduate in a timely fashion.

We are also purchasing Platinum Analytics, which can so to speak “talk” to SmartPlanner and run a report on how many students need X, Y, and Z courses.

Deans, faculty, and chairs will know three months in advance how many sections the students will need.

Just as importantly, Platinum Analytics will “talk” with our class scheduling software and will automatically schedule the needed courses.

With these three pieces of software, we will completely eliminate this particular bottleneck as long as we follow through on hiring additional faculty.

If all this sounds familiar, it is because we said that we were going to start this project last year as a pilot project.

No more pilots — we will begin the actual installation for all programs in January. We are setting aside the funds for backfill positions and for students to input the degree plans.

There can be no excuses — you, especially the students, have my word.

To improve our graduation rates, we have to reach back into the high schools and even grade schools to ensure that our students are prepared.

56 percent of our first year students are in remedial classes — that means that 56 percent of our students are gathering debt.

The statistics nationwide are frightening regarding the success of students who have to take remedial courses — 37 percent of these students will never graduate.

We are going to work with Next Ed to build a strong P-16 council.

We need to communicate and collaborate with the high schools to ensure that students are prepared for the rigors of college.

We need to provide the teachers with the curriculum that will match the curriculum of our beginning composition and algebra courses.

I have already reached out to Sacramento City Unified School District and other superintendents — everyone has been receptive and open to adopting our curriculum.

More importantly, using our P-16 Council and using all the tremendous outreach efforts of our faculty, we need to start a literacy movement in the Sacramento region.

We know that if students aren't reading at third grade level in third grade, 80 percent of the students will drop out before completing high school and before ever enrolling in Sac State.

Given the work that our faculty are already doing in the community and given the energy of Sac State, I am confident that we can reduce the number of students in remedial education and thereby reduce our students' debt.

We need to rethink how we are teaching remedial education — and we will do so, so that our students are not caught on the treadmill of remedial work.

Maybe we will do it by creating concurrent remedial courses that students will take alongside course load bearing courses.

Maybe we will do it by using new diagnostics and modular courses.

But we will do it — we will do it together — I need all of you to help me find solutions.

OK, I have probably gone on too long about improving graduation rates — but that is how important it is to me and how important it is to my work plan.

So let's move on to the second of nine initiatives in my work plan — improving retention rates for all four years.

We tend to focus too much on retention of our students after their first year — which is quite good: 82 percent of the students return as sophomores.

Things get dicier in the second year — with the fall 2013 cohort, only 72 percent of the original 3,366 freshmen return as juniors.

Where I really get concerned is with seniors — only 65 percent of the original 3,366 students return as seniors.

In other words, when we get to the senior year, 606 students have dropped out, at least with the fall 2013 cohort.

So how will we help these 606 students so that they don't drop out?

We will initiate a College Ready program, and we plan to fund it with \$100,000.

Similarly, we will initiate an Upper Division Ready Program, and we will fund the program with \$100,000.

And for the seniors, we will initiate a Career Ready Program, which we will fund with \$100,000.

We are putting our money where our mouths are.

I believe that while these initiatives will have measurable affects, increasing the number of advisors and degree auditors by approximately 10 and the number of faculty advisors in the colleges by approximately 14 will help our students even more.

And fully implementing SmartPlanner for every degree program and for every student will revolutionize students' ability to plan for classes and stay on track.

With the addition of Platinum Analytics, students will finally be able to register for the classes that they need — though I have to repeat my caveat that we must hire fulltime faculty to teach those classes.

I want us to be focused on graduating our students with the highest quality education possible; hence, most of the initiatives in my work plan are interrelated.

The third initiative is to reduce the time to degree.

Starting this fall, we will undertake a comprehensive space utilization review.

We need to know what classrooms are available and when they are available.

We almost did not get our soon-to-be-announced science building because we were not using our space responsibly on campus.

Yes, it is 98 percent certain that we are going to get a science building that will provide more labs and classrooms for our science classes, and we will be following our campus master plan and adding additional buildings in the coming years, but we must justify the need.

The space utilization plan has to be extensive. We have to be willing to use the entire campus and the entire week — even Fridays and even weekends.

Our students deserve the opportunity to take classes even when it is not convenient for us or for them.

I do believe that if we “quote” build it, they will “quote” come.

Some of you may have already heard that I have argued that we need to provide incentives for our students to take more units.

If students take 15 units a semester, they will graduate in four years. Fifteen plus 15 equals 30 times four equals 120 equals a degree. Even an English professor like me can do that math.

Once we eliminate the bottlenecks and once we have the classes available that students need, we will give the students a \$500 credit, a true financial incentive, toward the next semester for every semester that they take 15 hours.

And we will advertise this incentive to every student, time and again.

Of course, I know that not all students are capable of taking 15 units.

Hence, for those students who are only capable of taking 12 units, we will offer them a \$1,000 incentive/credit for taking an additional 6 hours in the summer.

The math is the same: 12 plus 12 equals 24 plus 6 equals 30 times four equals 120 equals a degree in four years.

But please believe me, I realize that a student’s degree should never only be about math — it should be about quality and excellence.

Still, we have a moral responsibility to help them avoid debt and to provide them with the very best education that we can give them in the shortest time possible.

These incentive plans will not affect the quality of the instruction. I believe in our faculty and believe that they will provide an excellent education to any and all students in their classes.

With this incentive plan, I am asking for a more robust summer program with more robust offerings.

I am also committing to looking at the compensation for the faculty teaching those summer courses.

I am further committing to looking at what we charge students for the courses in the summer.

We need a more equitable summer program.

And we need to provide incentives to the faculty and the colleges to provide a more robust summer school.

None of what I have outlined above can be done without appropriate data. With initiative No. 4 of my work plan, we will create a campus-wide decision support model.

What does that mean?

We will eliminate the multiple data center duplications on campus and thereby eliminate the silos that surround the data on campus.

We will create one source for data and will make that source available for all who need data.

Rather than making our decisions on the fly, I am asking that we make decisions based upon a common, reliable data source, with a common data dictionary.

That is why we are implementing SmartPlanner and Platinum Analytics.

And that is why I intend to centralize our data analysis operations.

When looking at data, however, we cannot forget our students — we cannot forget their needs.

Many have to work while attending school. Many need scholarships and monetary support.

Initiative 5 will create a centralized career and internship office to help our students find employment.

We will create an electronic bulletin board to advertise jobs, including part-time jobs in the community.

And we will place a priority on hiring our students over others when possible — not to replace existing staff, but rather to provide additional needed services as well as provide our students with valuable experiences.

Why? Because we know that if students work on campus, they will be much more likely to graduate than if they are flipping burgers.

Initiative 6 is also about our students, but it is also about our faculty and staff.

I, like most of you in this room, am troubled by impaction.

I find it deeply troubling when a student comes up to me with a 4.0 GPA and tells me with tears in her eyes that she was not accepted into nursing.

I find it equally troubling when a faculty member comes up to me and tells me that she has two times the number of students that her department, in this case Social Work, can handle because the students have been flowing into the program because they can't get into psychology or nursing because those programs are impacted.

Some good analyses of impaction have been done on our campus.

But we need a campus-wide discussion of impaction vs. integrated enrollment management.

We need to develop alternative pathways that are sustainable and do not create a burden on the faculty and staff for students who cannot get into their desired major.

And we need to look at when it is appropriate for students to declare a major.

Should it be earlier? Should it be later?

I don't know the answer, but for the sake of our students, we need to ask the questions.

We cannot let impaction or limits on Full Time Equivalent Students dictate the quantity or quality of the education that we provide our students.

We work at this University, at Sac State, because we want to make a difference.

We want to transform lives — as our mission statement says.

We need to graduate our current students so that we can provide access for new students.

But as we take on the task of graduating our students in a more timely manner, my responsibility is to make certain that Sacramento State is a

great place to work, a place to which everyone looks forward to coming every day — which leads me to the seventh initiative of my work plan.

We must ensure that Sac State is a great place to work (because with this speech and with this plan, I am asking you to work with me to make Sac State an even greater place to work).

When I arrived, I asked for our exit and climate surveys.

Sometimes you should be careful about what you ask for.

I got a pile of surveys, but I also got no evidence that anything had been done about the information in those surveys.

We need to tie the information in the surveys directly to our strategic plan — to Goal 4: “Excel as a place to learn, work, live, and visit.”

We need to use the information in those exit and climate surveys — we cannot just leave the surveys on a shelf.

Instead, we need to convene a task force that will create action plans based upon those surveys.

That task force needs to be charged with providing strategic initiatives to address the information in those surveys and to make Sac State an even greater place to work.

As part of Initiative 7, as part of making Sac State a great place to work, we will establish a Leadership Academy for both faculty and staff.

We will also establish presidential awards for staff and faculty with non-traditional categories.

We will hold a celebration in the library for all those who have authored a paper or book this year.

We will also hold a celebration for everyone who received a grant or research award and for those who are supporting them in their labs.

And as I mentioned earlier, we will support our Dream Act students, our African American students, and our Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander students along with all our other students.

We must also and will support the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community at the University.

For Sac State to be successful, we must focus on reaching out to the City and to the Sacramento region.

Hence Initiative 8 of my work plan: Expanding our community outreach.

I have already accepted invitations to join and have begun attending the meetings of the Greater Sacramento Area Economic Council, the Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce, and Valley Vision.

I have attended meetings of the Asian American Chamber of Commerce, the African American Chamber of Commerce, and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and we have planned a “Chamber Tour” of all the regional Chambers of Commerce.

Because one in 20 members of the region are Sac State alumni, I have decided to sit on the Alumni Board rather than send a delegate.

We need to engage our alumni, especially with fundraising for the Science Building and the Events Center.

And we need to make the alumni feel that they are part of the Hornet Nation.

In addition to me sitting on the aforementioned boards, I am actively engaging with the Capital Public Radio Board as well as the University Foundation and University Enterprises Incorporated Boards.

And I have asked everyone in the President’s Cabinet to sit on a non-profit, charity board.

At virtually every meeting at which I speak, I ask donors, politicians, and business leaders for internships and clinical rotations for our students.

We are also looking to expand the University Enterprises Incorporated’s California Intern network to include even more internships.

Most importantly, we will be initiating an academic program needs assessment of the Sacramento Region.

This assessment will examine the demographics of the region and the educational institutions in the area.

It will then do an inventory of all the recent hires in the region, subdividing them by the level of education needed for each job.

Then it will map the curriculum at Sac State, at the community colleges, and at other local universities over those jobs in order to find gaps or redundancies.

The ultimate goal is to find out if we are educating our students for productive careers in the region.

Of course, some students will leave the region, but we want to create economic prosperity as well as civic leaders.

Our students will make the region wiser, healthier, and wealthier.

Now to the final initiative in my work plan: Fundraising.

As noted earlier, we are launching a capital campaign, the first capital campaign for Sac State.

We are recruiting chairs for the campaign as well as committee members.

We are finalizing the agenda for the campaign, focusing on the new buildings identified in the campus master plan and on scholarships for our students.

We are organizing quarterly meetings and attending trainings.

I am eating more salads than I ever thought possible with donors (I refuse to eat the rubber chicken — I am a vegetarian).

We are going to visit San Francisco, Los Angeles, anywhere that we can establish a chapter of the alumni association and where we can raise funds for our students.

I am sponsoring at least one lunch with donors (we are averaging three) each week and a dinner at our house every week with donors, focusing on legacy donors.

We will also be using the Julia Morgan house to establish the President's Circle, which will raise funds for study abroad, for the food pantry, for club trips, for emergency funds for our students.

We are looking for naming opportunities for the science building. That is our top priority.

We also need a venue where we can have rock concerts and distinguished speakers — so we are focusing on raising \$50M for an events center.

The onus is on me, actually on Jody and me, to raise funds for the University. We will do so — remember one in 20 members of the Sacramento community graduated from Sac State.

Please help us engage them with the University. Please help bring them onto campus.

Together, we need to build the Hornet Nation. We need everyone to take pride in being a Hornet.

Maybe foolishly, but very honestly, I did not share the text of this fall address with any members of my Cabinet except my Chief of Staff, Lisa Cardoza. The only other person who has seen it is my wife, Jody.

I have provided a lot of information today — maybe too much.

But I really did want to give you an idea of what I am thinking and where I think we are going.

But right now, I want to do a big Rosanne Rosanna Danna (some of you will remember Gilda Radner from *Saturday Night Live*): NEVER MIND — for those who don't know the Saturday Night routine — I am simply admitting that I may have some things wrong and may have to make changes in my work plan.

As I said when I began, we don't know each other. I want to get to know you, and after getting to know you, I may have to change many of the initiatives that I have outlined today — nothing that I have said is set in stone — but because I have promised to be transparent, the initiatives and this address will be posted on the president's website.

My goal with this address was to let you get to know me.

I may have overloaded you with information and numbers, but I hope that you take away from what I have said that I am focused on students.

And I am focused on giving students the highest quality education possible.

If that means hiring faculty and staff, we will hire them. If that means purchasing software, we will purchase it. If that means, raising money, we will raise it.

As I said, I believe in you.

Herky, please join me on stage. Before I take questions, I want to end this speech in the way that you will hear me over and over end my speeches.

SAC STATE IS NUMBER 1. STINGERS UP.