

2001 President's Convocation Speech

A Retrospective Look at CSU, Chico's Strategic Plan:

A Valuable Blueprint

23 August 2001 by Manuel A. Esteban

Welcome

I welcome you all to the 2001-2002 academic year. Gloria and I have had a wonderful summer with probably as many days of vacation as we have had in many, many years. I am, therefore, relaxed, re-energized, and ready to go. I hope that you also have had a relaxing and enjoyable summer and that you are equally eager to embark on yet another academic year.

Acknowledgements

Let me offer a very special welcome to the new faculty, staff, and administrators who have joined us this year. I know that most of the 40 new tenure-track faculty are sitting together. Would you please stand up so we may welcome you?

From last year's convocation to the end of June, 79 new staff employees have also joined us. Many of them are not here because their responsibilities keep them in their respective offices serving our students. But, will those of you who are here please stand?

We also have a number of new administrators. Please welcome Dr. Dalen Chiang, Dean of the College of Business, Dr. Sarah Blackstone, Interim Dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, Dr. James Houpis, Dean of the College of Natural Sciences, Mr. Bill Post, Interim Vice Provost for Information Resources, Ms. Phyllis Weddington, Project Director for CMS, Dr. John Swiney, Director of Admissions, Mr. Dan Takasugi, Associate Vice President for Facilities Management, Ms. Sue Anderson, Director of Alumni and Parent Relations, Mr. Pedro Douglas, Director of Student Health Services, Ms. Annette Edwards, Director of Financial Aid, Ms. Mary Oling Ottoo, Director of Student Judicial Affairs and Special Projects, and Mr. James Starmer, Director of Career Planning and Placement.

Permit me also to congratulate and acknowledge several other individuals:

Dolly Solomon, our Outstanding Staff Employee of the Year
Tom Fox, our Outstanding Professor
Russ Mills, our Outstanding Teacher, and
Ernst Shoen-Rene, our Outstanding Adviser

The University's Strategic Plan

Before I delve into the main topic of my presentation, let me say a few words about our budget and our enrollment. Our budget is relatively stable. Basically, we have received a baseline increase of roughly \$4.6 million. When we remove all known fixed cost increases, compensation and benefits, increased cost in utilities, increased student financial aid, and an additional \$500,000 to help us fund the CMS project, we are left with \$222,053, which, as you can see, has been divided along traditional percentages among the three vice presidential areas. My only disappointment is that the state legislature did not fund the 6% salary increase that the CSU Trustees and our Chancellor had requested for our faculty and staff.

BUDGET

GENERAL FUND	
Total Baseline Increase	\$4,595,039
Less:	
Fixed Cost Increases	
Compensation and Benefit Increases	\$2,595,000
Utilities	\$ 919,000
CMS Assessment - Campus	500,000
Student Financial Aid	\$266,635
All Other Fixed Costs	\$92,351
	\$4,372,986
Net Increase	\$222,053
Distribution By Officer	
Provost	\$176,344
Vice President for Business and Finance	\$29,145
Vice President for University Advancement and Student Affairs	\$16,565

ENROLLMENT

Funded Enrollment	14,250 FTE
Estimated Enrollment	15,000 FTE

As to our enrollment, I have good news and bad news. The good news is that a lot of good students want to come to CSU, Chico because of our excellent academic reputation and beautiful setting. The bad news is that we have about 1000 students more than we had last year at this same time. This means that we could have as many as 15,000 FTE, or

750 FTE more than our budgeted target. I have received assurance that we will get additional money for any FTE beyond 14,535 FTE which is 2% above our budgeted target. This will help support more course sections for students. The immediate challenge is to help our students get the courses that will allow them to graduate. Since neither our resources nor our facilities support growth of this magnitude, we will plan to reduce our numbers for next year as well as control spring 2002 enrollment numbers. The silver lining in all of this is that our incoming students are better prepared academically.

In past years, I have devoted considerable time to detailing the impressive successes and accomplishments of our faculty, staff, and students. You'll forgive me if I don't provide any details this year but let me assure you that you were as productive and incredibly successful this past year as in years past.

Today, however, I want to talk to you about the University's Strategic Plan. Some of you quite familiar with our Strategic Plan may wonder why I have chosen this as the topic for my address today, particularly given that we adopted this plan back in October of 1995 and updated it in early 1999. The reason is simple. In the last few years, between replacements and new positions, we have hired several hundred people. It is important, therefore, that everyone be aware of our Plan for the Future, know what our Mission and our Vision statements say, know what our five strategic priorities are, and be knowledgeable about what we have accomplished since the adoption of this Plan.

It is also important to recognize that this plan has served us very well and that we have come a long way. Back in late 1995, Provost McNall and I had a meeting with a number of department chairs and all the members of the Executive Committee of the Senate to talk about the state of the university. We asked them what were, in their opinion, the major crises facing CSU, Chico at that time. They talked about

- The negative relations between the university and the community
- A lack of vision or clarity about what the university was and should become
- A serious decline in enrollment
- A lack of resources for faculty and staff development
- A technology push that was too costly and was warping the mission of the university
- Workload

To these I would also add that we were also facing unprecedented demands for change and to rethink the very nature and purpose of a university. Further, we had declining budgets at the local and state level. These were, without a doubt, "the crisis years." But, as Professor Harlen Adams, one of the most venerated elders this institution has ever had, used to say, what distinguishes our institution is its attitude, its can-do mentality. And he was right! Working together, we responded to the crisis in typical Chico fashion: positively. Our Strategic Plan for the Future came out of this positive attitude.

What is important to remember and know is that our Strategic Plan was and continues to be the result of a collective effort. Many people were involved in its development--

students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community leaders. It represented then and it represents today a collective vision, which still animates our present and serves as a valuable guide to our future. In fact, it may serve us well to review what are the fundamental principles which support our Strategic Plan.

Our mission statement first. Among other things, we agreed that our first priority is the education of our students by creating and maintaining selected quality undergraduate and graduate programs. We further agreed that we will be known for the purposeful integration of liberal and applied learning that provides our students with the knowledge, skills, and moral and intellectual virtues that form the basis for life-long learning and contribution. Further, we affirm the importance of scholarship and public service, support the exploration of the frontiers of knowledge, the integration of ideas, the connecting of thought to action, and the inspiring of students. And, we propose to make the results of these academic efforts available for public scrutiny.

Our vision statement gives us a glimpse at how we perceive ourselves: CSU, Chico sees its unique residential situation as an opportunity to create an intensive, high quality learning environment. We are able to create a vital and collaborative community of active and involved students. We have a well-respected and caring faculty, a superior support staff, and innovative leadership together with cutting-edge learning and information resources—all placed within a beautiful and engaging physical environment. In such an enriched community, we hope to stimulate intellectual rigor, moral development, and creative accomplishment and to evoke callings to imaginative citizenship in the worlds beyond the University. Finally, we aspire to be the university of choice for all those seeking these strengths.

In order to act on the vision represented by the Strategic Plan, we put in place new programs, changed the way in which we did many things, listened to faculty, staff, and students, and in the process have created a vibrant place to work and study.

Let's look now at each of the five priorities that have guided our decision making ever since we adopted our Strategic Plan and at some of the actions we have taken over the past several years to turn dream into reality.

A. First Strategic Priority

Our first strategic priority is all about learning environments, learning environments that exist within the classroom and learning environments that exist outside the classroom. Learning environments that demand academic rigor and learning environments that foster on-going learning for faculty and staff, as well as for students. On this campus, the creation of these learning environments has been and always will be our central work.

- Over the last several years, we have done much to support our number one priority. In no particular order of importance, let me mention a few initiatives:

- In 1995 we created the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) to provide a means to initiate and sustain a campuswide conversation about teaching and learning and to support faculty development. Further, from this Center, we grant awards for the improvement of undergraduate instruction. In fact, each year we allocate competitively \$150,000 to help create high-quality learning environments which are enhanced through the use of new educational technologies. The expenditure of these funds has helped our campus maintain its position as the most technologically sophisticated campus in the CSU.
- Along the same lines, each year we grant two \$5,000 awards to the two units on campus which have done the most to create high-quality learning environments. This year, for instance, the awards went to our program in Nutrition Sciences and to University Public Events.
- In 1996 we created the Technology Learning Program (TLP) to help introduce faculty to the wise use of new educational technologies and to provide them with the training essential for the creation of high-learning environments. The faculty who work with TLP routinely single it out for praise. I believe that this program is unique in the CSU.
- The Research Foundation has funded a number of undergraduate research and creative awards to make it possible for students to develop projects working with the faculty. Again, I believe that no other CSU campus offers undergraduate students this opportunity.
- Building on CSU, Chico's strong and well-deserved reputation we have deepened service-learning in the curriculum.
- We opened a 24-hour-a-day computer laboratory in Meriam Library to meet student needs, and colleges and departments have created new electronic learning environments for their students.
- We have built so-called smart classrooms, made progress wiring the residence halls, and acquired land for preserves to serve as outdoor classrooms.
- More importantly, in response to student needs and to better serve our community, we have built new programs in engineering and robotics. We have introduced a master's degree in social work, for which we have achieved the first level of accreditation. We have also instituted a master's in environmental science, built up our environmental research programs, strengthened interdisciplinary research work between colleges, and created a new on-line Liberal Studies program, to name only a few of our successes.
- And, though more work is required, we have the most distinctive General Education program in the CSU, distinguished by strong programs to help our beginning students succeed, e.g., Course Link, Extended Orientation, and the Book in Common Program.
- As a residential campus, we celebrate learning within and outside of the classroom. Through joint and individual efforts, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs have strengthened opportunities for students to learn in the residence halls, to participate in internship activities, to grow as

individuals through service to the larger community, and to participate in leadership study programs. We now have, for example, a new minor in leadership studies and a Leadership Program in Student Affairs.

- We have expanded the residential capacity by 240 bed spaces. We now have a total of 1731. Obviously, we can only accommodate a small percentage of our incoming freshmen and have lost many, excellent students because we cannot guarantee them on-campus housing. In the next several years we must address this shortage.
- We have been very aggressive in our efforts to provide healthy alternatives to the party culture for our students. We have expanded cultural and recreational sports programs and continue to explore means by which we can increase recreational space, both green space and indoor facilities. The major expansion of the BMU will help tremendously in our efforts. It is important to note that the Associated Students is committed to providing additional activities and programs that give students alternatives to drinking. They have hired a full-time person to assist Mr. Ajamu Lamumba, the A.S. Program Coordinator, to provide a comprehensive weekend and evening activities calendar. The intent is to offer concerts, lectures, films, game tournaments, poetry readings, workshops, seminars, etc., on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights in the BMU. The A.S. has also allocated an additional \$30,000 to the programming fund.
- We have initiated the Building Bridges program to increase tolerance and understanding.
- And, of course, we have not neglected the physical plant. PE II, the education classroom and faculty office building, is now under construction. Colusa Hall is being remodeled to accommodate many of the offices now housed in Sutter Hall, scheduled for demolition at the end of this semester. Far less glamorous but very much needed are two other projects: the utility infrastructure project which will provide underground utility service to PE II, Acker Gymnasium, and the three stadiums, and the Infrastructure project. In a concerted effort to expand the footprint of this campus and give us more "breathing room," we purchased a property on Main Street, several houses in the College Park area, and acquired two parcels between Orange Street and the railroad tracks. We also acquired from the City of Chico a portion of Chestnut Street to develop a visitors' parking and information center.

B. Second Strategic Priority

The second of our five priorities deals with human capital. It basically states that investment in the continual development of faculty and staff is essential to the success of our students. Although there is always more that could be done, we have taken steps to institutionalize faculty and staff development. For instance

- We created and funded a staff development program that provides many opportunities for professional growth. I should add this program was guided by the recommendations made by a group of staff members.
- We have also developed a supervisory certificate program and, I am pleased to report, a significant number of staff have taken advantage of this training program and can now proudly display beautifully framed certificates.
- The Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, in addition to the funding of the programs I mentioned above, also allocates, competitively, \$250,000 a year for the professional growth of faculty and staff.
- Through the Research Foundation, we also set aside resources for the professional development of department chairs.
- And, to give both faculty and staff opportunities to explore administration, we created the Presidential Leadership Program.

C. Third Strategic Priority

Our third priority emphasizes our commitment to the wise use of new technologies.

- Bill Post, Fred Ryan, key personnel from Information Resources, and a whole host of knowledgeable and committed faculty and staff deserve a great deal of credit for the work that led to Project 2000. This information technology strategic plan, among other things, provided for the renewal of academic technology on a regular and predictable basis and guided all of our efforts to use technology wisely to create and sustain high-quality learning environments. Now that all of the goals identified in Project 2000 have been reached, Beyond 2000 has been developed and will guide our efforts in this area for the next several years.
- Equally impressive are those individuals who helped shift all of our distance education courses from satellite to on-line delivery. This transition was accomplished in less than two years.
- As a recognition of the quality of our distance education programs, the Office of the Chancellor granted us \$500,000 to create an on-line Liberal Studies program. This fall we will offer our first complete program.
- And, as I have alluded to, this summer we have started work on a new \$12 million-plus electronic infrastructure.

D. Fourth Strategic Priority

CSU, Chico is and should be the anchor institution in Northern California. This commitment to our region is made patently clear in our fourth priority. To continue to serve and enhance the educational, cultural, and economic needs of Northern California, we have taken some valuable steps.

- We have re-created a very vibrant University Advisory Board made up of influential citizens from across the North State. These community leaders

provide us with invaluable advice and function as excellent liaisons between the university and our service region.

- The members of our Alumni Board have also become valuable ambassadors for their university. Jack Fox, our past Alumni Director, brought on to the board an exceptional group of people. Sue Anderson, the present Alumni Director, is working closely with them to take the Alumni Association to a much higher level.
- A recent, major development is the California State University/Agriculture Research Initiative. Funded by the state to the tune of five million dollars, this project provides our campus with \$750,000 per year to partner with agriculture firms to do applied research which ultimately serves and benefits the North State.
- Our campus has been very responsive to the needs of our K-12 partners. Our programs are cited throughout the state as models for others to follow.
- Programs such as the Pre-collegiate Academic Development Program; Collaborative Academic Preparation Initiative, specifically the Minority Engineering Program and the Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement Program; Mini-Corps; America Reads, and several others meet the diverse needs of Northern California students.
- We provide technology training for colleagues in the community colleges.
- University Public Events continues to expand its efforts to meet the cultural needs of the entire community and now through its partnership program welcomes over 12,000 school children per year to our campus. Of course, the University Public Events programming is responsible for bringing to this community exceptional musical, theatrical, artistic, and cultural events.
- Through the Presidential Speaker Series and the Presidential Lectures Program, which we created a few years ago, we have enhanced considerably the quality and caliber of our contributions to the intellectual life of our community. For instance, when Lech Walesa comes this October, he will be the fifth Nobel Prize winner for Peace to have spoken at our University.

E. Fifth Strategic Priority

Our fifth and last priority identifies our commitment to the proper management of the resources entrusted to us by the state and to diversify our sources of revenue. This priority led us to a number of conscious decisions:

- Through a well-designed plan, we have reversed our earlier problem of declining enrollments. And we have accomplished this while recruiting high-achieving students. Parenthetically, the number of freshmen with an entering grade point average of 3.00 or higher has risen from 56% in 1995 to 63% in 2001. Over all, our freshmen class has continued to strengthen each year and this trend is bound to continue.

- Though the numbers are still relatively small, since 1995 we have doubled our international student enrollments, at a time when such enrollments are either stagnant or decreasing at many other campuses, including our sister campuses in the system. In addition to helping us "internationalize" this campus with their presence, foreign students also bring welcome additional revenue as they pay full out-of-state fees.
- In 1994, external funding through grants and contracts totaled about \$12 million. For this past academic year, we will have surpassed the \$30 million mark. There is absolutely no doubt that, without the resources these grants and contracts provide and the flexibility they bring, we would not be able to sustain the quality of the campus learning environments. Nor would we be able to expose students, mostly undergraduate, to state-of-the-art equipment and provide them with the chance to work alongside their faculty in research activities.
- Academic Affairs implemented a system of performance-based-funding, which guides the establishment of goals and the allocation of scarce resources.
- Few will be surprised to hear that friend-raising and fund-raising have become a major responsibility in almost every university and college in the country. We are no exception. In the last few years we have taken a number of steps to improve our efforts in the area of university advancement.
 1. We separated the old University Foundation into two distinct organizations, the Research Foundation, which deals mostly with grants and contracts and entrepreneurial activities, and the restructured University Foundation, whose main purpose is to raise money for the University.
 2. We also reestablished, improved, and share very widely with alumni, parents, and friends our university magazine, Chico Statements. In addition, we have created a number of excellent publications from all colleges and many departments for key external constituencies.
 3. More importantly, we expanded our efforts in fund-raising by adding a number of staff to the central office of development and development officers in each of our seven colleges and in athletics. These investments are beginning to pay off. In 1995, for instance, we raised a total of \$7.5 million. In 1998 we hit an all-time high with \$14.5 million. We expect that this year will come close to this record year.
- While I am speaking about fund raising, let me update you on our first ever major fund raising campaign, our scholarship campaign. You will recall that our goal was to raise \$10 million by the end of June of this year. I am pleased to report that we were very successful. Although we don't yet have final figures, we are confident that we will have surpassed our goal by a very significant amount. In a month or so we will make the official announcement. What matters for now is that we are already able to

allocate over \$400,000 per year in scholarships to our students from the interest generated by our endowments. The success of this campaign will permit us to do even more.

IV. Continuing Challenges.

You will not be surprised to know that, despite our progress and many successes, we still face interesting challenges, as we always will. Let me mention a few:

- **Common Management Systems:** The implementation of the Common Management System, or CMS, is well known to everyone by now. Let me take this opportunity to recognize Phyllis Weddington, Project Director for CMS and the CMS implementation team. These people will be working very hard to bring us an efficient and high-quality administrative environment and they need our support to succeed and keep costs down. I don't want to say much more on this topic than I have already said in my last two convocation speeches and in other communications to you. This is a project that needs to be completed, it is self-funded, and it will mean a lot of sacrifices by a lot of people. But if any campus can implement quickly and successfully as complex a system as the PeopleSoft CMS project, our campus certainly can. Let me read you an excerpt from the CMS Readiness Report conducted by PeopleSoft Consulting.

"It is not common for PeopleSoft Consulting to find an institution as well prepared as it finds CSU, Chico. The experience and commitment of the functional and technical staff, the support of senior management, and the project management skill that will provide guidance to these projects are critical success factors in which the university excels. ...the university has done a stellar job of planning and following through on that plan. Chico has been very diligent in putting the components in place that would prepare it for success. Now it is well positioned to build on this foundation and successfully implement the Common Management System software. ...CSU, Chico has displayed a consistent history of aggressive, well-planned, and strategic steps to prepare itself for a successful PeopleSoft CMS implementation."

- **Enrollment and the Master Plan:** As many of you know, historically, our enrollment ceiling has been established at 14,000 FTE. This year, as I mentioned earlier, we are funded at 14,250 FTE but will surpass this figure by a good margin. This strong unanticipated growth will tax our facilities. Interestingly, according to the Office of the Chancellor, by formula we have the physical facilities to grow beyond 15,000 FTE. Therefore it is not inconceivable that we might be required to grow beyond our official 14,000 FTE without additional space. There may be a way out of this dilemma, however. In order for us to have any chance to receive funding for a new Student Services Building, expand Taylor Hall, renovate the existing Taylor Hall, get an expanded Modoc facility, and remove the many temporary buildings---such as the Sutter block, Siskiyou, and Aymer Jay Hamilton--we must grow officially our enrollment. I have asked a

group of people familiar with CSU and state formulas and the chair of the Academic Senate to recommend to me by the end of this semester our best plan of action. I anticipate that we will have to agree to grow by about 1,500 FTE over the next ten to fifteen years to a new, officially approved ceiling of 15,500 FTE. This would represent a modest growth of 100 FTE per year. If approved by the Trustees, this will permit us to revise our physical master plan and receive funding for the capital projects I have just mentioned. If successful, we would have badly needed new and remodeled buildings that would help us better meet the educational needs of our students, while improving considerably the aesthetic beauty of this campus.

- WASC Accreditation Visit. We need to prepare for the next Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) reaccreditation visit, for which we need a preliminary report in 2002-2003. This means that we must assure we have in place assessment plans for all units and for our General Education program. This means that each department and program needs to be able to respond to key questions that will be posed by WASC:
 - How do you decide what you want your students to learn?
 - How do you communicate these expectations to students?
 - How do you know that students are learning and graduates are achieving the goals of the program?
 - How do you use this information on student learning to improve your programs?

These are all reasonable questions to which many departments already have answers. WASC will expect that ALL department and programs have them.

- We must not neglect the recruitment of students because, despite our recent success in this area, we do not want to leave to chance the recruitment of the kind of students we want for this institution And we must also continue our efforts in the recruitment of international students.
- Under the letter of the law, we must continue to recruit affirmatively to diversify our student body, our faculty, and our staff.
- We must continue to diversify resources through fund-raising and grant and contract activities.
- In order to keep our reputation for excellence, we must continue to provide opportunities for our faculty and staff to develop their talents.
- Clearly, in order to use our resources most effectively, we must assure that our expenditures and our priorities are perfectly aligned. This means that performance-based budgeting must continue and that our decisions must continue to be consistent with our mission and strategic priorities.
- The tragic deaths of some of our students in the past several years that have resulted as a direct consequence of excessive drinking have forced me to pay special attention to the problem of high-risk drinking. I hope you will all join me in dealing with this problem. Our studies show that most CSU, Chico students who drink do so responsibly most of the time. My work last year on the Chancellor's Committee on Alcohol Policies and Programs has underscored the

fact that our alcohol abuse prevention efforts have been well ahead of most other campuses. CADEC, our Campus Alcohol and Drug Education Center, has done a truly outstanding job for many years. Yet, we must and will do more.

Through new state and federal grants to this campus, we will intensify both our educational and enforcement efforts this year, in cooperation with the wider Chico community. We are thoroughly examining our existing policies and programs in light of recommendations from the Chancellor's Alcohol Committee. We will continue to work closely with Greek organizations and other student organizations to ensure they do a better job of self-regulating their own conduct.

Faculty can play a key part in this multi-faceted effort. Here are some of the ways you can help.

1. You can do everything possible to academically engage your students, especially first-year freshmen, during the first weeks of school. One of our preliminary studies shows many freshmen spend too little time studying during this critical period. I suspect learning suffers and drinking is made too easy. I hope you will help change this bad habit early by administering more quizzes, written assignments, and attendance requirements during these early weeks.
2. You can maintain high academic expectations throughout the semester, especially on Fridays and around holidays like Halloween. Studies elsewhere show that the more students spend studying, the less they consume alcohol.
3. You can help educate your students about alcohol and drugs from the perspective of your own discipline, if this is applicable to your field.
4. Where appropriate, you can invite to your classes guest speakers from CADEC and other campus units to help inform students about alcohol issues.
5. You can become more sensitive to the early warning signs of alcohol abuse among your students and about appropriate actions you can take. Again, CADEC can help.
6. When the issue of alcohol does come up with your students, you can tell them that most students here over-perceive the amount of drinking among their peers, a fact that is supported by random-sample surveys of our students each of the last two years. There is increasing evidence nationwide that students tend to orient their drinking to these false standards and that correcting their misperceptions reduces consumption. Our new federal grant will help us strengthen our CADEC campaign to help with this corrective effort through social marketing.
7. We should all stop referring, even in humor, to Chico State as a "party school." Such references simply perpetuate an outdated image, normalize alcohol abuse, and demean the high academic quality of this institution.
8. Working together, we can continue to create a campus climate that encourages and supports academic involvement, healthy lifestyle choices, and responsible drinking among our students, especially those who are under-age and those who drink excessively.

V. Where Do We Go From Here?

So, where do we go from here? We all want to know what our reason is for being as an institution of higher learning and we also want to know where we are going. The purpose of our Strategic Plan, with its Mission and Vision statements, which incorporate our core beliefs, is precisely to reflect what and who we are and where we are headed. To use the words of Ernest Boyer, we are looking for a university in which all of its component parts are connected. In a connected university there are three priorities:

- Clarifying the curriculum, which means that we answer and act on the question of what it means to be liberally educated. So academic reform is never finished but represents a conversation that is rightfully with us forever.
- Connecting to the world beyond the classroom, recognizing that we need to look to the problems of our communities and work to solve them.
- Creating a campus community, which means that from freshman orientation to commencement day, we need to consciously strive to connect everyone by stressing the importance of shared values.

By being connected with one another, we can achieve as much in the next five years as we have in the past five. As I have said on numerous occasions, this is a very good institution that is getting better every day. My goal, which I hope is a goal we all share, is to be highly ranked nationally and be known

- as a university which strives to create high-quality learning environments for its students.
- as a university which makes wise use of educational technologies to enhance the learning process.
- as a university which has capitalized on its residential experience, building strong co-curricular programs and encouraging its students to engage in community and service learning activities.
- as a university with distinctive freshman-year programs.
- as a university with strong applied programs.
- as a university that prepares students equally well for further formal education as well as for the world of work, service, and life-long learning.
- as a university which celebrates and rewards the teacher-scholar model, and
- as a university that cares about the environment and works to protect it.

To achieve this goal, we simply need to continue to build on our already well-deserved reputation for academic quality and continue to work on

- enhancing the quality and rigor of our existing academic programs
- improving the campus infrastructure, providing new and revitalized spaces for teaching and learning. I anticipate, for instance, that in five years we will have a new Natural History Museum, a university art gallery, and a new, much-improved home for KCHO. I also foresee a new recreation center for our students, something I consider essential to student recruitment and retention and vital as a healthy alternative to drinking. And, hopefully, more parking spaces!

- increasing our fund-raising efforts. We can be a good institution with the resources that the state provides to us. To be excellent we need to secure extramural funds.
- becoming more aggressive in telling our story. We are a very good university and although in the past few years we have been doing a better job at telling our story in the higher education community, we need to do much more. Let's all try to find appropriate venues to highlight our successes and best practices. Let us not be excessively humble. This is our home institution. It is a reflection of who we are collectively and what we stand for. If we are proud of it, and there is good reason for us to be proud, let us sing its praises.

VI. Conclusion

The Strategic Plan has served us very well. We know where we are going. We have a vision. We know what our priorities are. We have a solid framework within which to make informed decisions. And if you check our web home page, you will see that, although our five strategic priorities have not changed since we adopted our Plan in 1995, what we are attempting to do under each priority is evolving yearly, as demonstrated, for instance, by the Academic Affairs Annual Action Plan.

To the degree that anyone of us can ever be satisfied with existing conditions, our university is in good shape. If I can refer back to some of the issues that formed the years of crisis, I would have to say that relations between the university and the community are healthy and prospering. Lines of communication within the university and between the university and its external constituencies are open and dialogue is civil and professional. Our enrollment situation is excellent. As we had planned, we are becoming the "university of choice" for many freshmen in the state. We will not be able to meet demand and thus we will continue to accept students with stronger academic preparation. Although the cost of technology is still a factor, I doubt that many would say that the university's decision to remain in the forefront of the so-called technological revolution is warping the mission of the university. Target 2000 and now Beyond 2000 have ensured that this never happens. Workload continues to be an important issue, but, hopefully, one that will be addressed successfully at the system level. I am also hopeful that relations between the CSU and the various unions will improve. But I hope you will agree with me that we have made tremendous progress since the crisis years. And, I might add, the collective vision reflected in our Strategic Plan has played a significant role in our progress and continues to offer a clear sense of direction.

Ultimately, what makes CSU, Chico unique and better is not a beautiful campus, although this helps, it is not that we are located in a charming and friendly community, although this, too, helps, and it isn't even that we have some exceptionally good academic programs and exemplary support systems. What makes us unique and better is your attitude, your commitment to this institution and our students, your accessibility, your professionalism, and the pride you take in what you do. A university is not its physical presence; it is its people and what they do individually and collectively. And what you all do is admirable.

So, if we continue to work together to create a connected university, this will always be a wonderful place for students to learn, for faculty to teach, and for our staff to support the creation of quality learning environments.

Thank you for your attention.