

**Dr. Jordan's remarks  
HSI Launch  
Thursday, April 19, 2007**

**What a great day to be a Roadrunner! You, our faculty and staff, are what make Metro State what it is: highly praised by students and alumni for its quality programs that contribute to their successes, as we move forward to become the preeminent public urban baccalaureate college in the nation.**

**Most of you have heard me talk about our goal of preeminence for a year and a half now. It's a lofty goal, but one I believe we can attain -- with the combined effort of all of you sitting in this room --within the next ten years. I see Metro State transforming into the caliber of institution as the City College of New York.**

**Another important college goal that the Board of Trustees has charged met to achieve is that of becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). I have proposed this goal in varied venues with many groups, but haven't formally launched it until today.**

**Our Board of Trustees is charged with visionary oversight for Metro State. This bold and audacious goal is just another example of their vision, their courage and their beliefs in the strength and mission of this institution. It is based on their collective wisdom and vision for Metro State and the state of Colorado.**

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**To become an HSI means that at least 25 percent of the College's student enrollment would be Hispanic, and of that Hispanic enrollment, at least 50 percent would be low income as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau (for precise information visit: [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)).**

**Today we're going to talk about the why and the how, and we will celebrate some of the success stories that have given us a strong foundation to help achieve this board-mandated initiative.**

**Mohandas Gandhi once said, "We must become the change we want to see in the world." Some of you may have heard my comparison of Metro State as an institution to our mascot, the Roadrunner. The Roadrunner is a bird that not only embraces but thrives on change.**

**The legendary Roadrunner has been called the war bird by some Native Americans. It is famous for its distinctive appearance, its ability and preference to eat rattlesnakes, and its fondness for scooting across the American deserts, as popularized in Warner Bros. cartoons. The agile Roadrunners are able to run up to 17 miles per hour and although capable of flight, they spend most of their time on the ground, preferring sprinting to flying.**

**These characteristics of the Roadrunner are symbolic to Metro State. Let me explain:**

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**We, like the Roadrunner value and recognize the importance of individual sprinting that will lead us to more powerful group outcomes.**

**The Roadrunner, a true individual, is quite unique and tough– Eating rattlesnakes is not a small feat!**

**We're quick, moving fast, accomplishing our goals with passion and zest. Both Metro State and the Roadrunner are diverse and flexible -- always adapting to our ever-changing environments. The Roadrunner captures who Metro State is and where it's going.**

**In 42 short years, our faculty and staff have embraced the spirit of the Roadrunner, adapting to the continually changing demographics and needs of our students and our surrounding communities, providing a better-educated workforce for the state of Colorado.**

**In 1965, we were created to serve the nontraditional working student. The College offered two-year vocational/tech programs and a four-year liberal arts degree. A little over one decade later, the two-year programs were dropped, and the College was focusing on providing four-year degrees to Denver's workforce.**

**By the late 1990's, Metro State, the agent of change, was faced with a shifting student population. A growing reputation for academic excellence culminated with stellar programs in Student Life and**

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**Athletics to name a few, and led to more traditional students choosing Metro State.**

**Today, we have the second-largest undergraduate student population in Colorado, surpassing CSU, we're the number one institution for transfer students, with nearly 30 percent of all Colorado transfers coming to the College. We also enroll the highest number of minority students in the state, more than CU and CSU combined. Metro State has become the college of choice for students of color!**

**We have helped transform Colorado with our abiding commitment as the state's best value in higher education. Metro State has boosted the number of our state's college graduates, resulting in a strong and positive impact on our economy.**

**Enter 2007, we are once again facing the need to adapt and change. Why? Nationally, there is a demographic shift, and we must do more to meet the challenges associated with the changing face of Colorado and the United States. Enrollment in college is on the rise, with the white student population decreasing and students of color increasing. Latinos currently make up 14 percent of the total United States population; if this current trend continues, 25 percent of the United States population will be Latino by 2020.**

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**Currently, we are the state with sixth largest population of Latinos in America, outpaced only by California, Texas, Florida, New York and Arizona.**

**Even though Colorado is the nation's fourth most highly educated state, with one in three adults having a college degree, we import these graduates! Colorado is ranked 44<sup>th</sup> in sending students of color to college.**

**Our state does a poor job of sending its own residents to college, especially those from low-income families and students from families of color.**

**Similar to the Sunbelt states, new entrants into Colorado's workforce are largely of color, and primarily Latino.**

**In fact, according to recent census data, nearly one in five Coloradans is Latino. And one in two births in Denver is Latino. While the total population of Colorado showed a not quite six percent increase, the total Latino population grew more than 17 percent.**

**The demographics of the workforce in Colorado are clear. It is composed largely of educated people due to retire soon. We must educate more of our future workforce, to avoid low-wage professions for our high-school graduates. If we don't recruit and retain more of this**

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population, Metro State will not be doing its part as a responsible member of the Colorado community, but our student enrollment could decrease.

We must look within our state and educate our own. At Governor Ritter's State of the State Address, he noted that 30 percent of Colorado's high-school students do not graduate, and currently, fewer than one-half of all minority students graduate. The Governor has set a goal to cut the drop-out rate in half within 10 years. By 2014, it is expected that Latino high school graduates will increase to 24 percent, up from 15 percent in 2002.

A longitudinal look at the demographics of education in the Denver metro area shows a shrinking pipeline to education. Let me explain:

- Denver's school district has the largest minority population in the metropolitan area, with 81 percent of its students being of color.
- The Community College of Denver, which offers the most diverse community college experience, has a population that is nearly 60 percent students of color.
- Metro State has the largest minority student population of any four-year institution in the Front Range at 24 percent. The state average of four-year colleges is 17 percent.

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**We must adapt to this trend like a Roadrunner, and become a solution to Colorado's shrinking pipeline!**

**We have a civic obligation and an economic imperative to educate our low-income and minority students. Otherwise, this fast-growing segment of the population will be qualified only for low-wage jobs when today's educated Baby Boomers retire, as they are doing in record numbers.**

**It makes economic sense for Colorado: College graduates earn almost twice what high school graduates do, supplying the state with more tax money. If Colorado could graduate and employ students of color at the same rates as other students, it would generate an additional \$967 million in tax revenue each year. (Source: National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.)**

**So economic and social REALITIES DICTATE that Metro State should and must increase its Latino student enrollment. Beyond THESE IMPORTANT IMPERATIVES, though, there is a tremendous benefit to becoming an HSI for the College—and all of its students, faculty and administrators—that can be summed up in one: money.**

**Once we achieve a 25 percent Latino population, this designation opens up a world of possibilities for receiving grant monies for activities that**

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range from faculty development to renovation of instructional facilities to student support services.

**These funds MUST BE USED TO THE COLLEGE AS IT SEEKS TO SERVE all Metro State students, FACULTY AND STAFF.**

Early this year, Assistant Finance Professor Juan Dempere began researching what it would mean for Metro State to achieve this status. He found that in 2005, the U.S. Department of Education awarded nearly \$96 million to HSI institutions across the country, of which Colorado's HSI's received approximately \$1.4 million. Numerous other governmental and private entities target HSI's for their grants, including the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the American Association for Cancer Research.

Currently there are five HSI's in the state, of which only one—CCD—is in the metro Denver area. The others are Trinidad State Junior College, Pueblo Community College, Otero Junior College, Adams State College and CSU-Pueblo.

How will we grow our Latino population you ask? Currently, we have 2,734 Latino students enrolled at Metro State And our Latino applications are on the rise at \_\_\_% higher than the rest of all other ethnic groups. This is a trend we've been seeing the last few years.

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Judi Diaz Bonaquisti, AVP of Enrollment Management estimates that our student enrollment grows at a rate of a two percent each year, with the Latino population growing at its current rate of 15 percent per year, we would reach HSI status at the beginning at the next decade.

We must be strategic, collaborative and use our best-seasoned and novel talent.

I have sought the advice of an exploratory HSI planning committee. I want to thank its members, some of whom are seasoned Roadrunners who understand the traditions of Metro State, such as Dean of the School of Professional Studies, Dr. Sandra Haynes; Anthropology Professor and Director of the highly successful College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), Dr. Arthur Campa; and our creative AVP of Communications, Ms. Cathy Lucas.

Other members, like me, are relative new Roadrunners who bring varied perspectives to achieving this important goal. They include: Assistant Professor of Finance, Dr. Juan Dempere; AVP of Enrollment Management, Ms. Judi Diaz Bonaquisti; and Associate to the President for Diversity, Dr. Sallye McKee.

Over the past few months, under AVP Diaz Bonaquisti's leadership, this group has designed a template for a campus-wide HSI task force. You have a copy of this template in front of you and I ask you to think

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**carefully as you nominate yourself or other colleagues to participate in this task force.**

**Your nominations will be reviewed by the planning group who will serve as the steering group for the task force. They will forward to me their recommendations for task force membership for my review and appointment to work over the next six months.**

**Metro State's HSI task force will be composed of five working groups. Initial funding to support the task force's work will be provided by the Office of Diversity. To encourage student development and participation, each working group will be staffed by a student.**

**Now, I want to remind you that like our tenacious Roadrunner, this task force will spring around campus as they undertake arduous, challenging ground-breaking work. They may even eat a few snakes as they tackle key institutional issues like:**

**Assessment – How will Metro State build a culture of evidence based best practices of data collection, analysis and information dissemination?**

**Retention and Recruitment – How will Metro State enhance its culture of academic success for ALL students?**

**Marketing/Public Relations – How will Metro State strengthen our cultural interface with internal and external publics?**

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**Campus Climate – How will Metro State ensure that students, faculty and staff work, learn and earn on a campus that is respectful of diversity?**

**Professional Development – How will Metro State empower faculty and staff to become aware of the best curriculum and staff enhancement practices that ensure holistic approaches to teaching and learning for all people?**

**Achieving this important Board-mandated initiative would not be realistic had we not already built a solid foundation of award-winning community programs focused on improving K-16 education for Latinos and students of color. Many Denver Latinos already think of Metro State as “our college.” These students feel welcome in Metro State’s diverse urban environment.**

**In 1995, our vibrant Chicano Studies department began developing the El Alma de la Raza project, a partnership with Denver Public Schools that provides multicultural curriculum for early childhood education through twelfth grade. Committed to supporting the cultural infusion of standards-based lessons into the daily curriculum, this collection of units broadens the teacher's ability to teach a more inclusive and accurate curriculum through a literacy-based approach. Assistant Dean Luis Torres, a key player in the project, said that yesterday he**

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met with teachers from Northglenn interested in infusing this program at their school.

**THERE IS A COMMON SAYING, THAT BEING IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME IS CRITICAL TO SUCCESS. IN THE LATE 90'S, PROFESSOR ART CAMPA AND DR. ADRIAN WYCKOFF LEFT COLORADO'S FLAGSHIP INSTITUTION TO BRING THE COLLEGE ASSISTANCE MIGRANT PROGRAM (CAMP) PROGRAM TO METRO STATE, THE RIGHT PLACE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR STUDENTS FROM MIGRANT FAMILIES. The CAMP program focuses on a unique population: seasonal and migrant agricultural workers or their children who desire an education. CAMP is an example of an unofficial learning community at Metro State, and it boasts a relatively high success rate.**

**Its first cohort was tracked from 1999-2004. Retention after the first year is 80-85 percent. Retention after five years in the program is 70 percent (that is, of the students who began with CAMP, 70 percent are either still enrolled or have graduated five years later).**

**After freshman year, the average CAMP GPA is 3.0. Cumulative GPA in subsequent years is 2.63 for sophomores, 2.77 for juniors, and 3.0 for seniors.**

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**Richard Paiz, coordinator of counseling and tutoring for CAMP, believes the learning community model is a successful one for retention. “Grouping students creates a sense of belonging, and with that sense of belonging they’re more invested in their education. There has to be a certain connection to the College in order for them to stay.**

**And speaking of retention rates, the last four years, Hispanic students at Metro State have had a higher retention rate than any other ethnic group at the College. Many attribute this to the already-engaged Latino Faculty Staff Association that provides scholarship and mentoring support to Latino students and advocacy services to Latino faculty and staff.**

**Looking ahead, in true Roadrunner spirit, many of our departments have developed or are developing initiatives that embrace the HSI initiative.**

**We want to continue to build on student successes, by strengthening the “safety net” we provide our students in a number of ways. First, we have gone back to the roots of the original Auraria concept, developed in 1963, by rejuvenating our partnership with the Community College of Denver. We now have a stronger program in place for students who complete general education or remedial courses at CCD, allowing students to achieve academic success and seamless transitions.**

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**Taking this a step further, we want to continue to build our 2+2 programs with Front Range Community College and other community colleges with strong student-of-color populations who don't have access to Metro State, delivering full-degree programs onsite at the community college. In December, a front-page story in the Denver Post entitled, "Metro State Enters New Turf," praised the College's efforts for this program in improving access for place-bound students.**

**We are also creating "learning communities" to provide students with academic support. We have developed a first-year freshman seminar, called Metro State 101. Beginning in fall of 2007, all provisionally admitted freshmen will be required to take this first-year seminar, which will provide valuable learning experiences and opportunities that will assist our students in better engagement with the academic community, while improving retention and access patterns.**

**Athletics Director Joan McDermott is working with the athletics director at Denver Public Schools to develop a partnership with West High School. Next year, our women's softball team will adopt their women's softball program. This partnership will allow these student athletes to practice on our softball fields and have access to our coaches, while empowering our student athletes to mentor these DPS athletes.**

**We are working Denver Public Schools to achieve Hispanic Serving School District status at the K-12 level, and are in talks to assist with the**

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re-opening of Manual High School and other work on creating lab schools at other DPS schools.

Machiavelli once said, "There is nothing more difficult to plan, more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to manage than the creation of a new system. For the initiator has the enmity of all who would profit by the preservation of the old system and merely lukewarm defenders in those who would gain by the new one."

I urge all of you to act on the will of the Roadrunner and embrace the planning and managing of this significant goal. Whether it is nominating someone to this task force, reaching out to the business community and developing a partnership that would enhance the HSI initiative, involving your students in an HSI project, sharing the HSI concept with a community leader, or simply attending next month's special graduation ceremony for Latino students, I am empowering you to adapt and become part of this change.

I am confident that together, with hard work and focused energy, we will complete Metro State's trek to becoming an HSI, while obtaining preeminence. This journey will be filled much perseverance, determination and success, and perhaps the eating of a couple of rattlesnakes along the way.

Thank you. Now I'd like to turn this over to panel moderator, Dr. Sallye McKee.