

**Metropolitan State College of Denver
Welcome Back Breakfast
September 6, 2006
King Center**

**President Stephen Jordan's Address
*"Where Success Begins With You"***

If you haven't already gotten the message, let me make it clear: It's a great day to be a Roadrunner! Thank you for joining me today as Metropolitan State College of Denver embarks on a great academic year with renewed energy and enthusiasm. Vince Lombardi once said, "Individual commitment and passion to a group effort -- that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work." I know that each of you bring with you commitment and passion -- clearly the foundation of Metro State's success.

As we begin the 2006-2007 Academic Year, I want to first reflect and celebrate the many Metro State successes this past year.

A year ago, the Board of Trustees charged me to lead the college toward a vision of Metro State becoming the preeminent public urban baccalaureate college in the nation. I understand that, to some of you, it is affectionately known as P-PUB. To help achieve

this vision, I laid out a three-phase plan of stabilization, growth and investment, and assessment.

Now in the second year of stabilization, I am pleased with the success we have already attained in stabilizing the College academically and financially.

When I started my presidency, I was asked by many why the President's Cabinet had no people of color to represent our diverse student body. I am happy to say that we have built on Metro State's heritage of diversity and now have a diverse and dynamic senior leadership team (Dr. Rodolfo Rocha, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Dr. Douglas Samuels, Vice President for Student Services, Dr. Sallye McKee, Associate to the President for Diversity, Ms. Natalie Lutes, Vice President for Administration and Finance, Mr. Lee Combs, General Counsel and Mr. George Middlemist, Interim Vice President for Information Technology).

With statistics showing a clear correlation between student retention and the number of full-time faculty teaching lower-division classes, last fall, I set an overall goal to boost, over time, Metro State's full-time faculty from 38 percent to a more acceptable percentage of 60 percent. The start of this semester brought 62 new full-time tenured

and tenure-track faculty. Subtract the 19 faculty we lost to retirements and resignations, and we have a net gain of 43 new faculty, of those 20 are of color. This new cadre of faculty have a great opportunity to work with and learn from our core group of senior faculty who are absolutely committed to teaching.

Metro State boasts a group of accomplished professors who are known nationally in their respective fields. Some of these passionate individuals include Dr. Deborah Leong, a world-renowned early childhood educator recognized by the United Nations for her innovative Tools of the Mind program, Mr. Jeff Price, an aviation security expert who is the lead security trainer to airports throughout the country, and Dr. Nancy Rich, a nationally recognized expert in emergency mental health who went to Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina to teach disaster/crisis intervention and how to work with those who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder to the counseling staff and faculty at two major universities.

Fully committed to creating an environment which encourages our faculty stay at Metro State for their entire career, this spring we developed a major faculty salary initiative that demonstrates the

value of faculty promotion more so than any other institution in the state, including CU Boulder. We have also committed to improving the status and working conditions of adjuncts, and have already increased the average credit hour salary rate.

We have infused \$3.3 million into classroom equipment and faculty computers, including acquiring every piece of equipment specifically identified in an academic program review or program accreditation report.

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, which allows students to achieve academic success and seamless transitions.

Taking this a step further, we've branched out and have developed a pilot program with both Front Range Community College, which has a strong Latino student population, and Aurora Community College, with its significant African American population, to deliver full-degree programs in three different majors. These will be

implemented in spring 2007 and fall 2007, respectively, improving access for place-bound students.

On campus we have developed learning communities that have a strong focus on peer mentoring, supplemental instruction and civic engagement. We have also developed a first-year freshman seminar, called Metro State 101. The overall goal of this program is to have all first-time-to-college students be required to take this first-year seminar, which will provide valuable learning experiences and opportunities that will allow students to better engage with the academic community, while improving retention patterns.

These programs and partnerships will be critical as we work to achieve a 2010 status as an Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), a federal designation which requires 25 percent of the student population to be Hispanic and brings additional federal resources. This entails doubling our Latino student population to 25 percent. Does this mean we don't serve other students? Of course not. But it does mean that we intend to be the four-year institution of choice for the fastest growing population in the seven-county metro area.

I'm also pleased that we're well under way with the strategic plan, having laid out four planning themes previously mentioned by Dr. Rocha:

- 1. Prepare students for success in their education, career and life.**
- 2. Provide a high-quality educational experience.**
- 3. Engage, collaborate, and work with the community.**
- 4. Embrace and promote diversity.**

These themes capture the essential elements of the College as it moves forward on its journey to preeminence. Now each division must build their goals and objectives around these themes. In addition, we're moving full speed ahead with the Higher Learning Commission accreditation. Various assessments are in process or complete, and the writing of the self-study report is well underway. This spring will be a critical time, as the accrediting body will perform a site visit in March.

Externally, Metro State now has a seat at the table. This past year, I worked with the legislature and CEOs of other Colorado higher education institutions, soliciting stronger support for Metro State. I personally met with over 40 legislators, and the Metro State caucus was formed. This caucus gathered four times during the legislative

session, bringing a core group of 15 legislators together to support and discuss key issues affecting Metro State. Being an election year, I have met with gubernatorial candidates Bob Beauprez and Bill Ritter. This is all part of an aggressive community relations program to garner support for issues of importance to Metro State.

The past spring a Denver Post editorial said, “Metro pumps thousands of college graduates into the metro-area economy each year. And the school boasts the state's highest number of ethnic minorities. It's a vital cog not only in higher education, but for Colorado's economic future. So while lawmakers are boosting the amount of money they spend per student, Metro's inadequate funding also should be on their minds.”

Funding was addressed by the legislature when the College’s unfunded enrollment was tackled, and it was approved that Metro State for the first time receives fee-for-service funds. In addition, the legislature allocated funding for the renovation of the Science building, one of the few construction projects approved by the Capital Development Committee this session.

We will also be addressing issues affiliated with campus housing. Originally conceived as a commuter campus, this fall the face of the Metro State is drastically changing, with three private housing options available to our students. Research shows, that campus housing has the single highest link to retention and graduation rates, with a 12 percent positive correlation.

While we all should be proud of our significant accomplishments, we must remember that work remains to be done. This year presents another funding challenge. As we begin rebuilding our operating budget, I am committed to working with the other colleges and universities to present a unified position at the legislature that benefits each institution's unique role and mission.

We also are facing significant challenges at the federal level. Last month, Education Secretary Margaret Spellings recommended a set of bold proposals that could radically reform higher education in America. These proposals include a complete overhaul of the financial aid system, standardized tests and federal monitoring of college quality.

The Secretary created a national panel to explore four issues – access, affordability, accountability, and quality and innovation, and to determine whether students are adequately being prepared to compete in a global economy.

No other four-year college or university in Colorado is as accessible to as many as is Metro State; none is more affordable; none has a more richly diverse student body; no other has a more diverse, committed and empowering faculty and staff; and none provides more internship and urban civic engagement opportunities. No other higher-education institution in the metro area offers as many major degree programs, several of them unique in the state.

Now is the time to assess what we're doing and build on our greatness. Becoming the preeminent public urban baccalaureate college in the nation has never been more important. It's clear that if we don't take charge and build on Metro State's known assets, we'll have to adhere to a one-size-fits-all approach developed at the federal level.

Last spring, we completed the audit phase of the integrated marketing and communication initiative I launched. Two of the key findings of this audit were that, although Metro State has an amazing number of highly valuable, relevant and unique assets, both academically and culturally, the College is perceived as a second-chance, last-hope institution, and that self-esteem issues were pervasive among all aspects of the College – students, faculty, staff and alumni.

It's time for a culture shift, which quite frankly will only come from an inside-out effort. We must assume PRIDE and demonstrate leadership and change.

The last year, and the 40 years prior, proves that we are an academic leader. As one of the nation's largest urban baccalaureate colleges, we are a leader. As one of Colorado's largest and fastest-growing institutions, we are a leader. As Colorado's only urban-centered undergraduate institution, we are a leader. Metro State has arrived and will continue to rise among the ranks of Colorado higher education institutions.

Based on the communications audit, we have launched a new campaign: “Metro State: Where Success Begins With You.” “Where Success Begins with You” leverages the following aspects of our vision and mission: urban, diversity, accessibility, high quality and value. It also adds the components of individuality and empowerment. Part of this shift includes building our brand and enforcing consistency in logo use, key messages and colors when used in college collateral materials and on the web. Later this semester, the Integrated Marketing and Communications committee will unveil a modified logo, which will be implemented college wide. In addition, College Communications will be distributing a graphic and editorial style guide to establish consistency, and promote clarity and uniformity in all written and printed college materials.

I’d like to see “Where Success Begins with You,” become the College’s mantra. In order for our students to achieve success, it does begin with you. Whether you are faculty, staff, student, administrator or alumni, we all contribute!

It begins with the student academic success employee who guides a student returning to college after 20 years. She is there with the student every step of the way, from a trip to the bookstore to buy

books, to helping research scholarship opportunities, to showing the student how to log-on for the first time to the College's system.

It begins with the academic advising director whose personal motto is "we don't close shop until all students have been seen," and so she and her team of advisors often stay well past 6 p.m. advising our students.

It begins with the faculty member who teaches online classes, but comes in on Saturdays to proctor exams, because that accommodates the students' hectic schedule.

It begins with the marketing professor who provides real-world experience for his students, by assigning a year-long project that allows them to develop a student-operated specialty retail outlet--the first of its kind in the country, entirely run and operated by undergraduate students.

It begins with the employee who after hearing my charge to lead the College to preeminence, is inspired and shares his idea of an internal leadership program to hone the institution's ability to develop its leadership from within.

It begins with every one of us that demands excellence while giving unremitting support to student success.

I thank all of you for being the catalyst to Metro State's success. In addition, I encourage you all to be the drivers of your own success. If you have a good idea on how we can further succeed, share it. If you want to be part of a particular project, find out how to get involved. If you want to be in the know, seek the information. I am empowering you to be the keys to our students', our institution's and our communities' success.

I want to end with a quote by Frank Lloyd Wright who said, "I know the price of success: dedication, hard work, and an unremitting devotion to the things you want to see happen."

Pure grit. Determination. Perseverance. Passion. These are essential ingredients of Metro State's success stories. With hard work and focused energy, Metro State's success will begin with you! Thank you and I look forward to working with you all this next academic year.

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Now I'd begin the awards portion of this program and take a moment to acknowledge our employees who have been with us for 5, 10, 15 and on up to 40 years.

Talk about that passion and commitment that I spoke throughout my speech! We have 205 full-time employees receiving service awards today. I'm going to ask each group to please stand up as I announce the years of service to Metro State:

- We have 70 employees who has been with us for 5 years**
- Here are 44 faculty and staff who are 10-year employees**
- Please acknowledge the 41 who've been with us for 15 years**
- Would the 16 people who are at the 20-year mark please stand**
- We have 19 employees who have been at Metro State for 25 years**
- We have 10 who've been here for 30 years**
- Dr. Liz Friot, Dr. Carl Johnson and Dr. Hal Tamblyn have been here for 35 years**
- And for the first time, we now have employees who have been here for forty years: Dr. Sandra Doe and Dr. Ed Low, two of our finest English professors.**

Longevity and dedication is very important to the College. In lieu of presenting today's group with a taxable monetary award, I will be appointing a committee to determine appropriate recognition awards for each category of service. For now, let's give a round of applause and thank everyone for their commitment to Metro State.

Now I'd like to introduce Faculty Senate President Hal Nees, who will be presenting the Distinguished Service Awards.