

A DECADE OF PROMISE

Good afternoon and welcome to the 2020 State of the University address. This is the seventh such address I have been privileged to deliver to the faculty and staff of Middle Georgia State since arriving as your colleague and president in late 2013. I am grateful that you join me today as we meet again at the start of another calendar year, mid-way through our academic year.

Today, however, is interesting because we stand not only at the start of a new year, but also at the start of a new decade: the 2020s. The astronomer Carl Sagan once noted, "The lifetime of a human being is measured by decades". I believe he was right: that a decade allows us to take stock of our life and our work over a significant period and to better understand the journey we are pursuing. The same is true of an organization of human beings, such as a University. Our life as a University has meaning and significance over a decade, and today in this Address I ask us to take that long-term view and long-term memory. Imagine the start of the 2030s, ten years

we must fulfill as we build this University to new levels of excellence over the next ten years, centered upon our three primary tasks of growing enrollment purposefully, owning student success and building shared culture across our campuses and communities.

I believe strongly that we are doing these well already and shall continue to do so in the coming decade. Part of my confidence in that claim comes from the fact that we have a track record to prove it. I invite you to think back to the start of the 2010s, just ten years ago. Many of you were here and can remember that, at that time, we were two colleges with different missions, different directions, different employees, and different students. In ten short years we have truly transformed ourselves, our institutions and our united mission for the people of middle Georgia. It has been a roller-coaster ride – with both stunning highs and dizzying lows - and yet we can congratulate ourselves on the journey we have made in the past decade. It has been an amazing one of renewal, growth and change. Going for-0.0hT(1.3 (15.4 0an

successes in the University System for the past four semesters, as one of the top three performers. That is a living daily example of purposeful enrollment, and today we are proud say that the first semester of the new decade is showing a near 5% increase over last year, with over 7,500 students enrolled at the University. Looking back ten years we could not have imagined we would have over 300 graduate students, and would be preparing to offer a new Doctoral degree in Information Technology. Our profiles in the fields of health, aviation, education, music and others have risen to new levels of prominence, and position us for continued growth of our University's reputation in our state, nation and even our world. I congratulate the faculty and academic administrators whose vision and determination have put us there.

I also want to thank my President's Advisory Board, a group of talented and dedicated leaders and executives who serve a wide range of industry, government, and educational organizations. This body is helping to inform us of workforce and community needs, and to keep us current on trends in our region. ~~to 7.14.10 (app) 01 of 15 4.0~~

engagement and a new home for bringing together the University and the people of middle Georgia. It will provide a new way and a new place for us to work in supporting the hopes of future students throughout this decade and beyond. And the Peyton Anderson Enrollment Center is literally and figuratively an example of people coming together. How did we do this? We did it through belief in the future of this University. Testament to that belief is that the Peyton Anderson Enrollment Center has been funded entirely - every single dollar - from private gifts given specifically for the Center. What amazing confidence that shows! Furthermore, our donors, the Peyton Anderson Foundation, Macon-Bibb City and Commission, the Georgia Department of Transportation, and the University itself have all come together on this project to provide a new doorway to the University. We have built a coalition of support and worked together to realize this dream. This will be a living example of the kind of work before us this decade, and the Center will be a permanent visible message and symbol of our new level of commitment to future students. For years we have hoped for this new face to the University. We now have it underway, and I thank our community partners, our donors, and the Foundation Board of Trustees for this extraordinary example of our University elevating middle Georgia.

Our commitments to student success and to first-rate learning environments indeed are visible across all our campuses at Middle Georgia State University. For example, here in Cochran we are in the advanced stages of needed renovations to the Roberts Memorial Library and to the

tomorrow. Campus transformations continue across all our University, as in the construction of the new Lakeview Pointe Residential Hall in Macon, building our hybrid identity of an access institution with a blended function, providing both traditional and non-traditional learning experiences.

value of Adaptability. I honor you for this accomplishment. I believe that continuing this as we go forward in this decade will not mean the end of innovation or growth or strength, but will in fact permit us to think creatively about how to be our very best and impactful as an academic community. That impact is realized primarily and ultimately in the lives of the students we serve. They are the ambassadors of the University in the community at large, and our 40,000 alumni have transformed this state and this nation in unimaginably good ways. It is fitting that next Thursday we launch our first-ever Center for Career Development & Leadership, designed to harness that track record of student success for the decade ahead through the coming generation of alumni. I congratulate our Student Affairs and Academic Affairs staff on this collaboration, and wish you much success.

This new Center also provides us with a tangible example of something that as your president I recognize only too well, namely that we are asked to do much with limited resources, an experience we have known since our birth as a single, unified institution. I am working with my leadership team to secure a strong budget in FY21 from the University System of Georgia, and state appropriations to support student success for next year and beyond. This will build on the many millions of dollars in state appropriations obtained in recent years to support education to our students in this region. I can remind you that our most important assets are the people of this University community and the intellectual capital and innovation they bring to the challenges ahead. I mentioned our Strategic Plan earlier. It will not have been lost on many that one of the seven priorities for this year is to evaluate staff compensation

operates in conjunction with yours and your goals. To that end I encourage you to visit with me, or email me, or to put suggestions in the Greatness Dropbox on the Office of President webpage. I have asked my staff to promote that Dropbox tool actively. You

