

**ADDRESS OF S.C. STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT DR. GEORGE E. COOPER
TO THE S.C. GENERAL ASSEMBLY
JANUARY 8, 2010**

Ladies and gentlemen and distinguished members of the General Assembly: Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. As we begin a new decade, I'd like to review South Carolina State University's vision and mission, and share the blueprint we have developed for the future outgrowth of our 2006-2011 strategic plan.

Founded in 1896 as a land-grant institution, this University has an obligation to effectively execute the land-grant mission (Academic Infrastructure, Research and Extension/Outreach). That mission is a covenant with the public. SC State is a public institution, and therefore exists to meet the needs of the public.

SC State meets the public's needs in multiple ways. For example, it offers:

- The only undergraduate degree program in nuclear engineering in South Carolina and at a historically black college/university;
- The only Master of Science degree in transportation and the only Master of Business Administration degree with a concentration in agribusiness in South Carolina; and
- The only Doctor of Education degree in the state with a concentration in educational administration.

All these are unique to SC State. We are:

- The lead institution for the South Carolina Minority Participation Alliance, a consortium of 12 colleges and universities that support programs in science, technology, engineering and math;
- The lead University in providing math and science textbooks for the country of Zanzibar in East Africa; and
- A member of the South Carolina Minority Teacher Recruitment Partnership as well as the education program for non-traditional students.

While my examples are limited, I recognize that SC State has other excellent and relevant programs managed under Academic Affairs, Research, Institutional Advancement, Student Affairs and Athletics. Currently, 87 percent of our students come from South Carolina, and the remainder are from across the United States and 21 foreign countries. Our campus is home to the most diverse faculty of any South Carolina public university, with 80 percent holding doctoral terminal degrees. SC State's nearly 30,000 alumni include eight college presidents, thousands of minority officers in the U.S. Army, and not surprisingly, several members of the South Carolina General Assembly. One of our alums is the Majority Whip in the U.S. House of Representatives and serves our state and nation well in Washington, DC.

SC State has a proud athletic tradition as well, having produced more than 100 professional athletes. The Bulldog football team under Coach Buddy Pough has won two consecutive MEAC championships and captured the 2009 Sports Black College National SBN Championship. Under the leadership of Coach Judge, our men's and women's tennis teams are also reigning MEAC conference champions. We have other coaches who uphold a winning tradition and provide excellent guidance to our student athletes.

As proud as we are of these accomplishments, on and off the field, we must continue to focus on the future. While our mission has not changed, the context in which we pursue it is dramatically different than that of our founding in 1896. The 21st century has catapulted us into the information and telecommunications age. Technology reigns. It is projected that this age will demand focus on the biological sciences, medicine, and recognition that we are part of a fully integrated global economy. The Commission on Higher Education (CHE), in its draft of “Transform SC,” is proposing several focus areas to lead funding priorities for colleges and universities, including technology, sciences, health sciences, teacher education and business. Information sites for this are www.newcarolina.org and the March 2009 Report “Leveraging Higher Education for a Stronger Carolina: Action Plan Implementation: Goal 3 – Objectives of Recommendations (p. 41-42).

Our mission is to serve the needs of our public, and many of these needs are changing. The pool of traditional students will become older and more diverse. More and more mature adults will demand new and more relevant training. We need only to examine the state of our nation’s economy, including the home mortgages fiasco, historic unemployment levels, and the collapse of major corporations and financial institutions. More than ever, a college education is essential. Historically, the panacea to public needs and ills has always been higher education. We must remain true to our mission, even in a recession.

That is why SC State has developed a strategic plan for progress for this new decade. Our “Blueprint for the Future” identifies six areas of concentration. We will be sharing a graphic of the blueprint on our website.

The first is academic infrastructure. A university is based on academics. We must scrutinize the quality of our programs in the context of peer and other state colleges and universities. As the public's needs change, the education we provide must respond to those changes. We are committed to maintaining academic curricula and delivery strategies that reflect current and changing professional standards, projected trends that are consistent with CHE mandates, and the needs of today's students.

The second area of concentration is administrative and physical infrastructure. The university's administration and finances must be transparent and efficient. We must maintain physical facilities that support our academic mission and meet the expectations of 21st century students. We must maximize our resources through program integration and collaborative partnerships with administrative and program realignment. To these ends, we will:

- Ensure administrative efficiency and accountability through planning, development, assessment and total quality management;
- Implement fiscal management systems that ensure accountability at all levels of financial responsibility; and
- Provide facilities and technology that meet or exceed enrollment and administrative requirements.

Our third area of focus is human resources. A university cannot exist without the professors, administrators, and support staff who keep university operations running smoothly day by day. Recruiting, retaining and developing qualified and competent faculty and staff will be an ongoing mission with intense focus. Even in time of declining

resources, efforts have been made to maintain critical mass to respond to the needs of students and accreditation issues.

Fourth is institutional advancement. A university is a vital part of the community and needs the community's support to survive and thrive. We must leverage stakeholders' interest in the future of SC State through the formation of strategic alliances with public and private organizations. We must and will forge new partnerships with alumni, friends, foundations, corporations, and other key publics to promote participation in successful fund-raising. We will work hard to foster relationships between the University and all her community stakeholders.

Our fifth area of concentration is research development. Research is the basis of a university's academic rigor and adds luster to its brand. SC State has generated more than 41 million dollars in external research grants in fields such as neuroscience and clean energy. Ladies and gentlemen, that amount is fourth highest among SC colleges and universities in our state. We will add strength to this academic tradition by promoting research that supports the university's instruction and service activities as defined by strategic goals.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, is student life. Our students are our most valuable treasure – assets for today and tomorrow. We must create and sustain an environment that is conducive to learning and that contributes to each student's growth as an individual. We also must prepare our students for engaged and active citizenship. This can be achieved through curricular and extra-curricular activities – courses, civic partnerships, community-based learning projects, research, and the creation of leadership institutes. We will:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive enrollment plan to recruit, retain and graduate students; and
- Create a campus community conducive to the holistic development of students, while exposing them to diverse educational activities in a global environment.

By adhering to this blueprint and fine tuning it as we go forward, we will improve and grow SC State, while preparing the state's young men and women for the challenges of the 21st century. Let us remember that South Carolina State University belongs to **all** the people of South Carolina. Our institution relies on financial support from alumni, corporate partners, grants and other sources. However, these sources can only provide so much help. With operational efficiency, sound financial management, and a plan for strategic growth, SC State depends on the State of South Carolina and the General Assembly to provide the funding it needs to keep its promise. With adequate state resources, SC State will fulfill its mandate to the people of South Carolina.

Challenges

- Mostly Economic challenges, such as the 2009-2010 budget surprise with 3 percent announced, but 5 percent was final. We are making every attempt not to propose additional furlough days to complete FY 2009-2010.
- A big Story in the Times and Democrat today stated that Governor Sanford says he will balance the budget for next fiscal year by cutting case from health care programs and worker's pay (furlough of state workers). He will accept stimulus funding.
- To offset this, we must increase recourses and revenues and also engage the legislature as never before to make education funding a priority.

Accomplishments

- Lifting of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Warning – Combined efforts of Dr. Rita Teal, Dr. Leonard McIntyre, Dr. Joyce Blackwell and Ms. Joyce Green
- Reframing/Recognizing Student Success and Retention
- Submission of our Compliance Report for reaffirmation of SACS Accreditation (September 2009)
- One-stop shopping environment for students to complete registration and other business functions – Crawford Zimmerman Complex (Admissions, Business and Finance, Registrar, Housing and Financial Aid).
- Hodge Hall Annex (Spring Completion); Lowman Hall (Administrative Offices); Clyburn Transportation Center – solicitation for contractors to initiate construction in the next 60 days, and completion of water lines.
- Campus virtual tour up and operational on the SC State Website.
- Ground cleared for construction of the new Science and Engineering Building (former site of Bethea Hall)
- Game Zone—Averaged 18,000 during five home football games
- Alumni Support has increased despite the economic stimulus downturn.
- Allocating the first installment from Federal Economic Stimulus Funds

Campus Safety and Security

Deferred Maintenance	\$862,000
Mass Notification System	\$ 35,000
Campus Police Equipment and Patrol Cars	\$142,000
Defibrillators	\$ 25,000
TOTAL	\$1,064,000

Technology

PASCAL/EBSCO (2009-2010)	\$295,000
Academic/Administrative Software	\$150,000
TOTAL	\$445,000

Student Support Services	
Publications (Recruitment and Branding)	\$250,000
Applied Toward E&G Deficit (Student Scholarship Support)	\$1,500,000
TOTAL	\$1,750,000
Grand Total	\$3,259,000

Thank you for your attention. I wish you the best as we move into the Spring Semester. The Cabinet and I are always open to discuss any questions, concerns or input you may have about South Carolina State University.