President Genshaft's State of the University Address -

(October 4, 2000)

President Judy Genshaft:

Good afternoon, and thank you for coming out today or joining us through the Internet. I am pleased and honored to stand before you today as president of the University of South Florida. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the warm welcome this university community has given me, my husband and children. From the moment we arrived from Albany this summer, we were overwhelmed by the outpouring of good wishes. Thank you.

This is my first occasion to deliver the State of the University Address. But it's a topic that has consumed my interest for about nine months. During the presidential search, I did everything you can do from afar to assess the state of the University of South Florida. Obviously, I liked what I found.

Since July, I've been able to take a more direct approach to the task. I can say without hesitation: The state of the university is good, with excellent prospects for getting better. In a very short time -- four decades -- the people of this university have built an institution of extraordinary breadth and depth. It is one of the most remarkable achievements in the history of American higher education, and I am profoundly grateful to all of you for the work you have done.

I will review some of the statistics and other indicators of the university's achievements later. But I want to say at the outset that the successes on our campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg, Sarasota-Manatee, USF New College and Lakeland allowed me to accept this job with the full certainty that I would have a role in building one of America's great research universities.

My first day as president -- July 5, almost three months ago -- immersed me in the spirit of this university. I was fortunate to be able to accept a $1 million gift from the Tampa Bay History Center for our library's new Resource Center for Florida History and Politics. I met with the university's cadre of faculty who hold the rank Distinguished Professor, and we talked about many important issues. Parking, for example. I had a tour of construction sites. I lunched with the University Leadership Council -- deans, vice presidents, and leaders of the faculty, staff and student body. I was honored with a wonderful reception by leaders of student organizations -- and I saw what a diverse, bright, productive, and energetic student body we get to work with. I had dinner with the leadership of our regional campuses, and learned their enthusiasm for this enterprise.

That day has remained memorable, not only because it was my first day, but because it prepared me for every day I've had since.
For this university, the news is good. This institution’s achievements, the quality of our faculty, students and staff, our potential, our determination and our support in communities throughout the region are incredible. However, the state of higher education governance in Florida is in flux.

There is natural concern about how we will be affected by the outcome of the governance debates in Tallahassee. Obviously, they are something we must follow closely. But they will not deter us from our privilege and obligation to build a great research university.

Everyone needs to understand this: The University of South Florida is an exceptionally strong institution. However the state decides to organize the governance of its universities, this university -- backed by its legions of alumni and other supporters -- will invent a way to do what it needs to do to build and maintain high-quality teaching and research programs.

The most important thing all of us can do is refuse -- absolutely and resolutely refuse -- to allow maneuvering in Tallahassee to distract us from the really important work in the classrooms, laboratories, libraries and offices that is the essence of a university.

In a nutshell, here is the status of the statewide governance discussion:

The Board of Regents is the governing board for the University of South Florida and the other nine state universities. This past spring, as part of an overall reorganization of state education governance, the Legislature voted to sunset the Board of Regents effective January 2003. This means the state intends to abolish the board.

If the reorganization outlined by the Legislature this past spring goes forward, in 2003, the governing authority for USF will shift from the Board of Regents to the State Board of Education and a University of South Florida Board of Trustees.

However this discussion of statewide governance concludes itself, at the University of South Florida, only one person is looking at the possibility of a change in reporting channels -- the president. And whatever happens, the role of the president remains constant -- to advocate the development of excellent university programs and to protect excellence where it has taken root.

I assure you, this president is prepared to stand firm for this university's quest for excellence.

We are carefully monitoring the statewide governance discussions, and we will make whatever changes are necessary in our organization here to make sure we are undeterred in our pursuit of excellence in scholarship and service to our communities, our state and our nation.

For USF, statewide governance issues are not limited to the future of the Board of Regents. As most of you know, some legislators hope to convert our campuses in St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee into separate, free-standing universities. My position is simple: We are a multi-campus university -- one university with diverse geographical sites. I'll talk more about our regional campuses in the next few minutes, as I share my vision for this university, the direction in which I think we are headed and the next steps we need to take to reach our destination.

I'll also provide a few specific reports on enrollment, key searches in progress and
new buildings to support our growth in research.

In universities, we talk a lot about our missions, and that's important. It helps us focus on what we're supposed to be doing.

But for our mission to be effective, it must be informed by a strong sense of place -- our geographic place and our place in the social, educational and economic enterprise. Like our academic ancestors at Oxford and the other early universities, our purpose remains the disciplined search for truth through knowledge. In American universities, we enjoy the benefits of extraordinary public confidence that this search for truth through knowledge has helped, and will continue to help, national, state and local communities meet the challenges of their times and places.

The first state universities, responding to the dominant social vision of the early 19th Century, were formed to provide classical education to the sons of the elite, and to prepare them to provide the political leadership for their states and the nation.

Economic leadership was the focus of the land-grant universities that came to be in the mid 19th Century. Their principal mission: develop agricultural methods to improve the economy of an agrarian society, and the technology for the industrial revolution.

By the mid 20th Century, we had become an urban society with an industrial economy and a much greater understanding of what democracy means. The Information Age began, and issues of modern urban life grew more complex and important.

The era dawned for universities like ours -- institutions that are located and set up to prepare people from all backgrounds for political, economic, cultural, educational and social leadership, to help regions participate in an increasingly knowledge-based national and global economy, and address social and educational issues of the large cities. We are where the academic action is.

Because of our sense of place as an urban and metropolitan institution, a commitment to diversity is more natural at the University of South Florida than perhaps at other some types of institutions. We serve a highly diverse state by providing full access to the university's opportunities for development of intellect, character and leadership without regard to race, religion, or gender.

The judgments here are based on the university's fair standards of performance. We must make sure this principle informs all we do as we go about our work.

And the work here at the University of South Florida is clear: We must continue the development of this institution into:

A major national research university.

One with high-quality undergraduate and graduate instruction, which promotes learning and personal growth through a student-friendly, student-focused environment.

One that strengthens the social, educational, and cultural development of Florida and the Tampa Bay region.

One that undergirds the economic development of Florida through research that
drives job creation and through teaching that, with our community college partners, prepares a work force for those jobs.

We have already posted impressive gains in each category. Two years ago, the Board of Regents determined that USF's achievements justified including us in the same category as the University of Florida and Florida State University -- Research I. This summer, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching confirmed what we already knew: USF is in the top tier of universities nationally as well as at the state level. We are included in the top Carnegie category: Doctoral/Research Universities-Extensive.

To the faculty, I must note that this recognition is a direct result of your work. I can only imagine how gratifying it must be to have been a part of this university for many years and to see it reach this level of achievement.

We are truly a national university. We draw students from every state and nearly 100 foreign countries. We contribute to a global conversation in almost every discipline.

This year, USF achieved another record level of funding for research -- $171 million. Of this total, more than $53 million came from federal sources, considered the most competitive and prestigious. But we have also had a very large component of competitive state funding -- for programs ranging from transportation to education to health sciences.

Our research-and-development partnerships with other institutions and corporations along the High-Tech Corridor -- from the Pinellas beaches to Orlando to the Space Coast -- have brought us fame and resources, have shown how effectively universities and community colleges can work together to train a high-tech work force, and have helped us emerge as a leader in a critical aspect of the new digital economy.

The position of leadership is the goal for all our programs. Two questions will guide us toward that goal. First: In each of our disciplines, is our department or program setting the national standard for others? Second: If not, what will it take for us to do so?

It may be productive to look at some measures of success that have become widely used and which we believe are valid for USF.

Many of you have recently read of the work of former President John Lombardi and others at the University of Florida. Their recent publication, "The Top American Research Universities -- 2000" studied the way research universities are ranked and identified nine measures of quality.

What caught my eye was the fact that four public universities in the United States ranked in the top institutions in all nine measures.

These four were the University of California at Berkeley, the University of California at Los Angeles, the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Let's look at the nine indicators the study laid out:

1. Total research and development expenditures.
2. Federally sponsored research and development expenditures.
3. Number of faculty who are members of the National Academies.
4. Number of significant faculty awards, defined as honors from one of 23 major bodies, ranging from the American Council of Learned Societies to the Wilson Fellowships.
5. Number of doctoral degrees awarded.
6. Number of postdoctoral appointments.
7. Average SAT scores.
8. Endowment size, and
9. Amount of annual private contributions.

While we don't rank in the top 25 public universities in any of these criteria currently, my hope is that we will in the future. And, in fact, you may be pleasantly surprised to learn how highly we rank already.

In this study, data from 153 universities with more than $20 million in federal research expenditures on a single campus were compared. Of these 153, 103 were state universities. Among the 103 state institutions, we rank 53rd for total research and development expenditures, based on 1998 data. We rank 61st in endowment. We're Number 63 in national academy members. We're 50th in significant faculty awards. We're 67th in the awarding of doctorates. And we're 55th in National Merit Scholars.

So in several categories, we are in the upper half of the nation's top 103 public universities.

Our lowest rankings are in the number of postdoctoral fellows -- we're 88th out of 103 -- and in the SAT scores of incoming freshmen, where we're 93rd among the top 103 state institutions.

It may be many years before we rank in the top 25 across the board. But 40 years ago, when we first opened our doors, who knew that we would be in the top Carnegie category by the year 2000?

On September 26, the 40th anniversary of the first day we offered classes, a television reporter asked me what I foresaw for the next 40 years. I've been thinking about that question. What I hope is that, within 40 years, people will think of USF in the same way they think of Berkeley, UCLA, Michigan or Chapel Hill.

So I propose that we begin to examine what makes Berkeley, UCLA, Michigan and Chapel Hill so strong, and start paying attention to what we need to do to match those strengths.

Our standing in some of those categories is really up to us -- how many post-docs we have, the number of doctorates awarded, and to some extent, the number of faculty awards. All of us can look for ways in which we can do better.

This process of looking at characteristics of the public universities that have achieved demonstrable academic greatness will help us focus. I believe it is time to engage in a process of rethinking where we are going, and how everything we are doing contributes to what we want to be.

We are now entering a period when we must consider whether we are spending our money and using our other resources as wisely as we might. This fall, it's appropriate for us to begin taking stock. Let us look at where we rank in the nation's top 100 or so public universities. Let's determine how we can improve our position on those criteria. Let's draw up a strategic plan, college by college, unit by unit.

Let's examine our internal allocations. Let's set priorities with some specific goals in
mind. Let's identify the next steps that are available to us, and select those that lead us in the right direction.

Let's be tough-minded. We have an opportunity to make some critical decisions now, while the economy is sound.

Before I go further, I want to explain something about research. Because of the nature of modern universities and our economy, most public discourse about research is about big-time scientific and technological research -- the kind of work that allows medical centers to perform Biblical feats on a daily basis, the kind that transforms industries, the kind that brings in big grants.

But in university discussions, the term "research" is shorthand for the full range of scientific research, scholarship and juried creative endeavor. A top research university embraces all scholarly activity as research and seeks to support it, cherish it and disseminate it.

Whether the field be microbiology or multimedia, electrical engineering or early childhood education, marine science or history, immunology or fine arts, let's find a way to do it best at USF.

A key element of getting better is a strong leadership team, and we are making sure that USF continues to have the leadership it needs to progress.

We're very fortunate to have David Stamps serving as interim provost. Provost Stamps is an able and experienced leader and he's doing a fine job.

We will be conducting a national search for a permanent provost. I have asked Dr. Dale Johnson, dean of the Graduate School, to chair the provost search committee. The members of the committee will be appointed within a week, and we expect to publish an advertisement for the position in the major higher education journals in the near future.

I would anticipate that applications and nominations will be received through a date this fall -- to be determined by the committee -- and that a candidate will be selected sometime in the spring and report in the summer, if not sooner.

In our advancement area, Vicki Mitchell is serving as interim vice president. I want to thank her for the excellent service she is providing to me and to the university. A search committee for a vice president for advancement has been appointed, with Professor Michael Kovac serving as chair. This committee has met, and the USF Foundation has engaged the services of a search firm to assist in finding the right person. We expect an appointment to be made sometime in the spring semester.

In addition, we have a new vice president for health sciences and dean of medicine. Dr. Robert Daugherty served as dean of medicine at the University of Nevada at Reno for 18 years -- not a record, but a very lengthy tenure in his field. In selecting Dr. Daugherty, I consulted with the Association of American Medical Colleges. Dr. Daugherty has been very active in the issues of leadership and accreditation of medical schools. He co-chairs the Liaison Committee on Medical Education -- the key body that accredits medical schools. Dr. Daugherty is a member and past chair of the American Medical Association's Council on Medical Education. He serves as the AMA representative to the Liaison Committee on Medical Education. He earned his M.D. and Ph.D from the University of Kansas.

Finally, we have another person newly on board. Mr. Jack Wheat, formerly the higher education reporter for the Miami Herald, has joined our staff this week. He
will become special assistant to the president, succeeding Dr. Patrick Riordan. Pat chose to become Director of USF's Resource Center for Florida History and Politics, and is excited about his opportunity to immerse himself in the subject he loves. I want to thank him for all the help he has provided me, and congratulate him.

Jack Wheat is a gifted writer as well as a genuine expert on higher education governance. He has been an award-winning journalist and has lectured at, among other places, the Harvard Seminar for new university presidents. And, I believe he has attended every Board of Regents meeting since 1987. Welcome, Jack.

We have some other new additions to mention. This fall, we added 90 new faculty. I would like to ask all the new USF faculty members who are present to stand and be recognized.

Thank you. You may be seated.

Of the new faculty, about 57 percent are men, and 43 percent are women. Eight percent are Asians, 7 percent are African Americans, 4 percent are Hispanics and 1 of them is an American Indian. I would like to note that we are making progress at closing the pay gap between male and female faculty, particularly in our new hiring.

In addition to our impressive new faculty, we have some impressive new students who deserve some recognition.

A total of 20 new National Merit Scholars, National Achievement Scholars, and National Hispanic Scholars enrolled at USF this fall. Eleven of them are at USF New College and 9 at Tampa.

Overall, for Fall 2000, we have 109 undergraduates in these honored categories, 60 of them at USF New College and 49 at Tampa.

This fall, our first-time-in-college enrollment at the conclusion of drop-add week was 3,611 -- an increase of 8 percent over last year. Our total undergraduate enrollment this fall is 26,169, representing an increase of more than 5 percent.

This fall's total graduate and professional enrollment is 6,204, an increase of 106 -- or about 1.7 percent.

Our approximately 36,000 students come from diverse backgrounds.

Ten percent of them are African Americans. Nine percent are Hispanics. Five percent are Asians. Seventy-two percent are white. And 106 -- less than 1 percent -- are American Indians. About 3 percent fall in that peculiar ethnographic category of "other."

About 81 percent of our degree-seeking students are undergraduates. About 19 percent are in graduate and professional programs. In most major public research universities, the ratio is more like 75-25 -- 25 percent grad students.

We will all need to work together to pursue that goal vigorously -- whether it's faculty involvement in the recruiting process, stellar web sites that are so important to attracting modern students, or increased assistantships and fellowships.

On our regional campuses, we experienced another significant gain in enrollment. At USF Sarasota-Manatee, we've seen an increase of 2.6 percent in student credit
hours. At Lakeland, head-count enrollment rose a whopping 18.5 percent. And in St. Petersburg, we're up 8.9 percent overall. We have nearly 100 freshmen on that campus -- as you'll recall, this is the first year it's been legal to have them there. At USF-New College, enrollment is up 3.5 percent.

Speaking of St. Pete and Sarasota-Manatee, this is a good time to return to our position on the regional campuses issue.

It is important that our regional campuses remain affiliated with USF -- for three reasons.

First, students want to attend an institution that is known, accredited, and established.

Spinning off campuses and making them into independent universities would force them into a long, slow climb toward academic respectability.

Second, taxpayers expect efficient use of state resources, not redundancy. The cost of technology alone to run a university makes it fiscally responsible for USF to stay together. The power you have in large-scale purchasing makes it fiscally responsible for USF to stay together. The more effective recruitment of high-quality faculty members that is possible at a recognized public research university makes it academically responsible for USF to stay together.

Third, is regionalization. As the population of this region of Florida grows, I believe we could become the major region in Florida, with extraordinary economic, political and cultural clout. Our multicampus university can be the unifying force for this region.

The good news is that, as I have traveled about, I find strong support for USF. In St. Petersburg, the community is solidly behind us. In late August, I was part of a delegation assembled by the Greater St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce to visit Arizona State West, a regional campus about 50 miles west of Tempe, Arizona. We can learn a good deal from the Arizona State model about how to provide the autonomy that allows for a regional campus to respond to the needs of its community while still providing the benefits of being part of a larger university enterprise.

And the Arizona State model is not an anomaly. The successes of regional campuses of such institutions as the University of Minnesota, Ohio State University, Penn State and the University of Wisconsin show that the regional campus approach is a highly effective method of higher education delivery.

As our trip to Arizona showed, we are intent on improving the operations of our regional campuses. In fact, to improve our service to Sarasota and Manatee Counties, we are looking at a plan that would help USF New College and USF Sarasota-Manatee to achieve their potential. Under this plan, USF New College would remain on the present campus, and the USF Sarasota-Manatee program would relocate. We have several excellent proposals for sites we are considering.

This is a very exciting prospect. I believe it would benefit one of the most prestigious liberal arts public colleges in the country -- our USF New College. It would also enhance USF Sarasota-Manatee by allowing non-traditional students in all the regions to take complete programs of study in a convenient location.

The issue here isn't politics. It's serving students. Our mission is an old-fashioned one: teaching, research and service. And we do it as one university with diverse
geographic locations.

USF is a state university, founded by the state to serve the needs of Florida and its people. It's a mission that is precious to us. And we fulfill it knowing that the state expects us to garner much of the money we need to do our work.

Only a third of all our funds come from state tax and lottery revenue.

Our operating budget this year is $873 million -- an increase of 6.2 percent over last year. And we are enjoying a banner year in private fund-raising. In July, we reached our $220 million capital campaign goal a year ahead of schedule. But we haven't slacked off. We are continuing in campaign mode, with a particular focus on private support for graduate education and research.

On every campus, regardless of size, after parking, the single biggest complaint seems to be space. Nobody ever seems to have enough space or the right kind of space, including laboratories.

In order to get big grants from the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health and other centers, you have to demonstrate you have precedent-setting equipment or that you can get it, and that you have space to house it.

Space is a particularly acute issue for USF, because both teaching and research demands have risen so rapidly.

So it's with great satisfaction that we anticipate the opening and construction of new buildings.

The new psychology/communication science disorders facility is nearing completion. This 105,000-square-foot complex is the first building in our new Interdisciplinary District -- the sector that will provide a programmatic and physical bridge between the core campus and the medical center.

Just this week, we broke ground on the new Engineering III building. This 54,000-square-foot facility will provide much-needed office space for mechanical engineering, civil and environmental engineering, chemical engineering, and industrial and management engineering.

Another major new project, slated for design work to begin next year, is the Natural and Environmental Sciences facility. More than half of its space will be devoted to research.

Campus life received a major boost this fall -- an increase of 500 students living on the Tampa campus. Our newly dedicated Holly residential complex was the first residence hall on this campus in about two decades. This semester, we dedicated the Crossroads Café in the Argos Center.

And soon, we will go forward with the 139-unit Magnolia complex -- this university's first on-campus non-traditional housing -- housing for married students and families. It is scheduled to open next fall. This will be of great help in recruiting excellent graduate students.

Obviously, from the record of this university, we've had a busy 40 years. And we've clearly got a busy few years ahead of us.
Let's work together to make hard choices and fight to move USF ahead.

I welcome the opportunity to enter into a long and productive dialogue with the faculty, staff and students of USF as we work together to find our path, and to put resources where they will produce results.

I promise you one thing: Once we reach consensus about our path, I'll lead the way, and we will achieve our goals.

This is a great university and I am delighted to be your president. I want all of you to know that I am committed, energized and ready to advocate for the resources we need to achieve all our goals. The University of South Florida is a university with great achievements and great expectations.

Thanks for coming today. And please remember that in the First Floor Lounge of the Marshall Center, beginning immediately after this event, we have an ice cream social planned. Ladies and gentlemen, the ice cream is waiting

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