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continuity of government. Economic problems are among the most frequent threats. Opinions on government have evolved, from frequent praise after the Revolutionary War to heightened skepticism today. Already Thomas Jefferson, presidents have called on Americans to unite after a tight election. Thank you, President Weinberg. I am grateful for this hearty performance and for your unwavering enthusiasm and support for Cleveland State University. This whole board of directors is an example of a commitment to this community and university, which is extraordinary. It was the sense of purpose, time, energy and focus that I saw during the search process that convinced me that it was a special group of leaders committed to the ideals of public higher education and the mission of the university. The council's continued belief that the CSU is an important transformation tool for our city, county and region has made it clear that the council has understood the nature of the city's university and is eager to advance partnerships and connections vital to the success of the city's university. I promise that I will do everything in me to make the university this way and redeem the faith the board has placed in me. The council's leadership is complemented by leadership at the local and state level, particularly at the level of Mayor Frank Jackson and Chancellor Fingerhut. The Chancellor is passionate in his belief that the future of the state depends on the ability to produce a diverse and diversified core of graduates who will be architects and engineers of the new state economy - one that will be anchored in the new knowledge and knowledge services industry. The leadership of the state is in line with this vision. In the most difficult times, our leadership of the state fought – and largely succeeded – to protect the state's investment in public higher education. I thank all my family, friends and colleagues who have traveled to share this day with us. They all contributed different ways to give me the opportunity that I have today. Most of all, I am grateful to my wife and secret weapon, which becomes less of a secret by the day, for supporting me and with me on this incredible journey. Please join me and welcome and thank my wife and partner, Patsy Bilbo Berkman, who shares my commitment to this institution. Our children and other members of our family are also with us today and I would ask them to stand and be recognised. It's an honor to stand before you today as president of Cleveland State University. Dr Schwartz had a long planned trip to the Mediterranean and could be here, but I want to commend his leadership for the last 8 years. I also want to recognize former presidents Dr. John Flower and Dr. Claire Van Ummersen for helping build the university platform we are building on today. Please join me in applauding our president's emeriti. Since I accepted this position and moved here from South Florida, I've been telling everyone that there's no place I'd rather be than be here at the CSU. And yes, I think I know all about snow with the effect of a lake. CSU - and Cleveland - no longer feel at home for me. In many ways my whole life has been spent in preparation for this opportunity. Let me tell you something about the trail that brought me here. Virtually my entire life has been spent in cities. I know the cities and I appreciate them – I draw strength from their energy and resilience and I respect the hard work and commitment of their people. Secondly, I passionately believe in public higher education. I am a product of the New Jersey State College system, earning a B.A. in political science at William Paterson College. Like many current students, I have worked on various jobs throughout my college career. I became a college student a little reluctantly, waiting three years after finishing high school before enrolling at Paterson. Until then, I just wasn't interested in going back to school. But as soon as I started, I became loving the freedom of thought, investigation and creativity that college provided. When it came time for graduate school, I signed up for several, including Princeton. I was accepted into a doctoral programme in political science with full support, which allowed me to pay my full attention to studying for the first time in my life. After earned a Ph.D. and then taught for three years at Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School, I wanted to teach at a public university, the best one in an urban setting. So I accepted a professorship at Brooklyn College, part of the City University of New York system, and spent the next 15 years there. I found that I really loved teaching, and was good at it. Good teachers are, of course, the foundation of education at any level. Nothing is more important. Good teachers are better listeners than speakers - dialogue is a more valuable learning tool than a monologue. The teacher's real mission is to make every student feel that he or she has something to contribute and provide them with a path to growth through participation, to create a safe environment for students to make mistakes. I would love to spend the rest of my career as a professor, but somehow I came across a report linking CUNY's administration as dean of the university's urban affairs natural fit due to my interest in urban studies. It brought me face-to-face with the myriad and complex set of issues facing urban universities and American cities. Later was appointed founding dean of the School of Public Affairs at Baruch College in Manhattan. My career eventually brought me to another Miami city center, where at Florida International University, where I had the privilege of serving as executive dean of the College of Health and Urban Affairs and Provost. I don't like cities despite their problems – I love cities because of their problems. In overcoming obstacles that seem insurmountable, they display nobility and courage in the face of the favor of fate, which I find inspiring. Do your worst - you can knock a big city to its knees, but it always veers back to its feet, ready to go the next round. In 1975, New York City was essentially put into receivership, and a year later, Cleveland was the first city in America since the Great Depression to go into temporary bankruptcy. Yet both persevered, overcame, and moved forward. Call it toughness, or swagger, but that refusal to stop fighting regardless of the odds is the quality all major cities share. It's the quality I feel in Cleveland. And right in the heart of Cleveland, at the center of its urban core, lies Cleveland State University, a large public institution I now have the privilege of leading on what I believe is a pivotal moment for schools and the city. I came at an incredibly exciting time. Registrations rose 4 percent this year, reaching the highest level in 15 years. More than \$300 million in new construction and refurbishment is underway or planned, including a new student center, the College of Education and Human Services Building, and a \$65 million project that will eventually add five tracks plus a 300-car parking garage to the campus. We've seen tremendous growth in all of our health science programs and the College of Business. I'm proud of the incredible steps taken by Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, with 95 percent passing the February 2008 state bar exam on their first attempt. Cleveland State is in this city and this city, and the connection and bond between the two needs to be strengthened. We need to build bridges between university and city that will provide an environment for students to apply and expand what they learn in classrooms and laboratories. The urban environment of our campus is a benefit that we must make full use of. Students choose CSU because of its location downtown and the opportunity to engage in business, art, philanthropy and nonprofit communities. These trips will lead them to a career in Cleveland and help them stay in Cleveland. I find that businesses and organizations here are eager to get CSU students into their fold. They found they could find a nationally competitive pool of talent in the CSU. And they get dividends with CSU students - great work ethic and commitment to our city. Most of our graduates want to stay here. Our ability to provide qualified, a determined workforce, which underpins a strong foundation in the liberal arts and sciences, is a huge asset. An example of the transformative power of higher education can be found in a recent report by the Northeast Ohio Council for Higher Education, which estimated that an increase of just one percent in northeast Ohio bachelor's degree achievement levels would result in an additional \$2.8 billion in annual personal income for the region. Jobs in the new economy will require education and training, and these jobs will not come at all unless the skilled workforce is ready to fill them. The average salary for an American with a high school diploma is \$28,000, compared with \$51,000 for a person with a four-year college degree. And that gap has been steadily growing - over the past 30 years, the average income of those with a high school diploma or less has declined in real terms, while the average income of college graduates has increased by 19 percent. It is estimated that two-thirds of all new jobs will require some higher education, and at the current rate we are producing college graduates, by 2025 there will be a shortage of 23 million college-educated adults in the American workforce. The benefits of higher education are not just financial. Those with college degrees are more likely to vote and actively participate in their community, their children will do better at school, and they will even live longer. Today, there is only one reliable path to the middle class, to what we call the American Dream, through education. Providing the educational opportunities Clevelanders and residents of northeast Ohio need to succeed is our special mission. And that means not only getting them to school, but keeping them here. For some, opportunity is all they ask for. The campus is home to many courageous and determined students who refuse to let any obstacles come between them and their educational dream. Students like Jennifer Halko of Lakewood, a mother of two who worked her way through school to earn a bachelor's degree last year in speech and hearing, graduated from Summa Cum Laude, all the while caring for her sick parents. She is back at the CSU this year, working on a master's in speech-language pathology hearings. And Colin Cross, a business major, one of 279 military veterans registered in Cleveland who came to us after serving eight years in the U.S. Army, including missions in Iraq and Kosovo. Many of our students face a triple barrier to success. For them, college is a challenge from the economic, academic and social year and they need support, advice and encouragement to succeed. As educators, it is not only our duty to enroll students, but to complete them. All of us - faculty, staff, counselors, peer students - must themselves to help students get over obstacles standing between them and and and It really takes a village to graduate student. Cleveland State University needs to lead the rebuilding of our area. Of course, the idea of public education as a leading force for social and economic progress is nothing new for this country. Public education in America has a long, sterling history of inclusion. Unlike meritocracy-based systems in Europe, Americans have always regarded education as an asset not to be jealously guarded, but to be shared. It's an attitude that has served us well for over 200 years, sparking creativity and invention that made us the envy of the world. But for all its long and noble traditions, American public higher education has been slipping significantly in recent decades. When I graduated, the United States had the highest educational attainment rate in the world. It's a different story among younger adults today. Other nations achieve educational attainment rates dramatically better than ours - up to 54 percent among adults ages 25-34, compared with 39 percent for the U.S. According to the Lumina Foundation, of the 30 nations that make up the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 29 have increased the degree of achievement among their young adults over the past 10 years. The United States is the only country that sees a decline, and it has fallen from first to tenth in percentage of young adults with college degrees. All this just ups the ante for csu. What we are doing here is important not only for the future of this city, region and state, but also has global implications. I am confident that we will take up this challenge. If you were to make a list of Cleveland State's strengths it would be long, but number one would be its outstanding faculty, with more than 90 percent holding the highest achievable title in their field. They're productive, talented, determined - and I've been here long enough to know that they share my love of teaching, scholarship and service. And working behind the scenes and on the front line is a remarkable group of dedicated administrators and employees who are doing everything we can. And since coming here, I've been emboldened and energized by the huge trade of good governance that exists for the CSU in the Cleveland area. People recognize that this university embodies their hopes for the future, and they have a burning desire to see us succeed. And we will succeed. It would be premature for me on this occasion to offer an overarching vision for Cleveland State University. My intention is to continue to listen and learn, and this process, now four months, is still ongoing. While I am very excited about some of the initiatives that I will soon be writing, I intend to ground these ideas in a smit with all CSU constituencies. However, I follow certain principles. Our mission will be to integrate to reflect the needs of our students, our city, our civic and business academic strengths. I believe in public university systems with an emphasis on cooperation and not on competition. The recent restructuring of state institutions into the University System of Ohio reflects a vision of a system strategically aligned, differentiated, but still acting in concert. As part of the state's higher education plan, we have identified two signature topics. One of these topics will be health, a natural direction for us given the excellent medical and health institutions based in the region. This strategic focus on health and health education doves-tails perfectly with our goal of increasing the depth and breadth of our sponsored research. The second theme of the signature will be in sustainable communities. Again, this is a natural choice because csu excellent Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, along with Nance College of Business and Fenn College of Engineering. Their focus will be on finding new ways to restart and sustain urban economies, which again offers direct benefits to the city we call home. Building our research component will be a top priority. Research, like everything else in the twenty-first century, is undergoing rapid change, and ours should reflect these changes. It was said that technological progress over the next decade came not from the discovery of new knowledge, but from the link between already existing sets of knowledge. Our research program should reflect who we are, what we are and where we are. To the extent possible, our research priorities should be unique to our community. I am very excited about our emerging partnership with the Cleveland Municipal School District and the College of Education in setting up K-12 schools here on campus. There are several reasons to do this – provide a place to educate the teachers of tomorrow, it will spark collaborative research and will provide a school that serves all students in the city. This school will become part of a much larger tapestries – a lively and active urban corridor. I am impressed by the amazing potential of the corridor that forms the Cleveland State campus. This neighborhood has it all - it's pedestrian-friendly with great patency, has good public transportation and boasts the second largest theater district in the United States. Our expanded campus has its own hospital - St. Vincent's - and two higher education institutions - CSU and Cuyahoga Community College. In short, our campus has the potential to become an exciting, diverse, cosmopolitan neighborhood, and I intend to do everything in my power to make this a reality. I imagine faculty and staff coming here to live, sending their children to school here, and building a lively neighborhood together. There can be nothing more important for the future of the region than the task and we must not fail. From what I have seen and learned here, I have full confidence that together we - students, faculty, staff, donors and supporters - all participate in leading the way to a new country. It is with humility and burning passion to realize the goals I have outlined that I accept the presidency of Cleveland State University. Thanks. You.

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