Remarks by SDSU President Stephen L. Weber:

Let me begin with what I hope will be a constructive suggestion: The California State University is facing unprecedented increases in student demand; not since the 60’s have applications grown so sharply. The proposal you will be considering from San Diego State is a response to this need to grow our universities so that they can provide increased access to higher education for tens of thousands of new students knocking, or about to knock at our door.

Our proposal is ambitious, complex, controversial, precedent-setting, and important to the future of both San Diego and California.

You will soon be hearing arguments pro and con. And after you have sorted out the best interests of the citizens of California with regard to this proposal, there will be others to follow from other campuses similarly straining to make access more than just a slogan.

In short, we need to get this right.

May I respectfully suggest that you postpone your final vote on our proposal until your September meeting

- so that you will have time to weigh the materials before you,
- consider the comments you are about to hear, ask staff to brief you with regard to the issues that arise,
- and then determine in September the wisest course for the CSU.

Increasing access to quality higher education is the most important challenge faced by San Diego State. Increased access is essential to meeting the educational needs of California and preparing minds to enter our regional and state workforce.

The demand for higher education in California is growing due to Tidal Wave II. It is estimated by the Department of Finance that enrollment at CSU campuses will increase 28% over the next ten years.

SDSU is no exception.

San Diego State is already close to reaching its enrollment ceiling of 25,000 full time equivalent students;

- We continue to receive greater numbers of applications each year.
- In the past 7 years CSU-eligible applications to SDSU have increased by 73%.
- In fact, for this coming fall San Diego State received more than 49,000 undergraduate applications for 8,400 available openings.
• Our limited capacity has forced us to deny admission to over 9,900 CSU eligible applicants for next fall
• and more than 40,000 CSU-eligible applicants since 1999.

Because no new CSU campuses are planned in the foreseeable future, existing campuses like San Diego State must meet the needs of California’s emerging high technology sectors such as biotech, wireless, telecom and health care that require a well educated workforce --- nowhere is that more true than in San Diego.

San Diego State’s proposed Master Plan is not just about bricks and mortar on the main campus; we are also addressing SDSU’s fast-growing demand by:
• increasing summer enrollment
• developing off-campus centers, where appropriate
• and expanding the use of academic technologies

But even with these initiatives, SDSU will still experience enrollment demand well in excess of its current capacity.

The proposed increase in the university’s enrollment capacity to 35,000 FTES by the year 2024-25 will allow modest annual growth of only 500 additional full-time equivalent students per year.

San Diego State’s proposed master plan was developed with careful thought to achieving the state’s educational objectives and responding to CSU policies and directives, while having the least impact on our neighbors. A committee of faculty, staff, students and alumni worked for nearly two years to analyze a number of options for campus growth.

The plan before you today is a very efficient use of space. We do not propose expanding to privately owned property in the surrounding neighborhoods. Instead we focus the next 20 years on SDSU-owned or affiliated property.

Over the last year, SDSU undertook a broad community outreach effort to share information about the master plan with a number of stakeholders.

• My colleagues and I participated in more than 70 meetings with neighborhood groups, elected officials, public agencies and regional organizations.

As with any major proposal, there are understandable concerns expressed by neighboring communities. Residents have concerns about perceived traffic impacts resulting from the Adobe Falls and Alvarado proposals – and from the general expansion of enrollment.

We have worked hard to present to you a plan that enables the CSU to fulfill its responsibility for the education of Californians while at the same time limiting negative impacts on our neighbors.
We cannot, however, reduce those impacts to zero.

We are funded to provide access to quality higher education for the citizens of California – not to build roads.

We have been reminded by General Counsel that because CSU is a state university, the constitution of California expressly prohibits the funding of off-site improvements through the California Environmental Quality Act mitigation process.

There are good public policy reasons for this immunity, which are at the heart of the CSU Monterey Bay lawsuit that is currently pending before the California Supreme Court.

Allow me to interrupt these introductory remarks to ask CSU General Counsel, Christine Helwick, to explain the law. Chris…

Remarks by Christine Helwick, CSU General Counsel:

Long ago, it was determined that localities should not tax the State for the cost of local improvements. The reasons are basic. Without such a prohibition, each locality would have authority to tap into the tax revenues paid by all of the taxpayers throughout the State for every local project. The tax burden on all citizens would then be unfairly increased to pay for strictly local benefits. Looked at from a different perspective, when the State contributes its limited resources to fund local infrastructure improvements, there is no new revenue generated as a result. Here, the CSU, if taxed, would necessarily have less to accomplish its mission to provide higher education for the citizens of this State. There would be that much less educate students, build classrooms and house the faculty and staff that our students need.

This exemption of the State is limited to the cost of local infrastructure improvement only. San Diego State, like all other CSU campuses, and all other citizens in the community, already does pay, and will continue to pay the City of San Diego for services actually delivered.

When the State bestows a public benefit such as a public university on a locality by devoting its property to public use, it is inappropriate for the locality to then tax the State for that benefit. A simpler way of thinking of this is that the State does not ask the locality to bear the cost of academic and support buildings. It is inappropriate to ask the State to bear the cost of functions, such as roads, that properly belong to the locality.

Whenever a new campus is planned, communities compete for the right to host a university. The value of having a CSU campus within a city is obvious and undisputed. When an existing campus plans an expansion, however, the benefits of this trade-off are perhaps more subtle because the many benefits of
already having the campus located in the community are easily overlooked. But the State’s immunity and the reasons for it remain the same.

The San Diego Master Plan reflects planning for the next twenty years. The environmental impacts that cause concern will not be experienced immediately, or all at once. There will be time for the City to take whatever steps it chooses to accommodate this new development, much as it will likely have to accommodate other private developments and improvements that will be constructed within its borders over this same period of time. When faculty housing is constructed, the faculty homeowners will pay a possessory use tax to the County, and that revenue or a portion of it is eligible to make its way to the City for the City to determine its use. What the City may not do is use this CEQA process to exact fees from the university up-front, to pay for down-the-road improvements that may never be required, let alone built.

In the Monterey Bay litigation, the City of Marina similarly sought to impose over $20 million in infrastructure costs upon the Monterey Bay campus in response to its Master Plan, without any guarantee that the improvements contemplated would ever even be constructed, after the money was collected up front. The university objected, and its objections were sustained by the California Court of Appeal. That matter is now pending before the California Supreme Court. It would be contrary to the law for the Board now to seek a compromise solution to contribute some funds to the City of San Diego in response to this Master Plan, and could very well jeopardize the university’s position in the Supreme Court case. I have been reporting on the progress of that case to you for some time. The matter is fully briefed, and has been pending for more than one year. We expect to be assigned a date for oral argument sometime in the fall. Steve, I hope that is a helpful summary of the law.

Remarks by SDSU President Stephen L. Weber:
One of the goals of San Diego State’s proposed Campus Master Plan is to create a more residential, transit-oriented and pedestrian-friendly environment by increasing housing on and around campus.

- This effort will not only reduce traffic on area roads, but will benefit student learning by providing increased proximity to university resources and events.
- In addition to housing proposed in the master plan, housing for approximately 4,500 students will be developed in the College Community Redevelopment Area adjacent to campus during the envisioned 20 year build out.
- SDSU has had numerous discussions with the Metropolitan Transit System and private developers interested in building student housing around nearby trolley stations, further encouraging students to take advantage of public transit.
For more than a century, SDSU has been producing leaders in business, government, education, health care, sciences and the arts. As the largest importer of bright minds to the San Diego region, the university plays a critical role in preparing today’s students to become tomorrow’s workforce.

Together, the CSU and SDSU are working for California.

Approval of SDSU’s proposed Master Plan will enable San Diego State to continue to implement the CSU mission of ensuring access to a university education for all qualified students who seek it.

Thank you for your consideration.