Well, good afternoon. Nibbling Around the Edge of Success is the title of what I want to speak about. I have five minutes to talk so what I’d like to do is start with the conclusion, seeing that I might run out of time. The conclusion I derive from the later Senator Robert Kennedy. And -- paraphrasing -- Senator Kennedy said that there are those of us who see things as they are and ask why. I dream of things that never were and ask why not. And for me, what I dream about and say, “why not” is why don’t we have transformative education from the time our students walk through the door to the time they leave. And so that’s been my framework since I’ve become the president of Modesto Junior College.

Modesto Junior College is a Hispanic-serving institution. The majority of our students are Hispanic. Over 20,000 students in a great community, a very supportive community. I have been the president for exactly 112 days, 7 hours, 42 minutes, 62 seconds. So up until now it’s been taking sips of water from the firehose, and you’ve all been there.

For me, dealing with guided pathways has been an objective look into what the college has done over the last two years. And what they’ve done is things that most of you are familiar with. They’ve looked at advising, they’ve looked at outreach, services, support service, wraparound services, how can the foundation help, institutional changes, and instruction. So for the most part, things that you would expect in a guided pathways approach.

One of the things they’ve done is they’ve involved the student voice in a lot of the discussions and they’ve tried to remove a lot of academic-ese from the conversation so the students know what’s in front of them. For example, they don’t use the word meta‑majors because the students found it confusing. And so what they’ve done is they’ve grouped the majors around schools. So the school has an organizational level that students and faculty can understand.

It just so happens we have nine schools, which happens to equal the number of deans we already have. Coincidence? Maybe. But that will make the transition easier in terms of administratively handling the schools. The problem I had just coming in for 112 days is looking at what we’re doing from the instructional point of view. And when you look at what we have planned, nowhere with the list of things we need to do involve anything to do with transformative curriculum in terms of looking at roadblocks, eliminating roadblocks. I’m not sure we can get past that edge of success if we don’t confront those roadblocks head-on.

So we have nine schools. Coming into a community college where nine are already in existence, to try to change the nine would be a political nightmare. So the plan is well, let’s add another one. So we’re developing a nine plus one school. The school is meant to develop with the willing, finding strong faculty across the institution that believe to their core the importance of transformative curriculum and bringing them into a new school where the school is based on inquiry and it’s based on interdisciplinary, it’s integrated ... the curriculum will be integrated for the students as opposed to hope that they will actually integrate it on their own, which we all know doesn’t happen.

It will be active learning. It will be community based. And it will be that way from the day they walk through the door to the day they leave. And the hope is as we develop these best practices that are integrated across the entire curriculum, they will provide that proof positive, that model that can work in Modesto. So that’s us looking forward.

And lastly to wrap up, I go back several decades. And I remember in California over 50 years ago California developed the Master Plan. The Master Plan was to provide high-quality education at an affordable price. All three systems were supposed to do that, the University of California, California State Universities, and the California community colleges. And I’m a byproduct of that great system.

Unfortunately, the University of California and California State University have abandoned that vision. And for me, the community colleges across the country represent the last best hope for our students and for our country to achieve that dream, to achieve that social mobility that we all need. So thank you.

**[END OF FILE]**