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# Saigo praises SCSU in kick-off

## President outlines goals for retention, graduation rate before classes begin

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Roy Saigo on Wednesday touted St. Cloud State University's work to overcome budget cuts, unstable leadership and charges of discrimination as he welcomed the university's employees to a new school year.

four vice presidents were hired or appointed after Saigo arrived.

"These kinds of difficulties are not uncommon to universities, but ours were specific and painful, also public," Saigo said. "So I turned to you, the campus community, to engage in these is-

...fifth year as president of St. Cloud State, also unveiled the university's focus on students, outreach and scholarship for the new school year.

Wednesday's convocation officially kicked off the school year for Minnesota's second-largest university. St. Cloud State's 16,000 students start classes Tuesday.

"Reflecting over the past four years, I am pleased to see what we have accomplished," Saigo said. "Collectively, we have worked very hard these past four years. We have gained ground on every issue."

Those issues include:

- Charges of discrimination resulting in the \$1.25 million settlement of a class-action lawsuit accusing the university of anti-Semitism.

- \$20 million in cuts in two years and multiple double-digit tuition increases.

- Turnover of top leaders. Saigo was the fifth president hired in nine years. Three of the university's



**Roy Saigo**  
St. Cloud State  
president

Saigo applauded the faculty and staff for improving communication, boosting enrollment management and creating new academic programs.

The university's accomplishments, Saigo said, include:

- An improved plan to track student enrollment data.

- Several initiatives designed to combat racism and improve the atmosphere on campus.

- A budget reserve totaling 5 percent of the university's annual operating budget of about \$120 million.

The university this year will focus on improving student retention and graduation rates; working with two-year colleges and on economic development and fund-raising; and emphasizing faculty development and securing money for special projects, Saigo said.

"I believe our future will be one in which our successes will be identified by the success of our students, by the scholarly and creative productivity of our faculty and by the success and loyalty of our alumni," Saigo said.