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On behalf of the University administration, faculty, staff, and students, I would like to welcome our guests from the international transmutation research community and from the national advanced fuel cycle initiative.

We are very pleased to be the host site of this international meeting and we hope you find our facilities accommodating.

The issue of what to do with our nation's nuclear waste has become a significant issue for the citizens of Nevada. Our Congressional representatives from the State of Nevada have their eyes and ears focused on alternate approaches to nuclear waste mitigation, now more than ever, with recent decisions regarding a potential repository at Yucca Mountain. I believe I can say without doubt that the transmutation of high-level radioactive waste is a technology that is important to our representatives and our community, because it provides a significant reduction in radiological hazard and has the potential to remove nuclear waste from Yucca Mountain. This is, of course, a key issue with our Congressional representatives who have been ardent supporters of funding the national Transmutation programme.

We believe that University of Nevada, Las Vegas is well-situated to lead the academic effort through the continued development of the research programme at UNLV and collaborations with other universities and research entities. As part of that commitment to investigating a key problem facing our community, UNLV began its research programme, the Transmutation Research Programme, to participate in the development of partitioning and transmutation technology as a part of the national effort. Now it is its fourth year, this programme has become one of the most exciting new science and engineering research projects at UNLV.

The programme currently supports 23 faculty-supervised graduate student projects involving 36 graduate students and 25 faculty members in six academic departments across the UNLV scientific and engineering communities, with research tasks spanning the range of technology areas for transmutation, including chemical separation of uranium from spent nuclear fuel, methods of fuel fabrication, optimization of super-conducting components for proton accelerators, and corrosion of materials exposed to lead-bismuth eutectic.

I trust you will all have a productive meeting and enjoy your visit to Las Vegas.