Good morning.

Welcome to the start of the fall semester and a new school year.

It’s good to see everyone back together again.

I hope you enjoyed the summer, whether you were away doing field work, took a vacation, or just came to work and took advantage of the food trucks we had here during lunch.

I also welcome all the alumni, community members, and friends of the University in the audience today – along with the Parents from our Parents and Families program.

Please know that your friendship is critical to this campus, and we truly appreciate your continued interest, support and enthusiasm.

Additionally, we have with us today the first five students from Chongqing University in China who are slated to enter our master’s program in power engineering.

They are here as a result of the partnership between Sac State and Chongqing.

The students are taking classes in the College of Engineering and Computer Science and the College of Continuing Education’s English Language Institute.

And right behind them is our ASI Board of Directors in their Made at Sac State T-shirts.

On that note, I would like to welcome those who are new to Sacramento State.

First, there are 25 new tenure-track faculty members who have joined us in our academic departments.

Last year the number was six, so we are finally able to move in the right direction once again.

Next, I want to give a special Sacramento State welcome to the 8,000 new students who are joining us this fall.

They are part of an unprecedented group.

This semester’s incoming classes of freshmen and transfer students are the largest in the history of Sacramento State.

We also have some familiar faces in different positions:
Our two ACE fellows have returned to Sacramento State and begun new assignments for a year as part of the fellowship.

Dave Evans is working in Student Affairs as Assistant Vice President for Student Engagement and Success.

He oversees Academic Advising, Orientation, the Career Center and Guardian Scholars.

Dave brings valuable experience and perspective to the new post.

As a professor and chair in the Geology Department, he strengthened ties to the U.S. Geological Survey on campus, which led to more relevant curriculum and jobs for our graduates.

Also returning is Jana Noel, who is serving as Special Assistant to the President for Analytics and Institutional Effectiveness.

This is a new and very important position, and I'll have more on it later in my remarks.

On one more personnel note, we have begun the search for a new provost with the goal that the position will be filled by January.

Charles Gossett has agreed to continue to serve on an interim basis until then.

Other new developments you may notice on campus begin with the Department of Physical Therapy’s move into Folsom Hall.

The move again highlighted excellent teamwork among many campus units, including the department, the College of Health and Human Services, Facilities, IRT and University Advancement.

PT will now enjoy a 230 percent increase in space for teaching and research, and it supports the department’s new doctoral program.

This is the second phase of our plan to establish Folsom Hall as a Center for Health Professions.

Continuing the theme of new academic space, IRT, Academic Affairs, and Facilities worked to equip 23 classrooms with smart technology, increasing faculty access to smart teaching podiums by almost 50 percent.

One of those rooms was created by combining two smaller rooms in Douglass Hall, helping us address a critical need for larger classrooms.

Over the summer, the University Union revamped the Hornet’s Nest food court to promote better traffic flow and a more welcoming environment for the busy facility.

Speaking of physical changes, work on the Campus Master Plan is progressing with input from all sectors of the campus.
The architect will present ideas to the entire campus community this fall, and everyone will have the opportunity to provide feedback.

When the final draft is complete, we will take the plan to the Chancellor’s Office and the Board of Trustees for approval.

**Budget and Enrollment Update**

Now, on to more good news.

For the first time in several years, I won’t be talking about budget and enrollment cuts for our campus.

Of course, everything can change very quickly at the state level, but for now, it appears that both our budgets and enrollments will grow slowly – at least in the near future.

In regard to hiring for both faculty and staff positions, this means we can ease some of the restrictions we had to put in place, but we must still be strategic and prudent when making these decisions and evaluate each hire carefully.

In fact, I’ve asked the deans to begin putting together their planned needs for future hiring so that we can build them into the university’s strategic planning.

The final state budget was in line with what we had expected, and now we have a healthier and more stable budget outlook at Sacramento State.

Working with the University Budget Advisory Committee and the budget staff on campus, we restored baseline funding to every division.

All told, the increases amount to about 8 percent.

We can also celebrate a stronger enrollment in the coming year, with our target growing for the first time in quite awhile.

The target rose a modest 1.2 percent in full time equivalent students, however – there is a crucial distinction here.

Chancellor White has raised the level by which we can exceed target to 5 percent.

That is significant, and good for us.

With the admission restrictions we’ve faced in the past, there is clearly pent-up demand.

At the same time, more students want to come to Sacramento State because of everything we offer. So I have asked Student Affairs to bring in as many students as the CSU allows, and we are on target to do so for the academic year.
I want to emphasize that slow growth in the budget and FTES is the overall point here.

For us going forward, it’s important that we apply the discipline and creativity that we developed during the lean years.

There was a show on the Discovery Channel this summer that reminded me of this.

It was called, “Naked and Afraid.”

If you haven’t seen it, the title says it all.

The premise is that two strangers are left with no clothing in the wilderness and forced to use their survival skills for an entire week.

On one hand, the show is about finding food, water, and shelter in hostile conditions.

But it’s really about two people with different perspectives learning to work together, and using teamwork to conquer challenges.

That’s why I mention it today.

As the CSU suffered budget cut after budget cut, it seemed like we were being left alone in the wilderness, with the shirts virtually stolen off our backs.

We had to scrounge for resources, and at times, it felt like we were living day-to-day.

But along the way, we learned a lot about ourselves.

We found strength in our core educational mission, and we discovered that entire communities believed in the value of the California State University and of Sacramento State.

We saw how we could succeed by working together, both among ourselves and with those we are here to serve – and that is the real lesson I hope we take from the aftermath of the Great Recession.

Let me give you some examples.

A broad coalition of education leaders, elected leaders, business leaders, and student leaders joined together to secure the passage of Proposition 30.

Our friends in the community stood up for the CSU, providing funds for scholarships, support for academic programs, and donations of time and expertise to ensure that our graduates would receive a quality education.

And on campus, in every unit and department, faculty and staff examined how we could do better by our students and provide a helping hand whenever possible.

Now we are seeing the beginnings of a new Sacramento State – one that could be exponentially greater than the 8 percent budget increase we received.
In other words, we are delivering on the commitment we made to the people of our state when we asked for their help.

That is very important, because we are under more scrutiny than ever.

Today’s public is much more aware of its investment in public education, and it is clear that the changes we are experiencing are just the beginning.

**Campus Highlights: A Respected Resource**

One of the most heartening changes is that more people are taking notice of the great work we do here.

I hear about it all the time when I’m out in the community.

In fact, that is one of the biggest changes I have experienced in my 10 years here.

The community is more willing to speak up about the great work that you do for our campus and the region, and I hope we can continue to improve in this area.

Increased public scrutiny means that we cannot be modest about excellence at Sacramento State – especially when there are direct and immediate benefits for the community.

Community partnerships are one of the best avenues we have to provide those benefits, and I know that they involve a lot of effort on your part.

So I would like to take a moment to recognize just a few of the many examples of collaboration we have at Sacramento State.

Dian Lorene Baker from the School of Nursing is the principal-investigator on a federal grant to help members of the region’s Hmong community receive better treatment for diabetes.

Ann Moylan of Family and Consumer Sciences in SSIS worked with three local children’s hospitals to develop and teach a course in Child Life.

The field provides social and emotional support and education to children and their families in times of illness or injury, and the new course provided students with hands-on training.

In the College of Business Administration, our MBA for Executives program continues to grow, with Intel signing on for the eighth time locally, and expansion to Singapore internationally.

In Teaching Credentials in the College of Education, Brian Lim offered a workshop on common core standards and the EAP in partnership with the Sacramento County Office of Education and the Chancellor’s Office.
The College of Arts and Letters created Family Funday Sunday to showcase the incredible talents and value of all its departments.

More than 2,500 people came to campus for the event, and the college also used it to re-connect with many alumni.

Like last year’s U-Nite at the Crocker Art Museum, this new initiative is already becoming a signature event for us in the community.

The Construction Management Department’s strong faculty connections to industry are again leading to results for students, with a 100 percent employment rate for its most recent class of graduates.

Engagement is happening at the University-wide level, as well.

We completed work on the campus Smart Grid program in May, in conjunction with SMUD and the state.

This project helps us monitor electricity use, saves us money on energy costs and added charging stations for electric vehicles.

Looking ahead, the technology will produce data on energy consumption that we can use to become even more efficient as the campus grows.

A relatively new relationship with a local high school is coming to fruition as well.

This semester, we expect about 17 freshmen to join us from Cristo Rey High School, which fosters academic achievement for students from diverse communities.

Cristo Rey’s curriculum includes a work study program, and some of its students have been working with University Enterprises on campus.

Another exciting partnership is the Pathways to Success agreement we signed in April with Sacramento City College and the Sacramento City Unified School District.

Pathways to Success is designed to promote college readiness and access among local students, and under the agreement, we are examining roadblocks and solutions as partners, instead of as separate systems.

Our newly created Center for College Readiness is a key part of these efforts.

Under the direction of Joy Salvetti, the center will primarily focus on students before they matriculate to college.

Initiatives will include professional development for K-12 teachers, creating “transitional curricula” for high school students through the Early Assessment Program, and designing Freshmen Seminars that dovetail with high school senior year bridge courses.
And Bruce Ostertag and Frank Lilly from the faculty will coordinate expansion of the Accelerated College Entrance program that allows high school students to take courses for college credit.

The College of Continuing Education is supporting our readiness goals, too.

CCE held six Summer Academies that attracted high school students to campus for courses in biotech, health care careers, robotics, and fashion.

All of this is part of our university-wide commitment to keep the regional pipeline of students moving, learning and succeeding.

To that end, faculty and staff also worked to bring three important groups to campus over the summer.

The Office of Public Affairs and Advocacy worked with City Councilman Jay Schenirer to host the Way Up Summer Camp, which teaches leadership skills to high school students in under-served communities.

Tim Fong of Ethnic Studies took the lead in bringing the CSU’s Asian American and Pacific Islander Initiative to campus.

The initiative’s Journey to Success event provided workshops on issues that are crucial to the educations and lives of these students.

And just last week, more than 5,000 people came to campus for Es El Momento, a bilingual initiative affiliated with Univision that helps Latinos explore higher education options.

And as further evidence of our value to the community, Sacramento State exceeded its philanthropic goal, with $10.2 million in gifts, pledges and commitments.

Thanks to University Advancement’s continued success in private fundraising, we are paying out 5 percent of our endowment for the third consecutive year.

The lion’s share of that $730,000 is going for student scholarships.

**Campus Highlights: Widening Our Audience**

One of my goals under the Redefine the Possible initiative is to greatly expand the number of people we reach.

Several projects are helping us accomplish that.

James Baxter from Biological Sciences is leading a high-profile effort called the California Environmental Legacy Project.

With funding from the National Science Foundation, the project is creating a series of films to build public understanding of the past, present and future of California’s natural environment.
The main documentary will air on PBS, with companion pieces shown at visitors’ centers in state and national parks.

Jane Fonda has signed on to serve as the narrator in the films.

Sacramento State was also selected by the NSF to produce a video on the nationwide impact of the Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation, or LSAMP.

Our campus is the lead institution for the Alliance in the CSU, and Juanita Barrena has passionately made Sacramento State a leader in this STEM education effort.

The video is being produced by the Academic Technology and Creative Services unit in Academic Affairs, and it will have a national impact and audience of educators, stakeholders and policy makers.

Public Affairs and Advocacy is building on the success of its “Made at Sac State” marketing campaign by expanding into television.

The office’s launch of a video magazine will give local viewers the opportunity to learn more about the University.

Eight half-hour segments produced in conjunction with ATCS will be broadcast on KQCA Channel 58 in the region.

Each program profiles one of our colleges, including interviews with the dean, faculty members, students and graduates.

Bonus content will be available online, and the first video magazine will air September 5th. See the flyer on your seats for more information.

The Office of Advancement Communications and Stewardship has also significantly broadened its audience through the use of technology.

Publications such as Sac State Magazine, Torchlight and the Honor Roll of Donors now have specialized online versions to reach our alumni and donors more efficiently.

The results are all very encouraging.

Alumni Relations surpassed its membership goal by more than 10 percent and exceeded 7,000 members for the first time ever.

Additionally, the unit launched new alumni chapters for Nursing, Ethnic Studies and MESA graduates.

I have always believed that as our reach expands, so does our family, and I want to thank everyone across campus who is helping us to tell our story.
There are many, many examples of this type of work that I wasn’t able to mention in my speech – because we would be here all day.

I hope everyone realizes the impact that all of it is having.

It matters at every level.

It matters when we see applications for admissions going up every year.

It matters when more and more groups are engaging with us and bringing events and potential students to campus.

And it matters when employers seek out our graduates, because they recognize the value of a Sacramento State degree.

That said, I do want to mention one more noteworthy item that continues to generate a lot of positive buzz for Sacramento State.

The highly acclaimed new feature film “Fruitvale Station” was written and directed by Ryan Coogler, a Sacramento State graduate.

Ryan was a star on our football team, and he credits Professors Roberto Pomo and Steve Buss for giving him the inspiration to become a filmmaker.

We were able to quickly put together a special Sac State screening of the film and a discussion with Ryan in July.

**Campus Highlights: Redefine the Possible**

Now, as much as I enjoy seeing the campus recognized in the community and nation, I also know that tremendous work goes on behind the scenes to make us better as a University.

We are Redefining the Possible in much of what we do.

The Chancellor’s Office recognized the innovation of our faculty and staff with competitive awards of nearly $750,000 for proposals that further the Graduation Initiative by redesigning courses and fostering student success.

One of those programs is called U Mentor, and it will pair students with a faculty or staff mentor, if they don’t already have one through another program.

The proposal for U Mentor was submitted by Marcellene Watson-Derbigny and Viridiana Diaz, and I encourage everyone interested in serving as a U Mentor to visit the informational table we have outside the ballroom today.

Additionally, Student Affairs has transformed the way we interact with students, reaching out in innovative ways.
Academic Advising takes place online via real-time chat, and this fall, some advisors will be stationed in student-friendly locations across campus, such as in the University Union.

This commitment has led to 97 percent of our freshman receiving one-on-one advising.

Information Resources and Technology has been a key partner in enhancing our student success initiatives, providing tools for degree audits and planning, and automation of key services such as registration and financial aid.

At the same time, the unit has significantly increased privacy protections of the vast amount of data we have on campus.

These are enormous tasks on a campus of our size.

Our students can also enjoy greater career opportunities thanks to the California Intern Network, which is administered by University Enterprises.

UEI expanded the initiative this year to include federal, county, city and private employment opportunities.

UEI’s Faculty Grants Program, working with the Research and Contracts office, funded research and scholarly activities for 111 faculty members.

Its Campus Grant Program funded 26 department projects during the last fiscal year.

Human Resources is implementing a fully automated process for recording vacation and sick leave, so we can reduce processing time, save paper and provide more access to information for employees.

This fits with HR’s comprehensive commitment to improving the experience for all employees, from the moment they step onto campus for the first time.

Administration and Business Affairs has renewed its emphasis on customer service, with training and targeted initiatives such as a pay-by-phone app for parking permits and upgrades for the University Ticket Office that allow more function and flexibility.

And initiatives such as One World and the Committee to Build Campus Unity have led to amazing benefits for both our students and the campus as a whole – and the best part is that they began as ideas created and implemented by faculty and staff.

**Announcements**

I believe that everything I have discussed this morning will have a tremendous positive impact on the future of our campus.

Our students, faculty, staff and supporters – all of you here today – continually make Sacramento State a better University, and I see even brighter days ahead.
With an eye to that brighter future, I am pleased to announce the creation of an important new unit: the Office of Analytics and Institutional Effectiveness.

This office will boost our ability to plan for the future and help us to make thoughtful, data-driven decisions.

I have asked Jana Noel, whom I mentioned earlier, and Joel Schwartz to be part of this initiative, along with Jing Wang from the Office of Institutional Research and others who will comprise a working group.

Universities are places that are overflowing with potential data, but the big challenge is making sense of it all.

Our Office of Institutional Research in Academic Affairs does a good job preparing many of the reports we submit to the Chancellor’s Office while supporting the campus whenever possible, and it will continue to do so.

But we also know that one size does not fit all when it comes to data in public higher education, especially at a place as unique as Sacramento State.

So this new office will focus on exactly that: Sacramento State.

Its staff will tap into overlooked sources of data, gather new data where appropriate, and present it in an accessible form.

The goal is to help all of us make more informed decisions, as well as provide predictive analysis that will help us plan for the future.

It will also support efforts such as our upcoming WASC reaccreditation and the need to identify and address the bottlenecks and backlogs that are derailing too many of our students.

The office is just getting started, so you’ll be hearing more from them in the months to come.

That provides a good launching point for my next announcement.

This semester, we will be embarking on a new Strategic Plan for Sacramento State.

Some of the parameters for a new plan have already been put in place, as I asked a group of campus representatives to meet over the summer and get the process started.

This “pre strategic planning committee” as it became known, included members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Dean Fred Baldini and was convened by Dean Ed Inch from the College of Arts and Letters.

They framed out themes to drive the process going forward and took a look at big issues, such as what defines us, what we can or should be best at, and how we can maximize resources.
An effective Strategic Plan can be a unifying force for our campus and really bring even more focus to the way we serve students and the community at the new Sacramento State.

The impetus for my next announcement came earlier this year, when I met with the University Union Board of Directors.

But the reasons for it have been apparent for quite some time, as the campus has grown in vibrancy and popularity.

The Board and I discussed the future of the student-owned facilities on campus, namely The Well and the Union.

The students have done an outstanding job of providing amenities and services in the facilities, so much so that both are at or above their intended capacities.

For example, with more students staying on campus during the day, there is a definitive lack of space for them to sit, study, or just hang out.

Certain rooms in the University Union, like the one we’re in now, are simply unavailable on many days because they are fully booked.

And The Well has succeeded beyond our expectations, with areas for weights and cardio equipment exceeding recommended usage.

If we are to grow our student body, even modestly, overcrowding at our two most popular student facilities must be alleviated.

At our meeting, the board liked the idea of a comprehensive project that would address these concerns all at once – while also adding a Student Events Center that was originally part of the plan when we began The Well and before the economy worsened.

Now, with favorable outlooks in bond rates and enrollment growth, along with an impeccable track record for student owned and operated buildings, the board decided to move forward with exploring project options.

They also prepared to begin an alternative consultation process to increase the University Union fee to fund the projects.

The Student Fee Advisory Committee subsequently approved that request, and the consultation is happening early this semester.

Over the summer, the students have been busy with research.

They have looked at facilities on other campuses, held focus groups with students to learn what they wanted, and worked with a planning architect to determine what is feasible.

They have also launched a website to keep the process transparent and scheduled forums and more opportunities for the campus to engage.
I look forward to hearing their proposals later in the semester.

My final announcement again brings us back to a community partnership.

A few months ago, I was approached by the March of Dimes about serving as the event chair of the annual March for Babies in Sacramento.

Now, before you get too excited, this is strictly a volunteer post, so I’m not quitting my day job just yet.

But I agreed to the offer because the campaign fits with our commitment to be a resource for the community – and it gives us the chance to showcase some of our greatest strengths.

Like world-class health care education; students, faculty and staff who give back to the community; deep connections in the region; and the huge economic impact we make as a group.

Over the coming months, everyone will have the opportunity to get involved – and I hope that we can rally around the cause.

The campaign culminates in the March for Babies on April 26th.

I also felt that this campaign was a good way for our campus to show its appreciation to the community for the support we received during the years of budget cuts.

As I mentioned before, this semester hopefully marks the end of a very difficult period for public higher education.

And it is because of you that Sacramento State has emerged with more than enough strength and resolve to welcome the largest ever incoming class at our University.

Thank you so much for seeing us through the tough times, thank you for never wavering from your commitment to our students, and thank you for the work you do each and every day.

Have a wonderful semester, and again, thank you very much.