Thank you all for taking the time to be here today.

This is the fourth time I’ve had the opportunity to speak to you at the opening of a new academic year, and I am excited about the themes I’ll be raising today. Some, including the budget, will be familiar to you. But I’m particularly pleased to introduce a new logo, public-use names for our campus, and a campus motto. These will play a large role in extending the recognition, advocacy, and alumni support we have been receiving within the region and state – and, importantly, within the CSU.

First, I’d like to talk about a few notable recent successes … just a few of many.

California State University, Stanislaus continues to be ranked highly on many national lists of distinction. Last month, Money Magazine ranked us the top public university in the nation for helping students exceed expectations. This affirms our sense of pride in how many of our graduates each year are the first in their family to earn a college degree and how much the region’s employers appreciate our graduates.

The same magazine ranked us Number 82 among the entire country’s colleges in terms of value for the tuition dollar.

We made Princeton Review’s prestigious list of top schools for a 10th straight year, and we recently were ranked No. 9 in the nation by US News & World Report for our success in outreach and service to the Hispanic community.

In short, we are not simply here; we are making a difference. We are less and less America’s best-kept secret. The Stanislaus region has in its own backyard a university of which it can be justifiably and publicly very proud.

That pride, I believe, is at the core of people’s willingness to support us financially – not as a charitable cause but as an investment in developing our own region. Last year, the inaugural One Purpose campaign raised $818,000 – with every penny going to scholarships for our students. As I noted earlier, we have some very generous One Purpose donors in the audience today.
Last year’s One Purpose campaign was a CASE regional gold-award winner for best practices in fundraising. This year’s fund drive officially kicks off this week, and we hope again to experience public confidence in our graduates as the region’s future.

On another front, you likely don’t view our brown grass on campus as a success. Yet, again, we are leaders within the CSU in our effort to respond to our massive drought challenge through innovative water management. And we are doing so in concert with the City of Turlock, the Turlock Irrigation District and the Turlock Unified School District. We are all in this together.

Our faculty’s work in moving our students forward, of course, remains our hallmark. In that vein, our nursing program was ranked in the top 6 percent of all nursing programs in the West Region by Nurse Journal. And our online Masters in Business Administration degree program was ranked in the top 30 in the nation by the Affordable Colleges Foundation.

Just last month, in recognition of how well our University serves disadvantaged, low-income and first-generation college students, the U.S. Department of Education awarded us with a TRIO Student Support Services grant that should reach more than $1.8 million over five years.

Our students, faculty and staff are working side by side with local nonprofits and city governments to improve the quality of life in our region. Over the past two years, our students have logged more than 240,000 hours of community service, and that effort was recognized by the Carnegie Foundation, which added us to its prestigious 2015 Community Engagement Classification.

And speaking of high-reaching, socially engaged students, please give a round of applause to Maggie White, who distinguished herself and her alma mater by being named to the Board of Trustees of the California State University. Maggie, please stand.

In last year’s address we talked about the importance of addressing head-on the issue of sexual assault, harassment, and misconduct on campus. This is an ongoing national mandate. Many campus administrators, faculty, staff and students stepped to the plate on this one. I especially want to recognize our Warrior Watch and Aware, Awake, Alive programs, the Student Health Advisory Committee, and the athletes who made a sexual respect video. Warrior Watch trained 86 students to recognize and, where necessary, intervene in potential situations of problematic sexual- or alcohol-related behaviors. More important, they set the pace for a change in student culture. This is no one-year effort. Again, we are proud leaders, and we will remain so. Many members of Warrior Watch and the other organizations are here today – I ask them to stand and receive your applause.

The University also had another strong year in athletics, with the women’s soccer team winning an NCAA regional championship, the golf team winning a conference championship, track and field athletes standing out nationally, and several individual athletes earning All-American honors. Through the work of our athletes, our coaches, and Athletics leadership and staff, people are noticing the Warriors, and the Stanislaus community is being noticed.
Our campus continues to reach out to the community. The Art Space on Main in downtown Turlock offers a showcase and working studio for our talented students and faculty.

For the sixth straight year, the Department of Theatre brought Shakespeare to campus. Our interns and service learning participants continue to excel beyond campus walls.

And, hey, how about Fourth of July fireworks back on campus?

These are but a few examples of the great work done by our people and our programs. We have every reason to be proud.

Let me put in a quick plug for two initiatives dear to my heart. Thank you to everyone who has helped support the emphasis on writing at Stan State – the single most important key to success for our graduates. Faculty members have been bringing writing back into the everyday curriculum. Students are now recognizing the value of this skill set. We presented nine students One Purpose scholarships for writing this year. Check out our GROW (Greatness Relies on Writing) website.

And thank to those of you who have kept the faith with the “Adopt a Student” movement. Nothing is more satisfying than to see students overcome obstacles in large part because they had someone to talk to – you. I urge you, please, to adopt a student (for coffee, lunch, whatever suits) and see the difference you can make. My adoptee, Russell Fowler, is seated to my right. Welcome, Russell.

Finally, we continue to be what fulfills the dreams of first-generation college students and their families. Ultimately, this is what we are about. Ours is one of only six campuses in the CSU system with a six-year graduation rate above 50 percent and one of only three to have met the system’s target for closing graduation rate gaps among our student subpopulations.

These are great trends, great numbers, great successes, but we can do better – not only by serving students already on campus through stronger advising efforts – I thank the University Task Force on Advising in advance for the recommendations I am about to receive -- but by doing all we can to make certain the next generation of students is ready for college. The focus must be upon advising before as well as during college.

With this in mind, the University has joined with Modesto Junior College and the Stanislaus County Office of Education to form the Stanislaus Education Partnership. We are teaming up with K-12 and MJC to make a difference. We understand that it does little good to keep saying we need more college graduates in the region if we are not helping collectively to increase the number. This is not just giving young people a better chance. When we do our jobs, we are moving the region forward. College graduation rates are the key component of economic success for the entire Central Valley. In the bigger picture, they are the key to making the Central Valley California’s next economic engine.

Against that backdrop, let me speak briefly about budget and enrollment. California has not yet moved beyond the effects of the Great Recession; neither has the CSU. But things are looking
better. This year, Stan State is permitted to increase its enrollment by 4.6%. This is significant not only in terms of increased college access for students in our region, but for the budget relief that increased enrollment brings.

Especially important is the recognition by Central Valley legislators that we must stop pitting individual counties and districts against each other and address higher education as a bipartisan, macro-Central Valley issue. That happened this year, and I thank our legislators – particularly those from our area who led the effort – for their vision. The CSU stepped forward for us too with the enrollment increase.

For a moment, let’s celebrate our good fortune. And let’s thank everyone who helped structure the positive outcome: the governor and legislators, community members, CSU leaders, campus administrators, students, and faculty and staff union leaders. You made a huge difference.

That said, let’s also not kid ourselves. We are far from out of the woods. The amount given the CSU does not get us back to 2008 budget levels. The new dollars to our campus do not equal the perfectly legitimate calls on those dollars. And in our effort to deal with the challenges of the past eight years, we have developed a structural deficit (too much reliance on one-time reserves) and patched together year-to-year fixes to keep us in the game. We need to begin stabilizing our budget with an eye to the future as well as to the present.

On that note, I want to express my gratitude to the University Budget Advisory Committee, whose recommendations this year call our attention precisely to those bigger-picture matters. Those recommendations directly inform our efforts to shape this year’s campus budget. And I also look forward to receiving the recommendations of the Committee to Implement and Prioritize the Strategic Plan, which will help us focus yet more sharply on linking today’s budget decisions to future outcomes.

Everything we do has to be about the future of our region just as much as it has to do with helping the individual student.

How do people view our region and us? Last October I was in Denver with a group of CSU alumni – not just Stanislaus alums, but alums from the entire system. One from Southern California broke my heart and the hearts of those with me by noting that she had never heard of our institution though she passed by Turlock all the time when she went skiing in Tahoe -- she meant Truckee. It hurt, but it happens all the time. After three years, I am convinced that we are the least known and understood campus publicly and even within the CSU itself.

We must shoulder the blame a bit. We have not made ourselves noticed, even by name. When you walk down the street, you hear people talking about CSUS, CSU Stanislaus, Cal State Stanislaus, Stanislaus State, Stan State... and that other name. Who are we?!

Recall that last year I promised we'd embark on a journey to design a new logo, produce a leaner naming convention, and create a motto -- all aimed to help people see us more clearly and advocate for us more actively. I promised that the new identity communication, or branding, effort would be both difficult and fun. I suspect that those involved in this effort would agree.
Let me start by recognizing the committee members who worked so hard to get us where we are today. Their names are on the screen behind me and many are sitting in front. Committee members, please stand and receive our thanks.

Special thanks also to the 300 people who participated in focus groups designed to narrow the field of ideas through clearer expression of who we are and what we stand for.

Finally, special appreciation goes to our consultant, JSA, and its president, Bruce Batti, and media director, Brenna Blagg. This is one of those challenges that is met well only with the help of people with experience.

Logo design isn’t about creating works of art, because nearly everyone will have a different opinion about the logo’s beauty and artistic merit.

Case in point: If I took 25 people from this room and teleported us back in time to 1971 and showed you a rounded, stylized checkmark, announcing that this was our new logo, you’d say I was crazy. ... But it worked for Nike. Or, I could take you back to 1976, when this (holds up an apple) was introduced as the logo of a company that wanted to make computing personal.

Our goal was to create a vehicle that, like the swoosh and the apple, would become instantly recognizable to a new generation of observers and potential partners. We wanted a logo that – even when viewed at a distance – would evoke the strengths, aspirations and values at the heart of the University’s message.

The logo ultimately developed from the efforts of the committee, focus groups, and consultants possesses simplicity, clarity and an ability to send a message. And that’s what I like about what we’ve done here.

Let's start with what we have and where the committee began. We are and will remain California State University, Stanislaus. We will keep our official seal but will use it more selectively and formally.

So what will take the place of the seal? What is our new logo?

Once you've distilled everything the committee and the focus groups put on the table, two things stand out -- the shield that appears in so much of our image communication and the S that we've used in the past. With that in mind, let’s see the new logo. Here's what I like about it:

The shape of the logo emerged from the shield in the University seal and gives homage to our strong culture of Warrior pride. The strength of the split shield is that it allows us to be bold but not contentious. The artistic “S” also has historical significance, dating back to when our mark featured an “S” made from book bindings. Ultimately, this logo will serve as a family crest as we march toward our 60th year. Not only does it provide us with the opportunity to take pride in our generational history, but its contemporary look and feel gives us strength moving forward.
We have a surprise for you. As you exit today, you will receive a first-edition logo pin. You are the first to wear it. Someday your kids will find out that it is worth a fortune on Public TV's Antiques Road Show.

If we stopped our branding efforts at this logo, our outreach would be incomplete. The committee also was charged with creating an official naming convention, bringing consistency to the way people refer to our University: official name; less formal name; very informal reference.

Let's start with the easy part. Our official name remains the same – California State University, Stanislaus. We’re proud of our connection to the California State University system, and it’s important that we maintain this connection.

Next, the very informal name, the term of endearment by which so many alums and local people refer to us – Stan State. Our formal name will continue to be used in official communication, but we’re going to see Stan State popping up with increasing frequency on campus and among our friends.

Let's get a sense of what this looks like. We've asked some of our student-athletes to model for us today.

The challenge for us was something between formal name and term of endearment -- the less formal, common marketing name. I assumed that this would be easy -- CSU Stanislaus, the derivative of the formal name. I was wrong. Once people really started discussing the matter, here's what they gravitated toward: Stanisl aus State. I admit that this was a surprise to me. But here's what I really like about it: It clearly emphasizes our connection to a wonderful, vibrant, and increasingly important region in California – Stanislaus. We are not just a CSU that happens to be in the Stanislaus region. We are the Stanislaus region's university, a partner in its development, the institution that changes the lives of so many who have grown up here.

Even after all this work, the committee wasn’t done. Universities have mottos that capture the spirit and essence of who they are, and what they are trying to do now and in the future. The themes and values that stood out as focus groups talked about us consistently were -- personal attention, engagement, providing opportunity, and connection to the region. It's not easy to capture all of that in a motto. But I really like what will be our new motto. It captures both our relationship to our students and our pledge to partner with our region.

The motto that will join the logo and naming convention is: Engaging. Empowering. Transforming.

When I saw this, I was pleased … and proud. That is who we are.

We've launched. But don't worry. You won't have to shred all of your cards and stationery for a while. We'll ease into this with a transition plan, rules and guidelines for use, a formal approach to public communication.
It’s now up to all of us to do our part in carrying the brand to the region. The brand is not the logo. The brand is not the motto, and the brand is not the name of the University. Our brand is and always will be the positive impact we have on our students and our region. What we want to emerge in the minds of the people we serve when they see our logo, name or motto are the strengths, aspirations and values of an institution – our University: California State University, Stanislaus; Stanislaus State; our beloved Stan State.

Our community has to know we’re here; the state has to know who, what and where we are; the CSU must see our incredible strengths; and the branding process is a huge first step toward that becoming a reality.

I end today with the hope that everyone in the University community can work together to create ideas and concrete plans to address our challenges. Committed as we are to transparency and consultation, we need this to be a place where all people feel free to weigh in when policies and directions are being established, aware that though everyone’s opinions might not become policy, those opinions certainly will be heard, respected, and considered.

My wish is that all of you leave here today confident about the state of the University and proud of the jobs you are doing. All of us have much for which to be thankful. We are a strong, serious university that is being recognized on a national level for its accomplishments.

I’m pleased and grateful for the support we are receiving from the people of the region. They not only are willing to invest in our students, but they are demonstrating the ultimate confidence in us by sending their family members to study here.

Thank you for coming this morning, and thank you in advance for the great year we’re going to share.