**(Remarks as prepared)**

**Stan State President Ellen Junn**

**2018 Fall Welcome  
Aug. 20, 2018**

Thank you, Dr. Chris Nagle, for your kind introduction.

Good morning! Welcome to the Fall Academic semester: a fresh start for some, and truly an opportunity for everyone interested in bringing renewed energy, ideas and collaborative efforts to continuing the remarkable trajectory and transformation of our beloved Stanislaus State!

Since no successful university can exist by itself in a vacuum, I have the privilege of introducing our elected officials, community guests and friends of the University joining us this morning—our highly respected, influential and important thought-leaders and members of our Foundation Board, our President’s Community Ambassador Council and our Alumni Advisory Council. Will all members of these illustrious boards and councils, please rise, wave and accept our applause and thanks!

Next, I would like you to please join me in recognizing the members of my Cabinet. Please withhold your applause until all cabinet members have been introduced:

* **Dr. Kimberly Greer**

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

* **Dr. Darrell Haydon**

Vice President for Business and Finance and CFO

* **Dr. Paz Maya Oliverez**

Interim Vice President for Student Affairs

* **Dr. Michele Lahti**

Vice President for University Advancement

* **Dr. Gitanjali Kaul**

Vice President for Strategic Planning, Enrollment Management & Innovation (also known as SPEMI)

* **Ms. Julie Johnson**

Senior Associate Vice President for Human Res, Equal Opp & Compliance

* **Dr. Rosalee Rush**

Senior Associate Vice President for Communications, Marketing and Media Relations

* **Ms. Neisha Rhodes**

Director of Presidential Initiatives

* **Ms. Nina Palomino**

Executive Assistant to the President

Please welcome our cabinet (applause)

In addition, since this marks the start of our new academic year, will everyone who has joined our campus as new faculty, staff or administrators, or who have been recently promoted--as listed in your program book, please stand? Please join me in congratulating and welcoming all of our new staff and faculty, and those who have been recently promoted here at Stan State. Thank you and welcome and congrats to all!

I can’t believe this already is my 3rd year welcoming everyone to the fall semester. But with my first two years squarely focused in the rearview mirror, I have been able to reflect on the many wonderful things we’ve accomplished TOGETHER at Stan State in such a short time, and these times certainly are exhilarating for all of us.

The news about what we’re accomplishing at Stan State has spilled over our campus boundaries. We continue to receive high praise on the national level for the quality of education we offer and the value we add to the lives of our students. Just this month, we were named as one of the nation’s top 384 colleges (or top 12% in the nation) by the *Princeton Review* for a 13th consecutive year, and we’re one of only 3 CSUs to make that list, which is based solely on the quality of the education we provide to our students. We also found out that *Money Magazine* has moved us from 82nd to 49th on their list of the nation’s best colleges for the money, and we’re 31st in the nation on that list among public schools.

I am confident that we will continue to garner these accolades for years to come because of the focus and the momentum we have developed through the approval and implementation of our new Stanislaus State University Strategic Plan 2025. You may recall that the plan took slightly over a year to conceive and write, with the 25 members of the Strategic Plan committee representing all facets and constituencies of our campus community--including faculty, staff, students and administrators. Several campus town halls and events were hosted, and feedback was received and incorporated. And even more gratifying when the plan was completed, it was reviewed by and unanimously endorsed by the Academic Senate. I am deeply indebted to the involvement of many faculty leaders and shared governance on our campus.

Since then, I want you to know that I’ve received many glowing comments about our University Strategic Plan, from various venues and from others who have commented on how comprehensive, compelling and ambitious our 2025 plan is. And I’m here to say that that was intentional. We wanted to design a thoughtful, living, breathing document that could serve as our pathway through 2025. Our University Strategic Planning Council (USPC) was incredibly energetic, proactive and visionary in creating our strategic plan and acknowledging its potential. So as we start the 2018-19 school year, it’s paramount that the momentum we gained through the process of developing and adopting the plan continues and must continue in full force as we implement it.

Here’s just one small example, I’ve heard from some peers about how impressed they are that technology is infused throughout our plan, because they’ve seldom seen it mentioned in other university plans. However, in this day and age, technology is like oxygen for universities - you can take it for granted since technology touches almost everything we do at universities:

* whether it be for communicating (like email or updating our websites),
* for improving teaching (like updating our smart classrooms or improving our LMS system),
* for implementing more transparent and responsive budgeting systems,
* for maintaining robust, timely financial aid and data analytic systems,
* for improving our HR and other business and administrative processes,

So our Plan 2025 makes it explicit that we need to be up-to-date, assess and consider carefully how we integrate IT advances throughout ALL divisions. In short, it’s critical for any university’s survival.

* As one tangible example of our commitment to technology, **40** Stan State classrooms have been enhanced by technological upgrades since the end of the spring 2017 semester. That includes **33** on this campus, and **7** at the Stockton Center. **4** more classrooms on this campus will be undergoing upgrades during this semester.
* Those are in addition to the technology-enhanced Active Learning Classrooms that have been developed on campus, with possibly several more in the planning stages.
* One key individual critical to our IT assessment and implementation plan is someone I’d now like to introduce you to--newly hired, **MR. RAFAEL ESPINOSA--**CIO and AVP for Information Technology, who begins Aug. 31

So once again, I extend my congratulations and heart-felt thanks to everyone who had a hand in the development and now implementation of our Stan State Strategic Plan 2025. Your work and dedication will have a positive impact on this campus for decades to come.

Now, the exciting next step for each of us is to fully engage and work together to do new things to transform the campus in stimulating and productive ways. It takes courage to come up with and share transformative ideas. But it’s the willingness to share, and the courage to develop innovations that will allow our University to grow with our region.

### American psychologist ABRAHAM MASLOW said: *“One can choose to go back toward safety or forward toward growth. Growth must be chosen again and again; fear must be overcome again and again.*”

For many of our students, particularly those among the nearly 74% who are the first in their families to attempt to earn a four-year degree, it can take exceptional courage to challenge the unknown and step on a college campus. For those who do, the experience certainly is transformational or life-changing.

That was the case for **ALEJANDRO MARTINEZ**, who graduated this spring with a degree in political science. He struggled as a student at Rodriguez High School in Fairfield, and was told by his high school counselor to forget about college and to follow his brother’s example and enlist in the military. But something inside Alejandro gave him the drive and the courage to be the first in his family to earn a college degree. Once at Stan State, Alejandro engaged as a student and he soared. He was accepted into the Panetta Institute's Congressional Internship Program in 2016, and this fall will start law school at UC Davis with the goal of becoming an advocate for victims of domestic abuse.

**Alejandro’s** story is an example of how not being afraid to fail can lead to a transformative experience – in his case the blossoming from a underperforming high school student to a strong college scholar. In his case, it took courage to go against the advice of his high school counselor, and take the huge step of enrolling at Stan State. And taking that first step will often open more doors and decisions that culminate in a collection of small steps that ultimately yield larger, transformative change.

As INDIRA GANDHI said: *“Have a bias toward action – let’s see something happen now. Break that big plan into small steps, but take the first step right now.”*

We’ve certainly already taken many, many steps toward our goal of envisioning Stan State as a University of choice, of distinction, and of high regional visibility.

Let me summarize some of those steps – some certainly larger than others, but all reflect how faculty, staff and administration is engaging to enhance and propel forward the University and the region we serve.

So a second accomplishment focuses in on our Graduation Initiative 2025, when last year, we took new actions:

* The campus intensified advising in the departments and colleges.
* We added 253 course sections to our Winter, Spring, and Summer course schedules.
* We offered tuition waivers to students who were on the cusp of graduating, to take their last course or two during Winter and Summer Session, and have helped approximately 435 students graduate sooner than they would have without the targeted advising.
* We implemented more major-based advising with faculty, and
* Initiated other high-impact practices.

As a result of these efforts, our University made good progress on 5 of the 6 GI 2025 Goals assigned by the Chancellor’s Office and the BOT by:

* Improving on our 6-yr FTF rate by 4.7%
* Increasing 2-year and 4-year transfer graduation rates
* We already have met one of the 2025 Goals--that is, we eliminated entirely the graduation rate gap between under-represented minority and non-URM students!
* We have reduced the Pell gap by 1.6%.

As we continue, I am confident that we will reach, and hopefully even exceed our goals as defined by the Chancellor’s Office and the Trustees.

It is very important to note that these gains don’t just happen out of thin air—it takes *focused* *leadership* and *engaged collaborative teamwork* to move the needle on student success. Our campus has responded by creating two new large, vigorous and critically important committees that regularly meet to review our data, interventions and student outcomes, and these groups have provided vital leadership for our student success. Please stand if you are a member of the:

* **GREAT—**Graduation Rate Excellence and Assessment Team (Co-chaired by **SHAWNA YOUNG**-AVP for Academic Affairs, **JOVONTE WILLIS-**Director for Institutional Research, and newly hired AVP for Student Success-**DR. FUJI COLLINS**.
* Also stand if you are a member of the Enrollment Management Committee(chaired by **DR. GITANJALI KAUL**).

In sum, I applaud everyone’s collaboration in Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, SPEMI and all divisions, and to all of our dedicated faculty for their daily commitment to champion the success of our remarkable students.

A third achievement in progress is our campus’ preparation for our upcoming WASC reaffirmation and accreditation process. Academic Affairs has taken the lead role in collecting, analyzing and presenting our campus data and student success outcomes. Many thanks to **DR. CHRISTOPHER CLAUS** and **DR. SHAWNA YOUNG** for leading the writing of our WASC institutional report. There will be additional ways you can support this process, which will be announced throughout the fall semester, all ahead of the arrival of the WASC visiting team, who will be here in Turlock on April 3-5, 2019.

Fourth, last year, we launched The President’s Commission on Diversity and Inclusion (PCDI), and $50,000 was allocated to support programs across campus focused on improving campus climate, as well as hosting campus talks, activities and supporting faculty research in this area. In addition, the PCDI was charged with developing our new campus Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, which is in the process of Academic Senate review.

* You may already have seen our new banners hanging throughout the campus with our student-created slogan, *“We STANd together for unity and inclusion”* featuring photos and quotes from our students.
* The next steps in developing a culture of diversity at Stan State will be the hiring of a director for our new Diversity Center.
* We are in the preliminary stages of developing a task force that combines the interests of the University and the City of Turlock to work together on the key issues of diversity and inclusion. I hope to have an announcement regarding this task force in the next few months.

Fifth, in light of the fact that only 35% of our total student body is male, vs. 44% male enrollment system-wide, in order to achieve our goal of narrowing the Central Valley’s education and gender gap, we will also embark upon a new **Males of Color** **Success** initiative to recruit and retain more Latino and African-American males to our campus. To support our efforts to narrow this gap, I have authorized the hiring of a new coordinator to oversee the recruiting process and to find ways to support the academic progress of young men once they **arrive** on campus. A search for the coordinator will commence this fall.

Sixth, during the spring semester, we launched the Innovate, Design, Excel and Assess for Success (or IDEAS) grant program. In May, eight creative proposals to help the University work smarter, totaling more than $50,000, were funded. These proposals represent the first cohort of University IDEAS projects within a program administered by **DR. GITANJALI KAUL.** More than 20 proposals were submitted last year, and 1 example of one of the 8 programs that selected to receive funding was the ***Yo Puedo (I Can) Boot Camp***, proposed by Assistant Admissions Director, **CAROLINA ALFARO**. This camp, conducted this summer, was designed to create a stronger pre-college going culture within an underrepresented community in San Joaquin County. Given the positive response from the campus, I am pleased to announce that another round of competitive proposals will be funded next spring. The IDEAS program grew out of Strategic Plan Goal number 3, which urges the University to build an innovative and visionary future that draws on campus creativity. And I’d like to encourage everyone to think about submitting an IDEAS proposal that will boost student success.

As I shared in my end-of-the-year email communication, in May, which I’m sure you all read carefully we have so much to celebrate. While time does not allow me to note everything, I do think it’s important for our campus to hear some highlights.

So a seventh achievement made in June, is that we announced a Memorandum of Understanding, or **MOU, with San Joaquin Delta College** that will allow Delta College students to earn a bachelor’s degree from Stanislaus State without ever leaving Stockton. The partnership, which we call **WOW, for Warriors on the Way**, includes a guaranteed sequence of upper division courses in the Stockton Center’s three most popular majors: (1) business administration; (2) psychology; and (3) liberal studies. These courses will be offered in sequence so a transfer student can take a complete set of courses within a two-year period at the Stockton Center. The agreement gives students from Stockton, and the surrounding communities, unprecedented access to public higher education close to home, with the potential to increase their earnings and improve their lives — and the lives of their families — as a result.

In addition, we are working with our Stockton Warrior Team, the Stockton Site Authority and the Chancellor’s Office to make strong progress toward the construction of a new, modern university facility at the Stockton Center. We will be talking more about those plans during a Stockton Center Town Hall, set for **October 5th at 10-11 am** **right here in Snider Hall**. The town hall will be designed to help the campus community better understand how the Stockton Center serves the entire region, and how everyone benefits from having a branch campus. So save the date if you are interested in joining us at this town hall.

We also are moving forward with plans to expand the WOW program to the other three community colleges in our six-county region: **Modesto Junior College**, **Merced College** and **Columbia College**.

An 8th achievement is our exciting pilot program involving our new **Design Your Tomorrow**certificate course, which is modeled after the **Stanford Design Your Life** series. This continuing education unit course, offered through University Extended Education and funded by an innovation grant from the CSU Commission on the Extended University, involved approximately 30 students and was team-taught by **DR. BRUCE HESSE, DR. HAROLD STANISLAW, DR. ELLEN BELL** and **MS. JULIE SEDLEMEYER**, as an innovative workshop certificate course that actively guides students in identifying their goals and creating a career path. This course spurs students to not only think about a career path, but to actively map-out a direction toward the career of their choice. I’m especially excited that **Provost KIM GREER** and I hope to team-teach another section this fall. I hope that many of our faculty here today, after looking into the Design Your Life concept, will consider joining us in teaching the course in future semesters.

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We’ve learned this year first-hand about the impact Stan State can have on a global scale. In February, a group of Italian farmers visited our campus and engaged with our students and faculty so that both sides could learn about sustainable farming practices applicable to both the Central Valley and the **Emilia-Romagna (Romana)** region of central Italy. The group from Italy was so excited to be here, and we were equally excited to have them. They were wide-eyed at a lot of the things they saw here, and were very polite when they saw some things here that they were convinced they did better in Italy. For example, one of the Italian farmers happens to live in Parma and is one of the leading producers of the world-class thin-sliced Parma ham and, of course, the Parmesano-Reggiano cheese so famous in that region. At our get-acquainted session, we provided the group with some meats and cheeses and light snacks, which he proclaimed as being very good … for America.

Also, this spring we were able to share the story of the successful Solar Suitcase project that Stan State conducted with **Dutcher Middle School** to provide solar power to classrooms in Kenya. We take for granted the ability to light a room in the dark or to recharge our cellphones, but in many rural areas of the world, **The Solar Suitcase** project has the potential to transform thousands of lives through education.

Of course, our effort to impact lives through education starts at home, and this current semester marks the launch of our four-year teacher credential program, designed to enable qualified students to complete both a B.A. in Liberal Studies and a teaching credential in four years rather than the usual five years. We received a program grant late in 2016 to launch this program, which is designed to help ease California’s K-12 teacher shortage with a special focus on expanding the number of teacher candidates earning STEM, special education and bilingual credentials — the most critical areas of need for teachers in California.

I hope a pattern is starting to emerge for you and you are starting to hear the difference we are making. We are not only changing the trajectory of our students’ lives, Stan State is helping to positively shape the Central Valley region.

Another great example of how we are responding to the immediate and compelling needs of our region is through the launch earlier this year of our family nurse practitioner master’s degree program. This program will help alleviate the shortage of primary care providers in the Central Valley, which has fewer physicians per capita than any other region in California. In January, we received a **$1.6 million gift from Legacy Health Endowment i**n partnership with Livingston Community Health to help establish this program. The gift will provide tuition assistance for students who plan to live and work in the region and for mentoring initiatives that will connect them with local healthcare professionals.

Just like our campus continues to receive attention for the impact we’re making, our students continue to attract the spotlight and earn awards. Earlier this month, we were informed that an unprecedented **4** Stanislaus State students received CSU system-wide scholarships.

**They are … HEATHER SIMMONS**, who is maintaining a perfect 4.0 GPA as a second-year master’s student in English, received the $10,000 Schoettler Scholarship for visually-impaired students. **LIVIER SANCHEZ**, a senior biological sciences major, who received a $6,000 CSU Trustees Award, and **ATOUR KAMBER**, also a senior studying biological sciences, who received a $3,500 CSU Trustees Award. Finally, **MICHAEL WYATT,** a senior studying business administration and an infielder on our Warriors baseball team, won a $3,000 Leffingwell Scholarship. This is the first time Stan State students have claimed four CSU system-wide scholarships.

And now for some notes and perspective on the budget. The state provided **$197 million in new base** funding for the CSU this year or about **70% of the $283 million requested** by the CSU Board of Trustees. In addition, the state also provided **$122 million** of one-time funding.

Our Stan State budget increased by **$11.0** million with $6.5 million in base budget and **$4.5** million in **one-time** funding. These resources will fund compensation and benefit cost increases, support and expand Graduation Initiative 2025 programs, and fund additional course sections. In addition, the funding will allow us to address critical deferred maintenance projects, improve lab safety, and augment funding for several Student Affairs positions.

Vice President/CFO, Dr. Darrell Haydon will hold an open campus budget forum in early September to brief the campus on last year’s financial results, year-end reserves, divisional budgets, and provide detailed information on how the new funding will be used in consultation with the University Budget Advisory Committee.

While this year’s budget allocation was greater than that originally proposed by the Governor, it still fell short of allocating new base funding for additional enrollment growth. Nonetheless, we are grateful to the shared commitment of the CSU and our state legislators towards investing in higher education in order to continue to transform our students’ lives and our regions.

Ninth, no one these days can walk through our campus without noticing the physical hole in the middle of campus. But soon, within that space, the new $52 million student-funded University Student Union will rise and will change the look and feel of our entire campus. Students, as well as faculty and staff, will come to find that a well-designed and well-managed student center is a place where classroom conversations can overflow and emerge with greater depth.

At accomplishment #10, an ongoing project that to most of you will seem very much behind the scenes is the refocus of University Communications and Public Affairs, led by Vice President **MICHELE LAHTI** and Senior AVP **ROSALEE RUSH**. We have established proactive relationships with all of the key media players in our region — both print and digital. In the past, Stan State has experienced some difficulty garnering the attention of our local television stations, especially since they are based more than 90 miles north of us in Sacramento. Our new approach has resulted in more than 300 stories about Stan State in the last year appearing in regional media, including 40 feature stories that were a direct result of being proactive in the way we pitch story ideas to media outlets. Our Communications and Public Affairs team also continues to analyze and enhance its social media and marketing presence and is developing a broad-based marketing strategy for both our main campus and the Stockton Center. As I mentioned earlier, this is part of the effort to position Stan State, through increased regional visibility, as a University of choice and distinction, increasing the value of a Stan State degree.

All of the above examples demonstrate how the University, through the engagement of students, faculty and staff, continues to move toward becoming a regional academic powerhouse. But we also recognize that often the greatest transformations start one person at a time.

No one can attest to this more than **ALTHEA MCCLAM**, who as a child in Oklahoma City dreamed of going to college … until life got in the way. Her mother died when she was 17. With six younger children in the house, Althea stepped into the role of being a mom and got a job to help support her family. That job paid $70 a week and her take-home pay was about $53.

Once her siblings got older, she moved to Oakland and started taking classes at Laney College. Again, life happened. She got married and she and her husband took in and raised a foster child. She worked for 16 years as a correctional officer, and then her husband died. Althea moved to Stockton and enrolled at Delta College, earning an associate degree. She transferred to the Stan State Stockton Center and this spring, at age 65, walked across the stage with a bachelor’s degree in social sciences. Althea is considering going on to earn a master’s degree. Congratulations Althea.

**Alejandro and Althea** are only two success stories out of hundreds that illustrate how students are transformed by their Stan State experience. And they will go on not only as ambassadors of their alma mater — but as people with the potential and drive to be a transformative power within the region.

We are so proud of our students. Our success as a University is defined by their success. We know that our students are Valley Tough, brave, pioneering, courageous and dream of going beyond the norm of earning a college degree. They are dreaming not just for a job, but for personal success and a professional career that is fulfilling and gives back to their communities. They are implicitly becoming leaders, while transforming themselves and their communities. They have grit, tenacity and tremendous potential.

I think about **ROCIO GARCIA**, who grew up in an agricultural family and came to the Central Valley from Mexico. Neither of her parents spoke English, but Rocio came to Stan State as a first-generation college student and graduated with a double major in sociology and Spanish. She didn’t stop there. She earned her master’s degree in sociology from the University of Nevada and is finishing-up her doctorate at UCLA, with plans to defend her dissertation next spring. We recently found out that Rocio just received a prestigious Minority Fellowship from the American Sociological Association – one of only seven such national awards presented annually in the nation.

Rocio’s story illustrates how Stan State succeeds in transforming the lives of students. Because of their success in college, because they are strong enough to attempt college and brave enough to engage their teachers, they go on to become leaders in the region and beyond.

At my Fall Address last year, I asked how many in attendance were excited and ready to make Stanislaus State an even more visible, distinctive and outstanding campus. Do you remember how many of you said you were ready? 92% of you said that you were excited or very excited to roll up your sleeves and get to work.

With our strategic plan in place, we have a blueprint that illustrates our University’s shared goals for the next seven years. Those goals are:

1. To be a student-ready university

**2. To provide transformational learning experiences driven by faculty success**

3. T**o boldly pursue innovation and creativity**

4. T**o hone administrative efficacy through thoughtful stewardship of resources**

5. To forge and strengthen bonds with our communities, rooted in a shared future

It’s a new year and a new day on campus. So with our collectively-constructed marching orders in hand, I invite everybody to engage fully in the efforts and experiences that will continue to transform our students, our faculty, our staff, our community and our region.

Thank you all for coming to the Fall Welcome and I wish everyone a great year!