

Welcome back.

Our academic achievements over the past year have been tremendous. The faculty in the College of Science and Mathematics produced nearly 400 scholarly and creative works. The faculty and center directors in the College of Health and Human Services received over \$10,000,000 in grants and contract awards, contributing to the record \$41M in external research funding that the President noted. The Division of Continuing and Global Education provided more than \$2.2M to Schools, Colleges, and academic departments. Funding from faculty research and from Continuing Education are significant contributors to the sustainability and growth of our academic programs, which increasingly depend on non-State sources. One of those sources is private support, and in that connection I'm pleased to note that, as we conclude our capital campaign, we'll begin to see how the \$29.4M Jordan gift is transforming Fresno State, as we make progress on building the Jordan Research Center, a state-of-the-art facility equipped for faculty research in agriculture, science, and engineering that spans disciplines across the university.

The Campaign for Fresno State has brought us a number of transformative gifts, while it has challenged us to create an engaging vision of academic achievement and distinction. To continue to pursue that vision, Vice President Smits and I will be meeting with the School and College Deans soon to begin to develop a vision for the next five to ten years. Over the fall semester, the Deans will involve you in what I hope will be an exciting discussion focused on two central questions: What do we want Fresno State's

academic profile to become over the next decade, and how can private support help us to get there. I'm eager to hear your ideas and plans.

At present, we continue to build distinction and demand in many areas. As the President noted, we are launching two new doctoral programs, in Nursing and in Physical Therapy. Our Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership hosted 47 doctoral granting universities from around the US to participate in the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate. The Craig School of Business has received approval for an online MBA program and is actively recruiting an initial cohort. The Department of Philosophy received a major NEH grant, as part of the Bridging Cultures Initiative, for a project titled **Ethics, Religion, and Civil Discourse**, and, in October of 2011, we hosted an academic conference that brought over twenty scholars from across the nation. And the Henry Madden Library recorded 1.2 million visits last year, continuing to draw students, faculty, and community patrons in increasing numbers.

As President Welty noted, our retention and graduation rates are exceptionally high. The ten Departments with the highest graduation rates are Finance and Business Law, Accountancy, Marketing and Logistics, Management, Geography, Communicative Disorders, Mass Communication and Journalism, English, Information Systems and Decision Sciences, and Social Work Education. My congratulations to everyone, in every department, who is contributing to this effort.

Our national reputation as a premier engaged university is strong. In the Kremen School community engagement remains high--for example, Fresno Family Counseling provided over 6000 hours of low cost or free services to the community and Mediator Mentor trained students in peer mediation in 66 local schools. With the support and leadership of Mike Dozier and the Fresno State Office of Community and Economic Development, Fresno State was a key participant in a regional economic summit that had an impact on State budget priorities; and, with significant increases in service-learning courses, and exciting new programs like the Revitalize the Fresno State Neighborhood campaign, the Fresno State community provided 1,129,000 hours of service in 2011-12. Our interdisciplinary faculty cohorts--in the areas of health disparities, urban and regional transformation, and world cultures and globalization--have begun working on some very promising projects: the health group is looking at ways to develop more equitable access to health in some of the poorest areas in our region; the transformation group is developing research papers and grant proposals that approach the issue of sustainability from multiple perspectives; and the globalization group is planning a national conference on the international issues and opportunities facing the 21<sup>st</sup> century university.

These wonderful achievements constitute only a small portion of what you are doing for our students, for your disciplines, and for the region. In the face of challenges that many would find paralyzing, your dedication keeps us moving forward, and I'm delighted to keep step with the momentum and distinction that you have established.

Along with support for faculty development in teaching, which I'll discuss in a moment, I have for this year allocated \$500,000 to assigned time for faculty research, \$100,000 to undergraduate student research (to support undergraduates' collaborative work with faculty), and \$100,000 to graduate student research. I'll make every effort to continue and expand this funding, because it's crucial to the success and distinction of our faculty and students.

As the President noted, we will be searching for over fifty new faculty this year. This is possible in part because the reduction in our employees since 2008 has freed up some dollars in our benefits pool, and I've devoted those dollars to funding faculty positions in areas identified by the Departments and the Deans. And today, we are welcoming 22 new colleagues who will be beginning their careers as tenure-track faculty at Fresno State (invite them to stand for applause).

To our new colleagues, let me say, unequivocally: You have joined a great university. Unfortunately, we are entering another year of fiscal uncertainty. In the face of this challenge, we are nonetheless positioned to make well-considered rather than urgent decisions. We will maintain scholarly distinction and teaching excellence as high values. And I trust that—as we work together in the spirit and process of shared governance—we will maintain a dialogue informed by mutual respect, courtesy, transparency, and good will; and remind ourselves often that we are here for our students, and that their best interests should frame and guide everything we do.

Those of you who have, like me, been in the academy for decades, must have noticed that our students keep getting younger, relative to many of us. We can sometimes forget the fact that our views of how learning takes place are rooted in our own generational experience as students. Many of us are Boomers. As youngsters and young adults, we got our information from paper--books, magazines, and newspapers. When we were in college, most of us self-identified as students. We used pencils. We did one thing at a time. Today's students are post-Boomer, post-Gen X, and post-Millennial. They complete multiple tasks while listening to music with headphones and texting with an iPhone. They come to Fresno State from a rich diversity of backgrounds, many are the first in their family to attend college, and most have significant responsibilities beyond what they encounter in the classroom. While we Boomers saw higher education as a path, these students often see it as a network, a constellation, or a maze.

What constitutes learning for these students? Is their facility with multi-tasking a deficiency, a sign of minds with more energy but less depth? Or, is it a new literacy that makes them more adept at critical thinking, wit, irony, the appreciation of complexity and simultaneous multiple perspectives, and social intercourse?

These are unsettled, trenchant questions, some of which can be addressed through good analytic tools that tell us how different types of students learn best, while others invite the patient, reflective deliberation that we have been trained to value and exemplify. However, while we deliberate, a number of universities, including Harvard, Stanford, Princeton, Michigan, MIT, Berkeley, Penn, Georgia Tech, Duke, Washington,

Caltech, Rice, Illinois, and Virginia, are speeding along, mounting self-paced Massive Open Online Courses—MOOCs—with the potential for enrolling millions of students.

How should we respond to the challenges of this new context? That's an easy one: we respond by continuing to respect and support the diversity of effective approaches to teaching and learning that our faculty colleagues represent, and by pointing at the successes of our students as proof of our dedication and their commitment. At the same time, we want to acknowledge that our students are different from many of us, and that staying at the cutting edge of pedagogical practice will help us continue to both engage and challenge them. In this connection, take a look at a brief video showing some of the support that we offer for teaching and learning with technology:

### TILT video

You can see that there's been a great deal of energetic interest in our course redesign academy. As you know, "course redesign" is nothing new. We all redesign all the time. I had a colleague at the University of Illinois who added a page or two to her syllabus every semester, to account for the new ways in which the students had either misunderstood or "strategically interpreted" her course requirements. By the time she retired, the syllabus was the size of a monograph. In quite different fashion, our redesign academy offers technological tools and pedagogical strategies for courses that are both rigorous and engaging. Because demand for the redesign academy was twice as high as what we could accommodate, we are providing Plan for Excellence funding this year for an expansion of this service, which I hope will interest many of you.

On a closing note, I want to remind you that this year I'll continue to be out and about, holding open forums, meeting with the Council of Chairs, lunching with new and newly promoted faculty, and visiting the classes of those who invite me. And I'll be happy to meet with any Departments, Schools, or Colleges that ask me to come by. Also, please feel free to stop me when I'm in transit to or from Starbucks, to let me know how you're doing, and to share with me your best ideas, worrisome questions, or good news. I promise not to appoint any Task Forces this year, but guarantee that I will ask for your help and advice as we press ahead. We are always at our best in a climate of well-informed exchange, where we expect from our students and from ourselves no less than honesty, civility, compassion for our common struggles and flaws, and love for the best that is known and thought. Please hold me to these ideals as we move forward, and help me continue to learn from your example.

Once again, welcome back. And thank you for helping to make Fresno State a great university.