



Statement by President Joseph I. Castro – First 100 Days

November 8, 2013

On August 1, my first day of service as President of Fresno State, I shared with you my plan to listen and learn before making major decisions. Over the last 100 days, I have begun to introduce myself to students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends throughout the Valley and nation. The welcome I have received has been inspirational and heartwarming.

Serving as president of this extraordinary university has been the most exciting personal and professional challenge of my life. It is a perfect confluence of deep personal meaning and incredible challenge and opportunity. I have met many hundreds of people across the Valley, state and nation. I have walked across the entire campus plus visited farms, museums, places of worship, homes, Capitol Hill, football stadiums and so many other places locally and beyond.

As I've said since Day 1, my highest priority as President is to accelerate our student success efforts. We will invest more in programs with proven success in helping our students to graduate in a timely way. To ensure that our students have access to the most valuable tools, we will launch phase one of our tablet initiative in fall 2014, which will serve a cohort of undergraduate and graduate students. Other students will participate in future years.

I reported in August that Fresno State has record enrollment this fall. There is more good news to share today. Freshman applications for fall 2014 are up almost 20 percent over this point last year. This is encouraging preliminary news as it provides evidence of Fresno State's attractiveness to students and families. Because of this significant demand, I have requested funding from the California State University Chancellor's Office to support 800 additional students in 2014-15.

One key responsibility that I have is to recruit and retain a talented and diverse leadership team. I have launched two national searches for new members of my Cabinet – one, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and two, the Vice President for Student Affairs. I plan to fill these key leadership positions in 2014.

The Valley is home to the largest and most vibrant industry in California – agriculture. Our agricultural industry is the most successful of its kind in the world. Fresno State is uniquely positioned to capitalize on its close proximity to this dynamic industry. To ensure that we do this, today, I am announcing the establishment of a Presidential Commission on the Future of Agriculture. This Commission will be co-chaired by dairy farmer and industry leader, George

Soares of Hanford, and Fresno State Provost Andrew Hoff, and will include leaders from throughout the Valley. The members will assess industry needs and make recommendations to me regarding how Fresno State's agricultural programs (defined to include intersections with science and math, engineering, business and other areas) can be among the very best in the nation and world. The commission will share its first report with me in May.

In my fall Address to the campus, I made a commitment to invest more in the professional development and wellness of faculty and staff. Today, I am announcing the establishment of a campus Task Force on Organizational Engagement that will make recommendations to me in 2014 regarding new strategies to enhance support for faculty and staff. Our people are our most vital asset. We will invest in them, their development and success.

My most urgent non-academic priority is to upgrade our campus' infrastructure, much of which has been in place since the 1950s. We will invest over \$31 million to upgrade our IT and electrical infrastructure over the next two years. I am grateful for CSU Chancellor White's support in this key area.

Finally, I have spoken often of my belief that Fresno State's academic and athletic programs can and will rise together. Our student-athletes, coaches and staff have greatly impressed me. It is my goal that we continue to win with integrity. One important component of winning with integrity is embracing the spirit of Title IX throughout our athletic programs.

There has been great interest in what changes may or may not happen in the athletics area at Fresno State. Today, I am announcing a comprehensive review of athletics at Fresno State. This review will be done in collaboration with the Athletic Department and will lead to decisions made next year regarding our men's and women's athletic teams. As part of that review, I will explore the re-establishment of a men's wrestling team. Doing so will require a significant investment of private funding by those in the community who want to see this become a reality.

Fresno State has been a vibrant comprehensive regional university for over a century. My presidency will continue to emphasize success and excellence. We will deal effectively with short-term issues while always staying laser focused on ensuring that Fresno State will be an even stronger university for the next generations of students and families.

Our future is very bright. Because our future is bright, so is the future of this great Valley.

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