MODERATOR: I would now like to turn the conference over to our host, Associate Vice President of Communications at Fresno State, Ms. Shirley Armbruster. Shirley, please go ahead.

ARMBRUSTER: Thank you Rich and good afternoon everyone. Welcome to our press conference to introduce our President-designate, Dr. Joseph Castro who will assume the presidency at Fresno State on August 1st. As you saw on the California State University press release, Dr. Castro is from Hanford and is coming home to Central California. He’s a lifelong educator. He’s dedicated to California public higher education. Also on the conference with us today is CSU Trustee Dr. Peter Mehas of Fresno who chaired the presidential search committee. We’ll start with brief remarks from Dr. Mehas and then go to Dr. Castro, followed by your questions and the moderator will call on you for your questions. So Dr. Mehas, would you please join us?

MEHAS: Certainly, thank you Shirley. The California State University trustees and the Fresno State presidential advisory committee, who I wish to thank for their diligence and their contentiousness on this whole project. We are absolutely delighted and excited to have Dr. Castro as the eighth president in Fresno State’s 102 year storied history. And the trustees have full confidence in Dr. Castro’s passionate, and I mean passionate commitment to serve the students, faculty, staff and people of the Central Valley. I really believe because of the great reputation of the university and the search process we really were able to draw from the incredibly large pool nationwide of over sixty candidates. And I think the thing that sold us so strongly about Dr. Castro, no one knows out of all the candidates the valley better. The pride of the valley, its students, its people, the economics of the valley, its culture. You talk about our job as trustees to find the right fit and clearly he’s the right fit for Fresno State at this time.

ARMBRUSTER: Thank you Dr. Mehas. And now we’d like to introduce Dr. Joseph Castro.

CASTRO: Good afternoon everybody. I am deeply honored humbled and blessed by the confidence shown in me as I become the eighth president of Fresno State and I want to thank chair Mehas and the entire Board of Trustees for the CSU for their confidence, as well as Chancellor White. I want to especially thank and applaud President Welty for his 22 years of leadership, very successful leadership. And I’ll be standing on the shoulders of his and so many others before him who have shaped Fresno State into an outstanding regional university in the Central Valley. Throughout the process I have been emerging myself in all things Fresno State, its history, its growth and development, its culture of community service and civic engagement, its strong connection with all of the Central Valley. It’s truly a magnificent campus and one that I am just privileged to lead. I’ve worked with Fresno State students, faculty and staff for many years throughout my career. Earlier in my career I was part of the UC/CSU joint doctoral program in educational leadership where I had a chance to work closely with faculty from
across the Fresno State campus and was able to get involved in the preparation of doctoral students throughout the central valley who are leading many of the educational intuitions throughout the region. I was also very fortunate to be part of the founding team of UC Merced and developed many of the programs there that led to the great diversity of their student body. And many of those programs were in close collaboration with Fresno State and I look forward to a close relationship with them going forward. I also have worked closely with the Smittcamp Scholars, particularly those with an interest in the health sciences and recently I hosted them, over a month ago, a commitment I had made well over a month ago to have them come and learn about health sciences and they are just stellar students from throughout the San Joaquin Valley. I love the diversity of the campus. I see Fresno State as a place for great success for students from all background. And I want to enhance the growth of the staff, I want to support the faculty as they expand discovery that serves the interests of the Central Valley. I think the real strength of Fresno State is its people. And I am looking forward to meeting and getting to know all of the students, faculty and staff. And listening and learning and getting a lay of the land. And I want to guild Fresno State in ways that build from such a strong foundation that has been created over the last 22 years and even before that. My wife Mary and I are looking forward to being back home. We both grew up in Kings County. I’m from Hanford. And it’s just a great honor to be back in the Central Valley and to serve in this new and exciting way. We’ll have a transition over the next two months. I spoke with Dr. Welty last night and we had a chance to discuss the transition period. We will work very closely together to ensure a smooth transition. And I will begin August 1st and I couldn’t be any more delighted to do that. We’ll be bringing our two-year-old son, who already has a Fresno State Bulldogs hat.

MEHAS: Yes!

CASTRO: And we have a daughter that’s a Humbolt State student, junior year. And our son is a graduate from UC Berkeley. And with that I’ll be happy to take questions that you might have.

MODERATOR: And ladies and gentleman, if you do have a question please press star and then one on your touch-tone phone. You will hear a tone indicating that you’ve been placed in the queue. You may remove yourself from that queue at any time by pressing the pound key. If you are using a speaker phone we ask that you do pick up the handset before pressing the numbers. Once again if you have a question please press * and then one at this time. And we will first go to the line of Corin Hoggard from ABC 30. Please go ahead.

HOGGARD: Dr. Castro, congratulations, first off.

CASTRO: Thank you.
HOGGARD: I have a lot of well-wishing messages already including one from a woman named Laurie Scott. She talked to me on Facebook, says she went to High School with you and very excited for you.

CASTRO: Oh wonderful. Thank you for passing that along.

HOGGARD: Can we, can you tell us a little about your time down there in Hanford in High School and how that will help you as you come here to the Valley and take over at Fresno State?

CASTRO: Absolutely, happy to do that. Well as you might know, Hanford High School’s mascot is the Bullpup. So I’m graduating from being a Bullpup to being a Bulldog at Fresno State. And it was a great, a great place for me to grow up. I went to schools K-12 in Hanford and graduated from Hanford High School. I was active as editor of the school newspaper and part of the West Yosemite League champion varsity tennis team, most valuable player my senior year. And so I was very active there as both a student and outside the classroom as well and I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to go to UC Berkeley. At the time Chancellor Heyman made a strong commitment to the Central Valley and geographic diversity of the Berkeley campus. And he sponsored a program that was at the Ted Wills Center where I, along with a handful of other Valley students, went for what I thought was an application review workshop. And I went with my mother and they admitted me on the spot. Something that I didn’t expect but I was thrilled by it. And it was one of the transformation moments in my personal journey. And I go back to Hanford regularly. My mother still loves there and my sister who is a Fresno State graduate, both an undergraduate degree and a master’s degree, and is a very successful speech therapist, lives there. And my wife’s family as well, so we’re just thrilled to be back in the Central Valley and particularly at Fresno State.

HOGGARD: Mom is still a beautician?

CASTRO: Absolutely. She retired from that but does it a little bit on the side. But she retired a few years ago to help care for my grandparents and, who have since passed on. But she gets to enjoy her grandchildren now, which is well deserved after working so many years.

HOGGARD: So other than being prepared for the heat, how else does that growing up in the Hanford area, in the Central Valley help you prepare to deal with the students and the issues they have at Fresno State.
CASTRO: Well thank you. I think growing up in the Valley is a really unique experience. And I recall going to the public schools there and the kids were from every background. From every socioeconomic circumstance and what that enabled me to do is to early on develop relationships with people from all different backgrounds and to appreciate the rich diversity in the Central Valley. My wife is Portuguese and I’ve been really blessed to learn a lot about that culture while we’ve been together and just appreciating all of the differences from a cultural perspective from throughout the Central Valley. And that I think that’s just really special and distinct and you see that in students at Fresno State. At the same time, you know, the poverty rates and the unemployment rates are just unreasonably high. And that’s something that I am looking forward to tackling with others at Fresno State and with elected leaders and with community and business leaders up and down the Valley to see what we can do to change that over time. And so I think growing up in the Valley gives me that special appreciation. And I won’t need a GPS to find Tranquility or Parlier or anything like that. I know the communities up and down the valley very well and a lot of the people there and I look forward to meeting more of them in the near future.

HOGGARD: Okay. Thanks.

CASTRO: Thank you.

MODERATOR: We will now go to the line of Pablo Lopez of the Fresno Bee. Please go ahead.

LOPEZ: Dr. Castro, congratulations on your new job.

CASTRO: Thank you Pablo. Thank you for your note today.

LOPEZ: And you mentioned that you have these big shoes to fill in Dr. Welty. And I was wondering, what is your experience in fundraising and what is your experience in handling big time athletics because the Bulldogs are a very big part of the community?

CASTRO: Thank you very much. Well Dr. Welty, as I said in my opening remarks, has done a magnificent job in leading Fresno State and I am so fortunately to be able to lead Fresno State in ways that build upon what he has done with so many other people, the faculty and staff and the students and the alumni and all the friends. As it relates to fundraising, I have been very active in fundraising throughout my career at the Berkeley campus. I helped secure the first major gift at the Goldman School of Public Policy which named that school. It was a gift from the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Foundation which at the time, this was in the 90s, it was a huge gift for the Berkeley campus, $10 million, and we named the school after that family,
which has been so supported of education. At Santa Barbara and Merced the same thing. With the founding team in Merced that I helped to identify and cultivate and secure gifts in collaboration with the Chancellor at the time Carol Thomson Keys and the vice chancellor Jim Erickson. And we were able to secure a number of private gifts that helped UC Merced develop in extraordinary ways. And at UC Santa Barbara I have worked in the past I worked on development efforts including a very special gift from a man named James Jimenez. James Jimenez is basically one of the inventors of the early machinery to make tortillas in mass form. And he and I developed a very close friendship before he passed away, well into his 90s. He was a very successful philanthropist and we worked together and he provided a major gift, over half a million dollars to the UC Santa Barbara campus. And then most recently here at UC San Francisco, Chancellor Desmond-Hellmann asked me to lead on her behalf a $100 million fundraising initiative, a three year, what we’re calling a turbo initiative. It’s not a full-fledged campaign, it’s focused on student support and enhancing our educational infrastructure. And we’ve been very fortunate to raise $40 million in one year for that particular initiative. So I have experience in that area that I’ll bring to Fresno State, and there is such a wealth of experience at Fresno State in this area and incredible friends and supporters throughout the Valley. I’m going to look forward to meeting all of them and one of the great things about fundraising for something that you care about is it’s really easy to do because you want to make a positive difference and you’re talking to people who want to do the same thing. So it’s really about friendship and from that will flow more gifts. In terms of athletics, as I mentioned I did play sports in high school, I am a very avid sports fan while I was at the Santa Barbara campus I was very fortunate to work closely with the Athletic Director there, Gary Cunningham, who is athletic director of Fresno. I learned a lot from him during that time at Santa Barbara. UCSF as you know does not have athletic teams. We have a school medicine though that provides complications for the mission here complexities and that sort of thing. I am going to focus on learning more about what’s happening in athletics and supporting it as much as I can. I believe it is very important for the students and the entire community to have a strong athletic program and I’ll do whatever I can as president to advance that.

LOPEZ: Okay and I notice in your bio it says here that, “He is also a faculty member in the department of family committee medicine in the UCSF school of medicine.”

CASTRO: Yes.

LOPEZ: So I was wondering are you teaching there now? And will you be teaching at Fresno State?

CASTRO: Thank you. I do teach now and I really enjoy teaching recently taught a course on health policy here for UCSF students and it was a concentrated course over a couple of weeks. I have not been able to teach full quarter class, I would love to do it to explore whether my time
will allow for it at Fresno State. But as Shirley said I’ve been a lifelong educator and I’m passionate about that. I enjoy working and interacting with the students in that way and look forward to being an active faculty member of Fresno State and supporting the academic mission and I really want to do everything I can to enhance even further the academic programs at Fresno State. When people think about Fresno State they are going to think about the great academic programs and the great athletic programs as well/

LOPEZ: Thank you very much Dr. Castro

CASTRO: Thank you!

MODERATOR: We will now go to the line of Rachel Azevedo with CBS 47 TV Fresno

AZEVEDO: Congratulations Dr. Castro!

CASTRO: Thank you Rachel nice to meet you.

AZEVEDO: I’m Portuguese as well so I am happy to hear your wife is.

CASTRO: Wonderful. Wonderful.

AZEVEDO: So I wanted to do some housekeeping. Can I have your age please?

CASTRO: Sure I am 46.

AZEVEDO: And were you and your wife high school sweethearts?

CASTRO: Almost we met right after I graduated from high school.

AZEVEDO : So with all this time spent in the bay area for so many years did you know that you wanted to come back to the Central Valley was it part of your plan or did it just kind of happen?

CASTRO: That’s a great question. It’s something that Mary and I, my wife Mary and I have talked about throughout my career and we were so blessed to be part of the UC Merced team earlier in my career and for a variety of reasons, I decided that the opportunity of Santa Barbara was too hard to pass up. So we gave up being as close to our family for that period of time but that was clearly one of the parts of moving to Santa Barbara and then later San Francisco that we missed. And in addition to family just the strong connection to the valley that I have enjoyed throughout my career whenever I can I design and develop programs that support the valley. So I got to know the Smitcamp scholars program through Honora Chapman and the Dean Sharon Brown-Welty. And we decided to work together to make sure those students know as much as possible about the health sciences. So I took a trip down there with the administration deans a year and a half ago and then we had a subsequent visit last month, so that’s just one example. I work very closely with the Doctors Academy there in Fresno headed by Dr. Flores and so
whenever I could, even when I didn’t live in the valley I tried to do whatever I could to support what was happening in the Valley. And especially for all those students who are the first in their families, I get that. And Dr. Welty gets that. And so many people at Fresno State get it from that perspective. So that’s really one of the great blessings of being president at Fresno State, is going to be working throughout the valley and doing whatever I can to advance educational opportunities for everyone.

AZEVEDO: I think much like your story a lot of students at Fresno State probably share that with you, a lot of them come from smaller towns on the outskirts of Fresno are the first of their families and communities to go to college. There’s been a lot of tuition raises and I think some students feel it’s not as financial feasible for them to pay for college these days, I mean what do you plan to do about that I know you can’t decrease tuition by yourself how will you address that when you get here?

CASTRO: That’s a great question, certainly one that I’ve thought a lot about, I believe that Fresno State is already attracting great students. I want to help students to continue to do that from all communities regardless of their economic background and for those who need support, financial support other support to get through I want to make sure that they have that resource at Fresno State. And that where I think the development efforts are going to be very important and I’m going to be thinking about with many others at Fresno State, how to ensure that our development efforts continue to really support those students so they can come to Fresno State and succeed and graduate and go back and work in the communities of the valley ideally and to support the economy of the Valley. The more I can do enhancing those opportunities and making sure that they complete their education and then going out and supporting the economy, I think, that’s going to be critical to the future success of the entire region.

AZEVEDO: Thank you very much.

CASTRO: Thank you.

MODERATOR: Okay. We’ll continue on the line to Joseph Reed with the Hanford Sentinel. Please go ahead.

REED: Hi Dr. Castro. Congratulations on the position.

CASTRO: Thank you nice to meet you. There in Hanford right?

REED: Yup.

CASTRO: Terrific I use to be a paper boy for the Hanford Sentinel.
REED: Oh wow!

CASTRO: Yeah!

CASTRO: I just wanted to know what lessons did you learn growing up in Hanford and how that will impact your time at Fresno State?

CASTRO: Thank you and as I said earlier I really had a great life growing up in Hanford I was raised primarily by my grandparents and my mother. And I had very strong family support to get to where I am today, lots of friends and relatives. And I think that by growing up in Hanford it provides me with a really good insight in terms of what the opportunities are throughout the Valley as well as what the challenges are. And I know the people and culture and I know higher education very well from all of my experiences throughout my career and so I’m looking forward to tapping into all that experience and learning even more about what is happening there to make a positive difference in the Central Valley so I think being in Hanford. Growing up in Hanford and continuing to go back there on a regular basis, it’s been a great reminder of how special the Central Valley is.

REED: So aside from Hanford High which schools did you attend growing up?

CASTRO: I went to Monroe Elementary which was down the street from where my grandparents were. Then I went to Woodward Wilson Junior High School which at the time was the only middle school or junior high school in Hanford. And then there was one high school with two campuses so there was the west campus and the East campus and I did the west campus my freshman and sophomore year and I think that’s now called Hanford West high school and the east campus was for juniors and seniors, so you knew you were big time in high school after the east campus.

REED: Great thanks a lot.

CASTRO: Thank you, nice to meet you

MODERATOR: We’ll now go to the line of Justin Willis, KSEE 24. Please go ahead.

WILLIS: Dr. Castro welcome back to the Central Valley!

CASTRO: Thank you Justin nice to meet you!

WILLIS: Nice to meet you as well look forward to meeting you in person in a couple weeks as well

CASTRO: Terrific!
WILLIS: The question I have for you is Fresno State the motto is Discovery, Diversity, Distinction. As generic of an answer as it might seem to garner, I wonder how you plan on embodying those three words?

CASTRO: Terrific well let’s take Discovery first. You know higher education at institutions like Fresno State play a very special role in our society. They are among the few institutions that both are shaped by society but they in turn shape society through the creation of new knowledge. And so discovery for me is just a reminder of that important feature of universities, the creation of new knowledge the sharing of new knowledge. And that is something that Fresno State has done so well for 102 years. And as a leader I am going to think about the next 102 years not just this year not just next year but making sure that Fresno State is strong and vibrant for all the generations to follow us. Diversity. Diversity of opinions, of backgrounds, cultures. Diversity is such a broad term and I think an appropriate, appropriately broad one. It represents the richness of cultures and people and ideas that exist at Fresno State. And distinction in terms of programs, academic programs certainly the agriculture programs and business programs education and health, all the different areas where Fresno State has really distinguished itself as such a fine institution. And co-circularly from an athletic standpoint certainly Fresno State has distinguished itself as one of the powerhouses from an athletic perspective. And so that is what those three words mean to me today and I anticipate they’ll be brought to life even more clearly in the future when I am at Fresno State.

WILLIS: Going back to about you being the first in your family to go to college, spoke to a couple of students on campus today

CASTRO: Great!

WILLIS: And I mention that to one of the girls that was there and she was learning that for the first time and her face just lit up because she herself is also the first generation to go to college.

CASTRO: Oh great!

WILLIS: But what I wonder is, now that your president being the first in your family to go to college are you setting a new bar for educational goals? Is that the goal now, I have to become university president, you know?

CASTRO: Thank you well I hope that there are some kids in the valley that want to be a university president. That would warm my heart to hear that. And if they were to ask today can a person from the valley be president of Fresno State the answer is absolutely yes! And I think that is a great thing when you talk about being first generation to college, that comes as Dr. Welty has said on such a fine website around the first generation initiative, that comes with some uniqueness. Where students who are first generation of college they really need to understand more clearly how to navigate through the university and because they haven’t had someone from their family who has done it, it requires someone else a friend, a colleague a faculty member a staff member. And for that reason even here at UCSF which is one of the top
health sciences universities in the world, we have a very large percentage of first generation college students and we set up a first generation college program to support them just like Fresno State has its imitative. And as president I would work to make sure that every student from every background, I am going to be president for every student, every faculty member, every staff member, hundreds of thousands of alumni and friends, I want to make sure that everybody succeeds and thrives. First generations in college as well as other students from other backgrounds.

WILLIS: Perfect, let’s see, one last question for you.

CASTRO: Sure

WILLIS: In your time in college you talk about having that person to help you get through and navigate through. It’s just not about being first generation to go to college, it’s about what you doing beyond that and here you are doing way beyond that. Who was the one person that you would credit for helping you navigate the system?

CASTRO: Well, there isn’t one I have to tell you it’s a lot of them, and I’m thinking about them today. Some are alive and some are not. But it’s been you know teachers and counselors, there was a counselor in Hanford high school who told me about that program in Berkeley that if I haven’t heard that from him I would have never known about that program. There was a professor at Stanford when I applied for the doctoral program and in my field, I am very fortunate that I graduate from the very top program in my field actually in all three degrees, I’m fortunate in that way. And at Stanford there was one professor in particular who went got to the admission committee he said I want this guy and that’s how it works in the doctoral programs. You have to have an advocate and he decided he was going to be an advocate for me. And then my advisor Jim March is one of the leading thinkers around leadership at Stanford University. He and I corresponded this morning, and he has written one of the prominent books of about presidential leadership and universities. And he and I worked together on my doctoral dissertation which is about university presidents and so I’m thinking about him and thinking about my grandparents today, a lot of people. The message is, it takes a group of people, it’s not just one, usually and maybe it is for some, but that certainly wasn’t for me. Very supportive wife and children, parents, and in-laws, and friends, just a great strong community of support that I’m going to continue to tap in the days ahead.

WILLIS: Perfect Dr. Castro. Thank you so much and again welcome back

CASTRO: Thank you appreciate it
MODERATOR: We will now go to the line of Toni Tonoko, KMJ news. Please go ahead.

TONOKO: Hi Dr. Castro congratulations!

CASTRO: Thank you Tony. Nice to meet you.

TONOKO: Nice to meet you. I’m going to ask you one question. What’s your first order business comes August first?

CASTRO: First order business, well I want to get to know people. I am going to be listening and learning. I’ve been immersing myself in all things Fresno State and I’m continue to do that during the transitions so that on august 1st I am hitting the ground running. So a lot of the early days are going to be meeting with the folks and listening to their ideas and what’s happening there and formulating some ideas for the future. I certainly come with my own and I want to listen and learn and take it from there. So that’s how it’s going to be initially and then a few weeks after my arrival the new students come and I’m looking forward to participating in all the new students orientation and all the gathering that occurs with new student and just that rich vibrant thing that happens every fall in a university like Fresno state, where you get all these new folks with new ideas. So that’s what I’m planning to do and work closely with the faculty and understand what their issues and interest and needs are with the deans with the other senior administrators. Meeting with the alumni and other friends around the Valley. So I’m going to be busy on campus but I’m going to make sure I am spend significant amount of time off campus talking with our alumni and friends and really hearing what they say about Fresno State and what we can do together to advance the work there.

TONOKO: Wonderful we are all very excited.

CASTRO: Thank you

TONOKO: Alright, Thank you

MODERATOR: Alright. We will not go to the line of Juan Esparza, Vida en el Valle

ESPARAZA: Felicidades Dr. Castro!

CASTRO: Gracias, thank you

ESPARAZA: And just one real quick question, are you bi-lingual or tri-lingual?
CASTRO: Well I want to make sure that, so I know enough words to be dangerous but I don’t want to stretch it so I not am going to say I’m bilingual, okay?

ESPARAZA: Oh okay not a problem, now Fresno state is one of the largest Hispanic service institution in California, you being the first Latino president is significant. What do you hope the message would be to the fast growing Latino community in the Central Valley? There’s five country now that have majority Latino population. Latino enrollment, latino graduation at Fresno state has grown but I’m sure it’s not where it needs to be. Can you talk about that a little bit?

CASTRO: Sure, happy too. Well the fact that Fresno State is a Latino serving institution designated by the federal government is one of the reason why I was attracted to Fresno State there are many reason why I’m attracted to it and that is one of them. As I mention earlier I shared that background with Latino students. I also shared my background being from the Valley with a lot of students and so I’m going to be president for everybody. I’m going to work to advance educational opportunity for Latinos and all the other students at Fresno State. And yeah I hear you about the success rate. You know Fresno State has done a remarkable job of providing access to so many students, Latinos and other students throughout the valley, I want to continue that with my colleagues at Fresno State and do whatever I can to make sure that as many graduate as possible. And of course 100 percent is what we want and I’m going to do whatever I can to work towards that and ensure that all students have what they need to succeed. So that’s my vision as it relates to your question and I’m looking forward to meeting with leaders from all the different communities including Latinos community member throughout the valley as I make visits.

ESPARAZA: Thank you!

CASTRO: Thank you.

MODERATOR: Next to the line David Taub, Clear Channel. Please go ahead.

TAUB: Dr. Castro, speaking of the Athletic department, where do you stand on the wrestling team returning it to varsity sport?

CASTRO: You know I don’t have a position on that. I’m learning about what’s happening, and you need to give me a little bit of time to be able to answer questions like that.
TAUB: Now when you do, you and your family do move to Fresno, will you be owning your own house or be living in the University President provided house.

CASTRO: Thank you, we will be living in the University House just as Dr. Welty and his family has been living and we look forward to that.

TAUB: Will you be having your own car or using the university provided car?

CASTRO: I will be I will receive the benefit of the university car allowance and I plan to use that for the vehicle that I can drive up and down the central valley and across the state.

TAUB: And you mention you have a 2 year old. When he becomes school ages, will you be sending him to a public school?

CASTRO: Yes, that my kids have all gone to public school elementary through high, and both public university and that would be my intention.

TAUB: And finally Giants or Dodgers?

CASTRO: Well, you’re gonna laugh about this because when I was in Santa Barbara, I became a big dodgers fan and I still am. And then I move to San Francisco and of course everybody is a Giants fan. So I appreciate both teams and I know in the Valley that it goes both ways and my grandfather was a big Giants fan and he didn’t like the fact that I was a Dodger fan but you know so I cared for both of them. But I am a Dodgers fan at heart.

TAUB: Alright. Thank you sir.

CASTRO: Sure

MODERATOR: Now we go to Ricardo Cano, The Collegian. Please go ahead

CANO: Hi Dr. Castro. First off congratulations on the new position.

CASTRO: Thank you nice to meet you

CANO: Can you talk a little more about your experience with UC Merced being a part of that leading effort. How is that going to help you, you know when you assume presidency here you know kind of working from the ground up.
CASTRO: Thank you, well working at UC Merced was very exciting part of my career. I actually had the opportunity to work with Dr. Mehas while I was in Fresno and started the UC Center there in Fresno on Shaw avenue. I was given the keys to that in August of 97, I was the first one to open the door and we started a whole a lot of programs there in Fresno at the center, was kind of a pre-curser to the new campus. I would say the most valuable part of that experience was working with people up and down the Valley including students and faculty and staff at Fresno State. As I mention earlier, we had a number of collaborative program where I had a chance to meet and work with the faculty of Fresno State and really understand the overall landscape from higher education perspective and ways that were clearer I had realize before that. So it was a time where I learned a lot we develop a number of initiative. And many people have told me that those early program have really help them to enrolled very talented and diverse institution. And I would look forward as president of Fresno State to working with Chancellor Leland and her team to advance education opportunity throughout the Valley.

CANO: And I know it probably a little too early to ask but you know Dr. Welty is going be staying through end of July for the transition period, you know during that time is there anything specific you going maybe seek out his advice on maybe fundraising or?

CASTRO: Well let me say generally, in my research on university president, my dissertation in Stanford was on this, that many times new president do not talk to their predecessors. And let me tell you in this case Dr. Welty and I gonna meet and talk as often as I can, and I told him last night that I am going to really need some time hearing from him and value his perspective both during the transition and afterwards and welcome his continued support and engagement at Fresno State. So we’re going to talk about fundraising and academic program and community connection and all sorts of things. And I’m looking forward to working closely with him and the rest of the team there at Fresno State. I’ve been on the phone most of the day talking to different folks around the Valley letting them know how excited I am to be joining them.

CANO: You know you talk about coming back to the valley, the Fresno state student body, is that something that attracted you to the position where you seeing the student body that you know that maybe emphasize with a little bit more with them?

CASTRO: Yes let me tell you that the rich talent and diversity from so many perspectives is so attractive. And when I thought about whether to get in to this search, I certainly consider that it was a huge factor. I’ve enjoyed working that kind of environment throughout my career at UC Santa Barbara, in San Francisco, in Berkeley, and now in Fresno State. And yes it’s one of the most attractive parts of the job is getting to know and work closely with students from all backgrounds.
CANO: And at what point in your life, I guess, did you really start to notice that you had a passion for education was it in high school, college?

CASTRO: Thank you. Well I knew in high school probably around my junior year that I was going to be committed to a career in public service because of the experiences I had. And so I knew that. Then when I was at the Berkeley campus as an undergraduate it became clear to me how vitally important universities and other higher education institutions are in our society. How they can help to transform people’s lives and that is when I decided that I wanted to vote to a career in higher education. And so if you look at my resume I spent my entire career as an educator working in higher education with UC but on always on programs that were across the segment. Community colleges and the CSU campuses and the K-12 schools up and down the state. So yeah I say probably around my sophomore junior year of college that I knew I wanted to do that. But I didn’t not know what that was all going to mean. I would of not have predicted university president, at that time, or even consider that as a career. That certainly is come on later.

CANO: Thank you Sir.

CASTRO: Thank you, nice meeting you.

MODERATOR: Now we’re on the line with Pablo Lopez with the Fresno Bee.

LOPEZ: I’m back.

CASTRO: Hi Pablo!

LOPEZ: Hi. I want to be clear; did you say you had three children?

CASTRO: Yes.

LOPEZ: Oh, because my boss thought your wife was pregnant.

CASTRO: Oh, no. She is not pregnant. We have a two year old and we have two older ones.

LOPEZ: What does your wife do?
CASTRO: My wife right now spends a lot of her time supporting our two-year old, taking care of him and our house. When we get to Fresno she will continue to do that with me. She is going to help me and help Fresno State in as many ways as she can. And, she’s told me she wants to go back to college. So I’m hopeful, she gets admitted she’ll be a Fresno State student as well.

LOPEZ: I was wondering your opinion on online courses.

CASTRO: Yes. So that’s a great question. I think what I would talk about is online education in general, Pablo. Whether is important for universities to participate in that, I believe that the answer is yes. The question is whether—is how to do that, the extent to which it’s done and the ways in which it’s done. For example here in UCSF I’ve been very active in leading that effort here and we’ve design our first hybrid online degree program for UCSF, it will begin next January, a Master’s degree in Health Care Administration and Interprofessional Leadership. We have started a number of what they call it MOOCs, Massive Open Online Courses. We were one of the founding fathers of Coursera. We put out three courses in January and we were just experimenting we didn’t know what was going to happen. We had 110,000 students who enrolled in those courses and of those who took the first assessment, 70% of them completed the course. So there were a lot of students there just kind of you-know taking a look, they wanted to take a lecture just for fun. But, for those who were taking it more seriously by beginning to taking assessment, very high percentage completed it. So that taught us fair amount. So what I would say, it would be wrong for any higher education institution to not consider opportunities in this area. I know Fresno State is already been involved in this and the CSU System as well. I would want to learn more about that and think carefully with the Academic Senate and talk to the students and really think about what future directions we would take in online education. There are great opportunities, but something that requires tremendous thought to make sure the students and faculty benefit from that.

LOPEZ: One more tough question, so, compensation will be more than Welty or less?

CASTRO: The compensation will not be set until the next meeting.

LOPEZ: But don’t they give you a ballpark, like you know, $10.00 an hour?

CASTRO: Trustee Mehas, I don’t know if I can actually say that right now, right the Trustees have not acted?

MEHAS: No, we are in the process. You are correct. We are in the process, you’ll find out Pablo, when the Chancellor and the Board—the Board has been talking about that, that will be set in
July for all the new presidents set in L.A. as well as the three other that were in transitions. We are very sensitive to the economic times, so you can find that out come July.

LOPEZ: One question for Dr. Mehas. Are you going to name the other finalist, identify them?

MEHAS: No, were not. As we said before it’s not fair to them and it’s not fair to their institution. I think, if there’s any validation, as you listen to Dr. Castro, if there’s any validation as you listen to the community, all the things that the community said, they wanted somebody that understands the valley, they wanted somebody who understand and had a passion for education. He went to the checklist of all the people who came before the forums, all the emails that I received and our committee member received, Dr. Castro gets an A+ in every one of those categories. So, for those who sometimes think that search committees don’t listen, we listened well and we are so delighted and pleased that we found someone that clearly meets the needs and tailor fits the Central Valley, Pablo.

LOPEZ: Dr. Castro, what is your opinion about the close search process?

CASTRO: I’m going to leave that to Trustee Mehas.

MEHAS: And we found it and it works very, very well, and we always have that option, depending upon the institution, dependent upon the candidate, we never closed that door. But in these cases they work very well. We know this much, that our pool of candidates, clearly and it proved this, clearly we would not have gotten the pool of candidates if had not been for this process. So I think it’s a validation when the process works well, but we always keep that option open, Pablo.

LOPEZ: Thank you very much.

CASTRO: Thank you.

MODERATOR: We’ll go to the line of Chuck Harvey of the Business Journal

HARVEY: Hi Dr. Castro.

CASTRO: Hi Chuck, nice to meet you.

HARVEY: I’m the agriculture writer here and I noticed that no one’s talked about agriculture so far, I believe your family background is in agriculture, isn’t it?
CASTRO: My grandparents came and were farm workers, absolutely. And many of my friends lived on farms, I did not, my wife did, she lived on many dairies and we have many friends and family involved in agriculture, very important part of the valley and I hoped to continue to help in that area. I know Fresno State’s had a very rich tradition of supporting agriculture in the valley and that will continue under my leadership.

HARVEY: Yeah, it’s been—it’s a great agriculture college.

CASTRO: Yes.

HARVEY: Good courses and demonstration projects, water conservation, I believe, coming up.

CASTRO: Yes.

HARVEY: Good organic farming and you want to see all that sort of thing continue at a high level

CASTRO: Well, what I can tell you, I need to learn more about what’s happening. It’s I’m going to be an advocate for advancing the Central Valley’s economy and agriculture is such an important part of that. So, I’m going to do what I can to help through Fresno State’s efforts, through research, education, extension to do whatever we can to support that.

HARVEY: Alright thank you.

CASTRO: Thank you.

MODERATOR: We’ll go to the line of Corin Hoggard, ABC 30.

HOGGARD: Hello again, I have two quick questions. First, what was your mom’s reaction when you told her you were coming back to the Central Valley?

CASTRO: She was very emotional, she was so happy. It’s partly about having her son nearby, but I think is mostly about having her two-year old grandson, she’ll be able to see him more often.

HOGGARD: I’m sure she takes a lot of pride in her son, considering how much effort she put in making sure you got to this position
CASTRO: Absolutely. You know, one of the gifts that she gave to me, and I tell her this all the time, is that as I was growing up I spent a lot of time in beauty salons and I learned so much from all the people in the beauty salon about life. And she embraced diversity even before it was fashionable. You know and her friends are from so many different backgrounds, that, as I grew up developed an appreciation for that and it’s always been in my fabric to have friends and family from so many backgrounds and I think that is the special gift she gave to me as a mother in addition to all her hard work every day to make sure we were okay.

HOGGARD: The last thought I had was—I know you’ve been very active at Canal Alliance and County, have you found any similar local community groups that you’d like to support.

CASTRO: We’ll you can bet that I’ll be looking for them. In everyplace that I’ve lived, I’ve been looking for a community. With Canal Alliance when I arrived here, I was reading a magazine with all these young kids talking about their dreams. And I said, I have to get involved with this organization. I tell you, when I go to Canal Alliance, in San Rafael, which is in Marin County, I feel like I’m back in Hanford Ca. again. The apartment complexes are just like the ones I grew up in, in Hanford. And that’s one of the reasons why I got involved in that. So yes, absolutely, I’m going to be looking for lots of ways, both Mary and I will do that and figure out how we can help to improve the quality of life throughout the valley.

HOGGARD: Great.

CASTRO: I appreciate it. Thank you and good luck.

HOGGARD: Thank you.

MODERATOR: And at this time we’ve exhausted all the calls we have in the queue. Please continue.

ARMBRUSTER: This is Shirley coming back on the line. I want to thank everyone for calling in and participating today. Particularly we want to thank Dr. Castro, and again, we welcome you, as you can see, we are all quite excited to have you. Dr. Mehas thank your participation in this day, as well as in this process, we do appreciate your help for everything you do for Fresno State.

MEHAS: It’s been a pleasure. It’s reaffirming listening to Dr. Castro why the trustees and advisory committee, clearly, clearly made the right decision. I think everybody who is listened
to this press conference today can sense he has the concern and the passion for this valley and the future looks very, very bright.

ARMBRUSTER: Absolutely! Thank you Dr. Mehas. Thank you very much for your participation and good afternoon.