

## Welcome

**President Perez;** Thank you. Thank you so much. I couldn't be more excited to be here than I am right now. I'm blowing up with excitement, honestly. There's so much going on and so much I want to talk to you about. To get things started, we've invited some campus and community leaders to share some welcome remarks. Please join me in watching the screen.

## Welcome video

**Chico Mayor Andrew Coolidge:** Welcome to our new and returning students and faculty here at Chico State. I'm Andrew Coolidge, Mayor for the City of Chico, and a proud Chico State graduate myself, who moved here from just an hour away in Yuba County, where I was raised, to go to school at the university. Chico State is vital to our community. Beyond the educational and cultural aspects, it is you, the students and instructors who make this beautiful college unique. It is your influence and concern for our community which makes Chico a better place to be. A city that cares about our downtown, our neighborhoods, and our parks. A community in which you can grow and learn and flourish. Like many of you, I came to Chico because of this small-town environment that is easy to love and enjoy. I stayed here after college, started a business, and raised a family in Chico because of all that it had to offer.

Taking office in late 2020, we had a lot of work to do to make progress in Chico. We approached the homelessness issue head on. After many decisions and community discussions and even lawsuits, Chico now has one of the largest tiny home communities in the country and is continuing the enforcement period of cleaning up large camps and hazards in our public spaces. This started over a year ago and will continue as each public area in Chico has been cleaned and cleared. Each person finding themselves in this situation is being assessed and moved to the tiny home community or to one of our local shelters. Depot Park, close to Chico State is currently in the process of being noticed and cleaned as we speak.

We've also passed the sales tax measure to repair our streets and increase our public safety. If you drive the areas around the university, you've seen how our roads are in need of repair. This is from several years of needed repairs being ignored in 2019 and 2020, coupled of course with the damage incurred post Camp Fire. While road repair does not happen overnight, I can promise you this, the roads in Chico will be substantially better by the time you graduate, as we are now investing tens of millions of dollars to improve our local city streets each and every year.

Improvements to bike paths, fencing by the railroad tracks, joint improvements with Caltrans of the North Corridor, Highway 32 for bikes and pedestrians, and energy saving city programs have all taken center stage over the last few years. I'm also pleased to announce that after many years of effort, we've had real interest from an airline in returning commercial flights to the Chico Regional Airport. Massive improvements to Cohasset Road, the road that leads to the airport and the overhaul of our taxiways, which were all paid through grant funding, have added to this interest. Flights to and from LAX are our priority and could realistically take off within the next year.

And now I'm asking something from you which I ask each year from our local citizens, join me in making Chico a place in which discussions are calm and where finding solutions in a rational way becomes the rule rather than the exception. Whether you're born and raised here or just here for a

few years or plan on making Chico your home for the future, I ask you to join me in this calm tone. I ask you to respect Chico's parks and creeks, to become a positive example in our community and to leave Chico better than you found it.

**Academic Senate Chair Jeff Trailer:** Welcome back. The easy problems have been solved. The challenge before us is to solve what remain increasingly complex problems. The problem-solving methods that have worked well for us in the past will increasingly not be sufficient. So, in the Academic Senate, we are working on how we can improve our policymaking. I am super excited about our campus leadership team and respectful of our challenges. Let us not forget that we have everything we need to be the most popular campus in the system. Our unique location, fantastic expert faculty and staff, and Chico style curriculum that allows students to be unique individuals and ultimately define their own unique career paths, new solutions, products, and services that we cannot yet imagine. Let's do this.

**Staff Council Chair Tawnie Peterson:** Hello, I am Tawnie Peterson, Chair of Staff Council. In this message, I wanted to tell you the ways staff council will bring you some joy, some fun, and a way to take a break from your day-to-day work. For some fun come to the big Halloween costume contest. Come help us bring some joy to the children of Butte County by being involved in the Joy of Giving program. And who can resist taking a break and volunteering from the ever popular Ask Me tables, where last year we helped 1,700 students. Staff Council will also work to bring you monthly Coffee and Kudos, the Staff Council coffee cart, the Staff and Faculty Art Show, Cats Caught Being Awesome, and the Staff Awards Luncheon. So, watch out for emails and announcements for all the events from Staff Council throughout the year. Wildcats, Staff Council is here. Come join us.

Associated Students President Autumn Alaniz-Wiggins: Hey, Wildcats, I'm Autumn Alaniz-Wiggins, your 2023 to 2024 President of the Associated Students. Today we gather not just to begin another academic year, but to celebrate the pursuit of knowledge and the extraordinary potential that lies within each of us. As a first-generation student who continually finds myself breaking new ground, I urge you to consider a path that promises challenge and growth. Through COVID, we have an increasing number of students attending Chico State in various formats from distance learning, in person, and even hybrid. However, you choose to show up, do not be afraid to question the status quo. Forge connections with your fellow students, teachers, and mentors as you challenge conventional wisdom and dare to innovate. Embrace diversity and thought and the uniqueness that each of you brings to our community. Your experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds enrich the tapestry of our collective Wildcat community. And I can't wait to see what we accomplish this year.

**CSUEU Chapter President Eri Roman:** Greetings Wildcat family. As we begin this fall semester, I can't help but be filled with nostalgia. I remember back in 2007 when I was a Chico State student applying for my first on campus job as a student assistant in Don Penland's CME lab in Tehama. Then in 2008, as a second-year student, I fought against the CSU budget cuts and proposed tuition increases as part of SQE. In 2017, I joined the Student Health Center as an admin support assistant, proudly signing my first union card and becoming a member of CSUEU. Today, I stand before you filled with pride for our union's history and the resilience of our union siblings. Now, as we embark on this exciting year, we are about to witness new leadership across our great campus and at the Chancellor's office. But even more thrilling is the spirit of the labor movement sweeping across the CSU. Our student assistants will fight to vote for their union election this fall, bringing the last

employee group into the union fold. By uniting as one, we will have a stronger collective voice, enabling us to advocate effectively for fair pay and safer learning and working conditions for all represented employees. Joining the union empowers us to stand together at the table with the CSU where we can collaborate and provide concrete solutions that lead to positive change and a better future for each and every member of our community. We are student workers and represented employees of the CSU, from financial aid advisors to custodians, carpenters to lecturers, and graduate assistants to student assistants. Together we are the CSU, and this year our unity will make us stronger than ever before.

**Mechoopda Chairman Dennis Ramirez:** Welcome back Wildcats, let's make history together. Hi, I'm Dennis Ramirez and I'm honored to be here with you all. I'm the Chairman for Mechoopda Indian Tribe, but first let's start off with a prayer. Dear Creator, I want to thank you for such a beautiful day. I want to thank the staff, these people that are all around us, and I want to thank those that are here to learn, to teach. Also, Creator, I want you to bless those that are ill. Give them the strength that they need to get well. And if anybody lost a loved one, please touch their hearts and give them strength to know that one day they will be honored as we honor our own. So I ask this in your name. Amen.

I want to talk about land acknowledgment. What does this mean? I know what it means to me. I would like for you to remember that even though this is an institute with buildings, it's also the land of the first people, my ancestors. When you walk and enjoy the beauty, remember and try to think what it was like 200 years ago. Enjoy the creek, the green grasses while you relax, the trees that were once small and now provide shade for you to enjoy. Land acknowledgment is everywhere. Think a bit before you drop a piece of paper. Remember to think of what was once here.

Congratulations to your new president, President Perez. Take time to know him, ask questions. I had the honor to talk with him and he knows the importance of the Mechoopda people. I know he will keep us alive while he is in this position. Good luck President Perez. My best wishes to the faculty. My best wishes to you, the students. You are where you need to be. Enjoy your last year. Enjoy your first year. Go after your dreams. No one could do it for you. In closing, enjoy your time here. Remember why you are here. Thank you. And may the Creator bless every one of you. *(video concludes)*

**President Perez:** Thank you all. Thank you all. That was that was really special. It brings home how important it is that we as different communities in the same community all work together. We had representation from our faculty. I see our Academic Senate Chair. From staff, I see our representative Eri from our CSUEU. I think Tawnie's here. Autumn's here. I'm not sure if Andrew the Mayor is here. If you are--there we are. Thank you. And Dennis, thank you very much for being here as well. And I really appreciate what you said about how important the land acknowledgement is, what it means to you and what it means to us. It's important to be reminded of that. So thank you and thank you for sharing that with us.

I'm excited about those strong relationships. It is one of the great things about working at Chico State when we look at what we do. And I'm going to talk a little bit about this today. What do I think our purpose is and what our job is? You know what it is already. But it's good to highlight it and remember what it is. Part of what we do is we interact with our community, and we do great things out in our community, and we do it really, really well. So I'm really proud of that, and I want to talk

about it quite a bit, but we've got a lot of other people to thank for being here as well. We've got representatives from our local school board, our superintendent is here. We've got four presidents from community colleges from around the North State. And that represents, and I'm deeply grateful for you all being here. It represents what we do. We're here to provide higher education to students within the North State, but across the state of California. And it's with partnerships with individuals like you and with your institutions that we can do it even better. So thank you for being here.

## **Introductions**

**President Perez:** All right. Now we've got a bunch of other welcomes to go through. We've got five brand new tenure track faculty who we're welcoming on campus. We took a picture today. We've got to Photoshop one more in there when we show this picture the next time. But welcome. We have three lecturers who we moved to the tenure-track line. We've got two other people that are coming from elsewhere to come join our faculty and help us, help our students be successful. So, thank you and thank you for being here.

We also, despite having a hiring freeze, and I'll talk about that in a little while as well, in 22-23 we hired 118 people on our staff side. We converted ten employees from temporary to probationary, and since we had a hiring freeze, 45% of the new positions were promotions from people inside. We have a picture up there. Yeah. Cool. All right. Look, so that's not all 118 positions, but if you look, you've got a couple of new cabinet members as well who have stepped up. We've got our new Chief Diversity Officer Joseph Morales, our Interim Provost Terence Lau, and (interim Vice President for Business and Finance) Jamie did not make it to the picture and she said it was on purpose. So, we'll see whether we can get her in the next one too. And then, oh, I'm sorry, this is part of the problem when you like to go off script as I do, you don't always follow what you're supposed to do. And I apologize to Lori and everybody involved because I know it drives you nuts.

But if I could have our five new tenure track faculty stand and be recognized by the crowd if you're able, that would be awesome. And if you're here. They're holding down the middle of the building over there. And anybody who took on a new staff position last year, if you would rise if you're able and be recognized, I'd appreciate it. But we also had a lot of faculty who were promoted and tenured last year. And so we're going to see a list of those that were recognized for their achievements and promoted or tenured here from the last academic year. (video plays) Thank you. Thank you for what you do here and thank you for what you do for our students. We really appreciate it.

I want to take a little personal privilege and introduce two people who are very special to me, my wife and my son down here in the front. It means a lot to me that you're here. And last but certainly not least, let's talk about our new students. I want to make sure you're paying attention the whole time.

## **Enrollment**

**President Perez:** So, I'm previewing a little bit of what we're going to be talking about. We're going to be talking about enrollment and how we're trying to build enrollment. It's been going on for a good period of time and it is working. We have 4,000 new students coming to join us this fall. This is the largest entering class since the fall of 2019. That's a tremendous accomplishment. We've got more first time in college students. We've got more transfer students. We've got more international students. We've got more graduate students. How many other, what other kind of students do we have? We've got more of them as well. All right. We've got them all. We've got more of everything.

And this doesn't happen for no reason. It's because of the work that you all are doing. It's the work that you've done in the past providing great academic programs, providing great support, providing a great community. That's what you all have done. And now we're going to be able to sell that, show that, and bring students to be able to enjoy it. That's what we get to provide. And I want to thank you all for that work again, we're going to talk about that as we go. We have seen significant declines in enrollment over the last several years. Projections-- Serge told me it's 9,000 more students this year than last year. Is that right Serge? Not quite. All right. Not yet. But there are more students, we expect to have more students this year than we had last year. And that's the first time we can say that in a number of years and it's thanks to the work that you all do. So, let's have a round of applause for everybody here. It's the efforts of admissions, enrollment management, the enrollment continuum teams, the chairs, the faculty, the staff, the deans, other students, advisors, recruiters, outreach people, literally everybody on campus. Everybody on campus participates in this and has participated in it. And we're going to be able to turn this ship around. We already have.

All right, what have we got next? All right, now this is where I get to talk about what I think we need to do. Okay? I couldn't be happier to be here at Chico. Chico State represents everything I want to be as part of a university. We've got a great environment, we have a great climate, we have a great culture, we have a caring campus, community, everything. My wife and I, we're so excited. We're living in the house on campus, the Warren Center, but it's designed by Julia Morgan. We're so proud to be able to live there, but to be able to come and be part of this community right off the bat. It means the world to us. It's fantastic. We've chosen to live, thank you. We've chosen to live in college towns since 1997, except the year I spent at San Jose, which is not quite a college town. But we've liked living in communities that are centered around higher education, that care for students, that care for what we do. And so, the fact that we get to stay here and do that for as many years as we are welcome here, we're looking forward to it. We're very fortunate to be here and happy to be doing it. Keep going. Thank you.

All right. So, this is also going to be a participatory, so you got to understand, let me before we move on, thank you to everybody who has organized what we're seeing today, what we're doing today. I am a challenge to work with. I say stuff that's not in order. And so, the poor person who's running the screen for me, that is a terrible job. Don't ever volunteer to do that. All this is going to be a participatory afternoon.

How many of you have applied to be a president of a CSU now? Participatory. Raise your hand. I'm gonna tell you a little bit about it. Some of you have participated in the search process, but I don't know whether you applied or not. So, here's what happens first. It gets posted, a leadership profile gets posted. And if you want, you go can back and look at the one for Chico State. It talks about what is Chico State. What's the CSU like, what are the challenges that we face? or what are the opportunities that we face at a university? So, I thought I'd maybe tell you a little bit about that. What do we look like as a university? How do I see us? All right, what does our leadership profile look at? Let's roll a video that talks a little bit about what we are.

(Video plays ) Chico State, 136 years of educating the leaders of tomorrow. More than 183,000 graduates making a difference across the globe, and each has their own story to tell. At our core, we support our students to do and dare. To learn new ideas, work hard, overcome challenges, innovate,

support each other, reach new heights, transform their communities, solve impossible problems, and take on the world. Chico State faculty and staff are at the heart of our commitment to student success. We are recognized for social mobility, affordability, innovation, and most importantly, a high quality, high value education. It is abundantly clear that we have so much to be proud of and so many stories to tell. Our Human Identification Lab secured initial state funding to build a new \$55 million state of the art facility on campus. We are leading the way to shape learning across the CSU. The Fulbright US Scholar Program, again, recognizes our exceptional faculty. We continue our legacy of preparing the next generation of outstanding teachers, especially in the North State. A Chico State education prepares students for successful lives and careers, helping them to find their passion, reach their professional goals, and use their voices to help others. Our Wildcats are leaders conducting real world research and helping to solve the biggest challenges of the 21st century. Through our Office of Tribal Relations, Chico State has established a strong relationship with local tribal communities and is committed to outreach and support of indigenous students. Chico State's Cal Fresh outreach program is the best in the state, working tirelessly to ensure California college students basic needs are met. Building on the online expertise we established during the pandemic, Chico State has increased our online programs, expanding access for students, and there's still more growth needed. The Seufferlein Sales program is the largest sales program in the country, with over 500 students enrolled. We will continue to write these stories while strengthening our communities in the North state and beyond. At Chico State, we've been writing these stories for generations. It is the responsibility of each and every one of us to keep sharing them. What Chico State stories will you tell?

## **Community**

**President Perez:** So that's what Chico's-- that's what you are. All right? That's everything that you're doing, that's everything that you have done. It's awesome. Exceptionally proud to be here. Let me also talk a little bit about the caring-ness of what I've seen here. You brought it back to me with the applause, the unsolicited applause that came when your colleagues came up on the screen, recognizing the great things that they did. I was sitting right about here. I think you were sitting next to me. We were here for the staff awards. It struck me, this might not mean that much to everybody else, but I'm going to tell you, this is how it resonated with me. It was awesome. The staff awards were fantastic. Great video, was it Family Feud? I think that's what was played. It was spectacular. So, here's to that, that was great. But I was sitting here and you could see it. It was about this many people. And people were getting awards, people getting nominated for awards. And when I would see somebody's name go up, I remember I was looking over in this area. You saw this genuine level of joy among each other for the recognition of their colleagues and friends. And it happened throughout the entire ceremony. I don't know if that happens every time, but it certainly happened at the one last year. And you could feel this care and this love for each other in the room that was really striking and moving in a lot of ways. And you just saw it again when your pictures of your colleagues came up and you clapped for them. That's the type of caring community that I'm so happy to be a part of. So that's what Chico State looks like to me, That's the leadership profile.

## **Purpose**

Now we talk about--it says, what's the purpose? This is when you, again, you're applying for president, you're trying to figure out what's this place like? Where do I work? What's important to them? So, what's the purpose of our university? The purpose of this university, as I see it, is to provide access to high quality higher education to students in the North State and the state of

California and beyond. And I've got very specific ideas of what that means, and we'll talk about that here in a second. But on top of that, we also need to be embedded in our communities, doing great things for our community and with our community. And we strive for excellence among our faculty, staff, and colleagues. And you saw a lot of recognition on the screen as that was coming. So let's go through this one at a time.

### **Our Students**

Let's talk about our students a little bit. What are our students like, thumbs up or thumbs down for our students? Let's remember, it's participatory. All right, so now we've got people moving. I know the mic's on now. All right. Thumbs are up. Our students are awesome. Alright. They're diverse, they're hard working, they're talented, they're dedicated, they're caring. I was at--another touching moment that I've had in the last year. I was at PAC, the Provost Advisory Council, when I was serving as the Interim Provost, and Joseph Morales, our Chief Diversity Officer, came to talk to the PAC and talk about different circumstances and different things that we might want to look at and experience as we're working. I can't remember what the first group was, but they were talking about the challenges and the difficulties that some of our students overcome. What they face when they come to a university, any university, but when they're coming to Chico State. It was our undocumented students that was the first one. And the hoops that are jumped through willingly and by choice. And it struck me how much people do, how much our students do, how much they're willing to do, to just come and be our students, to come and be in our classes and learn. And it struck me the privilege that we have to be here to welcome those students because of what they're willing to do just to be our students.

All right, so let's talk to one of our students. I want to, let's bring out Autumn Alaniz-Wiggins. Thank you very much for being here. Autumn is our Associated Students President. And I don't know how many of you have met Autumn before. I met her a little while back, actually. I met her before I got to Chico State. I don't know if you want to talk about that.

**Autumn:** Oh yes. This is one of my favorite stories. So, I was at the Juneteenth symposium, thank you so much for coming. It makes this transition to Chico State a lot easier. And the Chico State table was filled. And I just kind of chose a random table to sit at, not really thinking about much. And I sat next to you and we're chatting. He is so friendly. It is like dad energy. It's so welcoming. And I am being really casual with this person and we're talking about how much fun we're having. And I'm like, I'm from Chico State. Where are you from? San Jose. What do you do? I'm the President. Oh, so sorry, sir. I immediately straighten up and he just starts laughing. And he's just been so friendly ever since.

**President Perez:** Well, thank you and it was a pleasure getting to know you there. I really appreciated the experience we had there. It was really cool. It was a Juneteenth symposium. Very proud of what we're doing in the CSU to advance Black student excellence, Black excellence supporting our black student faculty and staff. And we've got a lot of work to do, we've got a lot of people here that have been talking to us and we need to be receptive to that. But I'm also appreciative of what you've been doing this summer in relation to that. I don't know if you want to talk about that.

**Autumn:** Yeah, so this summer, it was kind of split up into like a third of third parts. So, I was working with Shawn Ryan and Darnell Lee with the Black Leadership and Mentoring Program in

partnership with Summer Orientation to help our Black identifying students, that pipeline from high school to college make it a lot easier. And so that's what I was doing with that. The other third of the time, I was working with CSSA, advancing a lot of our initiatives with the tuition increase and the Black Student Success Work Group and the \$10 million that was allocated from the Chancellor's Office. I'm excited to get that work done. And then on the other third, I was just relaxing being a student, not doing anything, because I know this school year I'm going to be doing a lot. So that's good.

**President Perez:** So it's interesting you're breaking it into thirds. I was talking to a student athlete one time and they said they had four things. It was sports, study, social, sleep. And there's not enough time for four things. So they had to give one up. So I'm glad you only had three. That's good. And so what made you want to be a student body president?

**Autumn:** So, what made me want to be student body president or just being a leader in general was actually my time away from Chico State. I took some time off to just work on some mental health issues. I worked on farms around the United States just picking carrots. It was really relaxing. I thoroughly recommend it. I worked at some...

President Perez: I'm in, we're picking carrots tomorrow.

**Autumn:** I worked at some summer camps, and I realized that as much fun as I was having just being a steward of the Earth, I realized that I do need to go back to college. I do need a degree, and Chico State really was giving it its all, and I couldn't imagine having transferred into any other college. So, I came back, I found my community in student life and leadership which was adjacent to AS government. I met some people. I met Kendra Wright who currently supervises us in Associate Student Government. Shout out to AS if I can have my AS team stand up. Stand up. But oh yes, please stand up. Thank you. And it's just been a wild ride ever since. I love it here.

**President Perez:** That's fantastic. And I'm so glad you chose to come back. I'm so glad you got involved with student government and found a community to work with, to bond with. How many students do we have out there? One. We have one student. All right. I highly recommend you get involved in something, some sort of a club. Maybe it's going to be the Convocation Club. And you can bring some more of your colleagues here next year. But I'm glad you're here. What does Associated Students have in store for it this year?

**Autumn:** Associated Student Government actually has a lot planned. We have our committee applications about to open, actually. So, if you know any students who want to get involved in student government committees, we have social justice and equity, legislative affairs, student engagement, sustainability. Please let your students know their voice is pivotal in making Chico State what it is. So that's one of the things that we have going on.

We have some personal initiatives, as I mentioned earlier, with CSSA and advancing black equity and equity amongst all our students when it comes to graduation, which we are doing amazing. Yeah. An independent report says that Chico State is actually doing pretty good. We're doing pretty well and we have more work to do. More work to be done. Yeah. So that's just some of the things that we have going on in Associated Student Government.



**President Perez:** Thank you. You can applaud for like 10 min. She deserves it. Thank you. I'd be happy to hear it. Thank you so much for being here. Thank you for working with me. I'm so looking forward to talking with you, learning with you, and working with you to make Chico State an even better place for our tremendous students.

**Autumn:** Couldn't imagine doing it with anyone else. Thank you.

**President Perez:** Thank you, Autumn. Appreciate it. So, we have this tremendous responsibility, but also a privilege to work with our great students. And with it, we work with outstanding colleagues. We've got great faculty and staff. You saw a number of things that flipped across the screen of recognition that our faculty and our staff are doing. There's a couple of other things we'll pull out of there. We're providing this great academic experience. You saw Mark Stemen's --I'm pretty proud of this one --there's an AASCU award. All right. Who knows what AASCU stands for? I know what it stands for. You don't have to tell me. I'm asking if you know what it stands for. American Association of State Colleges and Universities. We're receiving an award for something Mark has started and is working with. It's a Chico State-led initiative. It's a faculty learning community across the CSU. It also includes some of our community college partners. Faculty from all different disciplines are coming together and learning how to put climate change into their curriculum. So, it's not just an environmental study-- I'm an economics professor by training. It's not just economics and economics in the environment, history, political science, biology, any multiple different sources of that. And so congratulations to Mark getting funding for it, but also for receiving this national recognition that we get to be reflected in here at Chico State.

We've got new programs that were developed last year and we've got more on the books that are coming out. We are continually trying to reinvent and re-look at our curriculum and our academic programs to see what do our students need? What does our state need? What does our region need? And make sure that we're here to provide it for those different audiences. It's fantastic work, I've been in higher education for a long time, long time. I've been a professor of economics for many years. I've been able to work as an administrator for many years. Coming here and seeing the people who we get the opportunity, the privilege to work with, it is heartwarming. People, as I said, care about each other, take it very seriously.

Emilyn, well, say it. The Chico style, alright. She was talking about how we got this next program up and running and we used the Chico style. I can't remember what you referred to in the video as the Chico style. But I liked it. It resonated with me. We get stuff done, alright. We get work done. We also enjoy being around each other. And I feel it and I love it, and so thank you all for being here and being those people.

And we've got all kinds of other cool stuff that are up here that I missed. Hold on a minute. We have a record amount of grants and contracts from our faculty and associates. Over \$60 million last year in new grant awards, up 10% from the year before that. That's the only one I missed. I also want to highlight a program that we were doing last year. I got introduced to it when I was at San Jose State. And I think it's one of the coolest programs you're ever going to see. You may not even believe it when you hear about what it actually is. It's our College Corps. Our College Corps, I heard a whoop, whoop. All right. It's a program that has a remarkable impact on our students and the community. And again, it's called College Corps.

So, think about what we are. We're a university which impacts the success of our students, impacts the success of our communities, and does it by working with tremendous faculty. That's exactly what this is. It's a state program launched last year. So, get ready, it provides \$10,000 financial awards and living allowance to our students who complete 450 hours of service. They do 450 hours of service-- I think we've got some representatives here in the audience--and they get a \$10,000 financial award. As a result of it, we had 63 Chico State students that completed the entire fellowship program, and another four that completed 300 hours of service. Our sectors that our students work in, were K through 12. We had 46 fellows there. Food insecurity with 13 fellows, and climate action with eight fellows. Our community host partners were located in 14 different cities and towns across the state from Eureka to Los Angeles. And through a majority of our fellows served in Butte County, out there in the community, doing great work and getting \$10,000. Was it a \$10,000 loan? No, it's a \$10,000 grant that they got out of it. And so it represents everything that we should be doing at Chico State. It represents everything we're about. Let me bring out Emilyn. Emilyn is the person who started this. Love to talk to you about it a little bit. You got a big, big crowd out there. Thank you. Thank you for being here. Emilyn, how are you tonight, today, this afternoon?

**Emilyn Sheffield:** It is a spectacular time to be in Chico. Yeah, this is going to be a terrific year.

**President Perez:** I agree with you. Tell me why you think it's gonna be so great.

**Emilyn:** Well, it's going to be a terrific year for all the reasons that you've already highlighted. But I'm just delighted to tell you a little bit about College Corps. And by the end of this academic year, we will have had more than 150 College Corps Fellows invest their time, talent, and passion into our local community, host partners, and the people and places they serve. At the same time, they're learning from some of the most experienced, resilient, and capable nonprofit leaders in the country.

**President Perez:** Well, thank you. If you don't mind, maybe we'll watch a video and hear about some of them.

**Emilyn:** think that's a fine idea.

**(Video plays)**

College Core helped me recognize the impacts I can have by serving in my community. >>College Core helped me by surrounding me with like-minded students. So, I felt a sense of belonging on campus. And it also introduced me to community organizations who were vested in making a change. >>I think that it benefits the community massively, not even just for the community, but the students that are involved in this program. >> My fellowship benefits the community by teaching them how to talk about food, growing food, and eating healthy food. >>The biggest contribution our fellows have provided for our host site has been able to do Spanish translation. Not a lot of that's being done for our overall community. When 30% of our community is Hispanic, I think it's, they're better served. Right. And if we want to continue to promote awareness and education, you also have to have access. And having access also means making sure things are culturally appropriate and in their language. >>Some of my favorite moments this last year was our students that we got, you know, they were able to learn on the job like different skills. And they were able to take those skills

and then bring them back home to their families and then with their friends. And while they're engaging in the community in general, I think for morale purposes, it really helps the community. I think obviously having access to more folks that are willing to do the work and consistency. So I think that everyone involved benefits greatly. >>College Corps benefited my community by placing college students in organizations that needed help completing the projects that they were working on. >>The fellows brought a lot of creativity, they brought energy, they brought a sense of being able to do things that sometimes ask educators, we don't get a chance to do and get extra help with those pieces. My fellowship benefited my community through my work with the youth at Lake Elementary. The principal had told me that the first grade teacher had went to the school board and spoke about my involvement with her class, specifically on how I've been helping them. With their sight word literacy. She told me that the first grade teacher reported numbers of 50% increase in the first graders sight word literacy, which was outstanding to hear, to know that my work had a direct result.

**President Perez:** So, Emilyn I don't think you came here by yourself this afternoon.

**Emilyn:** I didn't. We have some of our community host site partners as well as fellows and staff in the audience. If you would stand and just throw a hand up, that would be great. We'd love to celebrate you. So, on behalf of all of us, thank you for serving and community house partners, we couldn't do without you and AS, CSE, stateside. Everybody's involved.

**President Perez:** Yeah. And as you said earlier today, we were talking earlier today, that's the Chico style, right?

**Emilyn:** That is, that is Chico at its finest.

**President Perez:** That's fantastic. So, we heard a little bit about what we did last year. How many we had, what 63 fellows last year? What are we looking at this coming year?

**Emilyn:** So this year we have funding for 90 fellows including support for AB 540 eligible dreamers. This is the only service program of its type that allows dreamers to serve. And serve, they do. If we remove barriers to opportunity, Chico State students will walk through every door.

**President Perez:** Yeah. As I said earlier today to you, and I just said earlier this afternoon, this is the heart of what we ought to be doing as a university. We're supporting our students, we're supporting all of our students, and we're supporting our community, and they're learning at the same time. Are any of our students also in service learning courses?

**Emilyn:** We do have full complement of service-learning courses for our fellows. That's part of the value added. So there's opportunity, there's course credit and there's really just that. Doesn't get much better.

**President Perez:** I asked you to confirm with me, even though I've heard this 1,000 times even from the Governor's office, they get \$10,000 for this right?

**Emilyn:** Yeah. These are \$10,000 fellowship split between a \$7,000 living allowance and a \$3,000 educational award, and you can reapply.

**President Perez:** Thank you. So you're a professor in what's your department?

**Emilyn:** I'm in the Department of Recreation, Hospitality, and Parks Management in the College of Communication and Education.

**President Perez:** Thank you for all that leadership at both the department and college level. We wouldn't be here without you. Thank you. This isn't the only thing you're doing. You told me about some other things you're working on as well.

**Emilyn:** In partnership with University Advancement, we're proud to be hosting eight Climate Core Fellows. We're looking at blending climate and College Corps in a way that leverages both. And we continue our partnership with the Forest Service, with a variety of forest service projects statewide that go from conservation education to environmental restoration. Yeah. Thank you.

**President Perez:** That's fantastic. Should be pretty proud of yourself, you know?

**Emilyn:** Chico is the--I'm gonna go off script. Chico is the most amazing place to be able to have a long trajectory. It was not my ambition necessarily to be sleeping in a tent surrounded by 100 millennials in my 60s. But we can and we do and we dare, and it works. And it's just so nice to be able to thank y'all at the end of my career because I'm a miserable failure as a retiree. This is an extraordinary place and it's nice to thank you.

**President Perez:** Thank you very much. Thank you so much for sharing that. I appreciate it. So here, there are all kinds of mistakes you can make right now, right? We just had this great, that was outstanding close, wasn't it? That could be it. I have an hour and a half of talking left, so maybe, I don't know if everybody wants to stand up, stretch a little bit. We're just getting started.

Remember, literally I taught an econometrics class. How many people have taken an econometrics class? I taught it for 8 hours one day. And just--oh, yeah, no, no, it was great. It was awesome. Everybody loved it. Everybody loved every minute of it. All right. So, we're going to keep going just a little bit. We're gonna talk about some other great stuff about our alumni, our community, and the support we get from them. It has been a banner year. It has been my pleasure to get to learn about and meet our alumni, meet our community and everything they do for us. Let me turn my pages here. Here's some of the achievements we've got out of there. They raised \$17.6 million last year. That comes in to support our students and it supports our ability to do our jobs the way we want to do them. Giving Day last year--Ahmad, he's sitting down here--on Giving Day he was sending me texts and everybody else on the cabinet, sending me texts all day long. You're not gonna believe how far we've gotten. We got way past our ... what was our goal? \$500,000? Right. And how many donors were we hoping to get? All right. So we were hoping for \$500,000. We got \$719,000; we blew past that. It was in one day of people giving on giving day to Chico State and we had 4,000 donors that were involved in it. A testament to you all and to the culture of the community that is here. The percentage of our faculty and staff at Chico State that give back to Chico State is one of the highest in the country among public institutions. And I'm about to fall off, Lori's about to freak out. That talks about how you care about this place and what it means to you. And I think that says a lot. It meant a lot to me. When I heard that we are at the top of the list, \$17 million is a lot of money. When you look

at a university of our size, it's an incredibly large amount of money. So, there's a lot of work that went into that. One of the big gifts that we got last year was from Jon Krabbenschmidt. He committed \$10 million to a new Business building. I had the opportunity to meet Jon this summer. He's a great person. He's super interesting. He's got really interesting interests. I didn't know my son was going to be here. So there's something I'm about to say I don't want him to hear. So plug your ears. Jon's into heli-skiing, so helicopter skiing. So, he donated \$10 million. And in talking to him, he had such a wonderful experience when he was here. He wanted to make sure that we can continue providing that experience for our students. So, he's a really generous person and a generous benefactor. We had an anonymous gift of \$1 million to the Meriam Library to help us with operations there.

And who's our biggest-- anybody know who our biggest donor is? The State of California. The State of California is our biggest donor, and we talk to them pretty frequently. And we want to continue to have the State of California be our biggest donor. One of the big gifts we got last year was \$55 million to build a new human identification lab. I don't know if you know what we do in our human ID lab. In the human ID lab, we have really talented people who are path breaking. It is a facility unmatched on this side of the country. And we need a new building. And now we've got money to build it and we're looking forward to building it. But let me just say what they're doing right now. Right now they're in Maui. There're four people from our lab that are in Maui who are helping with the recovery and the identification of the victims of the horrific fires there. I don't know of a community that would be more familiar with what they're going through in Maui and I'm proud that we're able to be there and help in any way possible. So, if you will indulge me, let's take a moment of silence for the tragedy and the horrific fires that happened there.

Thank you very much. Again, very proud that we can be there, but also appreciative from the state that we can have a better facility to do even more of it, train even more people to go out and do that great work. This is the second oldest CSU in the system. What year did we start? 1887. Prize for over here. 1887, second oldest. We have an aging infrastructure. We've got proposals to try to make that better, but we are modernizing as we speak. We are working to have a better information technology system. We are consistently working on it and working to make it better. We've got our Vice President down here who talks all the time about cybersecurity and what we need to be able to do to protect your information and to be able to protect your ability to do your jobs. We're working on that.

But right over here, we've also got-- anybody not know that we've got a new building going up over here? I love watching buildings go up. Let's watch that building go up. (*timelapse video*)

Ain't that cool? I mean, I don't know that I want to be doing that today honestly, It's hot. But that looks like a really cool job. Here's something else. We were out there for the topping off ceremony, where you put the beam up at the top. We asked him, how many Chico State graduates do you have working on this project? And a majority of the people working on it graduated from Chico State. So let me get, yeah, let's get the lights up in the house really quickly. How many Chico State alums do we have? All right. Keep your hands up, current Chico State students? I know I got one back there. All right. All right. Now, everybody else raise your hand. If you didn't just raise your hand-- you raised your hand before Angela. Thank you. I'm watching you. I have my teacher eyes on. No, no different hand. So you are neither a current Chico State student nor an alum. You have your hand up, it's not too late. We have a lot of really good programs you might be interested in. Maybe check them out.

Serge, We're going to do this one student at a time, my friend. So that's what a leadership profile looks like. Here's what the university is like, here's what our purpose is, then what are our opportunities?

What are our challenges? We've got some very real challenges, and I'm not telling you anything you don't already know, right? But we've got two significant challenges. We've got an enrollment challenge and a very related budget challenge that goes with it. Let's talk about enrollment a little bit. It's declined for several years. We know that we were over 17,000 students. We were down under 13,000 students this last year. We've now turned it around. Again, let's have one more round of applause for everybody who has worked to turn that around. And it's imperative that we continue that progress, that we continue moving forward with increasing in our enrollment. And it's imperative for two reasons. One, it's got significant budgetary impacts on our ability to do our jobs. So, we'll talk about that in a minute. But even more so, we have a mission driven imperative to increase our enrollment. Remember, what we're here for is to support student success. We're here to support students in the North State. And so what we need to do is we need to provide a broad-based higher education opportunity to our North State students who want to come to a CSU, and that's our job to provide that to them. And we have a unique experience and the unique ability to provide that unique experience to students from across the state of California. You have a very hard time finding another university in the state that can give what we can give in a small town, rural community surrounded by farms right up next to the mountains at a CSU price, and wonderful programs that we have.

All right, so we have this dual access mission as I see it. We've got our regional mission, but our statewide mission, in order to do that, well, we need to grow our student body. We need to provide that to more students. So, we have two reasons that we want to increase our enrollment and we have done it, we've turned it around. We are going to enhance those efforts and we're going to fine tune those efforts. Our colleges and our departments have worked really hard reaching out to prospective students and current students, finding out what they need, how we can meet their needs, and how do we build academic schedules that meet those needs. We've got advisors, we've got marketing, we've got recruiters. We've got presidents. We've got a president's spouse talking about what it means to be a Chico State student and be here. And that's what it's going to take. We all have to get out there and talk about what it is to be here as a student. Because as I said, I think it's special and it's unique and I think we're doing ourselves and those students a disservice if we don't give them the opportunity to come here. We are going to continue those efforts. We're going to fine tune them and enhance them, and I'm really looking forward to seeing it work. It's going to be fantastic.

Our other challenge related to that is budget. How many people think we have more money than we need? Just the President. Okay? That's a problem if the President thinks that. He doesn't. We don't have as much money as we need. In fact, we don't get as much money as we're spending right now. So, this is a question. This is going to be a vote. There's very few votes at this event today. Here's the vote. How many of you want to hear the good news first or the bad news? Good news first, 3. Thank you, Ahmad. So, there's no way you're not going to beat that. How many of you want to hear the bad news first? Okay.

Bad news first. It's actually pretty consistent with my impression of people here. Let's hear what we have in front of us and let's figure out how to fix it, right. So last year we had a deficit in our operating

budget of over \$9 million, meaning we spent \$9 million more than we bring in as revenue. And we get revenue through state allocation, through student fees, and through other various means. But we spent \$9 million more than that. We had reserves to cover it, and we have some reserves to push us out into the future. That's the bad news.

Here's the good news. It was only \$9 million. We projected last year to have it be \$20 million. We went into the year thinking we're going to spend \$20 million in reserves, but through a lot of work of you all, we didn't need to spend all that \$20 million. We instituted a hiring freeze and a hiring chill. We reduced our expenditures. We streamlined our academic offerings in ways that made sure that we still have the seats our students need to be successful, but we're more efficient. And we only spent \$9 million of our reserves instead of \$20 million. A little bit back to the bad news, we still spent \$9 million in reserves and we can't do that forever. So, as we go into this next year, we have to continue the efforts that we've had. The hiring freeze has been very difficult on us. We're going to thaw the hiring freeze a little bit. We're going to allow for strategic hiring where we need to, if it's going to increase enrollment, if it's going to increase revenue, or if it's going to support foundational activities. And I'll talk about here what I mean by that in a second. We're going to allow hiring in those areas because we don't want to make it so that we can't operate and we can't do things strategically. We will invest in places that will help us grow, but we have to do it smartly. We have to continue the work that we've done because we have reserves. But those reserves will not last forever and we face more challenges coming. Benefit costs, which we have tremendous benefits, but they're not free to us in the system. We project they're going to go up. I think it's about \$4.5 million next year. Okay. Got it. We're going to spend more on benefits, \$4.5 million. We're not getting an increased allocation for that. We think utilities are probably going to go up a little over \$500,000. Less than \$1 million. Check me out, but that's all money that we're going to have to spend. They're mandatory expenditures; they're things that we need. We need air conditioning, so we have to spend some money on utilities, but we're not getting more money for that. We need to generate that money and we've got to find ways to generate more money.

So, what do we need to do? If we grow enrollment, we'll be able to serve more students, which is the most important thing that we do, but we'll also generate more tuition and fee revenue, and we might be able to head off some planned reductions to our allocations from the CSU. Those of you who aren't aware ... if we don't increase our enrollment above some threshold levels, we'll be cut. Next year we'll lose \$6 million, the year after that, \$6 million, the year after that, \$5 million, cumulative. So, it's imperative again, for us budget-wise to raise our enrollment. But most importantly, it's because of what we do and our mission. We need to share what we do with more students, and I'm looking forward to making that happen.

Last but not least, our challenge we have is our campus experience. What is it like to be here? What kind of an environment do we need to cultivate to be able to serve our mission? I'm skipping ahead a little bit. I think our purpose is threefold. Student success, faculty and staff excellence, and community service and excellence. And we can't do any of those without some foundational activities. And what does that mean? What are those foundational activities? Well, we can't do any of it if our students, faculty and staff don't feel safe when they're on campus. We can't do any of it if we don't have an inclusive and diverse environment where everybody knows that they are welcome and that we actively engaged in being appreciative that they're here. We can't do any of it if we don't have utilities. We can't do any of it if we don't have IT. We can't do any of it if we don't have HR. So

there are certain foundational activities that we have to have and do so that we can do the things that are our purpose, which is student success, faculty and staff excellence, and community support.

So that's what I think we are as a university. That's where we're going to be going as we move forward. That's where we're going to be investing. It's going to be a really, really exciting time. We've learned a lot in the last year, in the last five years, we've learned a lot about how resilient we can be and how creative we can be, and how innovative we can be. And we're going to lean into that as we move forward. And now we get to lean into it in a way where we're going to grow and we're going to support each other and we're going to care for each other. Last time we're going to raise our hand. Maybe you vote yes for that? Thanks.

You're right, you're right. How many people in the last five years have felt like they've been in control? I got a laugh out of that. Been in control of what's happening at Chico State and to themselves individually? Raise your hand. Not the majority, all right? I hate that. I hate feeling like somebody else is going to tell us what we're going to be as a university, how we're going to interact with each other. I can't stand it. All right? I want us to be able to control what we do. I want us to be able to generate what we want to be and be able to chart our own path. I want us to be able to write our own story. I don't want it written for us. We need to generate revenue so that the next time there's a recession, we're not so beholden to our state allocation. We've got to generate other sources of revenue, and we can do it. We've shown that we can do it, and we can do it in other ways. We need to control what's happening to us. We need to think about what we want to look like as a university and what we're going to look like as a university. It's weird to say that about something from what year? 1887. Right. What we want to be in the next five years, but we have to continually think about that. Here's what we're going to do. On September 6th, we need to talk about it together too, right? That's the other thing they ask you when you're interviewing for a president, what are you going to do? How are you going to fix everything? What's going to happen next year? And the answer is, if the President says, here's what we need to be and nobody thinks it's a good idea, it doesn't happen, right? And it shouldn't happen if nobody else at the university thinks it's a good idea. So, we need to talk about it together. We need to talk about what we are going to do to write our own story? What do we want to do? And we're going to take some opportunities this semester to do that. On September 6th, you're all going to get a link. You're going to get a link to a survey that's going to ask you I think it's five or six questions. Pretty straightforward questions. What opportunities you see? What challenges you have? Where do you want to see this university in five years? All of that's going to go to AASCU. Everybody remembers what AASCU means. It's American Association of State Colleges and Universities. It's all going to them. They're administering the survey. They're going to give information back to me and I'll share it out. So, I'm getting so excited, I'm getting choked up. I'll share that back out with you as we get it. So I highly encourage you to take part in that survey. It's going to everybody on the campus community. We're also going to try to share it out with our community partners outside of our campus, find out stuff about ourselves and what we think about ourselves. We're going to have a couple of forums where I'm going to be talking with faculty and staff. Another one where I'm going to be talking with students to hear from you.

If you have a meeting and you would like the President to be at it, invite me. I love to go. I want to hear from you all what we're doing. We need to talk, we need to think. We need to write our own story, and this is our opportunity to do it.



Thank you all from the bottom of my heart for the welcome that we've got. It's meant a lot to me, but even more so, thank you for what you do every single day to make this a very special place to support our students and the great things that they do and talk about what we're gonna be doing for the next five years. Thank you all for being here. Don't leave yet, because I was promised it's really cold outside and we've got popsicles to celebrate the cold weather when we get outside. So, join us outside. We've got a reception in the courtyard right out there. Again, thank you Chico State.