Good day everyone. Today I want to share some updates and tell you about a few of our achievements for the year.

The California State University’s mission is built on providing access to students. While we have worked hard to offer every qualified student an opportunity to attend the CSU, providing access has become one of our greatest challenges with the state budget.

This year, the legislature passed the state budget on October the 8th--100 days past the constitutional deadline.

That doesn’t work too well for us.

Without knowing how much funding we’re getting, it is very difficult to estimate how many students we can serve. And that impacts every part of our operation.

The good news is that we did get a partial restoration in our budget. The governor and the legislature restored almost $260 million dollars to our budget and provided an additional $106 million dollars in one-time federal stimulus funds.

This will allow us to restore access to almost 30,000 students beginning with the upcoming winter and spring terms. It will also enable us to add course sections and provide some of the student services we have had to cut.

But we are still in a precarious situation. Our state support is the same as it was five years ago, yet we have 25,000 more students.

And I don’t think it will get better next year. The Legislative Analyst has already predicted a $19 billion state deficit in 2011 and the current budget already has a $6 billion hole.

But let me say this. Despite this bumpy ride, we have had some tremendous successes this year. And our victories come from your hard work.
The CSU sponsored several very important bills that we were able to pass and that will help our students and will help improve our state.

First, we will be able to offer a Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree and a Doctorate of Physical Therapy. With these programs, the California State University will help the state meet a critical demand for nurses and physical therapy professionals.

Second, the Community College Transfer Bill will make life much easier for community college students who want to come to the CSU. This bill establishes a transfer Associate of Arts Degree that will streamline the transfer process saving students a lot of time and money.

Last, our Affinity bill will allow our alumni associations at our 23 campuses to continue to use affinity partners to provide services to alumni.

These bills made it to the finish line because many of you came together and worked hard to ensure their success.

The good work does not stop there. With your help, our focus on serving students has been unwavering.

What makes our students successful is our employees. You have worked under furloughs and very difficult circumstances and you continue to do remarkable things. The California State University will succeed because we have talented and dedicated people who care and who make a difference every day. Your work has a significant impact.

I thank you for all that you do for us every day and I wish you and your families a happy holiday season.