

## Getting It Right

### Fall Convocation Address

August 22, 2013

Good afternoon! And welcome to the start of the new academic year.

As usual, greeting you on the screen today are a few images from last year. They are **reminders of what** we are about. But more, they are also **testimony to how** we actually **go about** our work. They underscore that so much of **what** we do, we **do well** and we **do right**. And I'll return in a few minutes to the story these images tell, and the theme of getting it right.

But, first, let me make a few introductions. Some new members of our community and some familiar colleagues in new roles:

New faculty [photo]

Wenshu Lee, Associate Vice-President for Faculty Affairs

Bob Knight, Dean, Humanities and Fine Arts

Eddie Vela, Interim Dean, Behavioral and Social Sciences

Ben Juliano, Interim Dean, Engineering, Computer Science and Construction Management

Leslie Schibsted, Interim Associate Vice President for Advancement

Katy Thoma, Executive Director, Research Foundation

I usually reserve these introductions to VPs, deans, and the like, but let me introduce one director-level appointment to you, because everyone will want to be his best friend. This is Stephen Cummins, our new Director of University Public Events. I want to point out to Stephen that I had a special understanding with his predecessor, Dan DeWayne, that came in handy when I needed tickets for the hot events in Laxson. [photo of PZ and Dan exchanging money at townball game] Of course, I am not suggesting anything by this photo, but, Steve, we need to talk about a percentage of the action.

Acknowledge Chris Ficken.

We have several members of our advisory and foundation boards in attendance today. There are many good reasons to acknowledge these folks, whose generosity and service help us in so many ways. You may recall that last year their generosity particularly enabled us to bring back to the campus the fall reception on Kendall lawn. Many of them continue to help this event and this year's reception will occur on Friday, September 20. And, of course, there will be a reception after this convocation in the courtyard outside. So, stay and mingle, and seek these folks out to say thank you.

As with so many of you in the room today and throughout our campus, these folks contributed to our goal of performing 125,000 hours of volunteer, community service to mark our 125<sup>th</sup> year. This was the goal of the My Service Counts initiative.

Well, we sold ourselves way short. Because of these great friends and neighbors and supporters of Chico State, and because of so many of you and our students and alumni, we capped our 125<sup>th</sup> year with over 171,000 hours of community service. And that does deserve a pat on the back and a round of applause. Thank you.

Here's another reason for applause. You may remember that last year we had a drawing for one of our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary Wildcat Cruiser bikes at the reception after the convocation. That winner was Gretchen Tousey. So, Gretchen, here's Willie and here's your bike!

Well, it's now year 126. And, as we did last year, we are doing another aerial photograph tomorrow morning of our new students, the Class of 2017. This will take place on the playing fields behind the stadium. No, not a giant 126, and not a camera on a crane. But something just as fun and logistically challenging as we debut our official Cat Cam. This is another Sue Anderson production. Sue is still worried she'll have to spend the weekend updating her resume if this doesn't work. So, come join the fun and help us keep Sue.

Along with Sue, Mary Wallmark, CC Carter, and Taylor Herren and her AS team, so many others [slide with names] have worked extremely hard over the summer crafting something else for our new students. This is a message which is also very much about getting it right. For informed by our Call to Action Summits last spring, tied to the provost's new Aim for 4 graduation initiative, and connected to the values we share with our host city, this message challenges our students to consider the reasons why **they** have chosen Chico State. And for us to emphasize why **we** have chosen them.

It is a message of right reasons. To join our company to learn, to grow, to explore. To understand and to delight in the privileges and obligations of citizenship on a campus and in a community. To recognize the importance of shared values and the responsibility to foster them. To appreciate what Chico State and the City of Chico expect of them. To meet those expectations and succeed as members of our University and our community.

This is the right message, at the right time. And there is a lot at stake in getting it right.

Let me now ask some folks to share some messages of their own with you as this academic year begins.

Speakers...Taylor Herren, Scott Gruendl, Paula Selvester, Michelle Berglund-Smith, Vincent Ornelas.

Thank you, each of you.

Now from inspiration to irritation. But actually less so than recent years. Let me briefly review our budget situation for '13-'14.

We've had our seven years of scarcity. No one predicts a biblical transformation to seven years of plenty ahead. But, for the first time in seven years, we are looking at an across the board salary increase **and** an overall increase of our General Fund allocation.

Yes, that is good news. It is tempered, however, by how modest the increases are. They are far below what the trustees sought and far short of the full recovery of the \$1 billion loss in General Fund support which the CSU has experienced during the years of scarcity.

But there are some elements in the General Fund increase worth noting.

The \$38 million compensation increase pool represents 30% of the total General Fund allocation. That would be a healthy proportion if it is sustained.

Another \$17.2 million, or 13.8% of the total General Fund increase, is targeted to help campus efforts support the CSU's graduation initiative, and our students' degree progress and success. In particular, a good portion of these funds focuses on the use of technology and on-line courses. And I'll say more about this in a few minutes, too.

The governor's budget also proposes a stable, multi-year funding plan for both the CSU and the UC. If this plan holds, we will see increases in our General Fund allocation over the next four years of 4 to 5% each year. Including this year, that would mean an increase in the State General Fund allocation to the CSU of over \$500 million through 2016-2017. Although this is only slightly more than 50% of the \$1 billion in State General Fund support we have lost, we would almost certainly be looking ahead to further years of severe reductions had not Prop 30 passed last November.

But this funding comes with very specific strings. These are several outcome measures which we are required to report on annually and to demonstrate progress in addressing.

So here is what the governor expects:

- Increase the enrollment of transfer students from the state's community colleges.
- Increase the enrollment of low-income students.
- Improve both the 4-year and 6-year graduation rates for all students who enter as freshmen.
- Improve both the 2-year and 3-year graduation rates for all transfer students.
- Increase degree completions for all students, disaggregated by freshman entrants, transfer students, graduate students, and low-income students.
- Improve year-to-year retention rates.
- Reduce overall units taken to complete degrees.
- Increase the number of degrees completed in the STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), disaggregated by undergraduates, graduates, and low-income students.
- Hold the line on the State University Fee **and** the cost for a degree awarded when **all** funding is considered.

So, here's the bottom line. The governor's performance expectations for the state's public universities focus on two mandates: produce more graduates and prepare a larger workforce.

To be sure, both of these goals – and their elements: access, affordability, graduation rates, degrees completed, cost containment – require our attention. But neither of these goals is as right, or as simple, as they seem.

So, this afternoon, I want to emphasize the understandings – the right understandings – that must guide our actions regarding the compact's expectations; and demonstrate the good things that happen for our students, for our University, for our community, for the North State and California when we are guided by them.

*The crux of the matter is getting it right.*

This begins with a fundamental understanding that **this is more than a numbers game**. Yes, the numbers matter. They stare us in the face and we are required to address them. But we are compelled to do more. We are compelled to remember that stories, human stories, underscore the numbers.

And, if we succeed with both the numbers and the narratives, we will hold up our end of the compact. We will demonstrate that we are the right place, at the right time, with the right approach to deliver on the expectations of those who count on us.

If we succeed with both the numbers and the narratives, we will make the compact right, because there's a lot in it that is neither very right nor particularly bright.

And, if we succeed with the numbers and the narratives, we will attract to our story those who appreciate it and who want to support it.

So, let's look at the main elements and purposes of the governor's budget and the new compact for higher education that it represents.

First, the governor calls for broader access, lower costs, higher graduation rates, and more degrees awarded. Terrific. Who doesn't? He predicates this call on something else, which, on the surface, is also fair and understandable. Namely, operating our campuses more efficiently, that it is, less costly.

So far, so good. Where this breaks down, though, is the almost giddy manner with which one tool – massive, open, on-line courses, or MOOCs – are being embraced as the magic potion for everything, including the future of higher learning in our state and nation. And a lot of places are rushing to drink this Kool Aid.

Driven by such for-profit providers as Udacity, edX, and Coursera; celebrated by individuals and embraced by institutions who see MOOCs as the epitome of cost efficiency and cost economy innovation; and encouraged by those who would measure the educational outcomes of our colleges and universities by credits accrued and diplomas disbursed, rather than content learned and knowledge

acquired – the debate we are having in our country about MOOCs and their cousins is among the most naïve, ill-informed and, quite frankly, stupid I have ever seen.

It is absolutely striking how lacking in context and good sense this frenzy to embrace simple solutions has been. We are watching presumably smart people in government, in higher education, drawn to MOOCs in a cult-like trance, eager to embrace the bogus notion that information is education, that watching a lecture on your tablet, no matter who is giving it, is the same as learning with a professor and other students in a class. The MOOC super-professors – a re-run of “the sage on the stage” approach, which has been so thoroughly discredited – are about as available to students as the pope is to us for a conversation on women priests.

Yet, here we have our governor hailing MOOCs as an “exciting moment in the intellectual history of our state and of our university.” We have Bill Gates throwing a lot of money at Udacity in order to develop on-line math courses because, as he has said, “College, except for the parties, needs to be less place-based.” We have the CEO of Udacity saying that his company has found the “magic formula” and that MOOCs “will change the life of Californians” by expanding access and lowering costs.

But are these folks seeing the whole picture? More to the point, what are they not seeing that good sense and a little homework would reveal? Even a little on-line browsing. Trust me. Google: MOOCs, shortcomings, failures. 1.2 million hits in less than two-tenths of a second

What we are seeing with MOOCs is just the latest version of the hype that accompanies every new technology as a world-changer and life-changer. **[Technology Hype Cycle graph]** Especially with regards to public higher education, it is the latest “answer” to all the challenges that face us: how to accommodate surging enrollments, how to deal with aging physical plants, how to reduce costs (especially the salaries of those pesky faculty who actually expect a decent salary for dedicating their lives to the pursuit of knowledge and its transmission to their students).

Rather, the MOOC bandwagon is silent on just a few matters. Like learning. Or the huge attrition rates accompanying MOOCs, 90% in some of the most highly touted implementations. Or the fact that these rates disproportionately affect both underprepared and community college students, adding further discouragement to the college degree aspirations of these groups, whom, ironically, the governor has targeted for special attention. Instead, these students are expending precious dollars for no return. This is just one of the many inconvenient truths in the theology of MOOCs.

But, seriously, should anyone really be surprised with the dismal student learning results that have accompanied some of these hyper-ballyhooed experiments?

Have we forgotten what we have learned over the years about student learning?

Students learn when they have contact with faculty; when they have opportunities for interaction and cooperation among themselves; when learning is actively engaged, not passively received; when they receive prompt, individualized feedback for their work; when they are held accountable to the tasks and

the goals of their courses; when high expectations accompany their studies; when diverse talents and ways of learning are recognized and accommodated.

The best places have not forgotten this. We haven't. We have built into our structure for evaluating faculty teaching performance these understandings. Our Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching focuses on these matters. We have adopted teaching and learning technologies that enable these best practices. We have recognized that technology may change constantly, but some things – like what we know about student learning – have been tested and validated and have earned our attention.

To be blunt, technology without direction – like connection without community, or teaching without joy, or learning without hope – will neither serve our mission nor enlighten our work.

And we know that **what** we know should inform us at the outset. Not be a surprise discovery, after the fact, when an experiment goes badly.

The best places also ask faculty and knowledgeable staff **what they think and what they need** to support student learning. I have never met a faculty member opposed to a new idea or approach that advances student learning – as long as it truly and demonstrably advances student learning. I have met a lot of faculty, though, opposed to uninformed assumptions and ill-conceived mandates.

The second focus of the governor's budget message is, in many respects, the end game for the first – namely, the production of college degree holders in greater numbers in order to fill the ranks of the state's anticipated future workforce. This is the answer to the question "**degrees for what**"? But, again, like the goals of awarding more degrees, and producing less costly degrees, it is neither the whole answer nor the smartest answer.

There are several elements to this focus on the workforce of the future, yet only one seems to command attention. And it is the easiest.

This is the identification of where the workforce needs and gaps are likely to be over the next 20-25 years based on various economic and demographic forecasts. And there is substantial agreement on where these job needs will be.

Primarily as a result of a growing and greying population, one-third of the projected fastest growing occupations are related to health care. These include registered nurses, physicians and surgeons, home health aides, psychiatric services, personal care aides, medical and dental assistants, technical occupations supporting health care services, and other areas within the burgeoning health care and family, community and social assistance industries.

One-fourth of the projected fastest growing occupations are related to the construction industry, including architecture and civil engineering. Part of this reflects the aging conditions of our state's public infrastructure of roads, bridges, canals, rail lines, airports, etc. But it is also related to the housing needs of an aging population and new patterns of work enabled by a booming on-line economy and the implications for private residences and community development.

Other occupational categories high on the growth list include: computer and mathematical-based occupations; management, business and financial occupations; arts, design, entertainment, sports and media occupations; education, training, and library occupations; and food production, service and safety occupations.

Overwhelmingly, most of these growth area occupations typically need some type of postsecondary education for entry. And this is why the governor and others are saying that California will need one million more college degree holders by 2025 than what the state's colleges and universities are currently producing.

But, again, the story is not simply about numbers.

For, as Lincoln understood in 1862 when he supported the Morrill Act, which gave rise to the nation's public land-grant higher education institutions; as Theodore Roosevelt understood in 1902 when he embraced the Progressive notion that a public university's "campus" is the state it serves; as John F. Kennedy understood in 1962 when he devoted over one-third of his domestic agenda to the support of education, **half the jobs for the next half-century haven't even been invented yet.** We need now, and we will continue to need, a national higher education agenda that is nimble and responsive to an ever-changing social, environmental and economic landscape.

There's a powerful history lesson at stake in facing this situation. Because we should have learned, through so many depressions and recessions, that the most narrowly educated, the most particularly trained, will be among the first to hit the unemployment lines, and to stay there longer, when what they have prepared to do is no longer needed, or has changed substantially. Consider the fate of switchboard operators, milkmen, telegraph operators, typesetters, lamp trimmers, pinsetters, door to door salesmen, alchemists. And Vestal Virgins. Whatever happened to the need for Vestal Virgins?

Beyond filling job slots, the next big question is what are the employee qualities that this ever changing workforce needs? What are the qualities that employers are seeking in their employees?

Again, there is remarkable consensus here, most recently revealed in the newly launched Employer-Education Compact of the Association of American Colleges and Universities; and its guiding report, *It Takes More Than a Major*.

The AAC&U effort focuses on two matters:

First, the learning that college students most need both for the economy **and** our democracy; and, second, the learning environment and curriculum, both in the classroom and beyond, that promotes high-quality, hands-on learning enabling students to prepare to deal with complexity, diversity, and change.

This consensus has several elements:

- Focused on innovation as critical to the success of their companies, employers place high priority on critical thinking, communication, and complex problem-solving skills.

- Employers look for individuals who bring not only immediate skills but also long range employment prospects to their companies. Informing those prospects are personal integrity, a strong work ethic, intercultural skills, and a capacity for professional development.
- Employers value both field-specific knowledge and skills – chemists must know chemistry, engineers must know engineering – and they value the knowledge, skills and habits that flow from an education that promotes personal and social responsibility, integrative and adaptive learning, and the broad knowledge and high-level capacities to navigate a fast-paced, global economy.

Sound familiar? It should. This used to be called a liberal education. And guess what? It still is. The best places have not forgotten that.

Check out our Pathways design for our General Education program.

Check out the orientation of our Week of Welcome and entire First Year Experience to civic engagement and responsibility.

Check out the results of our country's first National Scorecard designed to provide key information on college affordability and value. Only **one** university in California received the best possible score in the Scorecard's five categories: cost, low; graduation rate, high; loan default rate, low; student borrowing and indebtedness upon graduation, low; alumni employability and earning power, high. **Only one:** Chico State.

Ask yourself why we are one of only a handful of CSU campuses to receive funding for each of the four systemwide initiatives that have been selected to address the governor's call to reduce course bottlenecks and improve student success. These efforts include a Summer eLearning Academy focused on the effective teaching of Critical Thinking in an on-line environment; the funding of all five proposals which we submitted for the redesign of several high demand courses; and the funding of other proposals to support mentoring, the Summer Bridge Program, and a pilot freshman course on personal and social responsibility. All total about \$600,000 in funding that recognizes the dedication and expertise of our faculty and staff and the leadership of our campus to support student learning and degree progress.

These achievements, and so many more, underscore what getting it right looks like. Consider the evidence:

- One of only eight colleges and universities to repeat this year with a perfect score on the *Princeton Review's* Honor Roll of institutions for our commitment to green values, sustainability, and exemplary environmental programs.
- Getting it right with technology is our on-line undergraduate program for Social Work, ranked second in the nation for affordability and quality.
- Similarly, our Master's Degree Program in Nursing, which has been offered on-line since 2004, has been named one of the best of its kind in the nation.



- For the sixth time in seven years, Chico State has been named to the President's National Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, recognizing the extensive service that members of our campus perform in our community.
- We have earned Vet Friendly status again for the quality of our veterans' support programs.
- For the third consecutive year we have won the Commissioner's Cup of our intercollegiate athletics conference marking the overall competitive success of our men's and women's teams. 25 of our student-athletes received the NCAA's highest academic achievement award for GPAs of 3.5 or higher.

I could be up here all day with shout-outs to so many people and programs responsible for our high rankings, deep applicant pools, and high achieving alumni. People and programs which affirm that we are a university which can pass – which in fact, welcomes – any accountability test. An institution which can uphold its end of any compact.

But I want to conclude with just one more.

A few months ago, I was introduced to a gentleman by the name of Dan Giustina, who was curious about Chico State. He's not an alum. He doesn't even live in California. But he came to know a famous family in our area, the Bell Family, which operated a ranch in Butte County dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and another in southern Oregon, where Dan also ranched.

When the second of the Bell sisters passed away recently, Dan began to think about honoring the family's connections to Chico State, their affection for us, and their place in our community.

He liked what he learned and what he heard, especially from several students whom he met in our College of Agriculture. Dan has now established The Bell Family Presidential Scholarship Endowment as a way to remember the Bell family and to ensure that Chico State can attract the best and brightest students to our agricultural programs.

This is a transformational gift and Dan wants it to be so. It will raise the level of excellence in the College and it will be a driving force in developing leaders in agriculture in the North State and throughout the entire state. Dan's gift of \$2 million is the largest scholarship gift in the history of our University. Ladies and gentlemen, please say hello to Dan Giustina.

To be sure, when we get it right, our students, first and foremost, benefit. And others notice, and, like Dan, they want to be a part of our story.

And how, and why, we get it right is actually pretty simple. Because the people on the screen behind me, people like:

Keiko Goto, Professor of Nutrition and Food Sciences, named one of the top 20 women professors in California, by two organizations which promote access to higher education.

Richard Rosecrance, Professor of Agriculture, who received his second Fulbright Award.

Troy Jollimore, Professor of Philosophy, recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship. Troy is Chico State's second Guggenheim recipient since 2010. No other CSU campus has had more than one over this period and that was only at two other campuses.

Tanya Komar, Associate Professor and Director of the Concrete Industry Management Program, named one of the five most influential people in the concrete industry by the profession's leading magazine.

James Luyirika-Sewagudde, Jr., recipient of his profession's most prestigious award for outstanding service in the field of international student and scholar services.

David Stephen, Director of Housing, recipient of the Pantheon Award from the Association of College and University Housing Officers recognizing an extraordinary career of leadership and contributions to the field of campus housing.

Yes, we get it right because the people on the screen behind me, and the people in the seats in front of me, like Dan Giustina, would not have it any other way.

Thank you, all of you, for your kind attention this afternoon; for the high quality of your work every day; and, as always, for your support for me personally. In fact, believe it or not, for ten years of such support.

I am so very proud to be your colleague, to work on this campus and in this community. And I am so very grateful for how warmly you have embraced Yasuko.

One more cartoon. You see you'll never escape without at least one Lincoln reference and one dog cartoon. You've already seen Abe. Here's the dog. [The dog is thinking: "Good dog. Good dog. It's always good dog. Why is it never great dog?"]

Folks, let's have a great year!

Thank you.

August 22, 2013