

FALL CONVOCATION 2018

Thursday, August 23, 2018

3 pm

PAC 144

President Gayle E. Hutchinson
California State University, Chico

Unlocking our potential

We greet the new academic year with anticipation of cooler temperatures this fall and, eventually, the rains of winter in hopes of ending devastating wildfires and soothing the pain of those who have been impacted. Please join me in a moment of silence to honor the victims, fire fighters, and first responders who died by fire this year, and also as a sincere gesture of support to those whose lives and communities have been severely disrupted in what is already one of the worst wildfire season in California history. (Moment of silence). Thank you.

Good afternoon and welcome to the launch of Academic Year 2018-19. “Today decides tomorrow,” which is why we are passionate about our mission to educate students, fostering their success through excellence in interactive pedagogy, applied research, creative activity, civic engagement, and public service. We understand the importance of helping students learn to think critically, solve problems, and build solutions that enhance lives and improve communities here and around the world.

Chico State is a “community-based” university located on the ancestral lands of the Mechoopda. Our close proximity to downtown is an opportunity for the University and the City to explore, partner and collaborate on projects and initiatives that are mutually beneficial. Our town and gown relationships have improved in recent years and will only get stronger as we deepen our efforts to work side-by-side to enhance both economic and community health. The same holds true for our rural neighbors of the North State. It’s time to construct and manage with local governments, industries and non-profit agencies knowledge networks for public good. This University is a people’s university and here to serve our students and our constituents as an intellectual hub for innovation, creativity, science, and education.

ACKNOWLEDGING LEADERS

At this time, let’s acknowledge University, city, and regional leadership who joined us here today, and applaud their efforts and initiatives to work as partners educating our youth, fostering economic growth, and building vibrant communities. Please hold your applause until I have finished reading leaders’ names by category.

Cabinet (*stand as name is called*)

- Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs **Debra Larson**
- Vice President for Student Affairs **Milton Lang**
- Vice President for University Advancement **Ahmad Boura**
- Interim CFO and Associate Vice President for Business and Finance **Jeni Kitchell**
- Chief of Staff **Brooke Banks**

Academic Senate Executive Committee

- **Jed Wyrick, Chair**
- **Betsy Boyd**
- **Chiara Ferrari**
- **Rick Ford**
- **Jeff Livingston**
- **Carl Pittman**
- **Timothy Sistrunk**

Campus and community groups in attendance

- Chico State Alumni Association
- Parent Advisory Council
- Research Foundation Board
- University Foundation Board
- Gateway Science Museum Commission and Advisory Board
- Janet Turner Print Museum Board of Directors
- Chico City Council
- Chico Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Chico Business Association

Community leaders and special guests, please stand as your name is called.

Mayor **Sean Morgan**

City Manager **Mark Orme**

Police Chief **Mike O'Brien**

Laura Page of behalf of Senator Doug LaMalfa

Tim Taylor, Butte County Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Samia Yaqub, President of Butte College

Dr. G.H. Javaheripour, President of Yuba College

Michelle Power, CSU Alumni Council Secretary and Past President of the Chico State Alumni Association

WELCOME SPEAKERS

I'd like to invite faculty, staff and community leaders to share a few words as we welcome our fall 2018 semester.

Mayor Sean Morgan

- Chico State graduate with a bachelor's degree in International Business & Finance and a master's degree in Business Administration
- Current mayor of Chico following a long line of councilmembers and mayors who are also Chico State graduates
- Faculty member in the College of Business
- 45-year resident of Chico

Dr. Jed Wyrick

- Academic Senate Chair since fall 2017
- Professor in the Department of Comparative Religion and Humanities
- PhD in comparative literature, emphasizing the intersection of classical and biblical studies

Labor representative Jessica Westbay

- Jessica began her union activism in the early 2000s while she worked at Pacific Bell.
- She has been at Chico State since 2010 and has served as the president of the Chico chapter of the CSU Employees Union since the fall of 2014.
- A self-proclaimed foodie, Jessica and her husband enjoy exploring Chico and the surrounding areas for delicious bites.

Alisha Sharma

- Arrived at Chico State in 2015 and is now a senior entering her fourth and final year on campus.
- She is pursuing a bachelor's degree in business administration with an emphasis in project management and minors in communication studies and international studies.
- Has served as Associated Students President since January of 2018

Tawnie Peterson

- Worked for the Research Foundation for 14 years, beginning in 2000.
- Spent two years in the Department of Music and Theatre and is now in the Department of International Languages, Literature, and Cultures.
- Has served on Staff Council for more than eight years, serving first as chair of the Ways and Means Committee before becoming chair this year.

Thank you, Sean, Jed, Jessica, Alisha, and Tawnie.

UNLOCKING OUR POTENTIAL

In fall of 2016, we began the work of revitalizing community, rebuilding trust and morale, and setting our beloved University on a re-energized path. In 2017-18, we confronted difficult truths as we aimed to put our financial house in order and begin to resolve our practice of deficit spending.

This academic year will be a pivotal year in the history of Chico State as we look toward the future and envision our greatest ambitions. The planning we complete this year will help us unlock our potential and move our academic reputation from notable to outstanding. I will discuss this a bit more later on in my remarks. Now, keeping with tradition, it's time to honor selected achievements and events that took place last year.

Once again, Chico State earned national accolades. *US News and World Report* listed the university among its top 10 master's-level public universities in the western United States, as they have every year since 1998. We continued to earn recognition as a best value institution, with *Money*, *Forbes* and *Washington Monthly* highlighting our affordability and access, as well as academic excellence and student success.

In a list released last week, Chico State ranked 21st among *Money's* "Most Transformative Colleges," those that help students do better than would be expected based on academic and economic backgrounds.

On the world stage, Chico State has been ranked a top-four school for yearlong study abroad participants by the Institute of International Education, a leading nonprofit educational and cultural exchange group, and the No. 3 sending institution in the nation for participants in the University Studies Abroad Consortium. A total of 315 students studied abroad in 2017-18.

Chico State continues to lead the way in sustainability. The University received a Gold Rating for its overall sustainability efforts on campus from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). Our score of 73.41 is the highest score ever achieved by a CSU campus. In addition, living up to the Princeton Review title of one of the "Nation's Greenest Campuses," the campus went strawless in spring and sold out of its stainless steel straw kits within the first 72 hours!

To recognize faculty excellence, the University's Faculty Recognition and Support Committee selects six colleagues as Outstanding Faculty Award Recipients. Our 2017-18 honorees are:

- Outstanding Professor: **Steffen Mehl**, Civil Engineering
- Outstanding Teacher: **Jason Nice**, History

- Outstanding Academic Adviser: **Najm Yousefi**, History
- Outstanding Research Mentor: **Kasey DeAtley**, Agriculture
- Outstanding Faculty Service: **Chiara Ferrari**, Media Arts, Design, and Technology
- Outstanding Lecturer: **Alan Bond**, Construction Management

Our Staff Excellence Awards honor exceptional staff. The winners for 2017-18 are:

- Employee of the Year: **Ricardo Carrillo**, Facilities Management and Services
- Customer Service Award: **David Turri**, Facilities Management and Services
- Wildcat Spirit Award: **Jason Halley**, University photographer

Please stand faculty and staff award recipients and be recognized. Congratulations once again.

In Athletics, all 13 Division II teams advanced to the post-season for the first time ever! For the fifth time in 10 years, the University won the California Collegiate Athletic Association Robert J. Hiegert Commissioner's Cup, which is presented annually to the CCAA school with the best overall record in a given academic year.

Five Chico State teams won CCAA titles: men's cross country, women's cross country, men's golf, men's track & field, and softball. On the national level, Chico State athletics performed among the nation's top 10 percent once again in 2017-18. Chico State ranks 27th out of 308 NCAA Division II schools. Eight teams reached the NCAA Championships and four finished among the nations' top 10. As Athletic Director Anita Barker says, "Our consistent success can be traced to a supportive campus and community, strong coaching staff, and outstanding student-athletes." Our Wildcat family gives us a unique advantage.

No less impressive are the performances of Chico State's athletes in the classroom. The CCAA named 33 Wildcats to the 2018 CCAA Spring All-Academic team. The recognition honors those who have sophomore standing or higher, are competitors in a spring sport, and are recipients of a 3.3 grade-point average or higher. Women's track and field had 19 athletes earning the honor. Baseball, softball, and men's track and field each had four students on the academic team. Well done, Wildcats!

And, finally, truly a significant honor for one of our own. Basketball student-athlete Whitney Branham was nominated as one of two athletes representing the CCAA for the 2018 NCAA Woman of the Year award. Whitney and 33 NCAA Division II athletes are in contention for the award which will be announced on October 28 in Indianapolis. Whitney played guard all four seasons at Chico State, earning many accolades: Freshman of the Year, First Team All-CCAA, and the conference's leading scorer as a senior. Her inspirational story chronicling her path to basketball stardom while overcoming the challenges of spina bifida was profiled this winter in

the *NCAA Champion Magazine*. She graduated cum laude this spring with a degree in cellular and molecular biology. We are so proud of Whitney.

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

Our students, our faculty and our staff achieve; their preparation, talent, knowledge and skill are second-to-none. And, I've said this before, we are humble about our accomplishments. Over the past two years, we have improved our willingness to proudly communicate them to the world. Our communications staff leads the way by telling stories of perseverance and success through a variety of media like Chico Statements, Chico State Today, social media, and our home page. The University consistently wins regional, state and national competitions. It's clear, we excel!

Chico State students, faculty and staff earned titles and awards such as SpaceX Hyperloop Competition Innovation Award, 2018 Teaching Innovation Award, and the 2018 Chancellor's Award for Administrative Excellence and Innovation.

Let me talk briefly about two of our more recent achievements.

Earlier this month, David Zeichick, a lecturer in Computer Science, was named Lab Activity Winner at the second annual Innovations Cybersecurity Education awards in Portland. David, who just completed an interim assignment as information security officer for the University, won for his Advanced Information Security lab that teaches students about home smart devices and what could go wrong with them.

Claudia Stuart, a lecturer in the Department of Geography and Planning and principal planner in the county's Development Services Department, received an award of excellence for innovation in green community planning. Her Sustainable Agriculture Lands Conservation (SALC) strategy, which is up for state-level recognition as well, features a mapping-driven database of incentives available to county landowners.

You may notice a common theme here...Innovation. That's right, and innovation is a long-standing characteristic of Chico State, but has been championed by only a few. The time is right to truly embrace innovation with intention and coordination. Doing so will help elevate our campus reputation and better celebrate this academic community for what it truly is: creative and innovative scholars.

After all, our faculty, and many of our staff, are trained experts in the pursuit of truth. You work tirelessly to advance your fields of study using systematic inquiries and scientific methods. Your findings are vetted through rigorous peer review as defined by the academy. Your scholarship is applied often helping to solve real-world problems and build real-world solutions. And, your

modes of inquiry are shared with students, both undergraduate and graduate, as they work by your side exploring, creating and innovating.

Continuing with the good news...

Chico State sent 10 delegates to the 32nd annual CSU Student Research Competition at Sacramento State in May. Three of our exceptional students took top honors competing against hundreds of students from all 23 CSU campuses, including Jeanette Adame, a master's graduate in history mentored by Professor Kate Transchel. Jeanette won first place in her session, presenting on free and enslaved African and Afro-Creole Women in New Orleans in the late 1700s. She conducted original research gathering and translating from Spanish 17th- and 18th-century trial court documents to present a fascinating analysis of how these enslaved women successfully petitioned for freedom and then rose to become a formidable economic and social force in New Orleans.

Led by Ann Schulte, our faculty fellow for Rural Partnerships, the University is increasing its presence in the North State and serving as a national model in creating partnerships between the campus and rural communities. Other civic engagement projects last year include:

- Town Hall 2.0, a student-initiated and student-led project to engender civic engagement among high school students and promote a college-going culture in rural communities;
- A series of workshops offered, in partnership with CAVE, on the civic-minded graduate. The workshops were designed to more closely connect the work of service-learning with academic content. They drew 50 student participants, who earned Certificates in Civic Engagement from the Wildcat Leadership Institute.
- 35 faculty and staff participated in the Provost's Special Initiative on Co-teaching and Civic Engagement, which resulted in a list of recommendation to ease the barriers and increase opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and civic engagement at Chico State.

The College of Business launched the Center for Excellence in Finance, which hosted the first-ever Northern California regional stock pitch competition. The event exposed students to real-world Wall Street data analysis and decision making. Competing for cash prizes, student teams presented their research to investment management professionals from Franklin Templeton, UBS, and Wells Fargo Asset Management. The center also hosted a free community event called Financial Planning Day. Partnering with two national organizations—Financial Planning Association and the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards—this event brought financial literacy and education to community members who otherwise may not have had access to these resources. It gave students an opportunity to work with professionals in the field while doing community service.

Chico State leads in so many ways...

In the technology realm, I'd like to share an endeavor that I'm particularly excited about. It is first-of-its-kind in the CSU. In a special topics course called METX 498, students and faculty from three departments, across two colleges, explored the use of emerging storytelling technologies. Led by faculty members Clark Steinback, Jeff Underwood, Susan Wiesinger, Jennifer Meadows, and Debra Johnson, this collaboration of the Departments of Computer Animation and Game Development, Journalism and Public Relations, and Media Arts, Design and Technology produced four multimedia projects and a portfolio website. This work is amazing. It utilizes leading-edge virtual reality modeling technologies designed to be experienced on Oculus Rift and other state-of-the-industry VR headsets. Much of this technology, from cameras to headsets, has been purchased with alumni gifts and industry donations.

Merging community and classroom, all four multimedia projects were created for Sierra Nevada Brewing Company. Two of the project videos are finalists in the CSU Media Arts Festival, where the work will be screened for distinguished faculty and industry leaders and compete for prestigious awards. The virtual reality project, which I will share with you today, explores Sierra Nevada's circa-1980 warehouse brewery that led to the rise of the craft beer revolution. Through the use of this evolving technology, we can explore the origins of Sierra Nevada, founded by Ken Grossman, a community leader and recipient of the honorary doctorate.

Let's check it out, shall we?

(VR demonstration)

The faculty behind this effort have a motto: "Inspiration through collaboration." They are role models for all of us. Thank you to the faculty of Computer Animation and Game Development, Journalism and Public Relations, and Media Arts, Design and Technology for proving not only that cross-disciplinary collaboration is possible, but also providing students with an experience that is unmatched in the CSU.

The course will be offered again this year, as an emerging technologies class in fall, followed by the applied learning project in spring. Looking at innovators in the community, the team is excited to announce that its partner for 2018-19 will be Lundberg Farms.

At the end of convocation, you will have the opportunity to try the VR headsets in the lobby. Students will be ready to assist you.

Other campus innovations are in the areas of instructional technology, which makes it possible for us to improve and support, elevate and excel.

Earning national recognition, our Office of Accessible Technology and Services has become the consultant for accessibility in the CSU in addition to its work on our campus. In fact, David Rowe

and Jeremy Olguin received a Gold Award at Cal State Tech Conference this month for their project “Automating Accessibility within the Learning Management System.” Leveraging software tools like ALLY from Blackboard and Reach from Kaltura, this office created a new automated process.

The new tool provides Chico State for the first time the opportunity to allow students to absorb content in the way in which they prefer. Every content item in the Learning Management System now has six different formats, including translation to another language. Translation is a feature that Chico State was the first to add, and we are one of the few colleges to use it actively. Our ESL learners can now download directly in their native language. I am so proud of this important work and see this as the first steps in transforming Chico State into a truly inclusive campus. With an emphasis on serving students, this project has now evolved into a full student success initiative.

FOCUSING ON STUDENT SUCCESS

Student success is at the heart of all we do at Chico State. I’m proud to say we are leaders across the state when it comes to meeting the needs of students ...

Our Basic Needs Project continues to serve students in a multitude of ways AND they are doing so from a new home in the Student Services Center. Under the direction of Joe Picard, the Hungry Wildcat Food Pantry moved into a dedicated space in January.

The pantry served more than 4,000 students in Academic Year 2017-18, supporting an average of 100 students each day. More than 35 tons of healthy food—the equivalent of 58,000 meals—were distributed. Benefit referral and outreach services have been expanded as well, including support of 2,000 students in their quest to receive CalFresh USDA SNAP food assistance. Another 13 displaced or homeless students were accommodated in short-term emergency and transitional housing through University Housing and community partnerships. If you would like to get involved, Joe is always in need of volunteers to assist with food rescue from regular contributors, such as Trader Joe’s and Target. He also is in need of “gleaners” who pick ripened foods at the University Farm or in the community.

Let’s talk a little more about CalFresh. Once again, Chico State is leading the CSU and other institutions of higher education around the state. The Center for Healthy Communities CalFresh Outreach team submitted its 2018-2021 contract documents in June. The list of subcontractors joining our contract include: 20 CSU campuses, four UC campuses, 15 California Community Colleges, one private university, the CSU Office of the Chancellor, and the California Community College Office of the Chancellor. The center offers training and technical assistance to all of its new subcontractors. The implications of the work are threefold: direct monetary food support for students, economic activity for the state, and improved academic performance and

outcomes for students. Great work, Center for Healthy Communities, Cindy Wolf, Stephanie Bianco, and team.

This spring, Chico State student Karla Camacho won the California State Student Association award for Student Advocate of the Year for her lobbying efforts in support of students who are part of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, student mental health, student food and housing insecurity, and funding for the CSU system.

In support of academics, the Student Learning Center is having a significant impact. The center had another record-breaking year in the number of students served and the number of visits last year: more than 4,100 students and 41,014 visits! Students have access to subject-area tutoring, the Writing Center, Supplemental Instruction, and the Math Learning Lab. The center continues to evolve to provide the support that best meets the needs of our students.

CREATING GREATER UNITY ON CAMPUS

Our divisions are operating in greater unity and reaching new levels of excellence. Academic Affairs, Business and Finance, Student Affairs, and University Advancement all have successes to celebrate from the past year.

University Advancement is shattering records across its division:

- Advancement received the largest gift in the University's history—\$5.7 million—pushing us to a new record fundraising year, raising more than \$16.9 million.
- *Transform Tomorrow* | *The Campaign for Chico State* has raised a total of more than \$68 million. The campaign is expected to transition from the quiet to the public phase in spring.
- And, the inaugural Chico State Giving Day far surpassed expectations, with 2,200 donors giving nearly \$300,000 to support programs across campus.
- The Student Philanthropy Council boasts record membership with 2,026 students giving \$36,408. The organization donated more than \$24,000 to the Chico Cares Campaign. Our students “get it.” They fully embrace the culture of caring we aim to create at Chico State.

Our donors are passionate about the University's centers, institutes, and initiatives. Academic programs and scholarships also receive strong support.

We also are working harder than ever to engage alumni in the Chico Experience:

- An alumni survey this year reported 76 percent of alums consider their choice to attend Chico State a “great decision”—more than 10 percent higher than the CSU average. And 62 percent reported they had an “excellent” experience as a student—also 10 percent higher than the CSU average.

In a project led by Shari Anderson, the Office of Alumni and Parent Engagement, produced its first bilingual Chico State Parent and Family Guide for 2018-19. We believe we are the only CSU in the system to do this, and it is a testament to our commitment to access and identity as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. The guide is distributed by Alumni and Parent Relations and Admissions at orientation and move-in events. We also offered four Spanish language parent sessions at summer orientation, more than ever before, and 92 parents and guests participated in those workshops.

We dedicated our new Wildcat Statue in what is the now Wildcat Plaza on April 19. The joint project of Associated Students, Athletics, and Alumni and Parent Engagement, is a beautiful reminder of what we can accomplish when we work together. Our wildcat will welcome students as they come to campus for orientation and could possibly have a starring role in parting shots of graduates in caps and gowns. With Mayor Sean Morgan, I proclaimed Wildcat Spirit Day on April 19 and into the future ... on the third Thursday in the month of April in perpetuity. I can't wait to discover what Student Life and Leadership has in store for 2019.

University Communications continues to creatively tell the University's story and strengthen its branding and identity. A new Chico State Today website was launched along with a redesigned Chico Statements. On social media, Chico State managed to remain in the top eight all summer in *Forbes'* #MyTopCollege competition, edging out other premier institutions as our campus community and alums shared what they love about Chico State.

The Division of Business and Finance, with thoughtful planning and communication, early engagement from stakeholders, and adjustments to the timeline, delivered the University's 2017-18 budget nearly two months early in fall 2017. With the state adopting the budget in late June and final allocations from the Chancellor's Office toward the end of July, having the campus budget plan approved and released by September 5 was a noteworthy accomplishment. We are on track to repeat that performance in 2018.

The division continues to operate efficiently while the search takes place for a new Vice President. The search committee plans to meet semi-finalists in September and bring finalists to campus in October with the expectation of announcing an appointment by December.

In Academic Affairs, I would like to express my gratitude to Provost Larson, Vice Provost for Academic Programs Daniel Grassian, and the WASC team for their diligent work to complete our Institutional Self-Study. The report will be delivered to the accreditation team prior to the Sept. 25 deadline. In December, we will receive an off-site review, and the reaccreditation team will visit campus in March of 2019. A tremendous amount of work was completed to get us to

this point, including writing essays, producing the report, formatting and updating program portfolios, and establishing websites and dashboards.

In my spring State of the University address, I said it is time to move “from action to accountability,” especially if we are to take Chico State to the next level. Institutional Research has provided a tool to aid us in that effort. IR has published an online Fact Book with searchable dashboards in three categories: general campus, student success, and academic program review. Use of these dashboards will help us in making data-driven decisions as we strive to unlock our potential.

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking to the fall semester ...

We stand ready to greet our 2,800 incoming freshmen. For the 2018-19 academic year, we admitted a highly qualified class with an average GPA of 3.56, up from 3.45 last year. We also enrolled 1,600 transfer students to join us this fall, 37% of them from our service area. With 400 graduate students and continuing students, our total FTES for fall is 16,400.

Last year, on the first day of classes, we witnessed a solar eclipse, a difficult act to follow ... but the Office of the Provost embraced the challenge!

Making its debut on August 27 is EdXChico, a showcase of eight faculty members from diverse fields each presenting a five-minute, Ted-style talk that will remind all of us what we love about higher education. From the physics of hammer-throwing to the strange fantasies of medieval art, drop in to hear some of Chico State’s finest do what they do best—engage, enlighten, and inspire. Come for one talk, stay for all. Grab a donut and rediscover the joy of learning. The event will take place on Glenn Lawn from 9:30-10:30 a.m.

(video plays)

I hope I will see you there.

Another event that I’m very excited about is our first Student Success Summit coming in January. A collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs through the Graduation Initiative team, this one-day event titled the Tipping Point will focus on developing a collective and holistic sense of student success our campus, one that includes academic achievement, meaningful engagement, and resilient well-being. Let all of us—faculty and staff—renew our collective sense of purpose across campus and recognize the responsibility we share for our diverse contributions to student success. The time has come for such an event as our fall 2019 cohort will begin to determine our outcome against our GI 2025 goals.

What does the Student Success Summit have in store? I'm glad you asked ... There will be sessions on our new demographics and what they mean, inclusive pedagogy, students as researchers, the student-faculty experience, and what we are calling the "Best Practices Slam" in three separate sessions: teaching, advising, and student engagement and well-being. Bring your best self and share your best practices.

Watch for ramp-up events coming this fall. The summit replaces the CELT conference this year and it promises to be a tremendous opportunity for all of us. I hope you will choose to be a part of it.

Circling back to Graduation Initiative 2025, we continue to make progress in our four-year graduation rates... now at 30%. However, our achievement gaps for underrepresented minorities and Pell grant recipients are stubbornly more difficult to consistently reduce. The campus has invested in research that will provide us with data on possible roadblocks to graduation and allow us to take a closer look at common problems.

We continue to pursue goals established in our GI 2025 campus plan:

1. Strengthen the academic environment by investing in faculty—both in numbers and professional development for improved pedagogy.
2. Create a culture of caring by strengthening student support services; and
3. Support data-informed decision-making for scheduling, advising, business processes, and classroom practices.

So, as we seek to strengthen our academic community, we are joined by 30 new faculty members this fall. Please stand and let us greet you with a round of applause. (*Wait for applause to subside*)

Our new faculty come to us from alma maters such as Virginia Tech, New York University, UC Davis and San Jose State. We have three Chico State graduates among the new faculty and 10 of our new faculty members were previously lecturers on our campus. Welcome to all of you.

Also, in support of our academic mission, we welcomed more than 100 new-to-campus staff members during Academic Year 2017-18. During the summer we were only able to round up about a third of them for a photo. Will all new staff hired in 2017-18, please stand?

We are glad you are here. Welcome....

Today's students are comfortable with and inspired by new pedagogies and innovative methods for receiving classroom content. One new technology available at Chico State is called Learning Glass, a futuristic transparent whiteboard paired with a lecture-capture system. It can be used for speeches or lectures when instructors want to integrate notes and complex equations, video, images, or PowerPoint.

Learning Glass flips what you are writing on the glass board in real time and allows the instructor to maintain face-to-face contact with the class. Recordings take place in the Creative Media and Technology multimedia recording studio and are immediately uploaded.

Let's take a look ... as I introduce newly tenured and promoted faculty for the 2018-19 academic year...

(Video)

Will all newly tenured and promoted faculty members please stand ... congratulations to all...

Speaking of new roles, I'd like to acknowledge Tracy Butts who serves as interim Dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts. And, I'm pleased to give a long distance nod to our new Dean of the College of Business, Terence Lau, who joins us on January 2, 2019, after finishing his current obligations to the University of Dayton.

I'm sure you noticed that Siskiyou Hall came down this summer and in that vacant space a new beautiful, functional and sustainable building will take shape. Due for completion in 2020, the physical science building will house the Departments of Chemistry, Physics, Geology and Environmental Sciences, and Science Education, as well as a hands-on lab. It will be a state-of-the-art, LEED-certified teaching and research facility, and a beacon for science education.

18 months seems like a long time to wait, but today ... you are in luck. I will take you inside for a 3-D tour of the future building, thanks to our architects SmithGroup.

Let's go

(video tour)

What do you think? I can't wait!

Coming in the next couple of weeks will be the results of our spring campus climate survey. I would especially like to thank Professor Matt Thomas and the campus climate survey working group for their work in analyzing results and compiling the report.

And, finally, I look forward to our Constitution Day lecture which will feature renowned scholar of free speech Erwin Chemerinsky, dean of the UC Berkeley School of Law, who will discuss the importance of free speech on university campuses. The September 27 lecture will explore a topic I have been thinking about a lot lately.

Educated and engaged citizens are critical to open and democratic societies. Our mission at Chico State is to help students learn to think critically, solve problems, and build solutions. We want our students to take initiative, be engaged in career and civic life, work well with others

different from themselves and lead the way in building communities that are adaptable to climate change, economically robust, and socially healthy.

Freedom of ideas and freedom of expression provide a foundation for exploration, innovation and creativity. Given that our primary purpose as a public university is to discover and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research and creative expression, it is absolutely essential that we, as an academic community, engage and facilitate the sharing of divergent viewpoints. We must continue to foster the free exchange of ideas and opinions. We must help our students and ourselves understand the dangers of confirmation bias, which is a practice of only engaging others who share the same beliefs. Confirmation bias often occurs in a context void of divergent points of view.

In many a news headline, universities are questioned about their commitment to freedom of speech and expression. A recent Gallup Poll Survey (March, 2018) reported that of 3,000 college students surveyed, 61% “believe the climate on their campus prevents some people from expressing their views because others might find them offensive.” This percentage is up 6 points from 2016.

Our campus has a strong tradition as a free marketplace of ideas. We must nurture that and continue to foster it. I was moved by this quote recently: “The history of intellectual growth and discovery clearly demonstrates the need for unfettered freedom, the right to think the unthinkable, discuss the unmentionable, and challenge the unchallengeable” (*Campus speech in crisis*, p. 30, *Encounter Books*), and, I add, to do so in ways that are civil and respectful of people and ideas different from ourselves and our beliefs. Anything less diminishes the importance of intellectual freedom and critical thinking.

I believe we are living at a time in history when many Americans are more polarized than I can ever remember. This realization makes me think that we must work harder to protect freedom of speech and expression on our campus. Therefore, I have asked that a faculty learning community be formed this year and charged with identifying best practices that nurture intellectual exploration, discovery and growth, along with critical thinking, both in class and beyond. We must help our students interact with ideas different from their own and engage in courageous debate that is founded on credible information and/or evidence.

PLANNING OUR FUTURE

We live in a world filled with divergent points of view, driven by global interdependence reliant upon innovation, science, and policy.

To move Chico State from an academic reputation of notable to one that is a cut above the rest; to one that is OUTSTANDING, each one of us has a responsibility greater than staying current in our work. We must strive to be front-runners and leaders in our respective academic and professional fields. And, I encourage us to reach across disciplines and divisions to collaborate in ways that enrich student learning and the student experience, and that explore, innovate, create, and solution build, much like our colleagues in METX 498 are doing. To use their tag line: “Inspiration through collaboration.”

This year, the University will focus on three goals:

First and foremost, we are here for student success. Under the leadership of the provost and vice president for Student Affairs, we will continue to make progress on the Graduation Initiative 2025 targets, especially our commitment to reduce achievement gaps among underrepresented student groups. Our Student Success Summit in January and the events leading up to it will focus on this priority.

Second, we will continue to reduce the unsustainable practice of deficit spending across all divisions, learn to spend within our means, seek revenue sources in addition to state support, and prioritize the investment of our precious resources.

Third, and perhaps most significant, together with the campus and community, we will determine new guiding documents that will shape our University and our future over the next 10 years as we seek to create a nimble and contemporary Chico State on the leading edge of higher education and innovation.

This year, let’s think deeply about ...

1. Who we are as a regional comprehensive university?
2. What do we value and therefore preserve as we take Chico State to the next level?
3. What does it look like to take Chico State from notable to outstanding?

Together, through the strategic planning process, we will embrace our strengths, reaffirm our values, imagine our future, and ensure the means to get there.

Concurrently, to facilitate our strategic vision of emerging as the intellectual and innovative hub of the North State, we will update our physical master plan with respect to our campus and buildings.

In late September and early October, we invite campus and community members to participate in four and a half days of interactive conversations and discovery sessions. These are the first of numerous events to be held throughout the year as the planning process unfolds.

To help you get started and keep you informed, we have created a University planning webpage. Here, you can find the latest information and important dates.

By completing the WASC review come March and achieving a new University strategic plan and campus physical master plan by May, Academic Year 2018-19 will be remembered as a pivotal year in the history of Chico State.

I hope you will join in the discussions of Chico State's promise and its future, and together we will unlock the potential of this great University. Together, we will transform tomorrow.

Have a productive and healthy academic year providing all of our students with the best education possible—they deserve it.

Thank you to the convocation team.

Please join Cabinet and me in the courtyard for an interactive reception. There will be VR booths on hand for you to try, and many colleagues to greet.

Thank you.