Thank you, Dan, for that great introduction, and I look forward to working with you this year! Dan was a great representative for Iowa State at the Board of Regents meeting yesterday. Students chose their new leader well!

Good evening everyone and welcome to the start of a new academic year at Iowa State! I thought it would be a nice change to hold my Annual Fall Address in the evening instead of bright and early on a Friday morning. I hope you enjoy the new timeslot, and I appreciate that you took the time to be here.

Standing here tonight, I’m filled with excitement, optimism, and pride – and I hope you all feel the same way! We’re coming off an exceptional year filled with outstanding accomplishments, and I’d like to highlight just a few recent examples:

- We had a faculty member elected to the National Academy of Sciences – Dr. Catherine Kling.
- Team PrISUm made history with its first solar car race win ever.
- Reiman Gardens celebrated its 20th anniversary in June and University Museums is celebrating its 40th anniversary later this month – and the gardens and museums look beautiful.
- Cyclone wrestler, Kyven Gadson pinned his way to an NCAA title, and Cyclone runner, Ed Kemboi raced his way to national titles in the 800 meter in both the indoor and outdoor championships.

Now as we begin a new academic year, demand for an Iowa State degree continues to surge – we’re experiencing our seventh consecutive year of record enrollment. The official count announced yesterday was exactly 36-thousand-and-one! We really should have some sort of prize for that “one student” who helped us reach that total! But you know, every single student here could be the one. I think the reason we’re different from the other schools in Iowa is because any single student could be considered the one [by any given faculty or staff member.] We really care about individual student success.

We’re seeing significant growth this year in the Colleges of Agriculture, Business and Engineering. In fact, we’re the only institution in the entire state to experience this amount of demand-driven growth. Of course this begs the two questions I hear most often: why is an Iowa State degree in such high demand and how is this impacting the university?

Of course, our recruiting, admissions, and marketing folks do a remarkable job of promoting Iowa State’s brand and value. Our alumni also do a great job of sharing the excitement of the Cyclone Adventure. We now have more than 100,000 ISU alums living and working right here.
Remarks As Prepared for Delivery by President Steven Leath

in Iowa – and they all have a great story to tell. But we haven’t ramped up ad campaigns or poured more money into recruiting. What we’re seeing is our reputation is strong – students are drawn to Iowa State because of our commitment to our land-grant mission… our first-rate programs that align with the areas that drive our economy… our renowned faculty… our supportive culture… our state-of-the-art facilities… and certainly, our beautiful campus! An Iowa State education has a proven track record of producing graduates that employers want to hire: our placement rate is an absolutely stellar 95 percent!

And it’s not just students – faculty and staff are excited to work here! Iowa State was again recognized by Forbes as one of the Top 25 Best Universities to Work For. And that reputation is helping us recruit more great employees. I’d like to welcome some of our newest employees:

- Beth McNeil, dean of the University Library.
- Marlene Strathe, director of the School of Education.
- Ed Lyon, Executive Director of Reiman Gardens.
- And Steve Prohm, Cyclone men’s basketball coach. We’re very excited to have all of you on board.
- I’d also like to recognize Julie Nuter – who has been promoted to Vice President for University Human Resources.

Before I continue, I also want to acknowledge three outstanding long-time university employees who will be leaving us. I announced yesterday at the Board of Regents meeting the impending departure of Senior Vice President for Student Affairs Tom Hill, University Counsel Paul Tanaka, and Endowed Dean of the College of Human Sciences Pam White. I’d like to take a moment to talk about what each of these leaders has meant to this university.

For nearly 20 years, Tom Hill has been the architect and a champion of the Iowa State brand and the student experience. He may be one of the most recognizable faces on campus because he’s constantly engaging with students as a mentor, adviser, advocate, and friend. He’ll be leaving at the end of the year to spend more time with his family in Dallas. But we will keep his talents for a little while longer – he has agreed to serve as my Senior Policy Adviser on Student Experience Issues and he’ll assist me on student discipline cases. Tom will also continue his role as our representative on the NCAA Infractions Committee.

Paul Tanaka has been with the university for just over 20 years. During that time, he has provided exceptional legal counsel for Iowa State, successfully leading us through some challenging situations with wisdom and integrity. Because of Paul’s expertise, many institutions have looked to Iowa State for best practices; and he has been instrumental in maintaining our reputation as a university that demands excellence and ethics. I always count on Paul for sound, thoughtful advice. Paul plans to retire in the spring.
And Pam White has been a proud Iowa Stater for 40 years. As dean of the College of Human Sciences for the past 7 years, Pam has had tremendous success in increasing enrollment, fundraising, and advancing academic and research programs. Her positive demeanor and “get it done” attitude make Pam a role model for other deans. She will retire in July. I’m personally very happy for Pam, Tom, and Paul; and professionally, they will be leaving strong legacies here at Iowa State. There’s no doubt we will be challenged to find people of equal caliber to fill their positions. We’ll be launching searches immediately for all three positions.

You wonder why these three have stayed at the university for so long – it’s because Iowa State is truly a world-class institution! Tonight, I’m going to reinforce the priorities that have led us to this point with some new initiatives to support our demand-driven growth, enhance our reputation as one of the best universities in the country, and continue to move Iowa State forward. I also want to leave time for questions, because I’m always very interested to hear your concerns and ideas.

I. Affordability, Accessibility, and Quality

My first priority will always be fulfilling our land-grant mission to make a first-rate education accessible and affordable. We’re extremely proud to serve more Iowa students than any other institution in the world. We also understand and appreciate the importance of our non-resident students – they bring diversity and vibrancy to our campus from every state and 110 countries.

We’re striving to remain as affordable as possible – but as you’ve probably heard me say many times over the past year – accessibility and affordability without quality is no bargain. I’m very pleased we were able to freeze tuition for fall semester – our third consecutive freeze. Iowa State continues to have the lowest tuition and fees of our peer group of 11 universities. But even our students have voiced support for a moderate tuition increase to ensure our high-quality… and we will be raising tuition in the spring $100-per student for resident undergraduates. This was approved yesterday by the Board of Regents

A. Moving Students Forward: New Goal

We do understand, however, that any increase, no matter how moderate, can be burdensome. For that reason, we are aggressively working to raise additional dollars for student financial aid and scholarships. Three years ago, I launched the Moving Students Forward campaign – with the goal of raising $150 million dollars for aid and scholarships by fall 2017. Tonight, I’m extremely pleased to report we have raised more than $145 million dollars with two years to go. And we’re already seeing positive results: last year more than 5800 students received privately funded scholarships; and in general, our students are taking out fewer loans and graduating with less debt. The average student debt load for an Iowa State graduate has dropped 5 percent over the past three years and more than 10 percent over the past nine years. To ensure this trend continues, I am pleased to announce we will expand the goal of this campaign to $200 million.
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Overall, our fundraising skyrocketed last year to $165 million dollars. That’s nearly $50 million over last year’s record! This is especially exciting because we’re beginning to see the tangible impacts across campus. I want the impact to grow and tell you how it enables a second priority and that is

II. Raise Iowa State’s Profile
This year, we will be finalizing plans for a new university-wide fundraising campaign – our largest ever! I want to recognize Larissa Holtmyer Jones who was promoted to president and CEO of the Foundation. She has hit the ground running to keep our strong fundraising momentum going. But while our expectations are very high in terms of actual dollars we plan to raise, we also want to utilize this campaign to support another key priority – that is to raise the visibility and the profile of the university. One of the main ways to accomplish this is by promoting our outstanding faculty and their scholarly work, and expanding our research enterprise.

I’m extremely proud to say we have two new National Academy members. Ronald Leonard, who is a member of the National Academy of Engineering, was recently hired as an associate professor of agricultural and biosystems engineering. And Cathy Kling – she’s a Distinguished Professor of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and economics, and the director of the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development. She made Iowa State history last spring when she was elected to the National Academy of Sciences. She’s the first faculty member in more than a decade and the first woman ever at Iowa State to receive this honor. Additionally, I have named Dr. Kling a Presidential Chair in Environmental Economics in recognition of her tremendous accomplishments in her field and at Iowa State.

Moving forward, I want to position more of our faculty to earn the recognition they deserve, and as a result, become the go-to experts when state or federal agencies, companies, or organizations need innovative ideas, expert advice, or partners for progress.

Our faculty should be the go-to experts because they are doing exceptional work to fulfill the research and service components of our land-grant mission. They helped set an impressive record for external funding of $425 million. Of which, more than half directly supported research projects across campus. The newly created Grants Hub contributed greatly to this success by assisting 130 faculty in submitting more than $60 million in proposals in its first seven months. I’d like to acknowledge Vice President for Research Sarah Nusser for leading this effort. With the help of the Grants Hub, a team led by Alicia Carriquiry, secured a 5-year $19 million grant from the National Institute of Standards and Technology to establish a first-of-its-kind Center for Statistics and Forensic Excellence at Iowa State.
Iowa State continues to lead the way in advancing the bioeconomy. More proof of that came last week when the National Science Foundation announced it was adding 3-years and more than $8.5 million to the grant that supports our NSF Engineering Center for Biorenewable Chemicals. This is led by Brent Shanks. We also opened our new Biopolymer Pilot Plant at the BioCentury Research Farm.

Additionally, I’m very pleased with the progress of the Presidential Initiative for Interdisciplinary Research, which has resulted in more than $257 million in grant applications and $24 million in new funding to date. Two PIIR projects – one focused on nanovaccines and the other on crop bioengineering – are now ready to develop into interdisciplinary centers.

A. Big Data Initiative
As we look to expand our research enterprise, I want to strengthen Iowa State’s position as a pioneer in another rapidly emerging field… the field of Data Driven Science, otherwise known as Big Data. I’m pleased to announce tonight that we are officially expanding the Presidential Initiative for Interdisciplinary Research to provide seed funding for projects in Data Driven Science. Data science impacts every field and the applications are limitless. The ability to capture massive amounts of data and harness that information to identify industry needs, improve processes, and develop new technologies among other things has transformative potential. This new research initiative combined with our new online master’s program in Business Analytics presents tremendous opportunities for Iowa State to become established as a global leader in Big Data.

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B. Faculty and Staff Compensation
Iowa State’s success would not be possible without the dedicated work of our faculty and staff – they are the heart of our institution. We must do everything we can to attract and retain our best people – and I’m pleased that we’ve been able to acknowledge their great work with salary increases each year for the past four years. That being said, I’m disappointed we couldn’t provide higher increases this year. It was a particularly challenging legislative year for us. I’m disappointed the General Assembly did not implement the Board of Regents’ Performance-Based Funding Model. However, I am pleased they recognized the long-standing funding discrepancies by appropriating differing amounts to the three institutions. Iowa State received a $1.2 million recurring funding increase, UNI received $5 million, and Iowa received no increase.

I want to thank everyone who engaged in personal lobbying efforts – whether it was a phone call, a personal email, or a face-to-face visit with your legislator – to advocate for PBF. I can assure you those efforts were not in vain. I believe the General Assembly is now much more aware of the significant funding discrepancies among the regent institutions. This year, we will continue to work closely with the legislature and do everything we possibly can to push for additional
state funding and ensure we can provide competitive compensation to faculty and staff moving forward.

C. Larger Appropriation Request
In fact, that effort began in earnest yesterday when we presented our FY17 legislative funding request to the Board of Regents. Iowa State is asking for a significantly larger increase to our general university appropriation than in years past. We hope this will begin to correct the funding discrepancy that has resulted from our unprecedented resident enrollment growth. We are requesting an $8.2 million recurring increase to our base appropriation. UNI is requesting about $7.7 million, and the University of Iowa is now seeking $4.5 million.

D. Lower Student-to-Faculty Ratio
In making our case to the legislature, we will emphasize the need for additional funding to support strategic new faculty hires. I am making it a priority this year to lower our student-to-faculty ratio. Over the past 15 years, our enrollment has increased 34 percent while our student-faculty ratio has jumped more than 46 percent from 13 to 1 to 19 to 1. Our ratio is now second highest in our peer group. That is why I have set a goal to lower that ratio to at least 16 to 1. Over the past three years, we’ve hired 365 new tenured or tenure eligible faculty, including more than 120 this year – which is a record. But with attrition and our unprecedented growth, additional resources are imperative. We must ensure we’re providing the personalized, student-focused educational experience we’re known for, and that we can remain competitive in attracting and retaining top faculty. We also plan to stress the need for additional advising support, class offerings, graduate student recruitment, and expanding our IT infrastructure.

III. Expanding Capacity and Economic Impact
Expanding capacity is another critical component of how we support our demand. We successfully secured $40 million in state funding this year for a new Student Innovation Center in addition to a $20 million private gift, and we’re working to raise another $20 million for this project. This is the second consecutive year that Iowa State has been awarded state funding for a new campus facility, which is nearly unprecedented. And the $20 million dollar gift was our largest ever for an academic building. This facility will bring 165,000 square feet of space online for interdisciplinary collaboration and large-scale, hands-on projects involving students, faculty, and industry partners.

The Student Innovation Center is one of many strategic capacity improvements we have made or are in the process of making. Others include:

- The Campustown Revitalization project – which brought more student housing options online this fall, as well as commercial development and university office space. The Kingland Building at Lincoln Way and Welch will soon be home to several university units: Institutional Research, the Offices of Responsible Research and Research Integrity,
the Foundation Call Center, the ISU Daily, and University Relations. They’ll move into their new location this winter.

- Big things are happening at the ISU Research Park – and the benefits are two-fold. One, we’re expanding capacity with the construction of the Economic Development Core Facility – which will house all of our economic development assistance units by this time next year. And two, we’re enhancing our economic impact by transforming the park into a larger, more robust, and more vibrant place for industry and businesses to connect with Iowa State. The Core Facility is one of four buildings under construction or in the design phase right now. The others include Vermeer’s Applied Technology Hub, Boehringer Ingelheim’s Research and Development facility, and a new restaurant – which will be similar to The Café in North Ames. Vermeer, in fact, decided to expand their footprint at the Research Park for the primary purpose of attracting more Iowa State interns to develop into full-time employees! We’re also adding recreational trails and we’re finalizing terms to bring in more amenities including a fitness center, coffee shop, and child care center. The idea is to make this not only a modern, exciting, attractive place to work but a destination for the community to enjoy. We’re also working with the city to make it easier to get to the Park. Road improvements are underway on University Boulevard, which includes the installation of three roundabouts.

- Heading north on University, you can’t miss the striking new look of Jack Trice Stadium! The Sukup South End Zone Club has expanded capacity to 61,500 – the third largest in the Big 12 – while transforming the game-day atmosphere for fans, players, and coaches. I want to acknowledge Jamie Pollard for his leadership in making this project a reality, despite his serious health scare last spring. Jamie, we’re very happy to have you back leading Cyclone Athletics.

- With the stadium complete, we’re now turning our attention to Reiman Gardens and the integration of the garden’s greenspace with the stadium to transform the entire south entrance to campus. In addition, we’ll be making improvements to the intramural fields across from the stadium – adding lights and artificial turf to some of the fields in order to extend playing time and avoid some of the problems caused by rain and flooding.

These are projects the university, athletics, and business communities have talked about and advocated for… for many years. I’m so pleased that we have finally been able to roll up our sleeves and make them happen. In the case of Campustown and the Economic Development Core Facility – we’re not only revitalizing key areas in and around campus, we’re bringing nearly 70,000 square feet of new space online in order to free up core campus space to be repurposed for faculty and students. For example, the former TV studio in the communications building is being repurposed for studio space for the College of Design.
We’re also planning to bring 185,000 square feet of space online with the new Biosciences Facilities Project. This includes a four-story addition to Bessey Hall and the new Advanced Teaching and Research facility at Stange and Pammel. We’ve secured $40 million from the state and we’re working to secure another $30 million in private support, with construction slated to begin in early 2016.

Construction is already underway on the new 780-bed Residence Hall – set for completion in 2017. And next summer, the new Friley Windows Dining Center will be ready to open… which will increase campus dining options to more than two dozen locations.

But we’re not just adding more space, we’re making significant upgrades to our current space.

- Marston Hall’s 21st century makeover is targeted for completion in the spring.
- We recently completed renovations to Lagomarcino Hall for the School of Education.
- The Hub has a beautiful new patio with expanded outdoor seating and a free speech area.
- We’re also making improvements to Osborn Drive – one of the main east-west arteries through campus. It now features wider sidewalks, and we’ve launched several pilot projects to study other ideas for parking, pedestrians, bus stops and vehicle traffic to ease congestion.

- And we’ve launched two initiatives centered on classroom technology and learning. We’ve begun the process of upgrading all 214 general university classrooms over the next decade. And in an effort to adapt to the changing ways our students learn, we’re transforming dozens of courses – from introductory to graduate level – to a flipped format. This blends online instruction and content with more personalized classroom learning and student-faculty interaction.

- We’ve also launched our first-ever MOOC or massive open online course on the Iowa Caucuses. The no-credit, free course is led by University Professor Steffen Schmidt to give students, journalists, and political enthusiasts an in-depth look at Iowa’s first-in-the-nation caucus process.

With the Iowa Caucuses about 5 months away, the presidential candidates are barnstorming the state, which includes many campaign appearances here on campus. But in addition to their rallies, all of the candidates have been invited to campus to engage with students, faculty, staff, and the public in a more formal lecture format as part of a new Presidential Caucus Series.

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IV. Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe Campus

Now to fully meet the needs of the university community – we must ensure a welcoming, safe, and inclusive campus. I am pleased to say Ames was recently ranked the healthiest metro area in the U.S. But even with recognition like that, there’s always room for improvement; and for us, those efforts are focused heavily on the Thielen Student Health Center.
Many of you may be aware of the problems and challenges concerning the Student Health Center. Over the past year, we’ve taken a number of significant steps to overhaul the center and make improvements to ensure our students are receiving the highest quality care and support. We initiated a comprehensive review by Keeling and Associates, and we’ve worked aggressively to implement all of their recommendations: we’ve hired an interim director, a quality improvement officer, and certified medical assistants who are now serving as the first point of contact for students at the reception desk. We’ve also provided formal training for all physicians and nurse practitioners to better communicate with patients. And we’re adding two psychologists to the counseling center. I am confident that students will experience substantial improvements in service and care, and we will continue to make adjustments until the center is operating at the highest level. We understand that healthy students are more engaged, productive, and successful – and they deserve nothing less than first-rate care.

With respect to students’ health and safety, we’re also ramping up efforts to address sexual assault on campus. You’ll be hearing more about this throughout the year as we work to better educate students, faculty and staff about sexual assault and related crimes, and the resources, personnel, and support available for survivors. Later this month, the survey results from the Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey conducted last spring will be released. We will use the results to reexamine our current practices and develop new policies to better promote our culture of zero tolerance and improve support for survivors. The Student Health Center will be a key part of this.

A new, permanent Health Center Director will be one of our most important hires this year. We’re also looking to hire a new Dining Director, and we’re in the final stages or our search for a new Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion. This senior level position will report directly to me and will be responsible for developing and implementing initiatives to meet our diversity priorities. I began meeting with the four finalists this week and I anticipate a decision next month.

V. Operational Priorities

I continue to abide by my leadership philosophy that the way to move an organization forward is by raising the level of its talent. You also move an organization forward by identifying ways to operate more efficiently and effectively.

A. Budget Model Review

And while we are nationally recognized as one of the most efficiently-run universities in the country, I have established three key operational priorities for the year. First, I’m going to scrutinize the budget model. By and large, it’s a very effective budget model, but due to some unforeseen unintended consequences, I see a need to make some changes. I’ve charged my Chief of Staff to closely examine many of the direct and allocated costs to ensure we are aligning
Remarks As Prepared for Delivery by President Steven Leath

incentives between the service units and the colleges. Bottom line: the costs that you are being charged for certain internal services is too high and we are going to lower them so those savings can be reinvested in our core mission.

B. Faculty Charge
Two, I’m going to take a more targeted approach to address the needs of our growing university. Over the past three years, we’ve made great progress in implementing positive changes across campus… largely as a result of the thoughtful recommendations and feedback provided by the President’s Committee on Enhancing Institutional Excellence and the Student Experience Enhancement Council. Since the formal work of these committees has ended, I am now calling on Rob Wallace and the Faculty Senate to assist me in identifying ways to address our campus needs. In addition to this year’s initiatives to continue expanding capacity, lower the student-to-faculty ratio, and secure support for competitive compensation, I’m asking the Faculty Senate to give some careful thought to additional areas that need attention. I want to ensure we continue to provide the high-quality, unique experience only Iowa State offers.

C. Strategic Plan
Third, this year we will be developing a new strategic plan, which will guide us over the next five years. We have made tremendous progress with our current plan designed to attract outstanding students, faculty and staff to address the challenges of the 21st century. But now, for the first time, we have the opportunity to coordinate our strategic plan with that of the Board of Regents and the ISU Foundation. I have also engaged the faculty in this process, led by Steve Freeman, and this will enable us to develop new academic initiatives that we will discuss and implement at this time next year. I want to build off our current progress to continue to move Iowa State forward, support the strong demand for an Iowa State degree, and raise our profile as one of the top land-grant institutions in the country.

VI. Conclusion
Now before I open it up to questions, I want to conclude by saying Iowa State is truly an outstanding place – it’s an outstanding place to get an education, it’s also an outstanding place to work. Our faculty and staff are dedicated, hardworking, and caring. Our students are motivated, engaged, and productive. And our alumni and supporters are passionate, responsive, and generous. I believe that if Iowa State continues to be forward-thinking, opportunity-focused, and demand-driven, we will continue to produce excellence in everything we do. Have a great year, enjoy your adventure, and Go Cyclones! Thank you!