Thank you, Cole, for that great introduction! Good evening Cyclones! Today on our campus, Cole is one of 36,660 students who are one step closer to realizing their dream of earning an Iowa State degree!

2,000 faculty members are inspiring those students to reach their full potential as well as inspiring innovation that is changing lives.

And 4,400 staff members are ensuring this university fulfills all elements of its mission as a leading land-grant institution.

Welcome to all of you! I want to offer a special thanks to those of you joining us in person tonight and those watching online.

This is a transformational time at Iowa State! And while change can be challenging, it’s also exciting! Our campus is growing yet our university community is close-knit. We’re working to become more diverse yet more inclusive. And we’re raising the profile and reputation of the university while remaining true to our land-grant principles.

We’re experiencing major change not only in our student population, but also in our campus landscape and among university leadership.

There are many new faces on campus this year. Please join me in welcoming those who have assumed new leadership positions. Please stand as I call your name and let’s hold the applause until the end.

- Kate Gregory is our new Senior Vice President for University Services.
- Mike Norton is our new University Counsel.
- Dr. Reg Stewart begins his first full academic year as Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion.
- Margo Foreman has taken the role of Director of Equal Opportunity and Title IX Coordinator.
- Dr. Martino Harmon – a familiar face to many – was promoted to Senior Vice President for Student Affairs last spring.
- Dr. Laura Jolly is the new holder of the Dean’s Chair in the College of Human Sciences.
- Erin Baldwin is the new director of the Student Health Center and
- Mohamed Ali is head of ISU Dining.
- In athletics, Jamie Trachsel is the new head coach of the softball team.
- And Matt Campbell has taken the helm of Cyclone Football.
- I also have taken on new roles as member of the NCAA Division I Board of Directors to help enhance the student-athlete experience and ensure the integrity of college athletics. And more recently I joined the Board of Governors for the entire NCAA organization.
Let’s give these new members of the Cyclone Family a warm welcome!
You may be seated.

During this transformational time – we’ve been giving a lot of thought to the future. We’re looking at –
- How can we better position our university to meet the challenges of the 21st century?
- How can we meet the changing needs of our students?
- How can we lead the way in science and innovation and better serve our state and our nation?
- How can we make everyone on our campus feel safe, welcome, included, and valued?
- And how can we ensure we have the resources necessary to support these priorities?

These are the questions that guided the visioning and development of our new university strategic plan. Developing a strategic plan for a large, complex organization like Iowa State is a tremendous undertaking. And this was truly a campus-wide effort! This plan was crafted with broad input from faculty, staff, students, community leaders and other university stakeholders, including six subcommittees totaling more than 100 members. Hundreds of comments were submitted online and feedback was collected at four public forums.

All of this was done in a relatively short period of time. The steering committee received their charge in early October and the final plan was approved by the Board of Regents in July.

I want to thank everyone who played a role in its development. Your contributions were invaluable in the creation of a set of comprehensive and diverse goals, metrics, and action items.

I especially want to thank University Professor Steve Freeman for leading the Steering Committee; keeping the process on track; securing broad, balanced input; and making sure that our plan aligns with the Board of Regents new strategic plan.

The steering committee has been busy this summer. After the plan was officially approved, they got to work on an implementation and accountability strategy. This will ensure the strategic plan doesn’t become a dusty old document that we never look at again. This plan should be considered a “living document,” one that can be adjusted or tweaked to reflect the changing needs of our university over the next six years.

That’s precisely why we didn’t print a bunch of full-sized, hard copies to distribute. Instead, when you came in tonight, you should have found a card on your chair. This card features the university’s mission and vision and the plan’s four overarching goals. These goals will not change. However, the plan does contain several sub-goals, a variety of metrics, and related actions that will be revisited annually.

I encourage you to read the plan in its entirety. You can find it online at STRATEGIC PLAN dot I-A STATE dot E-D-U. That website is also listed on your card. We also have posters available for display in your offices, departments, and labs to increase awareness of our mission and vision.
You can expect that moving forward, each year at my Annual Address, I will discuss our progress toward these goals. We’re also required to report annually to the Board of Regents. And you’ll be able to find progress reports, data, and other information on that website throughout the year.

Tonight, I’m eager to officially launch this strategic plan. I’ll introduce in more detail the four overarching goals and the members of my cabinet who will lead the implementation efforts for each goal. And I’ll discuss some new initiatives and measures that will set us on course toward substantive progress over the coming year.

First, it’s important to note that the university’s mission and vision have not changed. We remain committed to creating, sharing, and applying knowledge to make Iowa and the world a better place. And we will continue to strive to lead the world in advancing the land-grant ideals of putting science, technology, and human creativity to work…

And to do this we must continue to put students first. Goal 1 of the strategic plan is to ensure access to the Iowa State experience – including an exceptional education. We want to improve the experience for underrepresented students and prepare all students for lives and careers in a dynamic, global community.

This goal will be managed by Senior Vice President and Provost Jonathan Wickert and Senior Vice President for Student Affairs Martino Harmon with support and input from Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion Reg Stewart.

One of the most significant outcomes of this goal will be the creation of a comprehensive campus climate assessment system. While it will take a year or two for full implementation, the purpose of this system will be to measure and evaluate the campus climate. This will provide invaluable information on the educational experience of underrepresented students. This system will be developed with considerable input from Dr. Stewart and other administrators and advocates for underrepresented students.

Goal 1 also places major emphasis on high-impact educational activities – such as study abroad, faculty-student research projects, service learning, internships and coops. We also want to grow our graduate programs; increase retention, graduation, and placement rates while maintaining affordability.

These focus areas are central to the exceptional education students receive both inside and outside the classroom… an education that is both accessible and affordable. This is at the core of our land-grant mission. And it’s why demand for an Iowa State degree has reached unprecedented levels.

But while we’re proud of this high demand and growth, we knew it wasn’t sustainable without a significant increase in resources. Fortunately this fall, while we did welcome another record number of students, our enrollment increased at a much more modest rate. This is exactly what we had projected and planned for. We want to continue to make an Iowa State education accessible, but we want to grow at a pace that allows us to protect and maintain our quality.
Last year during my Annual Address, I charged the Faculty Senate to engage the campus in exploring long-term, sustainable ways to manage our growth. I want to thank the Enrollment Management Task Force for the thoughtful, thorough, and eye-opening report they submitted earlier this summer. In addition to providing recommendations for enrollment management, this report details how rapid growth coupled with inadequate resources has impacted certain programs.

Examples of classroom, lab, and staff shortages, and overcrowded courses put a finer point on the case I continue to make to legislative leaders and that is – years of lagging state funding have put the high quality ISU experience at risk. We have been unable to make meaningful improvements to our university rankings and our student-to-faculty ratio. That ratio remains at 19:1, despite hiring more than 400 new faculty over the past five years.

We appreciate what the Governor, the legislature, and the Board of Regents have done for us, but the reality is – it’s simply not enough. I showed this graph at the Board of Regents meeting last week and I think it tells a compelling story. As our enrollment has increased to record levels over the past eight years, our state appropriation per resident student has rapidly declined.

In 2008 when our record growth began, we received about $12,700 per resident student. This meant that nearly equal amounts of our budget revenue came from the state and from tuition and fees – it was a nearly 50-50 split.

Today, we receive $9400 per resident student from the state. That’s a decline of more than $3000 per student. This has dramatically shifted our budget in such a way that now less than 30 percent comes from state funds and nearly 70 percent comes from tuition and fees.

To put this another way – in order for us to return to that 2008 level, we would need the legislature to increase our general state appropriation by $65 million.

The bottom line is – we know that’s not going to happen. We will continue to call on state lawmakers to increase support for higher education and we will lobby aggressively for more funding. But we must be realistic about the state’s economic situation – including the slowing farm economy and shifting priorities in the legislature.

As a result, we must make adjustments to the revenue stream that we have the most control over… and that’s tuition and fees.

We want our students and their families to be prepared for a number of potential changes. First, we will propose to the Board of Regents a new two-tiered tuition structure. This approach involves a lower tuition rate for freshmen and sophomores, and a higher tuition rate for juniors and seniors. It’s a very straightforward, reasonable approach. It reflects the higher costs of more advanced and increasingly specialized coursework, learning opportunities, and personalized instruction that occurs later in an undergraduate program.
Remarks as prepared for delivery by Steven Leath, ISU President

To ease the immediate burden of this new structure, we’re proposing a three-year phase in period beginning next fall.

We are also looking at increasing student fees to provide critical support for areas such as student health and technology.

In addition, the Board of Regents is implementing a new 2-year tuition and budget model to provide greater predictability for our students and their families. This new model calls for annual incremental tuition increases at 2 percent for fall 2017 and fall 2018. It also requests the state legislature to increase our state appropriation by 2 percent for each of the next two fiscal years. We believe this is reasonable and achievable.

I want you to know that we gave this very careful consideration, we sought input from students and stakeholders, and together we determined that a new tuition structure and incremental tuition and fee increases will help us maintain the quality our students expect and deserve.

The good news is – even with an increase, Iowa State will remain one of the most affordable universities among our peer institutions.

But having said that, we fully recognize that any increase in tuition can create hardships for our students and their families.

To ease that financial burden, we continue to work diligently to raise additional private support. It was exactly four years ago at my installation that I launched Moving Students Forward, a 5-year initiative to raise $150 million for student support and scholarships. Last year we reached the $150 million mark so we upped that goal to $200 million.

Tonight, I’m very pleased to announce that we have now reached and surpassed our $200 million goal – a full year ahead of schedule!

In the four years since this initiative took off, more than 23,000 students have received support through Moving Students Forward. And thanks to this as well as other institutional scholarships – we have been able to lower student debt by 8.5% during that time. I want to thank everyone for their support of this important initiative.

This is certainly a notable milestone, but our work doesn’t end here. Student support will continue to be a top priority as we kick-off the largest comprehensive campaign in Iowa State history.

Over the past year, we have been engaged in a collaborative university-wide effort to establish goals and priorities, develop a timeline, and work through complex logistics to prepare for the public launch of this historic campaign. And it comes with a historic goal!

The official goal and theme of the campaign will be revealed on September 30 at the public launch. You will hear much more about this campaign through your colleges, departments, and units in the weeks and months ahead.
Private support and public funds are essential for us to maintain the high quality ISU Experience – to make critical investments in our faculty and staff, student services, and cutting edge facilities.

I’m really excited about our new and improved facilities and recent campus beautification projects.

- After two years of work, the College of Engineering is back home in the beautifully renovated Marston Hall. We successfully preserved the historic elements of this iconic building while making 21st century, student-centered upgrades. We’ll hold the official dedication later this month.
- Late last spring, we were joined by the U.S. Energy Secretary for the opening of the Ames Laboratory’s new Sensitive Instrument Facility… it’s a facility that holds potential for unprecedented scientific discovery to address our nation’s materials and energy challenges.
- In June, we dedicated the new Economic Development Core Facility at the Research Park – which greatly expands our ability to coordinate and integrate economic development assistance. This facility also frees up critical space on central campus for faculty and students.
- We opened the Memorial Union this fall for student housing, and Buchanan 2 will be ready for move-in spring semester.
- Also later this semester, we’ll move forward on the new 100,000 square foot Student Innovation Center.
- The Physical Plant’s skyline will soon change dramatically – one of the two smokestacks will come down as part of a major multi-million dollar campus investment in environmental sustainability.
- The new south entrance to campus is taking shape as we make progress on the Jack Trice Stadium green space and new access to Reiman Gardens.
- And I hope you all noticed the beautiful new landscaped plaza around the Fountain of Four Seasons as you walked in to the MU tonight! I want to give special thanks to First Lady Janet Leath and Landscape Architect Rhonda Martin for their efforts to see this project to completion.

The campus aesthetic is a key component of the Iowa State experience. We take great pride in providing state-of-the-art, beautiful, and environmentally-friendly learning and living spaces. But while we strive to have the best facilities in the world, it’s truly our people who determine the level of excellence of our university.

To that end, we will continue to make the recruitment and retention of world-class faculty a top priority, particularly to improve our student-to-faculty ratio.

We’re very pleased to welcome more than 70 new faculty members this year. And while that number is smaller than the number of new hires we’ve made in past years, it’s important to note that our faculty resignation rate last year was among the lowest in the past three decades!
We are working hard to ensure our best people want to stay here. That’s why last fall, I pledged to make salary increases a top priority – and I was very pleased to deliver on that promise! I know we’re still not where we want to be or need to be, but we’re making progress… and we will continue to make salary increases a high priority as we move forward.

Related to that – we are undertaking a massive effort this year to review and potentially overhaul our pay structure. This is tied in part to changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act that take effect December 1 and will impact overtime pay eligibility. University Human Resources will continue to meet with campus groups throughout the semester to explain how these changes will impact you.

Investing in our people is so important because they enhance not only the academic piece of our mission, but they also strengthen our research enterprise…

And that’s Goal 2 of the new strategic plan – enhance the university’s research profile by conducting high impact research to address the grand challenges of the 21st century.

This goal will be managed by Vice President for Research Sarah Nusser.

First off, I want to acknowledge the exceptional work of our faculty. Despite national and global economic volatility, they helped secure a record $425.8 million in external funding last year. That includes unprecedented support for research. Research funding increased 12 percent to a record $252.5 million! And more specifically, support from federal agencies, industry, non-profits, and the state grew to five-year highs! That deserves a round of applause!

This is truly remarkable! It’s a testament in part to our emphasis on interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary research as part of PIIR – our Interdisciplinary Research Initiative.

It’s been four years since we launched PIIR, and now two of the original four projects that received pursuit funding awards are ready to become interdisciplinary research centers! I want to recognize principle investigator Dr. Martin Spalding, who retired this summer, and his team who will continue working to advance crop bioengineering.

I also want to recognize principle investigator Dr. Balaji Narasimhan and his team for their efforts to transform the design and manufacture of nanovaccines.

I also want to thank Provost Jonathan Wickert, Sarah Nusser and Jim Reecy for their leadership and support in moving this initiative forward.

Because of PIIR’s early success, we expanded the initiative last year to provide seed funding for projects related specifically to data-driven science. Iowa State is serving as a co-leader of the National Science Foundation’s Midwest Big Data Hub – and these projects align with our efforts to be a national leader in this rapidly emerging area.

Another reason for the success of our research enterprise – the quality of our grant proposals is improving thanks to the excellent support provided by the Grants Hub.
Moving forward this year, we plan to expand our seed programs beyond the PIIR program. Sarah and her team are working to develop peer mentor groups for specific agencies to help faculty be more competitive. And we’ll continue to work more closely with agency stakeholders to promote our visibility – much like we did earlier this year when we hosted a National Endowment for the Humanities Regional workshop.

We’re also making progress to expand and upgrade our research facilities. I know our Biosciences programs are looking forward to the new addition to Bessey Hall and the new Advanced Teaching and Research Facility.

And tonight I’m excited to confirm plans for a new capital project – we’re launching a major private fundraising and state lobbying effort to secure funds for a new Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.

At a projected cost of just over $120 million, this will be the most expensive, complex building we’ve ever built. But it’s also one of the most critical. The VDL puts Iowa State on the map as a national leader in protecting animal and human health. For example, the VDL has been at the forefront of the nation’s response to the avian influenza outbreak. Services and resources provided by the VDL are in such high demand that over the last five years the lab’s caseload has more than doubled. The current facility, which was built in the 1970’s, is now grossly outdated and overcrowded.

This project has been talked about for several years, but it is now our top capital legislative priority. We’ll be making a case to the legislature to provide $100 million over five years to help fund a brand new facility.

The VDL epitomizes our land-grant mission by applying world-class technology to real-world problems. And this is at the heart of the next goal of the strategic plan…

Goal 3 aims to improve quality of life for Iowans through services and programs dedicated to economic development and the promotion of healthy communities, people, and environments.

This goal is being managed by Vice President for Extension and Outreach Cathann Kress and Vice President for Economic Development and Industry Relations Mike Crum.

Each year more than 1 in 3 Iowans directly benefits from Extension and Outreach programs and services that concentrate on agriculture and natural resources, health and well-being, youth development, and community and economic development.

In addition to serving as the essential link to transfer our knowledge and innovation across the state, Extension and Outreach also increases the university’s visibility. Extension just wrapped up a hugely successful social media partnership with Cyclone Athletics. They promoted Iowa State in every county through the hashtag ISU 99 campaign. You likely saw Tweets and Facebook posts about this all summer!
Now, Extension is undertaking an exciting new project to share the state of Iowa’s land-grant story – specifically what it means for Iowa State to be a land-grant institution; the key functions of the land-grant act; and who owns that land now. Many people are surprised to learn that the land sold as part of the land-grant act is not the land our campus sits on. You can expect to hear a lot more about the project throughout the year.

We appreciate the great work of Extension and Outreach and the tremendous value they bring to making Iowa State a truly 99-county campus.

It’s the spirit of extension and outreach that also drives our economic development efforts.

Last year for example, the Center for Industrial Research and Service and the Iowa Small Business Development Center assisted a total of more than 1800 businesses in all 99 counties, and consequently, more than 6500 jobs were created or retained in our state.

Over the past five years, companies licensing technologies developed at Iowa State generated $2.6 BILLION in sales from our innovations.

As a result of this success, Iowa State has been designated by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities as an “Innovation and Economic Prosperity University.” We’re one of only 54 institutions in the country and the only one in Iowa to earn this designation, which recognizes that “economic development is in the DNA of ISU!”

This is wonderful recognition and it encourages us to continue to think bigger in terms of economic development! Over the summer we were excited to open the new Economic Development Core Facility at the Research Park. This facility brings together all of our economic development assistance programs in one modern, attractive, easily accessible location. It boasts a modern, collaborative working environment and it also anchors the collaboration hub and social gathering spot for tenants across the Park.

By creating this one-stop-shop for economic development assistance, we’re taking a more comprehensive and integrated approach to support the launch and expansion of high-value companies. These are companies that attract top talent not only to the Research Park, but across Ames and the state… companies like Boehringer Ingleheim and Vermeer, which both recently opened new buildings at the Park.

Vermeer’s new Applied Technology Hub will celebrate its grand opening next month. This facility will also soon be home to the ISU Startup Factory. The first cohort for the startup factory is underway – these promising entrepreneurs will spend the next year working to bring their innovations to full scale commercialization. And we just put out the call for applications for the 2017 cohort. The program secured a $200,000 grant last month – which will help position Iowa State as a top entrepreneurial center. It’s our goal that over the next five years, Iowa State will be one of the top five universities nationally in startups!

Early on, I made it a priority to double the size of the Research Park – and that development is moving full steam ahead. Commercial development and amenities including Ames Racquet and
Fitness Club, the new restaurant, health clinic, and new recreation trails are progressing quickly. But we’re not done growing the size of the park! We’ll be asking the Board of Regents next month for approval to add nearly 80 more acres.

Adjacent to the park, the Ames Airport renovations… including a new terminal, hangar and fixed base operator will soon offer more inviting, convenient access to our university and community.

We see huge potential in these enhancements to foster greater collaboration, innovation, and the entrepreneurial spirit as well as enrich the Ames community.

I think it’s evident that together we are positioning Iowa State for big things this year and in the years to come. I love the excitement and enthusiasm of each new academic year as it brings new ideas and new possibilities.

It’s this rich diversity – diverse people and perspectives – that makes our university vibrant and dynamic. And I believe Iowa State can become a model for how to really value this diversity and become truly inclusive by taking a staunch approach to Goal 4 of the strategic plan. That goal is to continue to enhance and cultivate the ISU experience where faculty, staff, students, and visitors are safe and feel welcomed. We want everyone to feel supported, included, and valued by the University and each other.

This goal will be jointly managed by Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion Reg Stewart and Senior Vice President for University Services Kate Gregory. But it’s really up to all of us to work together toward a safer, more welcoming, and inclusive campus.

We took an important first step last year by bringing Dr. Stewart on board and establishing the Office of the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion. Now we’re going to expand that office. We are in the final stages of hiring our first LGBTQ+ program director and our first Hispanic/Latinx program director. Offers have been extended to the top candidates and those positions will be filled in the coming weeks.

Also as I mentioned in Goal 1, Dr. Stewart will provide leadership in the development and implementation of a new comprehensive campus climate assessment system.

More broadly, we will enhance our approaches to recruit and retain diverse students and employees.

New this year, we are expanding services for our International Students. We started with a full two-week immersion orientation program to help students make a smooth transition to campus. This was very well-received.

We know that healthy students are successful students. To that end, we have worked diligently over the past year to overhaul the Student Health Center. Our new director, Erin Baldwin has done an excellent job of hiring more staff and making other improvements so that students will experience shorter wait times and better care. Those efforts are already paying off as the Thielen Student Health Center recently earned a three-year accreditation.
We’ve also launched a comprehensive Health, Wellness, and Safety initiative. This includes adding staff to our student counseling services and hiring a sexual misconduct prevention coordinator. This position works with the Dean of Students and the Office of Equal Opportunity on educational efforts to stop sexual assault and harassment and empower survivors to come forward.

ISU Police are also stepping up safety and prevention efforts. They’re piloting body cameras to improve transparency. They’ve expanded the safety escort program and launched a new safety escort app to make it easier to request a ride and track its arrival. And they’ve expanded their multicultural liaison officer program to better engage with underrepresented groups on campus. Aaron Delashmutt is doing a terrific job as interim Police Chief – and we’ve started the process to find a permanent chief.

The safety and well-being of everyone on our campus is paramount. We understand that recent hate crimes and racial violence across the country and abroad have caused many to feel frustrated, angry, and scared. There have also been many incidents over the past year of racism and bigotry on college campuses nationwide, including here at Iowa State. And our country is experiencing one of the most contentious presidential campaigns in recent history. In addition, our university community has suffered tragic loss with the recent deaths of two students and two professors. It is times like these when engaging in open dialogue, civil discourse, and offering kindness and empathy can make all the difference.

As I conveyed in my campus email on the first day of class, I want to set a very clear expectation for how we are to treat each other.

As members of the Iowa State community and Cyclone Family, I ask all of you to join me in committing to the Principles of Community. These principles were first drafted by student leaders a decade ago and endorsed campus-wide. I believe they are as relevant today as they were back then… if not more so. To become a truly inclusive campus we must commit to:

- Respect – fostering an open-minded understanding among individuals, organizations, and groups.
- Purpose – becoming engaged and building a genuine community.
- Cooperation – valuing each member of the Iowa State community for their insights and efforts to enhance campus life.
- Richness of diversity – as I said a moment ago, cherishing the richness of diversity and striving to increase the diversity of ideas, cultures, and experiences.
- Freedom from discrimination – working to overcome historical and divisive biases in our society and responding swiftly and appropriately to all acts of discrimination.
- And honest and respectful expression of ideas – free expression is fundamental to the educational experience. We have a responsibility to challenge and learn from each other’s ideas and perspectives – even if these ideas and perspectives make us feel uncomfortable at times. We can and must engage in a constructive, respectful way.
We also recently clarified the university’s policy on free expression to clear up confusion and correct misinformation. To be clear, free expression is welcome and encouraged anywhere on campus. We just ask that you don’t interfere or impede university activities.

You can find The Principles of the Iowa State Community online on the Office of the President’s webpage as well as the Office of the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion.

Racism, bigotry, discrimination – these are difficult issues to talk about. We’re not always going to get it right. But we can’t be afraid to talk openly and address these issues head-on. It’s the only way we’ll make real progress toward a more inclusive, welcoming campus. I urge you to share these principles widely – in your classrooms, organizations, offices, and clubs – and hold each other accountable when we fail to act in accordance with these values.

As I conclude tonight, I call on all of you to consider how you can help us become a better, stronger Iowa State. Our new strategic plan provides a clear path forward. As the state’s largest university and only land-grant institution, we serve a very important, unique purpose and we bring tremendous value to our state. And that’s because all of you bring unique and special talents, ideas, and perspectives to our campus. During this transformational time, I look forward to how we will elevate our reputation through an unwavering commitment to excellence.

Finally, I want to thank all of you for all you do to make Iowa State an exceptional place every day for our students, faculty, staff, and visitors! You all deserve a round of applause!

Now I’d be happy to answer any questions you may have.