



“Let’s Be Bold!”

Spring Assembly Address to Faculty and Staff

by

President Joseph I. Castro

January 13, 2014

Good morning and welcome to our annual Spring Assembly! I’m really delighted to see all of you here today, and I’m very happy that compared to August, I think I know many more of you, almost all of you. And for those of you who I haven’t met yet, I’m looking forward to meeting you this semester.

Mary and I have been doing our very best to go out and get around campus and throughout the Valley and to participate in as many academic, athletic, music and theater events as possible. We will continue to participate in the life of the campus and hope that when we see you, if we haven’t had a chance to meet you, that you’ll come up to us. I haven’t wanted to creep people out and say, ‘Hey, hi I’m Joe,’ so if I don’t do that, please introduce yourselves to me and to Mary.

As we begin today, I want to acknowledge three key campus leaders I have gotten to know pretty well over the past few months and have come to respect greatly for their efforts in support of the campus: first of all, I don’t see him today, but I want to acknowledge Moses Menchaca, our student body president, I think I saw on Twitter that he is in Sacramento getting an award, so he is not able to join us today, and Grace Liu, on behalf of the staff, thank you Grace for all that you do, for the Staff Assembly and support of our campus, as a whole and Lynn Williams, chair of the Academic Senate. I want to ask them to stand, Grace and Lynn –stand. I want to thank you for your work.

As I considered my thoughts for this new semester and this new year, I wanted to think about how to best share my goals for our university and gain and sustain your engagement as faculty, staff and administrators at Fresno State.

And I guess the conclusion that I have come to that can be summarized in this speech today is – **Let’s Be Bold!** I want us to be bold.

I want us to be bold in our creativity. I want us to generate new ideas, try new things, push ourselves into new and exciting ways.

I want us to be bold in having the courage to say and do what we believe is right. I've asked you in the past to communicate with me honestly through our website and so many of you have done this. I appreciate that honest communication, both the good stuff and specially those areas where you think we can do better. I appreciate that and I ask that you continue to do that.

And let's be bold in investing in the long term. We have come through a period – The Great Recession – when I know that many difficult decisions were made and investments were delayed or cancelled. I saw that at the campus where I came from and across the nation. We are now successfully through that period and we are in a period of stability, renewal and modest growth.

And as we journey together through the year, I'd like us to remember to do two important things -- take time to celebrate our successes and always strive to learn together in ways that make our university stronger. We're in a community that has come together first and foremost, as Lynn said earlier, to support our students.

I hope that this concept of boldness excites you as it does me. Because I see so many possibilities here at Fresno State for building on the strong foundation that exists and we have so many ways in which we can do that and strengthen the overall university.

I know some of you may wonder about the risks involved in being bold. You might be asking, "What happens if I make a mistake?"

My answer to that is – That's OK. Mistakes sometimes happen. Making mistakes means that you are trying to do new things – and that's a good thing. Author James Joyce said, "Mistakes are our portals of discovery." So we will learn from our mistakes and move forward to discover new and better ideas.

I believe that we are ready to boldly be creative and to try new things; that we are ready to learn new ways of teaching to provide our students with the most compelling information in the learning styles that engage and challenge them; that we're ready to boldly push ourselves and change ourselves to discover how to take Fresno State to new and exciting levels of achievement.

As I've said since last summer, my top academic goal is to improve student success at Fresno State. We'll work in many areas to continue to accomplish that, and one of them is our new Fresno State Tablet Program, which will be up and running this fall with 40 faculty members who stepped up and over 1,000 students who will participate in our inaugural year.

I've been asked many times why am I so interested in introducing tablets. I explain that my interested in making sure our students have the tools they need to succeed and that they're well prepared for careers that are become increasingly dependent upon technology.

We've decided to chose Apple for our initial tablet purchase, primarily because of accessibility. We also have a CSU model from Northridge in a partnership with Apple. We're building a

program to be nimble and agnostic, that is not platform specific. That way, we will remain open to technology as it emerges.

As you may have noticed, elementary, junior high and high school students throughout the Valley and around the state and nation are using iPads and other tablets in their schools. We must be prepared to serve these students well when they arrive at Fresno State. We are also seeing tables used in a wide variety of occupations. Now I'd like to show you a brief video from Apple that shows how iPads are part of daily life.

<http://www.apple.com/ipad/life-on-ipad/?cid=wwa-us-kwg-ipad-com>

How was that for BOLD at the end there? Last fall I appointed a taskforce of students, faculty, staff and administrative leadership to plan the development of our new tablet initiative.

Chaired by Associate Provost Lynnette Zelezny, whose here in the front row, the Fresno State Tablet Program Taskforce investigated successful tablet initiatives at higher education institutions, met with industry and technology leaders partners and defined the institutional infrastructure necessary to create successful implementation in fall 2014.

Forty faculty members, that's 40 faculty members, from the eight schools and colleges and the Division of Continuing and Global Education have volunteered to participate in this inaugural cohort. I'll have the chance to formally invest these faculty fellows at a reception later today. They will participate in focused professional development activities throughout the spring and intensive summer training.

Their training will culminate in the creation of re-imagined educational experiences and courses that will advance the transformative potential of technology in our classrooms.

Their courses offered in the fall will be delivered to a diverse, multi-disciplinary group of more than 1,000 students – from freshmen to graduate students.

As I call your names, will our Fresno State Table Program Faculty Fellows please stand and remain standing?

From our College of Arts and Humanities:

Paula Durette
Shane Moreman
Marnel Niles Goins
Mary Husain
John Beynon
Mary Paul
Mike Maniquiz
Sean Fulop
Jean Wang
Yolanda Doub

Rusty Robinson
Kenneth Froelich
Elizabeth Payne
Liz Waldman

From the College of Health and Human Services:

Bryan Berrett
Christine Maul
Marcia Thompson
Harshavrdhan Deoghare

From our College of Social Sciences:

Brad Jones
Ethan Kytle
John Farrell
Vern Creviston
Lisa Anderson
Michael Lukens

From the Craig School of Business:

Lorenzo Rios
Ida Jones

From our College of Science and Mathematics:

Joe Ross
Ulrike Muller
Martin Shapiro

From the Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology:

Steve Rocca
Arun Nambiar
Lynn Williams

From our Kremen School of Education & Human Development:

Frederick Nelson
Lisa Bennett
Elisa Jamgochian

From the Lyles College of Engineering:

Brad Hyatt
Zoulikah Mouffak
The Nguyen

Let's thank these "pioneers" for their boldness in accepting the challenge of launching our new tablet era at Fresno State. Thank you so much.

I am encouraged by the collective commitment to student success at Fresno State – and the tablet initiative is just one example of that. At the same time, our overall graduation rates are too modest and must increase in the future. Our students and their families deserve our very best effort in this area.

To accelerate further our student success efforts, I have approved just recently \$900,000 in new funding for various programs and initiatives. Some of these funds will be used to inspire new innovative student success strategies developed by the schools and colleges.

As I stated in messages during the fall, rebuilding and enhancing our campus' physical infrastructure is my highest non-academic priority. At the Fall Assembly, I spoke about the urgent need to upgrade our aged electrical infrastructure. We have good news on that front.

Upon my recommendation and with support from former Vice Chancellor Ben Quillian, in August, Chancellor White, a Fresno State alumnus, approved over \$31 million to address Phase I of this critical challenge. The project is now in design stage, with construction scheduled to begin in late summer. This is just the very beginning of the work needed to address campus power issues and is expected to be completed by March of 2016. So we have a few more years of hard work in that area.

This is great news, but we all must be prepared for unanticipated outages in the meantime. We have installed additional backup generators to mitigate unforeseen circumstances and we are working to enhance our communication and emergency protocol procedures to improve our ability to maintain operations during outages. I want to thank everyone who came together in December when we had that one outage at 5pm.

The most valuable resource at Fresno State is our people. I am committed to strengthening further our campus community. In doing so, everyone and every voice matters. The recent establishment of Cafe Academy by Provost Hoff and the Academic Senate has brought together faculty from across the campus. The staff and faculty appreciation breakfast in November brought hundreds of us together.

We will identify new opportunities for our campus community to come together in the spring and beyond. I have also established a task force co-chaired by Provost Hoff and Vice President Matson that will recommend new strategies in May to enhance the personal and professional development of our faculty and staff.

Another very important initiative is our WASC accreditation. Work is in full swing and the first draft of the WASC self-study is being completed. Fresno State professor emeritus John Shields has agreed to be our external reviewer and will critique our self-study. After receiving his feedback, we will make revisions and reach out to you in the spring through a variety of campus forums for feedback. Our final self-study is due to WASC next summer. Our offsite review is scheduled Nov. 20, followed by our final accreditation visit in October 2015.

One of the issues the WASC committee is discussing is how best to assess our graduates' core competencies in writing, oral communication, quantitative analysis, critical thinking and information literacy. The committee seeks your thoughts, which can be submitted at the WASC website, www.fresnostate.edu/wasc/.

On my 100th day in office, I announced the formation of a new Commission on the Future of Agriculture. The commission, co-chaired by agriculture leader, George Soares, and Provost Hoff includes leaders from our campus and across the Valley. I have asked them to recommend how we can further strengthen our agricultural programs and deepen ties with industry leaders. The commission will have a preliminary report by May.

I want to update you on three executive searches that are now underway.

- In the search for a new Vice President for Student Affairs, the search committee has recommended four candidates for campus visits in January and February, including open forums.
- The Provost search committee is now screening and interviewing candidates.
- A committee will be formed later this month for the search for the Vice President for University Advancement.

These three positions are crucial leadership roles and I promise you that we will keep you informed about the progress and I invite you to participate in campus forums with candidates.

A major event in the life of the campus will occur May 10 with my formal Investiture as President. I hope you all will attend this ceremony, which will be open to the public. Please watch for details and RSVPs.

As we begin this new year and new semester, I see a great deal of activity and excitement in all corners of the campus. I'd like to look with you at some of the initiatives you'll be hearing about, starting with **Academic Affairs**:

- First, we'll be breaking ground for the Jordan Research Center in late spring. This 30,000 square-foot, multidisciplinary research facility is being made possible through a private gift of \$29 million from the Jordan family. This center will provide state-of-the-art research laboratories and project spaces that will enhance our interdisciplinary research capabilities for faculty from the Jordan College, the Lyles College of Engineering and the College of Science and Mathematics.
- Arts and Humanities is developing a presence downtown, where the new M Street Art Complex will soon be available for students. I was pleased to join Dean Samiian for the opening of that in the fall.
- Continuing and Global Education will launch the online Master of Science in Water Resource Management this spring.

- Finally, 14 Fresno State's students traveled to Fiji this month to help build a community center. This is the university's first international service-learning program.

In the area of faculty development, there is continued funding to support faculty assigned time for research. A call for proposals will be forthcoming in the spring. The new Cafe Academy will continue in the spring as a place for faculty members to have the chance to connect with others and share ideas, challenges and opportunities. As I understand it, they don't talk about work there, is that right Lynn, they talk about hobbies and things like that? And there will be expanded investment in faculty development opportunities in the spring and summer.

In the **Administrative Services Division**, initiatives this spring will include:

- Technology Services is planning additional upgrades to enhance student success. These include implementing the necessary upgrades to wireless and classroom technology to support the new Tablet Program; student data analytics dashboards and reports; deployment of laptops for faculty spring refresh and the implementation of a new campus mobile app that will integrate with the student portal.
- Facilities Management will oversee construction on the new Faculty Office Lab Building and continuing work on University Center Testing Room, Engineering West Water Quality Lab, wayfinding signage which will look really nice by the way, you're are going to like that, and implementation of LED lighting across campus to enhance safety.
- The Fresno State Association plans to complete the Food Processing Laboratory and the construction documents for the Meats Lab Remodel and Expansion. Construction will begin on the first phase of retail buildings and theater at Campus Pointe. Plans are also underway to remodel the lower level of the Kennel Bookstore and the University Student Union.
- Human Resources workshops will continue to build on the wellness wheel concept, a model that supports all aspects of personal and professional development. In addition, there will be focus on Innovations for Change and Effectiveness and a CSU LEAN training program.
- We are improving several of our business processes as a result of our commitment to continuous improvement and success with Lean initiatives. At Printing Services, a new job tracking system will improve services. In the Lock Shop, a new key control and key issuance process will improve campus security.
- Fresno State is one of the lead campuses in the design and implementation of the CSU Common Human Resources System This will launch in the summer and will bring changes to our current business practices related to recruitment, benefits, self-service and other electronic data and transactions. I'd like to commend the team in Human Resources and Tech Services that is leading this important CSU-wide initiative. Thank you very much for your efforts.

- Public Safety will be updating the camera systems that help us maintain a safe and secure environment.

In **Athletics**, several facility projects are underway. We will see completion of the Soccer/Lacrosse venue; expansion and renovation of Strength and Conditioning and the football locker room; and additional coaches' offices.

Four student-athletes and two staff members will be attending the Apple Conference in Newport Beach this month. The conference aims to promote student-athlete wellness and substance abuse prevention. Initiatives will be brought back and implemented with the assistance of the Student Athlete Advisory Council.

The **Advancement Division** has launched important programs through the Alumni Association to better engage our alumni and students. Day-to-day operations of the Parent Program are now coordinated by the Alumni Office, and we will soon initiate a Discovery program designed to reconnect thousands of alumni throughout the state and region with their alma mater.

Clearly, we have some outstanding initiatives under way! As I said earlier, I want our campus community to remember to celebrate our successes. I know that sometimes in the busy-ness of our lives, we overlook or forget to acknowledge the many good things accomplished by our students, faculty, staff and administrators.

I want to give you some examples of our **ACHIEVEMENTS** in just the past semester that we can all celebrate:

In **Academics**, the accomplishments are many. So here are just a few:

- The Fresno State debate team, the Barking Bulldogs, I love that, has been winning competitions throughout the country and is currently No. 1 in the Pacific Region. Director of Debate Deven Cooper, a faculty member in Communications, leads our team, which has had impressive wins over such schools as the University of North Texas, Georgia State University and Harvard. We beat – Harvard! They came to visit me in my office in the fall, and I was so impressed with them. They were on their way to a tournament and they stopped by to say hello and to tell me how much they enjoy being here at Fresno State and being part of the team. They're representing us so well.
- Associate professor of English Alex Espinoza was awarded a 2014 Creative Writing Fellowship by the National Endowment for the Arts. He is one of 38 published authors from a nationwide field of 1,300 people chosen for his artistic excellence and merit. Each winner receives a \$25,000 grant to allow the authors to set aside time for writing, research, travel and general career advancement. Alex can you stand?

- Michelle Ganci in Animal Science and Agricultural Education received the Golden Rooster Award from the California Poultry Federation. It is the highest award for an individual who has made major contributions to the industry and is an inspiration to all.
- Dr. Jim Kennedy, chair of the Viticulture and Enology Department was one of eight internationally renowned seminar speakers for a Scientific American conference on the Rhone Valley. His presentations featured wines of the Rhone, wine and health, climate change and wine, and advances in grape and wine production. Congratulations to Jim.
- Fresno Family Counseling, under the leadership of Dr. Chris Lucey of the Kremen School's Counselor Education and Rehabilitation Department, provided over 6,000 hours of free or very low-cost counseling to Fresno residents in 2013. Thank you Chris.
- Dr. Janell Morillo has accepted an 18-month appointment as campus coordinator of Academic Advising beginning Jan. 13, 2014.
- Dr. Ali Peyvandi, director of the International Business Programs in the Craig School, was awarded the inaugural "Distinguished International Educator" award, sponsored by the Division of Continuing and Global Education. The award is given to one outstanding faculty member each year during International Education Week. Can you join me in congratulating Dr. Peyvandi?

Our **Administrative Services** division had a number of accomplishments in work that is often behind the scenes but crucial to our work and the success of our students.

- Facilities Management completed the Meyers Sports Medicine Building, the reconstruction of Campus Drive, ADA and classroom improvements and the Aquatics Center Shade Canopy. That canopy is really helpful on a hot day. In partnership with the Fresno State Association, we have nearly completed the construction documents for the Jordan Research Center.
- Auxiliary projects included the Paws-N-Go convenience market at the North Gym and a study of dining services on campus that will help us develop plans to enhance dining options and increase healthy food choices.
- Human Resources continues to present leadership and professional development programs. The 4th Regional Education for Achievement in Leadership – or REAL – Program is underway now with 10 Fresno State managers, chairs and administrators. A second cohort of the Staff Mentor program has just begun, and LEAD workshops offer skills training and wellness activities.
- The Fresno State Police Department led an effort to take *Seconds 2 Survive*, a training program developed on campus, to hundreds of school sites across the county. The

training prepares K-12 educators for school violence. The Police Department also partnered with the *Lock it up Project* to keep prescription drugs out of the wrong hands and collected hundreds of pounds of prescription drugs. I see several in the back. Thank you for your important work.

- Technology Services introduced several important upgrades to further our commitment to student success and achievement.

I am pleased by the work that is being done across the campus to support ASPIRE, which stands for A Strategic Plan for Inclusion, Respect and Equity, developed by the President's Commission on Human Relations and Equity. There have been many noteworthy achievements, including an increase in diversity hires across the campus.

I am supporting the PCHRE efforts to launch Diversity Forums this spring with key guest speakers, and I invite you to join me in focused campus dialogue about race relations and other important issues at Fresno State.

Additionally there have been efforts to increase visible signs of our diversity commitment, including diversity related videos, banners celebrating federally recognized cultural heritage months and the translation of ASPIRE brochures into Spanish, Hmong and Lao.

I am a strong advocate that diversity is the responsibility of all of us. Let's look at one of the campus videos created about this.

<http://youtu.be/sMvg2RiZnTc>

I think that video says it really well – promoting acceptance and diversity is everyone's responsibility.

Last fall, Fresno State student-athletes excelled in their sports and in their studies. I am so pleased that all Fresno State programs currently have a multi-year academic progress rate above the NCAA predetermined standard. In addition, during the fall semester, student-athletes completed 3,267 hours of community service.

I have enjoyed meeting our student-athletes and their coaches at practices and games. Their collective efforts have increased awareness of and generated renewed excitement about Fresno State throughout the Valley and across the nation. Fresno State's academic and athletic programs will continue to rise together.

Other accomplishments in **Intercollegiate Athletics** include:

- Fresno State women's soccer head coach Brian Zwaschka was named Mountain West women's soccer Coach of the Year.
- Completion of the Meyers Family Sports Medicine Center and Student-Athlete Village.

- The football team, in case you missed it, won the inaugural Mountain West Championship game, held at Bulldog Stadium.
- Finally, a growing annual fund donor base that is very important and increased major gift contributions.

As you know, we had a record enrollment of 23,000 students in the fall, which included a 45 percent increase in international student enrollment. I want to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Carolyn Coon for adding the job of Interim Vice President for Student Affairs to her other duties, as we search for a new Vice President. Thank you so much Carolyn, another example of being bold. Thank you, Carolyn.

The **Division of Student Affairs** had several achievements during the fall:

- The “Protect Your Dogs” campaign included training 56 students in intervention/alcohol overdose prevention. The students also received CPR training from the American Red Cross.
- The process of electronic receipt of transcripts was begun which I’m sure is making a lot of people very happy.
- The division launched an all-inclusive scholarship application process, which allows the utilization of a comprehensive scholarship listing and centralized application processing.

In our **Advancement Division**, a new era is upon us. Now that the Campaign for Fresno State has successfully concluded with a total of \$214.2 million, the major challenge is to build on that success and to sustain and enhance our efforts at securing private support.

- In the fall, we have seen a marked increase in visits with donors, with scores of proposals given to prospects, and we’ve retooled the Annual Fund. Many proposals under consideration could have major transformative effects on campus academic programs.
- Our communications culture was strengthened during the fall semester. University Communications launched the all-campus Communicators Network and produced the fall issue of the Fresno State magazine. Our social media program is fostering spirit and loyalty with 45,000 friends on Facebook, over 100,000 views of You Tube posts and thousands of Tweets. Our continuing efforts to revitalize our Web presence have also been dramatic. I’ve been using Twitter as you know and I want to invite you to join me in further strengthening our community through social media. I just went over 2,000 followers and I’m looking forward to having more, so if you haven’t joined me, please join our Fresno State twitter account and all the different Fresno State accounts and this will help us to further strengthen our communities.

I'd also like to take a moment to recognize Dr. Peter Smits for his 20 years of exceptional work as our Vice President for University Advancement. As you know, Dr. Smits will retire from Fresno State at the end of June, and we will miss him greatly. I'd like to ask Peter to please rise and allow us to recognize your accomplishments and thank you for your dedication to Fresno State. Another example of 20 years of boldness, right Peter?

At the Fall Assembly, I urged honest communication throughout our campus community. Hundreds of you responded to my request for feedback on those aspects of Fresno State that you love and those areas where you believe we can do better. I reviewed carefully every single one. Thank God I had a few airplane rides between here and the east coast to go through every single one and I did. Last month, the Vice Presidents and I responded on the President's website to those areas of concern that were cited most often. I'd like you to please continue to share those with me in person, by email. That feed is very important to me and to the entire cabinet.

I want to conclude this long speech by thanking each of you for your many contributions in the past as well as those that you will make in this semester. I am deeply honored to be your President. I wake up every day thinking about how I can help Fresno State to be the very best university it can be today, tomorrow and in the decades to come.

My grandfather taught me to think about the long term. I hope that the investments that I mentioned today indicate boldness and confidence in our collective future.

I am serving at Fresno State because the Valley has always been "home." Because this is home, my work with you is deeply personal, in the same way I know it is for so many of you.

I am very optimistic about our future. Our best days at Fresno State lie ahead because of all of you and the rest of our community. This is OUR time. Let's make every day and every hour count. Let's strive to accomplish great things for the generations that come after us, so that they'll marvel at how bold and courageous we were on their behalf.

Thank you for coming today. Thank you for all you do to help our students succeed.

I will be happy to take a few questions. Thank you so much!