

Welcome Back Message

Jeronima Echeverria, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Many of you will be happy to learn that I intend to keep my remarks as brief as possible this morning. (PAUSE) Please realize this means that I may not speak about everything that is important to each of us in this complex enterprise we call Fresno State.

I am so proud to be part of Fresno State. I am so proud to be part of this university with you. Here are some reasons why . . .

Last year, we worked with over 23,000 students, graduated about 4000 of them and sent them on their way to brighter and more productive futures. THAT IS OUR WORK, THAT IS OUR CORE MISSION AND THAT IS WHAT WE DO HERE.

Last year, we hired our largest class of new tenure track faculty, more than ever in our university's history. They join us from prestigious universities across our nation and the world, bringing their cultural and ethnic heritage to enrich us and our students.

We made our enrollment targets again last year, which as you know, is not always an easy task.

We launched the Graduate Augmentation Plan last year, distributing hundreds of thousands of dollars to graduate students and to graduate faculty in support of their programs. We also saw an increase in the number of graduate students by 20%.

We focused on grant and contract activity, cleaning up several of our procedures and policies, and working hard to support faculty in grant writing. Grant and contract activity increased by 29% last year.

We turned our attention to increasing the number of our students who study overseas and the result was a significant increase.

We won approval for the first independent doctorate in the California State University system. This week, we are welcoming 23 new students to our first class for the Doctorate in Education.

This summer we received the green light to offer the Doctorate in Physical Therapy. So this week we are also welcoming 10 new students to our first class for the Doctorate in Physical Therapy.

Being able to launch two new doctorates in one year is the result of superhuman dedication on the part of our faculty in those two departments. And, as you all know, both programs required the leadership and vision of two exceptional faculty leaders. I would like to invite both SHARON BROWN WELTY AND PEGGY TRUEBLOOD to stand and be recognized for the contribution to our community and to our university that these two doctorates will be. THANK YOU

Similarly, next fall we will be admitting our first students to the PhD program in Forensic and Behavioral Sciences, the result of ten years of persistent and dedicated effort by the faculty in the Department of Criminology.

I would also like to compliment the leadership in the Academic Senate and its subcommittees for its work last year. As you know, a great deal of thought and effort went into the new policy on Retention, Tenure and Promotion. And I have already overheard senior faculty telling our first year faculty that they will have a more streamlined, less daunting, more positive, RTP experience as a result of this new policy.

These and many other remarkable achievements happen BECAUSE every day you come to campus prepared to serve and prepared to lead. That is what Fresno State is really about . . . that is what Fresno State really is . . . and that is why I am proud to be a part of it with you.

(PAUSE)

I would like to take a moment to invite our new faculty to stand and be recognized. Welcome. If you are seated near one of these individuals and have not yet met them, please introduce yourself as you leave the hall this morning.

I would also like to invite Dr. Michael Jenkins to stand and be welcomed. Dr. Jenkins is the new Dean of the College of Engineering and is joining us from the University of Detroit. I look forward to working with him and his faculty as he leads the College into a bright future.

And I would like to acknowledge that we have some familiar faces in new leadership roles within Academic Affairs. If I read your name will you please stand and we'll hold our applause until all the names are read:

Dr. Bill Fasse - Interim Associate Provost

Dr. Karen Carey - Interim Dean, College of Science and Mathematics

Dr. Andy Hoff - Associate Dean, College of Health and Human Services

Dr. Steven Walker - Associate Dean, College of Social Sciences

Dr. Ram Nunna - Associate Dean, College of Engineering

Dr. Sandra Witte - Associate Dean, College of Agriculture, Science and Technology

Dr. Fraka Harmsen - Interim Associate Dean, College of Science and Mathematics

Mr. Dave Tyckosen - Associate Dean, Henry Madden Library

Also, two fine individuals who joined during spring term:

Peter McDonald - Dean of Henry Madden Library

Dr. Robert Hudgens - Director, International Programs

Please give them all a hand.

A few brief comments about this coming academic year. First, I would like to share with you that my personal goal for this year is not to add any new goals. While I do not usually make this sort of comment in the presence of my boss, I think it is important that you know that our focus in Academic Affairs this year will be on continuing the progress we are making in so many areas and on supporting the goals already outlined in the *Plan for Excellence* and in the Academic Plan.

Over the past few years several of you have worked on the development of an Honor Code for the University and this year we will be launching the 'official' implementation of the Honor Code. The Code is yet another way for us to address what we stand for, and it is significant for all members of the university. As a reminder, the bookstore will be distributing Honor Code pencils and bookmarks this term.

In addition, a group of dedicated faculty have been working to develop an Ethics Center. That group is inaugurating an "Ethics at Noon" lecture series that will take place on selected Wednesdays at noon in the Alice Peters auditorium. The focus of the series this Fall will be: "Academic Integrity." Faculty members will present lectures on topics including: plagiarism, whistle-blowing, professional ethics and education, and the idea of academic virtue. If you have suggestions for topics or speakers or other ideas for the Center, please contact Andrew Fiala in the Philosophy Department. (INTRODUCE ANDY)

Fliers for the Ethics at Noon Series along with Honors Code pencils will be distributed at the door as you leave today. I invite your support for both of these faculty-led initiatives.

I also want to invite you to contribute to the development of a new instrument for student ratings of instruction. Last year, we had several conversations with Department Chairs, members of the Personnel Committee, and Academic Senate leadership. There is general sentiment that this is the time to improve the survey instrument and the way we process the surveys. This year, we will be working with faculty-led groups to develop a common instrument and align on procedures for processing it. I invite you to participate in this important academic issue.

The new Provost's Calendars featuring our faculty are ready and will be distributed this week. This year's theme is civic engagement and service learning. I hope you enjoy them.

Also, we have an exciting University Lecture Series planned for 07-08 and the series fliers are available as you exit this morning.

Finally, I would like to invite you to join me and your colleagues for the annual FACULTY CONVOCATION THIS AFTERNOON AT 4PM in the RESIDENCE DINING HALL. You are ALL invited (whether you work in Academic Affairs or in any other part of the university). It is a social function celebrating the new academic year and contains a short but important program acknowledging one outstanding faculty from each college. There will be lots of refreshments, live music, Fresno State wine, and your guests are also welcome.

Before I yield the podium, I would like to return to the thought that I would like to leave you with this morning . . .

I AM PROUD TO BE PART OF FRESNO STATE AND I AM PROUD TO BE PART OF THE WORK THAT YOU DO HERE . . . HAVE A GREAT YEAR!