Distinguished guests and friends from the community ... colleagues and students ... those watching over the live video stream ... thank you all for joining me here today.

I would like to discuss the nature and characteristics of our enrollment growth, how we are responding to enrollment growth, and how we are transforming the quality and depth of our core missions.

The Nature and Characteristics of Enrollment Growth

In early September we learned that we reached an all-time record enrollment of 20,898 undergraduate and graduate students ... up nearly 5 percent from last year. Importantly, Student Full Time Equivalents are up 7 percent.

In late August we welcomed the largest freshman class in our history. The Class of 2019 at the University of Nevada, Reno has 3,851 students, a 13.7 percent increase over last year. The university continues to attract incoming students who are well-prepared academically. Freshmen came with an average high school GPA of 3.4 and average ACT score of 23.6.
The new class includes 16 National Merit Scholars. This brings our total National Merit scholarship recipients to 50, a 30 percent increase over five years. The incoming class includes 121 Presidential Scholars, a 20 percent increase over last year, bringing our total number to more than 300.

Diversity is also on the rise which is an important indicator of the university’s intention to actively recruit across the spectrum of Nevada’s populations. This year, our underrepresented students comprise 35 percent of our total enrollment, compared to 33 percent last year.

The University stands for inclusiveness, equity and respect.

Related to this, the September 21, 2015 Time magazine issue addressed anonymous web applications, saying “the anonymity of the internet allows our citizens to post the most vile, racist and hateful comments imaginable. It brings out the worst in humans. Plato asks: If we were shielded from the consequences of our actions, how would that change the way we act?” We have an unrecognized, anonymous group of students known as Coffin and Keys, and they have, unfortunately, shown their answer. While we all value freedom of expression as a foundation of our society, I want to make clear that words and actions, from groups like Coffin and Keys, that scare and denigrate women, members of the LGBT community, people of color and anyone else to whom they feel superior DO NOT, as they claim, "improve the university".
Fortunately, this small group of individuals, do not represent our student body as a whole.

Our students are enjoying more success than ever. The freshman-to-sophomore retention rate is 81 percent. Earlier this month the University was ranked again among the top tier of “best national universities” by U.S. News & World Report. An important determinant of these rankings is the six-year graduation rate. This year's ranking relied on a 55 percent six-year graduation rate for the 2008 cohort. For next year, we will be reporting a 59 percent six-year graduation rate for the 2009 cohort. The four-year graduation rate rose significantly too. In the last academic year, the university awarded nearly 4,000 degrees. The combination of larger freshman classes, strong freshman to sophomore retention, and higher and faster graduation rates means that our undergraduate enrollment pipeline is filling comprehensively.

In contrast, graduate student enrollment still lags, so the university is addressing needed growth in the graduate student population in several ways.

• The Marketing and Communications group is working with Graduate Dean David Zeh and several doctoral programs to test new social media marketing strategies in several fields.

• Recognizing that we have been below market in GTA stipends,
these stipends have been raised from $14,000 two years ago to $17,000 this fall.

• We have added 71 new graduate teaching assistant positions over two years.

• We have augmented annual graduate student professional travel funds by $100,000.

Imagine the effort of so many people at our university involved in attracting and settling so many well-prepared students onto our campus, the recruiters, the student ambassadors, the summer orientation team, cashiers, financial aid counselors developing aid packages, academic advisors, residence life and dining specialists, Facilities Services employees preparing new and renovated facilities and beautifying the grounds and keeping the buildings clean, and faculty responding with additional seats to pare down wait lists for classes. Bringing on nearly 21,000 students has been a near-Herculean effort. Please recognize all of the moving parts in making our campus a welcoming environment and give yourselves a hand.

Responding to Enrollment Growth

The university continues on a path to achieve three major goals. They are goals that fulfill all three aspects of our mission – learning, discovery and engagement.
First is to serve a growing student body so that students can succeed academically, socially and physically. As a part of this goal, we will reduce our student-to-faculty ratio from 22-to-1 to 18-to-1 so that learning can have greater impact, in a more experiential, “hands-on” environment.

Second is to reach the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching classification of “Research University/Very High,” which will help broaden our reach and elevate our reputation. World-improving research addresses the great issues of our time in the knowledge-based industries that are redefining Nevada’s future.

Third is to become a pillar of economic development and engagement for our communities, our region and our state.

While the enrollment has been growing rapidly, actually more rapidly than we had predicted, the university is addressing growth while remaining true to our goals.

Over the last two years, the university has authorized 101 new faculty positions, of which about 80 percent are tenure-track positions. Behind me is a slide of the 41 positions that we have added this year. These hires are part of a multi-year process. Eventually this investment in new faculty positions will total about 400, including at least 300 tenure-track positions.
These positions have been chosen through a Request For Proposal process, led by Provost Carman, that has involved all colleges and schools and faculty leadership. Two major emphases are addressed through the selection process.

One is to address the growth in student teaching demand, while balancing teaching and research responsibilities for our tenured and tenure-track faculty. The second emphasis in hiring is on “clustering” positions to create programs of critical mass in topical areas that promise to yield increased competitive research capacity. The clusters include cyber-security, neuro-science, dry land agricultural and environmental systems, autonomous systems, high performance computing, an expansion in statistics to warrant PhD programs in both Mathematics and Statistics, community health sciences moving toward a School of Public Health, music and theater to build degree programs in musical theater and the Doctor of Musical Arts, big data, and human development and family studies. Many of these clusters are multi-disciplinary which reflects the Faculty Senates’ Commission on the Future of the University Report of several years ago. Investment in these clusters, plus a number of individual tenure-track and lecturer positions, address both areas of enrollment growth and building research and graduate program capacity.

Over the last two years the university also has added support, including 16 administrative assistant positions, 10 additional
academic advisors, teaching and learning technology specialists, cashiers, financial aid counselors, police officers, and other support for students. The library has been augmented with 5 new positions and $650,000 in the annual base materials budget. Research support has seen additions in the Office of Sponsored Programs, the development of a shared research facility, introduction of a grant evaluation program, and the recent grand opening of the Innovation Center, Powered by Switch. The university also is responding to growth with new and renovated facilities for offices and research laboratories. Behind me is a slide of all our major capital improvement projects. Included on this list are several of the major renovations that are currently underway, or are planned for the near future.

Academic spaces include the conversion of Lincoln Hall from residence hall to office building. Manzanita Hall will undergo a similar conversion in future years.

With the opening of the William N. Pennington Student Achievement Center in January, 2016, the student services colleagues of counseling, disability resources, TRIO, and career studio will move to the new building and Thompson Hall will be converted to offices for social sciences and humanities academic faculty, which will open office and lab spaces in Mack Social Sciences. State funds have been secured for a comprehensive renovation of Palmer Engineering, which will expand office space and modernize research labs and classrooms.
Other academic space developments taking place in the very near future include space for the public health component of Community Health Sciences at the Medical School and laboratory renovations at the farm on Valley Road. When the E. L. Wiegand Fitness Center opens in January, 2017, Lombardi will be renovated to offer the dance program dedicated practice studios, expanded space for the kinesiology part of Community Health Sciences and allocation of the basketball courts to Intercollegiate Athletics as a basketball practice facility.

There are a number of other spaces which will become available as a result of the “domino effect”. This has already occurred as administrative units have moved out of academic buildings making room for expanded academic programs. New buildings are planned in the arts, engineering and business as part of our comprehensive campaign.

Plans for student housing include two additional freshman residence halls to open in the falls of 2017 and 2019, one to replace White Pine Hall and the other across Virginia in the residence hall district. Athletics will accomplish a major, self-financed make-over of Mackay Stadium for the fall, 2016 football season and will be completing a new tennis court for the men’s and women’s tennis teams by the end of this year.

Plans for our physical space, and the utilization of space,
go far beyond this list. Space planning, renovating existing space, creating new buildings and developing financing plans for such endeavors is work that is seldom recognized publicly. Additionally, ensuring that our physical plant runs smoothly and efficiently and that our campus environment remains so well-maintained, is simply remarkable. This work is done by the men and women of Business and Finance; of Facilities Services; of Human Resources; of Parking Services; of Planning, Budget and Analysis and the Provost’s Office. Please join me in thanking participating individuals in these units.

It is important to note that the growth of our student enrollment largely is responsible for the physical and staffing development of the university, either through formula state funding based on completed classes or tuition and fees.

This requires a careful balancing act. If we grow enrollment too fast, we will create a painful deficit of resources. In reality, the financing structure of the university has a built-in set of lags which provide resources after enrollment growth has occurred. Thankfully, the 2013 Legislature, supported by Governor Sandoval, created a funding formula which leaves all tuition and fee revenues generated at a campus on that campus. So, enrollment growth in fall, 2015 allowed the university to add faculty and other positions for search during this academic year for placement in fall, 2016. Thus, there is a one-year lag from the time the increased number of students arrived until we can place
additional faculty and staff on the campus. There is also a three-year lag for state funds coming through the funding formula. In the 2015 legislative session, funds supporting enrollment increases were based on completed courses in the 2013-14 academic year, providing funds to search for positions this year and placement in 2016-2017. To completely avoid this lag in resources to match the level of enrollment would require a no-growth or stagnation position. The balancing act is to plan for enrollment growth at a pace in which enrollment does not greatly outpace availability of resources.

Therefore, we are engaged in an enrollment management strategy that we believe will better calibrate, but not completely stop, our growth. This strategy includes three parts:

• Reducing the number of $1,000 scholarships we have awarded in the past to the less prepared end of our academically qualified entrants.

• Advancing the admissions deadline to April 7, beginning next year, which data show will slow growth slightly and improve retention and graduation rates.

• Increase the qualifications for the Western University Exchange students and raise tuition for those previously qualified for WUE beginning in fall 2016.
In addition to student-related revenues, we continue our seven year comprehensive campaign. So far, we’ve raised almost $156 million. The objectives of the campaign include:

- Faculty support in endowed faculty chairs and professorships;
- Student support in scholarships;
- Program support in operational and staffing funds;
- Research funding in equipment, operational funds, and personnel; and
- Building construction and renovation.

The campaign approach is to match institutional aspirations with donor dreams. This is a game-changing undertaking by our staff in Development and Alumni Relations, and our colleges. Let’s thank them for their success.

**A Time of Transformation**

This university is not merely responding to enrollment growth. More important than the numbers are the character and effectiveness of the university. In addition to this being a time of enrollment growth, this is a time of transformation. The university
is transforming and deepening the way we fulfill our missions. Northern Nevada is transforming with us into a hub of advanced manufacturing, of entrepreneurship, of creativity and quality of life.

Earlier this month, Reno Mayor Hillary Schieve chose to deliver her annual “State of the City” address right here, in this room. One of the lines that resonated for me that evening was when the mayor said, “Now, more than ever, we are a university town.” It was a powerful moment. It spoke to how, in a relatively brief time, our University and our community have joined on a clear path for the future.

I’ll just mention a few of these university transformations.

First is the adoption of a new master plan, a new strategic plan and a new core curriculum which will give direction and focus on future developments and operations. All three are adopted and are being implemented. The master plan expands to the south with intentions to connect the university tangibly with the City of Reno. The plan envisions an expansion of the campus footprint one block south to I-80 and to the west edge of Evans Avenue, along with coordinated private development south of the Interstate to downtown Reno. The strategic plan draws focus on ways to fulfill the three, key university missions: learning, discovery and engagement. The new core curriculum is an opportunity for faculty and students to regain respect for the
values of a liberal education.

Another related transformation is in teaching method to emphasize hands-on, experiential learning to provide students with the confidence that they truly can apply what they have learned. The De La Mare Science and Engineering Library has been named by both EDAWN and Maker Magazine as one of the most innovative learning spaces in the region and the nation. National competition teams, business and agency internships, service learning and civic engagement, undergraduate and graduate research, business plan competitions, study abroad, music, theater and dance performances and art exhibitions, real business enterprise development, field trips, and interactive class activities all are experiential learning opportunities that students should expect from a modern, 21st century land grant institution.

Our NevadaFIT program, which our Provost, Kevin Carman has led, helps our students learn first-hand about the experiential focus our University provides. Short for “freshman intensive transition,” this five-day academic program prior to the start of each fall semester is designed to increase success for our incoming students by providing a glimpse into our rigorous academic expectations. In just three short years, NevadaFit has involved hundreds of freshman and now spans all eight colleges.

Just as NevadaFit propels students to academic success, so too does our new Silver Core Objective 1. This objective will provide
our graduates with expanded opportunities for expertise not just in their chosen fields, but in mastering the demands of communicating to a much broader professional audience. We are adding GTA’s and lecturers in English to reduce class size of freshman English courses from 24 to 19 to enhance instructional performance. We are investing to grow the Ph.D. program in Rhetoric and Writing Studies to build university capacity in writing instruction and increase humanities PhD graduates which will help in our effort to reach RU/VH. Bill McCauley is heading our writing in the disciplines initiative. He will serve as a consultant to departments wishing to design writing programs between freshman English and capstone courses to improve writing in discipline-specific formats.

On-line education is expanding with a few degrees, like the on-line executive MBA, and a number of courses. Soon, the university will be involved in a public-private partnership to expand on-line degree education for purposes of expanding our service territory and reaping income.

There is increased emphasis on the return to the expectation that a college undergraduate degree is a four-year experience, followed by graduate school or a career. Our four-year graduation rate is growing rapidly and the new emphasis and expectation will accelerate this rate. In the last two years, we have seen our students take more credits per term, resulting in shorter times to graduation.
Building and supporting the research culture is transforming the university as a major research university. Our aspiration to attain the Carnegie classification of Research University/Very High (RU/VH), will enhance faculty opportunities for research fulfillment, build undergraduate and graduate research opportunities, provide a foundation for scientific and business development, and raise the reputation of Nevada. We are creating new Ph.D. programs across the disciplines, in areas that promise to bring us national recognition.

We are enhancing our research infrastructure with increased staff in the Office of Sponsored Programs and for a grant evaluation program. A new Applied Research Center has been developed and our state-supported Knowledge Fund monies have been applied to areas of strategic and statewide importance, such as our advanced autonomous systems manufacturing effort.

We also are building an ecosystem that enables innovation, talent development, and improving the business climate through facilities such as the Innevation Center, Powered by Switch. Such support is pivotal in helping faculty do foundational research, make breakthroughs, prove and shape scholarly perspective, license University intellectual properties, and form successful spin-off companies.

The campus has developed a health and fitness overlay onto the
academic enterprise. It is well-known that healthy lifestyles promote longer, more productive lives and careers. We have broken ground on the E. L. Wiegand Fitness Center which will serve as a hub for student health and wellness. It will open in January, 2017.

The university has joined 1,200 other campuses to become tobacco free; implementation will occur over the next two or three years involving tobacco cessation education and support. The Student Health Clinic has been renovated into a pleasant environment and the number of examination rooms has grown from 8 to 14. We have invested in the Nevada Recovery and Prevention Program to provide social support for individuals with the courage to adopt a sober lifestyle while pursuing professional development with a college degree.

Starting in the spring, we formed a committee to evaluate a proposed enhancement to the overall resiliency and vitality of our campus. This discussion is centered on the effort to integrate emergency management, continuity, and crisis management capabilities across the entire spectrum of our campus community. This integrated concept is known as organizational resiliency management. Our increasingly complex, interdependent world faces natural disasters, technological disruptions, and intentional acts that cause cascading disruptions. These complex problems must be met with innovative, integrated management practices.
We are hiring a manager of organizational resilience to spearhead this effort and prepare us.

Engagement with our communities is transforming. Programs in Cooperative Extension, Small Business Development, Seismology, and medical and psychological clinics change dynamically. Engagement with our communities is expanding to telemedicine, many guest lectures and arts performances, and participation in economic and business developments in the community. Last week we officially celebrated the opening of the University of Nevada, Reno Innovation Center, Powered by Switch. Located near downtown Reno, the Innovation Center will serve as a hub of ideas, engagement and innovation for the whole community.

The University of Nevada School of Medicine is transforming, as well. During the 2015 Legislature, an important commitment was made by state legislators to create a full, four-year campus in Reno, while developing a full, four-year medical school at UNLV.

This vision and incremental funding over this biennium will help the University of Nevada School of Medicine focus on primary care education and training with a research-intensive, community-based vision, new and strong hospital and community physician partnerships, and outreach to Nevada’s rural areas. From this year on, students in the School of Medicine can plan on taking all four years here in Reno. We’ve also forged key partnerships with health care provider Renown Health. This
includes integration of the Department of Pediatrics with Renown Children’s Hospital, jointly sponsoring a department of Neurology, and expanding agreements for clinical education, residencies and fellowships.

The School of Medicine will continue its statewide effort to bring sophisticated health care to all of the populations of Nevada, including mentoring a large number of residents at Mountain View Hospital in Las Vegas, maintaining clinical education at Las Vegas hospitals, and serving rural Nevada. The School of Medicine also will be reviewed by an accrediting agency next fall to begin a Physicians’ Assistant degree program in Fall, 2017.

Intercollegiate athletics also is transforming to be the kind of academically successful experience for student athletes which will make us all proud. We are achieving the proper balance between ensuring success on the playing fields and success in the classroom for our student athletes. We currently have an 80 percent graduation rate of student-athletes; our APR for all of our sports continues to meet and exceed national standards. Wolf Pack athletes are some of our best community ambassadors. In 2014-15 alone, our student-athletes contributed almost 6,000 hours of community service and won the Mountain West Conference award for most community service.

This is a transformational moment for our university. We are recognized as a high-quality institution of higher learning in the
West, the nation and the world. We have a broad reach that includes students from 49 out of our 50 states and many foreign countries. We are producing the highly educated and creative people that our state and our nation needs. What transformation we are still to achieve will depend on our collaborative work across campus, as well as our abiding sense of inclusivity, involvement and engagement.

We are a place that stresses civility through open and respectful communication. We demonstrate cooperation through our daily work. We show concern for all who step foot on our campus. Because of this, what transformation we will ultimately achieve will be the result of our continued common vision ... and our commitment ... to the achievement of excellence that runs deeply through all the work and all the people of our University.

Thank you all for the important role you are playing on behalf of our remarkable University.