Thank you for coming.

Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge some of our special guests.

Fall is a beautiful time at SIU. The transition between seasons is on full display, demonstrating why we are known as the most beautiful campus in Illinois.

Like the leaves of the trees on campus, SIU itself is in a time of transition.

All institutions change. Over the last 150 years, SIU has evolved from a teacher’s college to a national university. Change ... in programs, facilities, focus ... has always been a part of our history.
If you look around the university, you’ll see transition has been especially prominent this year – from academic programs to recruitment and retention. Today, I will touch on each of the areas listed here.

Before I start, I want to stress that I believe all of the change around us signals momentum and will position us for our next 150 years.

Let’s start with transitions in leadership.
I am often asked when we are going to take the “interim” out of SIU.

My joking response is that we are all “interim.” My more serious response is that regardless of the “interim” title, everyone is working with full authority and commitment to move the university forward.

But we know that stability … especially the perception of stability -- is important.

So here is where we are on filling key positions.

The search for president of the system is wrapping up. Board Chair Phil Gilbert has said we can expect an appointment to be announced in December. That’s the first domino that needs to fall.

The search for a chancellor is getting underway, capably led by search advisory committee chair Marc Morris of the School of Accountancy, who is also chair of the Graduate Council.

The new president will be appointed in time to be a part of the search process for the chancellor. We anticipate that the president’s recommendation to the board regarding a chancellor will be made during the spring semester.

The timelines to fill key vice chancellor and associate chancellor positions currently with interim leadership are to be determined. Final decisions will be made on the new chancellor’s watch.

There are a number of key interim positions on the academic side of the house. The most immediately critical is provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs.

As you know, we are currently conducting an internal search for a provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs. As I have indicated, I made the decision to move forward in consultation
with the system president and members of the Board of Trustees. It is likely that a new president and chancellor will be selected from outside the institution. Appointing a provost from within the university ensures that we retain institutional knowledge and continuity even as we transition to new outside leadership. I continue to welcome feedback and will do so throughout the process.

Meanwhile, we are moving forward with a number of academic hires with the reorganization in mind.

For example, we have completed an internal search for an interim dean of agricultural sciences who is now in place. We will launch a national search for a permanent director of the School of Agricultural Sciences. We are also searching for permanent deans of the schools of education and law and the College of Engineering.

We welcomed Dr. Stephen Shih as associate dean and director of the graduate school.

Of the seven new schools launched July 1, five have permanent directors based on the recommendation of faculty. In two cases, a preference was for interim directors as the schools get settled.

In short, we are moving forward to fill positions permanently while taking ongoing reorganization into consideration.

Speaking of reorganization, let’s take a brief look at where we are today.

### NEW SCHOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>July 2019</th>
<th>January 2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Applied Engineering and Technology</td>
<td>• Agricultural Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Biological Sciences</td>
<td>• Analytics, Finance and Economics</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Computing</td>
<td>• Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Earth Systems and Sustainability</td>
<td>• Human Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Health Sciences</td>
<td>• Management and Marketing</td>
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<td>• Justice and Public Safety</td>
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<td>• Psychological and Behavior Sciences</td>
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**Pending**

- Electrical, Computer and Biomedical Engineering
- Civil, Environmental and Infrastructure Engineering

As mentioned, seven new schools were launched July 1. Five additional schools have been approved and will start in January.
Adding in the existing School of Accountancy and excluding the Schools of Law and Medicine, 13 of 21 proposed schools have been approved.

Additionally, the School of Electrical, Computer and Biomedical Engineering, has been approved by the campus and is in the president’s office. It is likely to be sent to the Illinois Board of Higher Education as soon as a few more RMEs reach his office. Another school, Civil, Environmental and Infrastructure Engineering, is pending review by the Faculty Senate and Graduate Council.

In addition, two colleges resulting from reorganization – Business and Analytics and Health and Human Sciences, are being considered by the Faculty Senate and Graduate Council.

Discussions continue about other proposed schools, and we know that faculty members are working on proposals in addition to those proposed by the university.

Reorganization is a complicated process, and I am very grateful for the collaboration of faculty and staff as schools come together. Ultimately, it will lead to greater synergy and collaboration … greater visibility for many programs as they are more strategically aligned with each other … an even better experience for students as they are exposed to the added breadth of their chosen disciplines … and greater operational efficiency.

Thank you again to our faculty and to Interim Provost Meera Komarraju and her staff for moving this process forward.
In addition to academic reorganization, we are adding programs and certificates in targeted growth areas. These efforts are designed to address demand and contribute to enrollment growth.

Most notable are the undergraduate programs in business analytics and nursing as well as professional doctoral programs in physical and occupational therapy. We are grateful to Southern Illinois Healthcare for its generous support of nursing, physical therapy and occupational therapy.

We are also focused on the strategic hiring of faculty. We added 22 new tenure and tenure track faculty this year and plan to add 35 next year. Again, we are looking for outstanding faculty who bring needed expertise to the table. An example is a focus on digital humanities with the addition of Rebekah Frumkin to the creative writing faculty.

A new organizational structure, new programs and new faculty all contribute to the transition of our academic enterprise, even as we retain the excellence already in place.

Let’s also look at what’s happening as we reinforce our research mission.
Here is a look at our research awards over the last six years. You’ll see a large drop-off in the 2017 fiscal year due to the state budget impasse, which affected both state grants and some federal grants that pass through the state. There were also several programs providing significant funding that were phased out at about the same time.

But you can see that we are now realizing an upswing in research funding over the last two years – which is a very encouraging trend.

Further reason for optimism may be found in the fact that we have seen a significant increase in our federal funding over the last two years. While our funding from the state dropped by more than $6 million dollars, our share of federal funding increased by more than $11 million.

In fact, federal funding is at one of the highest levels we have seen in recent years. As anyone who has tried to obtain federal research funding knows, this growth is something our faculty and our institution can be truly proud of.

### RESEARCH AWARDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal year</th>
<th>Total awarded</th>
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<tr>
<td>FY14</td>
<td>$61.7 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY15</td>
<td>$63.1 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY16</td>
<td>$76.5 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY17</td>
<td>$44.6 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY18</td>
<td>$56.1 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY19*</td>
<td>$55.0 million</td>
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*estimate

Selected factors contributing to the drop-off:
- State budget impasse and affected state grants
- Phase out of America Competes stimulus funding
- Phase out of Illinois Clean Coal Institute funding
- Elimination of Integrated Assessment and Foster Pride funding
It is also important to note that we are holding our own as a research institution within Illinois and beyond. This is a look at research expenditures for Illinois institutions for 2017, our lowest year in the previous slide. The data come from the National Science Foundation’s Higher Education Research and Development Survey and reflect the most recent year available.

The University of Illinois Urbana Champaign and Chicago campuses are the big dogs among the publics. This is not surprising, as they are considered to be “very high research” universities.

According to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, we are classified as a “high research” institution. While we are well below the U of I campuses at $48.4 million, our expenditures are still significantly higher than the next two institutions on the list, both of which share our “high research activity” classification. In fact, we are the highest ranked Carnegie “high research activity” university in the state. And we are proud of that.

We also fare well comparing with private universities, coming in a distant but respectable third behind Northwestern and the University of Chicago, both of which are classified as “very high research activity” institutions.
Looking regionally, the St. Louis Business Journal also ranks us as third in research funding received for 2018. Only Washington University in St. Louis and the University of Missouri Columbia are above us.

Going even further out, we can look at national and international rankings, love them or hate them. They go up and down, so we don’t dwell as much on the numbers as we do on the company we keep.
I especially call your attention to the Center for World University rankings. These rank the top 2,000 institutions out of the 20,000 institutions worldwide based on quality of education and faculty, alumni employment, and research performance. Research performance is measured by total number of scholarly papers, number of papers in top-tier and influential journals, and citations. We rank globally in the top 1,000 of 20,000 institutions at number 773 – putting us in the top 4 percent in the world! Nationally we rank at 185.

The only Illinois public institutions above us are the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign and U of I Chicago. This is also true for the national rankings by the Wall Street Journal and Times Higher Education.

We also remain ranked by U.S. News and World Report in the top tier of national universities.

Every ranking looks at different aspects of institutions. The important point is that we remain in good company.

Here’s another reason to be proud of our identity as a national research university.

We have strong federal research partnerships with agencies such as the Argonne and Oak Ridge National Laboratories, the U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and NASA.

Earlier this year, SIU Carbondale joined other state institutions as a hub in the Illinois Innovation Network, an initiative to harness the research expertise of Illinois universities to drive the state’s economic growth.

Focusing on a few of our many research strengths, we are establishing the Illinois Food,
Entrepreneurship, Research and Manufacturing Hub to solve challenges in food, nutrition, agriculture and health.

Participation in the hub makes us eligible for startup funding approved last year by the Illinois legislature.

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<tr>
<th>STIMULATING RESEARCH</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2019 activities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Elevator Pitch Contest</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Research and Creativity Expo</td>
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<td>• Communicating Research</td>
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<td>• Confluence Ecologies</td>
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<td>• NSF S-STEM Workshops</td>
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<td>• Grant Writing Workshop</td>
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<td>• Natural Sciences Symposium</td>
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<td>• REACH Awards Due</td>
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An important research-related transition this year is the appointment of Dr. Gary Kinsel as interim vice chancellor for research. He is building on established efforts to promote research on campus. Workshops on grant writing and communicating about research support our goal of embracing and growing research.
Let’s turn to recruitment and retention. I won’t revisit fall enrollment in detail as it has been widely covered. Although our numbers were down as anticipated, we found a lot of good news.

ACT scores for the new freshman class continue to rise, up even from last year’s 20-year record.

I want to note here that we are still admitting students who may not have high ACT scores but who show promise based on other factors. We know that GPA ... not test scores ... are the best predictors of academic success in college.

In fact, many institutions are considering becoming test-optional, something we are starting to discuss at SIU Carbondale.

Retention is also up at all levels. While the number of first-time students declined, the dip decreased, and graduate and transfer enrollment was flat. Overall, we have improved significantly in nearly all categories.

Although we may see more decline before an increase due to the small classes coming through the system, we are definitely turning the tide.

Let me highlight a few our new recruitment and retention initiatives.
We’ve already discussed new degree programs. We expect nursing, for example, to enroll 300 students when fully implemented over the next four years. Already we have had nearly 350 inquiries about the program and admitted 79 students who have expressed interest in nursing. These are all brand new students in addition to 67 pre-nursing students already on our campus.

The state’s new AIM High program provides new scholarship opportunities to keep Illinois students in-state. We’ve revised our original plan for these scholarships in order to support students with mid-range scores. These students were not eligible for many scholarships in the past.

This fall, SIU Day attracted 900 students from area high schools, up nearly 50 percent over Fall 2018. While on campus, they get a taste of SIU through hands-on experiences with mock trials, linguistics, flight simulation, hybrid power systems and more. I should note that open houses and events like the State Science Fair, World Languages Day, FFA and math and accounting days also expose high-school students to SIU and all that we have to offer.

I am pleased to report that faculty engagement in student recruitment has grown significantly. Faculty are following up with applicants in multiple ways to make sure their questions are answered and students know they are welcome.

Why is this important? Students often apply and are admitted to multiple institutions. It’s not enough to admit them. We must focus on making sure they come here – on continuing to increase the number and percentage of admitted students we yield. Personal outreach is critically important. Thank you to all who are working hard on this effort.
We are reaching out more intentionally to our community college partners. For example, we recently signed 16 new program articulation agreements with Kaskaskia College, bringing the total to 24 at this college alone. And we had a productive on-campus meeting with representatives of City Colleges of Chicago. We have similar positive relationships with John A. Logan, Southeastern, Shawnee, Southwestern, Rend Lake and others. The community colleges are our partners. We share a common goal: put the student first.

Another community college initiative is a new portal designed to help prospective transfer students see what credits are likely to transfer, learn about articulation agreements with their community college and more.

We are also working to bring more guidance counselors to campus to show them all we have to offer.

We have increased our focus on key target areas, adding admissions officers in Chicago and St. Louis. We are also emphasizing Southern California, where we have a large number of alumni, as well as Memphis, Nashville, Louisville and Atlanta. Of course, we are also redoubling our efforts in Illinois, including Southern Illinois.

This outreach is paying off. Applications for Fall 2020 are up over where we have been at this point in the process the last two years.

We are now reaching out to students much earlier – as freshmen and sophomores – because we know the college conversation is starting early in high school.

**RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES**

- Segmented targeting
- Program-specific marketing
- New CRM to better track and improve interactions
- New online custom viewbook
- Chatbot
- Market research
- Social media team
- Web site restructuring

**92% increase in forestry inquiries**
We have engaged a service to help us with predictive segment analysis research identifying high schools and neighborhoods throughout the United States most likely to have individuals who might attend SIU based on multiple factors.

We are working collaboratively to market individual programs identified by the deans.

A new customer relationship management system called “Slate” will improve communication with students and families. It includes a newer, fresher application.

We’ve also developed a new, customizable online publication that allows students to build and email their own viewbooks based on their individual interests.

We’ll soon be launching an online, automated “chatbot” so students can get common questions answered around the clock.

We’ve invested in new market research to help shape our messages and expanded our social media team and outreach. In addition, we are beginning a restructuring of our website to make it easier for students to see the breadth of programs we offer and find those they are interested in.

There’s more, but I hope you can see the tremendous focus we have on student recruitment.

**RETENTION INITIATIVES**

- Early warning program
- Reinvigorated UNIV 101
- Reverse transfer
- Accelerated master’s programs
- Enriched advising
- Enhanced career services
- Dawg Days
- Summer Bridge Program
- First Saluki Center

Key to enrollment success is keeping students once they come. Retention is as important as recruitment. Here are a few examples of what we are doing to aid retention.
We are further developing our early warning program by identifying students who may need extra support ... and we are doing this almost immediately upon their arrival to campus. We simply cannot wait.

We have reinvigorated the University 101 course to ensure that students are connected to their academic homes as soon as they start on campus. We are relying more on program-based faculty and student mentors to make sure students develop a sense of belonging.

We are focused on reverse transfer programs that allow transfer students who come to us without their degrees to transfer their SIU credits back to their community colleges. This creates incentive for them to continue their coursework at SIU. It also solidifies our partnerships with community colleges.

We’re also adding accelerated master’s programs that provide a faster path from the bachelor’s to the master’s degree, creating attractive cost savings for students.

We’re enriching the centralized academic advising experience for students by providing additional resources and professional development opportunities for academic advisors under the leadership of a newly appointed director.

Career services have been enhanced with an alumni/student mentoring platform and support for students on unpaid internships. The office has also taken over student employment and made it easier for students to connect with on-campus job opportunities. In addition, this fall our job and internship fair was the largest on record, attracting 125 recruiting companies.

We have two programs designed to help new students get a good start on college life. Dawg Days is a late summer retreat at Touch of Nature for new students to learn about Saluki pride, spirit and tradition. The Saluki Summer Bridge Program is a two-week residential initiative that helps incoming freshmen to transition to college life.

Finally, this fall we launched the First Saluki Center dedicated to providing support for first-generation students. About 40 percent of our students identify as first-generation. These students are fully capable, but they often have higher withdrawal rates because they don’t have knowledgeable support systems to guide them through the college process. The First Saluki Center connects all of SIU’s resources for them and also provides peer mentoring support.

As an aside, our accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission or HLC, requires us to participate in a quality initiative project. It encourages institutions to take risks, innovate, take on a challenge or pursue a yet unproven strategy or hypothesis.

Our project focused on identifying demographic, financial, academic and self-reported challenges our first-generation students face. The outcome supported the establishment of the First Saluki Center.
The HLC peer review of the project noted that our efforts were serious, genuine, and sustainable. Congratulations to all involved.

Key to both recruitment and retention is our commitment to supporting every single student. Each of us must be mindful that we need to provide the personal, tailored support they need in order to ensure that they are welcomed.

I want to highlight just some of our current programs as well as offices on campus that serve as resources.

SIU is one of two universities participating in SMASH Illinois, a three-year, free, residential college preparatory program targeting high school students from traditionally underrepresented communities. These are students who are interested in pursuing STEM careers. We are honored to share this new program with the Illinois Institute of Technology.

The McNair Scholars Program is funded by the U.S. Department of Education to prepare members of underserved groups and low-income and first-generation students for careers as graduate students, professors and researchers. About 175 students have participated in the program since 2003. This is a point of pride for SIU.

We have a number of offices dedicated to supporting diversity and inclusion on campus. The Office of the Associate Chancellor for Diversity works closely with the chancellor’s Diversity Council and units across campus to promote inclusive excellence. Our Student Multicultural Resource Centers are central to engaging students.
We define diversity broadly. We have a strong history supporting students with disabilities and veterans and attracting international students. In fact, I recently returned from Shenyang Aerospace University in China with an exchange agreement that will bring about 60 students to our aviation technologies program. Agreements like this will attract more international students to SIU.

These are just some of the highlights of current initiatives. Supporting diversity and inclusion on our campus is everyone’s job, and it is key to our recruitment and retention success. We must do more to ensure that all communities feel welcome and supported on our campus. The work is not yet finished.

The quality of student life on campus also relates to retention. Many of the initiatives I have mentioned are, in fact, overseen by Student Affairs under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Lori Stettler and her team. I would like to highlight just a few others.

Living learning communities in our residence halls connect students with shared academic and personal interests and experiences. A new community for fall 2020, for example, will be launched for first-generation students in partnership with the First Saluki Center.

Service learning helps student gain valuable life and job skills while also benefitting the region. A new database is being used to track student volunteers and the hours they have completed. Last year, for example, nearly 2,000 student volunteers completed more than 25,000 service hours.

Our more than 200 Registered Student Organizations are another point of pride for SIU. They give students opportunities to expand their leadership skills, explore their interests, and make
life-long connections.

And if you haven’t seen the new esports arena in the Student Center, I encourage you to stop by on your way out today. It is a huge attraction for current and prospective students. For example, we sent a 15-second video to all prospective fall 2020 students as well as visitors to our website. Within 14 days, it earned more than 74,000 views and drove more than 3,000 individuals to the university website.

ATHLETICS

Liz Jarnigan, director of athletics
Geoff Hanson, swimming and diving
Bryan Mullins, men’s basketball
Lance Rhodes, baseball
Grant Williams, soccer

Women’s Golf  Men’s Golf  Softball  Track and Field

Athletics has had a number of transitions this year. We welcomed Liz Jarnigan as our new athletic director as well as four new coaches.

Several teams had great success this year. The men’s and women’s golf teams won Missouri Valley Conference championships. In track and field, the Salukis won six titles and broke two school records during the MVC championships.

The softball team came in second in the MVC and earned a spot in the NCAA tournament.

Our football team is on a three-game winning streak, and how about our new women’s soccer program!
A major transition this year has been a renewed commitment to higher education by our legislators. Colleges and universities received a 5 percent increase in general operating funds. Funding for MAP grants, the Illinois AIM High Program and more brought the total increase to 8.2 percent. That’s the largest percentage increase for higher education since 1990.

For SIU Carbondale, this means that we received $132.8 million for operations, inclusive of the School of Medicine. We also received funding for renovation of the Communications Building and greenhouses, as well as deferred maintenance. The funding for the capital projects will be made available over a number of years, so you may not see construction immediately.

We’re deeply grateful to the governor and our legislators for their support. The governor has made it clear that higher education is important to him and to the state. I’m also grateful to Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration Judy Marshall for her work ensuring that all funding we receive is put to its intended good use.

I offer one related side note: There is discussion taking place about legislative support for a building in downtown Springfield that might support the SIU system office, WSIU, a presence for the law school and other activities. You may hear more about this in the future as we learn more.
The increase in state funding is very welcome, but it is still 5 percent less than we received just five years ago. Combined with loss of tuition associated with our enrollment decline, we actually have less funding for operations than we did last year. This has led to the need for a 3 percent budget reduction for the current year.

We have other budget challenges. For example, the minimum wage increase could cost more than $6 million annually when it is fully implemented in July 1, 2025. This does not diminish the importance of the increase. It was the right thing to do. However, it is a financial reality we must manage.

In addition, as a 150-year-old institution, we have significant deferred maintenance needs for our aging facilities beyond what the state is able to support at this time.

We are looking ahead and will be working on a three-year budget plan that will reflect our priorities. We spend 76 percent of our budget on our most important resource – faculty and staff. A top priority is finding a way to provide regular salary increases for our faculty and staff.

All of this is to say that we must remain vigilant managing our tight budgets. Making student recruitment and retention a top priority will clearly help.
Enrollment also contributes to the region’s economy, as do our employees. For example, our payroll generates $150 million in Southern Illinois alone.

But that’s not all we do to impact our region. Here are a few more examples.

Through a partnership with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, we guided assessments of the World Shooting and Recreational Complex and Pyramid State Park. The goal is to increase usage and economic contributions to the region.

The 30-mile mountain bike trail system currently being built at Touch of Nature will attract about 55,000 visitors each year – a big boon to the regional economy. Funding will come from private donors. The project was jumpstarted with a $200,000 grant from the Federal Highway Administration through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

WSIU has expanded its footprint with the purchase of a public broadcasting station in Springfield. This expands its service area ... and the SIU name ... from 3.2 million people in five states and 32 Illinois counties to 5 million in seven states and 62 Illinois counties.

The Southern Illinois Research Park provides significant support to local businesses. For example, it served as the landing point for IlliniCare/Centene before the company established permanent space in Carbondale. It also welcomed new tenants this year.
The School of Medicine has a significant impact on Southern Illinois through both health care and research. In collaboration with the system, it is launching a rural health care initiative that includes offering the full M.D. program on the Carbondale campus.

Imagine what can happen when the SIU system combines its many health and social service initiatives – from dentistry on the Edwardsville campus to programs in health and human sciences in Carbondale – to serve rural areas in Southern Illinois. The Board of Trustees is appointing a task force to make this happen. Stay tuned.

The schools of law and medicine are also partnering within the university on a new program to assist veterans with disability benefit claims. These are the kinds of collaborations that make a difference to our region and state.

I would like to close with some brief announcements, highlights and final thoughts.
First, representatives of the Higher Learning Commission, our accrediting body, will be on campus in February for a comprehensive accreditation review.

Accreditation is essentially a peer validation that we meet expected standards. SIU has been accredited since 1913. Our most recent reaffirmation of accreditation was in 2009-10.

A steering committee has been preparing for the review, developing what is called an “assurance argument” for each of the five required areas of accreditation listed here. The assurance arguments and other information is posted online.

If you haven’t already, you will receive an email inviting you to provide input on the assurance arguments directly to the Higher Learning Commission. Students have also received a survey and will also be invited to comment on the assurance arguments.

Accreditation is essential to our status as a university. Thank you to all who are working on our review and all who provide feedback.
SIU has many, many accomplishments to be proud of. Let me highlight just a few.

We are the first university in the state to earn Level II Arboretum Accreditation from the ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program. This reflects our commitment to nurturing forested areas and incorporating educational components. You’ll see new maroon tags on 150 trees, honoring the university’s 150th anniversary. QR codes on the tags allow people on walking tours to learn more about each tree.

The new Alumni Center in Woody Hall is a new point of pride for the university. It gives alumni a place to gather when they return to campus. Please stop by for a tour if you haven’t seen it.

Physics professor Dipanjan Mazumdar is the latest SIU faculty member to receive a Faculty Early Career Development grant from the National Science Foundation. The $500,000 grant will advance his research testing new magnetic materials for computers of the future.

And SIU has earned its eighth spot in The Princeton Review’s “Guide to Green Colleges” as well as its fourth consecutive spot on the Sierra Club’s “Cool Schools” list. Both of these awards are a testament to our commitment to sustainability. I am pleased that we are moving forward with other colleges and universities to explore the Second Nature Climate Commitment.
I’m pleased to report that the Forever SIU fundraising initiative is closing in on $90 million as we near the end of a three-year, $75 million campaign. Yes, we met and exceeded our goal! To date we have raised $84.7 million and have about $5.6 million in solid commitments to be finalized -- $4 million to support the start-up of the nursing program.

Of the total raised to date, about $43 million supports student scholarships and $40 million has been committed to academic programs. The balance goes toward facilities and technology initiatives and more. Thank you to Interim Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Relations Rae Goldsmith and the SIU Foundation for this effort. We especially thank our alumni and friends for their confidence in the future of SIU.

By the way, we’re not done yet. Stay tuned for a December announcement about our future fundraising plans.
As you know, this is our 150th anniversary year. Units across campus have been involved in planning homecoming events, 150th challenges and other activities to mark this significant anniversary.

We have also been reaching out with a “150th road show” across the state and beyond to engage alumni and others in the celebration. In the months ahead we’ll be in Chicago, St. Louis and other regions as well as in New York and Florida. Later this month, we’ll have an event at the Wolff Theater, home of the Emmys, in Los Angeles. There we’ll show the documentary about the 2017 eclipse produced by our faculty and students.

We have alumni all over the world, and our goal is always to engage them in the life of the university in multiple ways.
I’ve been honored to serve as your chancellor during SIU’s 150th anniversary—a year of transition. When asked to step in following the untimely loss of Chancellor Carlo Montemagno, I did so because I care about this institution. And I care about its people and the region.

As a native of Pinckneyville, I know that SIU impacts the region. But as a national and international research university, we also impact the state, the country, and the world. I am honored to be part of the family.

I know you all want the university to be successful, too. Many of you on campus and off stop to ask me what you can do to help.

Here are a few of the ways we can come together to make a difference.
First, you can make sure every contact with every student and prospective student is supportive, constructive and helpful. After more than 40 years in higher education, I can assure you that both positive and negative experiences influence students’ perceptions of an institution for years after they graduate.

We want our students’ experiences with our faculty, staff and community to be positive. Join me in ensuring that at SIU, it’s personal.

Learn all you can about SIU’s attributes so you can be an advocate for the university.

Did you know every U.S. undergraduate student can attend the university at in-state rates?

Did you know that SIU is the birthplace of Special Olympics?

Did you know that one of the first African American women in space is an SIU graduate?

Did you know that the SIU School of Medicine was among the first to incorporate problem-based learning and standardized patients into the medical school curriculum?

Did you know that SIU student-athletes have earned 99 Academic All-American honors – the most of any school in our conference?

Did you know that we have produced 52 Olympians? One of those is DeAnna Price, who, in September, made history as the first U.S. woman to win the world championship in the hammer throw.

Did you know that iconic futurist and architect Buckminster Fuller taught at SIU?
Did you know that William Howard Taft, Eleanor Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, Barbara Bush, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama have all spoken on our campus?

There’s so much to learn, and the 150th anniversary is the perfect time to brush up on all things SIU.

Be an advocate for the university when you are in the community, at professional conferences and everywhere you go. Word of mouth is a powerful tool. You never know when you are talking to someone who could help recruit a student or faculty member, support a program, or simply help spread the word.

Wear the colors, on campus and off. Let’s wear maroon every Friday to demonstrate pride in your university.

I am confident that with your help, this year of transition will lead to a strong future for SIU. I cannot thank you enough for all you do the help make it possible. However, as we head into the holiday season, I can give you an extra day off. I have officially added December 23 as an administrative closure so you can have additional time with family and friends over the holidays.

I’ll end my remarks today with the theme for our 150th anniversary: Tradition, Pride and Promise. Tradition speaks to the past, pride to the present and promise to the future.

You can help move SIU forward by honoring its traditions of academic excellence, diversity and inclusion, and commitment to student success.

You can share your pride in our many strengths and accomplishments.
And you can deliver on the promise of the next 150 years by telling our story and making sure everything we do is forward-focused.

On that note, thank you for coming today and for being an advocate for SIU. Let’s keep the momentum going.