Introduction
As we shift into more meaningful matters, let me welcome all of you this afternoon. To our outstanding faculty, staff and students, thank you for attending and for making Utah Valley University the exceptional institution that it is. I also extend a warm welcome to members of our Board of Trustees and other friends and supporters of the institution. We appreciate those who are here from the media... especially if your coverage is positive! Finally, I note the support of my cabinet here today. Though, even as I do so, I note with some soberness the absence of VP for University Relations Cameron Martin.

Executive Updates
As many of you know, Dr. Martin was recently admitted to the Intensive Care Unit at the Utah Valley Regional Medical Center for what was later diagnosed as a subarachnoid hemorrhage. Initial prognosis had him staying in the ICU for 10 days. Ultimately, he stayed for 26 days, which is what it took for regular bouts of swelling and pain to subside... as well as get to level 63 on Flappy Bird. It was my privilege to be one of the few visitors admitted to see Cam during this time. And, yes, I have already been chided for taking and publicly distributing a photo that appears to indicate Cam had passed away and already received his halo. Fortunately, we can joke a little bit now, since what was a very serious situation looks like it is ending well. Cam is home and under hospital regulations as he eases back into regular life, which doctors predict he will soon enjoy with no lasting effects from this life-threatening ordeal. Cameron is expected to return to work within the next month on a part-time basis and is green lighted to move to full-time work as soon as he physically feels able. Cam and his wife, Julie, have asked me to communicate their immense gratitude to you for your kind notes, words of encouragement, thoughts, and prayers. And, I am confident I speak for most everyone on campus when I say that our thoughts and prayers will continue to be with Cameron and we look forward to seeing him again soon.

In his absence, I have asked Associate Vice President Chris Taylor to assume primary responsibilities for legislative affairs. And, I am very pleased to report that Chris has seamlessly moved into this legislative role in an especially critical year for UVU, while still maintaining overall responsibilities for marketing, communications and public relations for the university. I thank Chris, Stephanie Albach, and all on the University Relations team who have stepped up to assume some of the work load that needs attention during Cam’s absence.

While on the topic of executive updates, let me also say a word about the search process for our number of key senior administrative positions within Academic Affairs. The search committee for the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs headed by Kat Brown and a cross section of faculty and campus leaders has met multiple times with a national search advisor to cast a national net of interest in this critical position. Currently the committee is reviewing applications to determine who to meet with for the first round of interviews in an effort to narrow down a list of finalists to visit campus sometime in March. Interviews for the Dean of University College have been completed and Vice President Wilson is currently reviewing the input and final recommendations from that college and search committee respectively. Interviews for the Dean of the College of Science and Health are underway and will continue throughout the month of
February. Search committees for the Associate Vice President for E-Learning and Academic Outreach and the Associate Vice President for Engaged Learning are reviewing applications and will be conducting phone interviews in the next week. More information will be made available on all of these searches via UVAnounce as they progress. I wish to thank the leadership and staff of Academic Affairs, as well as the many faculty and staff members, who have spent so much time organizing and participating in these professional and thorough (hear “time consuming”) processes for seeking the best qualified individuals to fill these positions.

Healthcare

By way of housekeeping issues, if you will, I wish to say a word about our institutional review and plan of action concerning our health care benefits. In doing so, I hope to underscore that I understand just how important an issue this is to many of you. Last spring, after a lively set of public discussions, the Benefits committee, comprised of representatives from Faculty Senate, PACE, and administration, was given the charge to evaluate the University’s strategy in moving forward in the management of its health care benefits. Since then, the committee has carefully analyzed all of your feedback and formally evaluated proposals from over 30 different vendors to help us in the administration of our health care plans. In the coming days, the committee will be presenting final recommendations from the proposal to the President’s Council. Due to the nature of the process and confidentiality requirements, finalists cannot be specifically identified to general employees at this time. However, additional details regarding the process can be found on UVLink on the employee tab. In the coming months, additional information will be made available to employees through open forums, mailers, and training meetings in preparation for our open enrollment period this Spring.

UVU’s Olympians

Now, as I shift to the heart of my remarks today, I note with some relish how much I love the Winter Olympics. I always have. And, this year, with three UVU grads competing, I find myself more keyed-up than ever about this frigid festival of sport that absorbs the world every four years. Moreover, in the combination of those athletes who secretly wear UVU Green underneath whatever country colors they display, and the very nature of the games themselves, I see a reflection of what this institution is and where it is headed.

Let’s take Akwasi Frimpong. Born in Ghana and raised in Amsterdam, Frimpong always dreamed of going to school in the U.S. That dream came true when he applied for and was granted a track and field scholarship to UVU. Determined to excel in both athletics and academics, he graduated *cum laude* from UVU with a bachelor’s degree in marketing, a minor in business management, and Olympic-sized aspirations to turn his track and field skills into bobsled success on the international stage. And, to my mind, the fact that he is not representing America is entirely made up for by the fact that he is representing Holland.

Chris Fogt was team captain for UVU’s track and field team two years and set six school records before he graduated in 2008. He also completed ROTC and was commissioned into the Army as a second lieutenant in the Military Intelligence Branch. Despite having to interrupt his training and competition for an extended military deployment in Iraq, as well having to overcome the setback of a last place finish at the Vancouver games in 2010 when the #2 US sled he was pushing crashed, Chris has worked, and I mean worked, his way up to nab the U.S. National Push Championship and is now competing on the “Night Train,” the top rated bobsled team of the eight representing the US this year at Sochi.

And who could not be moved and charmed by the story of Noelle Pikus-Pace. When Noelle graduated from UVU with a bachelor’s degree in community health and physical education
she was at the height of her budding skeleton career. Then, the unthinkable happened. At the end of a run, she and a few teammates were waiting near the bottom of a bobsled track. A sled barreled down the hill, veered off the tracks and slammed into her leg, causing a break so severe as to puncture the surface of her skin. The accident caused her to miss the first half of the 2005–2006 season, and she did not qualify for the Olympics that year. Rather than wallow in self-pity, Noelle fought back that much harder to rehabilitate and train, coming back so strong that the very next year she claimed the World Championship title and finished second overall in World Cup standings. After taking a break from skeleton to have her first child, Pikus-Pace returned to training and qualified for the 2010 Olympic games in Vancouver. She placed fourth — just shy of a medal — and announced her retirement from the sport. If her story stopped here, it would still be one worth honoring and remembering. But, it does not stop here.

In 2012, Noelle endured a personal tragedy that affected her more profoundly than even her compound fracture of 2005. Pregnant with her third child, she suffered a devastating miscarriage. Knowing she needed something to help her heal, her husband, Janson Pace, suggested she return to skeleton and make a bid for the Olympics. With two young children at home, Pikus-Pace worked out relentlessly. Among her strategies of balancing the impossible demands of a life of excellence, she had her two-year-old acting as a weight on her back while she did pushups every day. Seemingly faster and stronger than ever, her comeback has been one for the record books. She is currently ranked number three in the world and is expected to win a medal, but she has her eye firmly focused on taking the gold.

Many of you may have seen it already, but I doubt if any will be disappointed if we take just a minute here to watch our television tribute to these three UVU athletes which is playing at key moments of the current Olympics broadcast.

The UVU Mission

If you are watching and listening carefully, I hope you see, as I do, that in these athletes and their quest, there is something going on very much like what we are aspiring to as an institution. First, I see a wonderfully diverse mosaic of people. I see white and black. I see male and female. I see mothers, and marketers, and military officers. I see rural Utah, the coast of Africa, and the canals of Amsterdam. I see in these three so much of what UVU is and seeks to be in terms of a large and hospitable place to all, whatever our differences may be across a range of dimensions that so often divide the world around us.

Of course, I also see people doing that much more to connect with the world, leave a mark, and make an impact.

And, who could possibly miss the driving sense of excellence that pervades virtually everything these individuals touch.

In short, I see inclusive; I see engaged; I see serious. And I see all of these three things in the service of an outstanding record of success, specifically UVU student success.

The time we have this morning is too short to do anything but offer some brief glimpses of one or two illustrative markers of the progress we are making on this unique blend of aspirations that define UVU. Yet, it is important that we do at least that.

INCLUSIVE

I am proud to say that UVU has made significant progress in our efforts to deliver on our commitment to inclusion. We have remained committed to access by holding on to our Open Admissions policy even while ramping up our enrollment standards as part of the Structure Enrollment changes. We cut the ribbon on a new nearly $3 Million Wee Care Center paid for by privately raised funds. This center is now poised to offer many, many more students the flexibility
they need to attend school by providing access to an affordable and beautiful facility for their
children. We have led the state in research and support for women in education both as students
and as professionals. We hosted the Governor’s Native American Summit and have emerged as the
higher education hub for American Indian students and communities in and around the state of
Utah. We received our 2nd Statewide GEAR UP grant. This time it is for $21 Million to help low-
income, first-generation students better prepare for college. We have hosted symposia, conferences,
and speakers with local, national, and international reputations in the areas of interreligious
understanding, ethics and values, and constitutional studies. And just this past October, UVU was
honored as one of six baccalaureate institutions in the nation for our Latino Initiative.

Perhaps most importantly, of late, we have made dramatic progress on my call for a strategic
inclusion plan, led by my Assistant, Dr. Kyle Reyes. Kyle has assembled an executive committee as
well as an advisory board comprised of faculty, staff, students, and administrators. The executive
committee has met weekly since September and developed a strategic framework for fostering a
more inclusive campus work and learning environment. The first draft of the framework has been
discussed in various groups including PACE, Faculty Senate, Student Council, University Planning
Advisory Council, President’s Executive Leadership Council, and the President’s Cabinet. The
Inclusion Committee then hosted UVU’s first ever campus-wide-conversation on Inclusivity this
past November where more than 200 of you engaged in dialogue about the plan. In the coming
weeks and months, you will receive notice about the plan’s development and opportunities for input
in various venues. Feel free to contact Kyle with additional input or inquiries about this plan.

ENGAGED

If it is not clear by now, UVU is responsive to community needs. You may have seen these
headlines recently covering the announcement that Vivint and its CEO, Todd Pedersen, have
donated $2 million to UVU for the development of a professional sales track in the Woodbury
School of Business. This program fulfills a need that the broader business community has been
calling for for some time—a program for developing highly trained sales professionals. The
donation will establish UVU as the premier professional sales program in the Intermountain Region
and hopefully eventually the nation. I am proud to say that we have the faculty and leadership in the
Woodbury School of Business to ensure that students in this program who will continue to
participate in a regular business major or other majors across the campus, will participate in a
rigorous curriculum, independent of the dictates of any particular company or industry, with
coursework including personal selling, sales management, sales analytics, research, and internships. I
want to thank Paul Dishman, Norm Wright, and of course, our partners at Vivint for helping us to
respond to the community and our student needs.

As part of the university’s ongoing effort to develop high quality engaged learning
opportunities, we are pleased to announce the creation of the Engaged Learning University
Distinction. This program is divided into three tracks, which the students pursue a variety of
activities in Service Learning, Leadership, and Professional Engagement. The Office of Engaged
Learning has partnered with the University College and these individual programs to provide
students the opportunity to leverage their engaged learning experiences for potential employers,
graduate programs, or other post-graduate pursuits. Alongside many other superb programs across
campus, this distinction is a prime example of making good on our pledge to graduate students with
both a diploma and a resume.

SERIOUS

It seems that nearly every day, I receive an email, see an article, or read a press release, that
reflects the myriad of ways UVU is a home of serious intellectual discovery, artistic expression, and
professional accomplishment. From the theatre department sweeping this year what was, effectively, the national championships of collegiate theatre at the Kennedy Center, to the UVU men’s basketball team currently sitting atop the WAC standings during their first season of conference play, or from UVU’s Fire & Rescue Academy receiving the “Best in State” award the third year in a row for public safety training, to UVU’s Personal Financial Planning program in the Woodbury School of Business becoming a Top 10 program in the country in just two or three years. UVU’s reputation for building sterling programs of state and national distinction is on the rise.

Of course, at a university, true seriousness is not only captured in the headlines. In fact, more often than not, it happens quietly and consistently behind the scenes. I saw greater seriousness than ever in this year’s stack of tenure files that came to my desk this year. Many of those pages told the stories of faculty members spending countless hours preparing well organized, cutting edge lectures, with at least that much time and more spent on carefully responding to writing assignments and reviewing exam performance. Courses taught by these faculty members were both inspiring and challenging to our students, drawing out from them a greater effort in their study habits, polish in their communications, creativity in their performance, and carefulness in their analyses and conclusions. The best of these faculty were recognized by both the students and their peers for setting a standard of expectation in the classroom that made all—faculty and student alike—rise up to a performance level worthy of an institution called a university. This was especially the case when it was clear that such outstanding teaching faculty, with high teaching loads, were also finding ways to stay connected to and make meaningful scholarly contributions to their disciplines. Evidence that this campus stands strong in the serious reflection of the world’s most current, persistent, and important issues abounds everywhere on this campus, as any given week shows.

I’ve witnessed tremendous seriousness of purpose and execution this past year across the institution in response to the unexpected combination of more students leaving school to go to work and the LDS Church’s missionary age change, leading to a decline of roughly 9% of our 18-22 year old students. With the anticipatory, expert and thoughtful guidance of the budget office, leaders all across campus came together last spring to identify $9.3 million in strategic budget reductions and revenue reallocations in response to what proved remarkably accurate enrollment declines. No less stunning were the efforts of our Enrollment Management and Marketing teams. Operating with considerably limited staff, compared to other institutions across the state of virtually any size, the rapid and creative joint efforts of these two areas realized a substantial increase of enrollment of non-resident students and first-time freshmen who’ve been out of high school more than a year. The obvious upshot of this is that our enrollment declines, and therefore our budget hit, were not as severe as they might have been. And, as we move forward, it is most encouraging to see the increased volume of prospective students for 2014-15 completing applications for admission (28 percent increase from July-December). This all happening a full year before we expect to start seeing the rebound effect of younger-aged missionaries returning. This is a long (but hopefully informative) way of saying that thanks to the quiet but diligent excellence of our colleagues mentioned here, we appear to have weathered a very significant budget and enrollment adjustment. While some reallocations have or may still occur due to the unevenness in enrollment changes, no additional budget reductions appear necessary this year due to the actions taken last year and that continue as we speak. When we take our jobs, and treat our responsibilities as seriously as those described here, it is amazing what can be accomplished. Unquestionably, other examples of such seriousness abound all over this campus, from the orderly maintenance and development of our physical plant to the caring delivery of our counseling services.

Before I leave the enrollment issue entirely, I would like to say one more word about the sweeping efforts to transform the seriousness of our student-academic enterprise on this campus
while remaining an accessible, open admissions institution, an effort that we must relentlessly continue.

It has taken a couple of years or more to do it, but this year I believe we have cemented a set of practices that simultaneously welcomes virtually any student interested in coming to UVU, while signaling to them that this is a place of achievement and expectation. It begins with a personal letter from me to every admitted student encouraging them to read two books in advance of the academic year and inviting them to my home for a back yard discussion of these books the first week of school. This is followed by a mandatory orientation, a final deadline for registering for classes and paying tuition, and a freshmen convocation replete with faculty in regalia, student success stories, a brief, interdisciplinary lecturette, and a public challenge to students to sign a card committing to completing their degrees at UVU. If you have not availed yourself of participating in one of these events you should not miss it this coming year. A submission of ACT scores and high school GPA is also now required, or placement testing if those things are not available. As needs be, underprepared students are placed on a structured path of remediation and counseling to get them college ready.

So what has been the impact of all of this? While it is always difficult to parse out the exact impact of any set of policy changes, we now have data to suggest that this approach is significantly contributing to its stated aim: namely, provide a solid academic footing for students no matter their level of preparation upon entering UVU. You will recall that last year I shared the following slides. Let me briefly review this data for those who may be new or may not have seen this information. In the Fall of each year, UVU measures 3rd week and end-of-term enrollments. In 2011, our 3rd week enrollments dipped by nearly 2.5 percent by the end-of-term. This pattern of lower enrollments by the end-of-term has been fairly consistent feature, not only for UVU but for many institutions across the nation. Last year’s enrollments taken at week three decreased for a number of reasons, but more because of economic factors and concurrent enrollment restrictions rather than our changes in admissions practices. What was exciting to see last year, was that in the face of introducing structured enrollment, is that for the first time, our end-of-term enrollments increased. What this suggests is that we retained virtually every student who signed up at the very start of the semester, and then we added more students on the block. Now, some might be wondering, as I did, whether last year’s end-of-term increase was just an anomaly. So, we can now finally look at the data for this year to see. Once again, we have experienced a decline in our enrollment as measured at third week. But, here again, the most significant factor involved was not our enrollment practices but the aforementioned LDS missionary age change and the continuing improvement of the economy drawing more students into the workforce.

Yet, once again, we see increased enrollments by end-of-term, and an increase even greater this year than last. Of course, it is still early to predict precisely, but it is only logical to assume that this will feed into the already remarkable successes we have experienced in our formal, campus-wide collaboration for Student Success and Retention where the retention of first-time, full-time, bachelor degree seeking students has increased roughly 24% in the last few years.

With the front end of things now largely transformed, and a robust retention effort well underway, I believe our next area of focus must be a more concerted effort to take all of these students we are doing a better job of retaining and ensure that as many of them as possible graduate. I call attention to three particular efforts worthy of everyone’s attention and support.

- The university has launched a “15 to Finish” campaign designed to encourage sufficiently prepared students to take 15 credits a semester in order to graduate in four years. Somehow as a state, we have gotten away from taking 15 credits a semester as a norm. While this will not work for all of our students, it will work for many than are doing so now. And we have
now have significant data from places like Hawaii where this has been pushed showing that not only does such a shift save students and the institution time and money, it increases rates of graduation and, perhaps most importantly, student learning and performance. I plead with all of you, but especially our counselors, to get behind this effort of culture shift.

- To further assist with this effort, among other things, the Division of Student Affairs has been working with academic departments to place their degree maps into Wolverine Track making it easier for students to develop a four-year plan to graduation. More work needs to be done to complete this project. I am asking all departments to move with dispatch to input these templates into the system.

- While we do a good job luring students in the front door with scholarships for tuition, we believe we could do more to help with “completion scholarships,” finding ways to help those students who for the lack of several hundred dollars or so are putting off graduation too long and sometimes forever.

- In addition to these and other efforts, a Completion Committee is being formed to track the progress of these initiatives and others to help improve our student graduation rate. This will be an importance focus of the University for the next several years. I invite you to share any ideas with us that you have on this front.

Much work remains to build up this university but the main point of the section of these remarks today is that we are having remarkable successes. Like our Olympian athletes, we are constantly stretching forward, in the face of obstacles and challenges, for nothing less than educational gold medal achievement. I'll have more to say about what I consider gold medal achievement in the world of education in just a moment. For now, I will note that like our athletes, succeeding on the Olympic level requires a tremendous amount of grit and vision. UVU has both in spades. But as essential as grit and vision are, they ultimately not enough. It is true that our athletes worked their head off to get where they are, but they also had support, both private and public. In this they are no different than we are. To achieve our Olympic size dreams, we too must have private sponsors and public backing sufficient to our mission, providing us with properly trained personnel, and sufficiently equipped facilities to produce top level performance in all that we do. Let me say a word first about the private resources.

**Private Funding**

As we look ahead, there are a number of critical things we must secure to fulfill our mission that can only happen with a successful private fundraising effort. The first is an expansion of the footprint of our main campus. While we have some capacity to expand our reach by technology and satellite campuses, the bulk of our work as an institution is happening and still needs to happen on or near our main campus. Unfortunately, we sit on 200 acres of land surrounded with commercial and residential developments that are simply out of our price range to acquire and redevelop. And, that 200 acres, while servicing us relatively well right now, will feel smaller and smaller every single year as we begin to mature into a full-blown university. Consider, for just a moment, the situation of our sister institutions in our state. Not only do we have less room than many institutions smaller than us in scope and size, but many of these institutions themselves are currently grasping for every extra (and, I might add, very expensive) acre they can find to expand their operations. Right now, while land remains at least somewhat within reach financially, we must do for future generations of UVU’ers what the blessed Wilson Sorenson did for us when he secured 200 acres on an old gravel pit in Orem for a very small technical school. The answer to this is, in my mind, is adding to the 100 acres we already have at the old Geneva steel site, which is just one Front Runner stop from this
main campus. There, the land is close enough, while still at a price that makes an acquisition doable provided we find some private support.

The other large scale and immediate private fundraising priority is a permanent, purpose-built home for the Arts on the main campus. I have always maintained that a university in the fullest sense of the word must include exposure to and opportunities to pursue the Fine Arts. The arts foster innovation and creativity, confident self-expression, and unique and powerful understandings of the self and the human condition, in addition to providing real-world skills for lucrative careers. Almost 20,000 UVU students take Arts classes each year. And both our students and faculty are regularly distinguishing themselves with regional and national awards in dance, music, theater, and the visual arts. Just imagine… Just imagine, what they could learn and accomplish if they had anything close to adequate teaching and performing spaces, which they currently lack. Dean Newell Dayley and the Arts faculty have been working diligently to provide some initial sketches and a program that will provide essential learning laboratories for our performing arts students.

We currently project that the new performing arts building will be positioned on the Southeast edge of campus and will provide roughly 100,000 square feet in over 3 floors. Early estimates suggest the building may cost approximately $30 million. With state resources what they are, we expect to have to raise a considerable portion of this from private sources, asking the legislature to help complete the funding of construction and secure its ongoing maintenance. This effort will represent the largest fund raising effort ever undertaken by the University.

If the hurdle here sounds a bit high, rest assured, these two are not our only fundraising projects. Even as we tackle fund raising for Geneva and a Performing Arts Building, we will also need to adapt and update portions of the buildings currently shared by Arts and Technology and Computing, set our sights on a new business building and a Thanksgiving Point satellite, launch a mini-campaign to endow 8 new professorships by 2017, support a smattering of other smaller scale objectives surfaced by our Deans in their four-year planning process, and pursue another multi-year scholarship campaign as will be announced at the Fall 2014 President’s Scholarship Ball.

Can we do all of this? I am absolutely confident that we can. It will not all happen in a year, or two or even three years. But, one by one, we will find the support necessary to achieve these dreams that are, at once, practical, forward thinking, and inextricably tied to our core themes and university mission. What is the reason for this optimism? Among other things in 2013, our development team was recognized by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) as the single most improved development and fundraising program in the nation over the past three years among peer institutions. We are also establishing a reliable record of success of major gifts and targeted campaigns:

- In 2010, a pair of million dollar gifts proved crucial in acquiring the Science Building and the Center for Constitutional Studies.
- In 2011, we set a UVU record of $4 million dollars for scholarships
- In 2012, we constructed our first privately funded building at the University, the Wee Care Center, with a generous gift of more than $2 million by Barbara Barrington Jones, and nearly a million more by other private sources.
- And just consider this last couple of months as 2013 ended and 2014 began:
  - In December alone, we took in
  - $30,000 Autism Initiative
  - $40,000 Arts Building
  - $52,271 CFP program
  - $55,000 Entrepreneurship
o $105,000 Scholarship
o $100,000 International Programs
o $200,000 Theatre program
o $250,000 unrestricted moneys
o Total $834,771

o PLUS … generous employee giving totals $94,000
o Beyond this, we added $2 million in January (Vivint/Pedersen), bringing our FY total to over $5 million. This stands right now as the second largest total of yearly fundraising for this administration and there is still 4.5 months to go in the fiscal year.

All of this said, achieving the fund raising results we need to fulfill our mission and realize our ambitious institutional 4-year goals, will require continuing institutional investment in our fundraising operations, as well as the enthusiastic support and strategically coordinated involvement of every student, faculty or staff member, and supportive volunteer that we can rally to our causes. I hope you will join us in this critical effort. We can do this. We really can, but only if we work together.

In that spirit of doing everything we can to secure resources for our students, faculty, and staff at UVU, now let’s talk about the upcoming legislative session.

**Legislative Landscape**

As in the past few years, compensation is right at the top of my legislative priorities for UVU. In the past, the Utah System of Higher Education has asked the legislature to fund increases for higher ed. employees at the same level other state employees have been funded. This seems most reasonable given that we are all, at the end of the day, state employees. Unfortunately, such a request has not always been honored. This year, the System is taking a different tack and asking for a 3 percent Performance-Based compensation pool, along with retirement rate adjustments, and 9.5 percent for medical and dental rate increases. Several things about this should be noted. First, it is first. As much as we may need an Arts buildings, or faculty and staff program support, I know that some additional compensation bump is vital to all of you. We are fighting hard for this. You should know that UVU continues to focus on building out a total compensation package (including benefits) that aligns with our various markets. In other words, we are striving to at least achieve equity in total compensation relative to our in-state and institutional peers. And here, we have made tremendous progress closing many of the gaps between what we pay compared to that of other institutions of similar size and mission.

Even as I note this, I believe it is important to stress that funding for compensation—where we are increasingly on par with our sister institutions—comes from one pot of money, and funding for the rest of our base budget of programmatic and personnel needs—where we are still woefully behind our sister institutions—comes from another pot of money. So, while we are making every effort to secure compensation funding, we are also making every single effort I know to address the inequities of our non-compensation related state appropriations.

Whether you look at it as what percentage of our base budget comes from state appropriations, or what the state expenditure is per full time equivalent student, UVU gets the lowest level of support of any institution in the state. There are multiple reasons for why this is so, and it does no good at this point to try to assign blame. Rather I am intent solely on doing everything we can to solve the problem. And, we have started to make progress.
Recently, the Regents budget and legislative appropriations have included funding to address the tax fund inequities that have developed across the Utah System of Higher Education. The past two legislative sessions UVU has received, respectively, $1,215,700 and $2,693,900 to address our level of funding inequality. While grateful for this help, which stopped and started to reverse UVU’s free fall in terms of a percentage of budget coming from the state, these efforts have simply not been enough. As Commissioner Buhler recently put it publicly, “the incremental funding of equity, has not adequately addressed the most acute equity needs [in the state].” Thus, this year the Regents budget request makes a bold and targeted focus for equity funding for those institutions with the most acute equity needs. The move really is quite historic.

To put this in perspective, consider that the last two years, the bulk of higher education, after compensation, went to two items (always listed in that order), with distinctive mission first and equity second. It’s also true that distinctive mission and equity funding were equally split at a ratio of 1 to 1. Meaning, if there was $10M after compensation funding, $5M would go to distinctive mission initiatives and $5M would go into equity. Furthermore, while UVU got the highest percentage of money on the equity side of things, that equity money was still spread between all eight institutions. What this meant is that the bulk of the funds left for higher education after compensation was spread pretty thin, even in the category of equity funding.

After an intense and laborious set meetings that started last summer, and ran virtually up to the legislative session, and, in one way or another, involved legislators, regents, and the system presidents, we hammered out a budget proposal with the following historic elements:

First equity now follows compensation as the second highest priority.

Two, the split between equity and distinctive mission is nearly 7 to 1 in favor of equity.

Three, a target is being set to bring up the lowest funded schools (those with “acute equity” issues) to a common floor of $4,800 per FTE. In doing so, UVU gets the highest percentage (roughly 42%) of the equity line, with a number of schools receiving nothing in that category.

Wherever this floor is drawn up, UVU will eventually get 42% of the equity funding.

While it has been clearly signaled that it will be impossible to get all the way to the $4,800 floor this year, what all of this means is that there is now a formula in place, at least for this year, to drive more money into equity funding and UVU than ever before, finally giving us a fighting chance to put a significant dent in this decades old problem. Here, I must pay tribute to everyone who has played a role in helping us get to this point: with support coming in different ways from the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Regents, the Commissioner, the Governor, the Speaker of the House, and the Co-Chairs of the Higher Education Appropriations Committee. And now the word is getting out more broadly as we have made the rounds to key news outlets in the state. Perhaps this recent editorial that followed on the heels of our visit to the Tribune last week is indicative of what will yet come. I must also offer a special shout out to my colleagues in the Council of Presidents. In a world where too often needy institutions fight and claw for whatever they can get regardless of concern for another institution, the heads of our peer institutions have recognized that something really must change here and are collectively supporting this effort; at least this year. Just as we may see our cause as just, the practical realities of holding together commitment like this with a set of institutions that face their own set of issues and demands is simply not promising in the long term. And so, even as I heartily thank them for their early and critical support for getting us thus far in the cause addressing higher Ed inequities, I call upon our Governor, our Speaker, and our Utah Valley delegation to seize this historic moment—one not likely to be duplicated any time soon—and do everything they possibly can to fix the Utah Valley equity issues as much as they can. It is time for the tax payers of Utah Valley to stop subsidizing every other school in the state more than they
are subsidizing their own. It is time for the students of Utah Valley University to not to have to take on more than their fair share of tuition to compensate for the inequitable state support of their institution. And it is time for UVU to rise up to its full strength to meet the educational demands of a region rapidly growing in numbers and complexity.

To do this, it is imperative that UVU aggressively advance a number of our key objectives tied to our core themes, which can only be achieved by a major infusion of equity dollars.

**So what would we do with that equity money?**

1. **We must support students in completing their educational goals and professional preparation.** Perhaps the single most critical thing we can do to help students stay and complete their degrees is to increase faculty-to-student mentoring opportunities, inspiring general education experiences, and access to upper division and critical path courses across the curriculum—the key to this being the presence of a sufficiently robust and properly trained faculty. In concert with this it would be an effort to enhance student support services including advising and tutoring and the expansion of engaged learning and career exploration opportunities.

2. **We must provide opportunity for a broad range of students in meeting regional educational needs.** At one level this will mean continued build out of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math-related disciplines. This is required to meet the already immediate student and employer demand at UVU driven by the explosion of technology related needs and opportunities especially here in Utah Valley, often now affectionately referred to as Silicon Slopes. At another level this will mean controlling the cost of tuition, especially at the lower level division, where UVU still must provide the kind of access and set of program like that of a community college which remains a vital part of our mission. At yet another level, we must meet our demand for growth by expanding the number and capacity of our courses and programs available at satellite locations, through distance delivery, and in our afternoon, evening, and weekend hours of scheduling on the main campus.

3. **We must foster a culture of academic rigor and professional excellence.** Even as we demonstrate our commitment to access and inclusion, we must ensure an academically rigorous environment in which students and faculty have access to appropriate instructional resources, field opportunities, library materials, software, labs, and equipment. Furthermore, UVU’s academic strength is bolstered by a set of well-qualified, talented adjunct faculty. Resources would be specifically directed to ensuring an adequate and sustainable pool of appropriately compensated adjunct faculty.

4. **We must operate effectively and efficiently through the innovative use of technology and professional practices.** All of UVU’s operations, from instruction to compliance and risk management, to student support require adequate human and technological resources. Absolutely essential additional resources are needed at UVU to implement and sustain strategic technology solutions, systems, and infrastructure as well as increase staff-support to meet the existing and growing challenges of being a large and complex institution of higher learning.

Again, if there is one single message that speaks most powerfully and comprehensively to the state of Utah Valley University today that I would have everyone here, especially our state leaders, it
is this: this is the moment to do something, and do something big, to fix the one thing that threatens the ability of this remarkable institution fulfill its noble and needed state mission.

This truly is a unique moment for a unique institution. You’ve heard me say it before, and I will keep saying it until someone stuffs a sock in my mouth, covers it with duct tape, and binds my hands behind my back. At a time when Higher Education everywhere is under the most severe kinds of cross cutting pressures, UVU is breaking molds and forging a distinctive path. We are like no other, and in pursuing that innovative path, I am convinced that we are headed for educational gold—an ability to provide a learning environment as rigorous as it is accessible, even as it rivals the largest institutions in the nation in terms of size and real world impact. Not every institution should follow our lead, but if more did, many of the crises we now see in Higher Education today would fade away.

In the world of higher education today, we hear much of “disruption.” In fact, thanks to Clayton Christensen, a good friend and perhaps the world’s most visible and influential management consultant, there is no hotter word right now on the national and international stage of education reform. I have appreciated the ways that conversations about “disruption” have pushed us to rethink higher education at some level. However, I would argue that we have been somewhat limited in our discourse on what counts as disruption. For most in higher education, disruption is simply synonymous with technology-enhanced or technology-centered delivery. I, for one, have embraced the notion that technology, when implemented thoughtfully, can indeed enhance learning and improve efficiency. I also am aware of the value of technology in meeting student demands for access and flexibility. And, I hope that everyone recognizes that at a place like UVU, with our demographics and mission success, will not be able to build buildings fast enough to keep pace student demand. As a result, we have made a concerted effort to ramp up our technology-based delivery and have seen some wonderful results—especially when that technology is directed to blended, or hybrid learning, taking the best of the magic of the classroom and live, human interaction between faculty and student, and student and students and combining it with the flexibility and informational reach of technological tools. In short, UVU has made progress and will continue to make progress in wisely understanding and implementing technology as an educational tool or solution.

That said, I see our greatest source of disruption to be our unique educational model. Rather than follow the strict, traditional path of a rising university toward a model that the nation is finding virtually impossible to support in mass, short of charging an astronomical tuition that becomes a significant barrier to the majority of the students out there, we have held firm to a model of integration that combines the virtues of an accessible community college with that of high quality teaching university.

If you will, permit to illustrate again just how unique we really are. I covered this in faculty and staff convocations in August but I feel it is worth sharing again today. Here is a map of the United States with all of the institutions of higher education represented by circles. The larger the circle, the larger the enrollment. The color breakdown is according to offerings: green for Associate’s degree offerings, orange for Bachelor’s offerings, and yellow for Master’s degrees. You’ll notice on the left that there are nearly 4,500 institutions of higher education. Now, if we take enrollment to at least 10,000 headcount, look what immediately happens to the total number on the lower left. We drop to 600 institutions out of 4,500. Next, if we count those that are public institutions we drop down to 500 institutions. If we look for those that are open admissions, our numbers are cut in half to 250. Look at how much green fills the screen…thus signaling those that are remaining are primarily Community Colleges offering two-year degrees. Now, if we look at those institutions that have at least 10% of the offerings as Associate’s degrees and Bachelor’s
degrees, the number shoots all the way down to .... 10. If we take that to 30% Bachelors and Associates, where in actuality we are closer to 50/50, ...we go down to five institutions. And if we bump up the enrollment to 30,000+, we stand as the only institution in the nation with that profile.

As I am fond of saying, the map would seem to indicate that either we are crazy…or we are pioneering an innovative model on a scale that may lead the way forward for many other institutions across the nation. The fact that the states of Florida and Washington are formally opening their two-year institutions to four year programming is just one signal that tends to make me believe more of the latter than the former.

What we are trying to do is not easy and is not without limitations. All of us know that. But, given the needs of our students and community, the pressures of public funding, and the existing character of the institution, we are building a two-for-one institution that is without peer in its efficiencies while attracting an ever more accomplished faculty and producing an ever more dazzling set of students—many of whom come thinking they are only destined for a certificate or two year degree and suddenly find themselves matriculated into four year programs that are opening up whole new vistas to them. The world does not quite know it yet, but UVU is one of the great educational success stories of the nation. And the world will know it someday, if we will stay disciplined in our unique mission commitments, turning what some might regard as our liabilities into assets, engines of innovation for a world absolutely demanding educational reform.

Perhaps there is another little lesson from the Olympics today on which I will close. Thirty-four years ago this month, a group of young college and amateur hockey players entered an Olympic arena in Lake Placid, New York, to take on the perennially powerful Russian national team. From the very start, the U.S. Men's Hockey team knew that if they were to achieve their goal of Olympic gold, all roads would lead through the vaunted Soviet juggernaut which had won the previous four Olympic gold medals (1964, 1968, 1972, 1976). The Russians had also won the World Championships, the World Cup, and had soundly defeated the same U.S. Team 10-3 at Madison Square Garden just two weeks before the Olympic tournament in 1980. The USSR team had gone 27-1-1 (wins-losses-ties) in Olympic play since 1960 and had outscored their opponents 175-44 during that span. The 1980 Soviet team had three future Hockey Hall of Famers and had the consensus best goaltender in the world at that time. One commentator said, "When surveying the competition, it is obvious that the Russians are most impressed with their own resume." In preparation for the game against the U.S., Soviet coach Viktor Tikhonov rested his best players while U.S. Coach Herb Brooks continued his tough practices. The average age of the U.S. Team was 21 making them the youngest team in U.S. Olympic history.

As the U.S. moved through the preliminary rounds of play at Lake Placid, they found a strategy that seemed to work against each opponent – rotate all 20 players in the final period with an all out burst of energy simply swarming the opposition with quicker, fresher skaters.

When it came to the match with the Russians, over the course of three periods, the seemingly green and overmatched U.S. team proceeded to carve up the ice and the Russian defense on their way to an improbable 4-3 victory, launching them into the gold medal game where they defeated Finland 4 to 2. Here is the final one-minute of that memorable match up with Russia.

I remember that game like it was yesterday. As many of you may know, or presume, I was raised a devout boy in a devout home. But, when this game ended this way, I immediately went to the dark side. Given that the final against Finland on Sunday, I woke up that morning, and with the help of a heating pad, faked a fever to stay home from Church, telling my mom I felt like I was coming down with the flu—which simultaneously breaking two of the basic 10 commandments. To round out my debauchery, as soon as my parents left for Church, I called my friend Adam Harrison and placed a five-dollar bet on the USA.
Despite the torrid success at these games that year, the doubters persisted. Just the day before the match, NYT columnist Dave Anderson wrote, "Unless the ice melts, or unless the United States team or another team performs a miracle, the Russians are expected to easily win the Olympic gold medal for the sixth time in the last seven tournaments." To this day, that is how too many people view this event, as simply a miracle, a fluky event where a rag-tag underdog got by a reigning champion through a combination of luck and grit.

But there is another way to view this remarkable moment. It was captured well by Columnist Jamie Fitzpatrick who later wrote: "The romantic notion that a bunch of college scrubs felled the world's greatest team through sheer pluck and determination is misguided. Brooks spent a year-and-a-half nurturing the team. He held numerous tryout camps, which included psychological testing, before selecting a roster from several hundred prospects. The team then spent four months playing a grinding schedule of exhibition games across Europe and North America. There was no matching the Europeans in skill, so Brooks emphasized speed, conditioning and discipline."

During the game, U.S. Coach Herb Brooks could be heard yelling to his players the following refrain over and over again, "Play your game, play your game." He did not want his team to get overwhelmed by trying to fight Russian hockey power with a Russian hockey style. What Brooks understood was that the US’s challenges were not what they seemed. He sensed that by embracing their youth, instead of being embarrassed by it, the U.S. team could actually get better prepared than anyone else to match up against an older, slower Russian team. To borrow from Malcolm Gladwell's thesis in his latest book, David and Goliath, Herb Brooks rethought the disadvantages of seeming advantages and vice versa. In doing so he created a whole new style of play that felled the strongest, most prestigious giant in the land.

Ladies and gentlemen we can do the same thing. We are on the way to doing the same thing. There will be doubters along the way. There will be bumps, and frustrations and disagreements along the way. No institution is perfect. But, if we will play our game, and not someone else’s game, we will win. And, we will win on a scale like no other institution I know. And, finally, let me say this: what you are doing day in and day out on this campus with your professional lives here at UVU, it matters. It matters a whole lot more than hockey. . . . Sorry Ian. They probably will never make a glitzy Disney movie about what UVU is accomplishing. But, if the world were truly just, they would make such a movie and each of you would have a starring role. Thank you for your quiet, daily contribution here, helping us collectively transform the lives of thousands of students and the generations that will follow. You are my heroes. Thank you.