Good morning! I’m excited! Are y’all excited? We’re off and running on another year and the campus is alive with student energy.

Thank you for all of your efforts in welcoming our new students to campus as well as our returning students. August is an incredibly busy time for most of us as we finish up orientation, move our students into the residence halls, and kick off Bronco Welcome. Financial Aid and the Registrar’s Office might be a little busy, too. Do you think?

One of the things I most enjoy about working in higher education is the fresh new beginning each semester brings. Welcoming students and their families to campus and sharing in their excitement never gets old for me. Each year just gets better. The energy on campus is invigorating, thanks in part to the excellent programming of Bronco Welcome. Here are a few highlights:

- More than 250 volunteers helped move new students into their residence halls on August 22, including members of fraternities, sororities, and clubs, as well as many staff from around campus. According to Dean the housing staff received numerous compliments about how organized, quick and easy the process was from students and families alike. Kudos to the housing staff and thanks to all who volunteered.

- More than 1,500 students shopped at College Night at Fred Meyer, stocking up on supplies and decking out their rooms.

- 382 students attended Capture the Campus (a late-night scavenger hunt and movie) and 423 enjoyed the Get (IN)volved Rendezvous (field activities and a 30 foot water slide), a partnership between University Housing and Student Involvement.

- More than 400 students attended Get Rec’d.

- Each year brings new programming, and this fall we added four new activities to the slate:

  1. Student Diversity and Inclusion and the Dean of Students Office sponsored The Faith and Creed, a fair-style event to share opportunities with students to connect with faith and religious communities on campus and in Boise.
2. The Transfer Student BBQ, was coordinated by the Student Involvement and Leadership Center and SHIFT (Students Helping Integrate Future Transfers), a new club on campus. There was a great turnout for this first-time event, with 157 students in attendance.

3. Advising and Academic Enhancement workshops were held throughout the week.

4. We also had five new events specifically for graduate students, such as Speed Friending, Library and REC tours, and a Meet-up at Alive After Five.

It’s great that we’re incorporating events for our grad students and transfers.

To all of you who contributed time and energy during Bronco Welcome like Erin and Charlie. Thank you. I’m sure the Class of 2018 is glad they decided to attend Boise State.

I’d like to recognize other new folks to campus, too. If you were hired in the last six months, would you please stand? Let’s give them all a warm Boise State welcome. I’m glad you’re on our team.

As a division, we continue to offer a new employee orientation for all new staff in Student Affairs. The intent is not only to welcome newbies into the fold, but provide some very specific information to help them make connections with colleagues early on in their career at Boise State and share the pride of working with and for students. This year that orientation will be held on September 25. If you’d like to know more, contact Elise Alford-Claffey or Jessica Martin."

Along with hiring new staff, we’ve also had some transitioning within the division:

- Jess Caldwell O'Keefe is now with the Office of the Dean of Students full time.
- Adriane Bang moved in to the role of associate director for the Women’s Center.
- Jennifer Cornwall now manages the Information Desk/Bronco Card operation.
- Jim West has become the SUB Building Facilities Foreman.
- Conference Services Manager is now Jentry Walsh.
- Michael Vasquez was promoted to Sr. Maintenance Craftsman in the SUB.
- Ansural Haque has been named the asst. director for Facilities at Campus Recreation.
• And after nearly 16 years of service to students, Brad Arendt has left Boise State. He has been given one of those once in a lifetime opportunities and we wish him all the best. Damoni Wright will be providing leadership to Student Media for the time being.

Congratulations to all our movers and shakers.

And when I say that, I mean all of you. We’re all movers and shakers. I’m so proud to work with a dedicated group of professionals who put our students first. After all, it’s our mission.

Boise State University Student Affairs connects with students to provide vital services, resources, and learning opportunities preparing them for work and life beyond the blue.

Some of the ways we’re fulfilling our mission right now:

• Staff in the Women’s Center did a great deal of work this summer to get the new ally development workshop going as part of their Safe Spaces programming, a concrete example of inclusive excellence. I strongly recommend everyone in the division attend one of these workshops.

• The Dean of Students Office continues to discover and respond to needs they encounter among our student body. This year they will initiate a Financial Literacy Education program to enable students to be more responsible for their financial wellness. This will be done by reaching out to campus partners and providing resource options to students.

• Awareness of the CARE program is gaining momentum. Last year the messaging was more faculty-focused, this year the messages will focus specifically on helping students engage with CARE so when they see something distressing or disturbing, they report it.

• On campus housing is as full as I’ve seen it. If you talk to families or students let them know the earlier the better when it comes to applying for housing. And the application goes live on the Housing website on December 1, right?

We also now have a new internship program that I’m very excited about. We are offering a “cohort internship experience,” a unique concept designed for a group of our students to actually go through a program together.

With support through orientation and personal and professional development, they learn the skills employers want to see in the people
they hire. Students have a real opportunity here to learn about succeeding in the workplace because it includes everything from time management to effectively communicating as a speaker, plus they get hands-on experience in their field of study.

Some are paid positions, some are for academic credit, some are both and all are for the full academic year.

This is a pilot program which we’ll evaluate next spring and decide if we’ll continue with it.

Whether it’s through internships or a more comfortable environment or being able to offer students a unique educational experience, it’s important to support them in every way possible. I’d like to share two stories with you about how we are helping change our students’ lives:

I think most of you know Emmanuel or know of him and his multicultural music video, “Let’s All Grow Together.” For those who don’t, he is a sophomore majoring in accounting and finance. He produced a wonderful, lively video to promote diversity and building community, a vision that came to him from attending the LeaderShape session in August of 2013.

Just a few weeks ago, he received the prestigious Palmer Award, which is given in collaboration with the LeaderShape Institute that recognizes the achievements of committed students like him who bring their vision for a better world to reality. His vision started in LeaderShape and took hold with his involvement in Multicultural Student Services. One thing evolved into the next thing and he continues to thrive.

Please allow me to read his email response to his mentors after finding out that he was selected as one out of two people to win this award for 2014:

“Just to let you all know: I’m very emotional right now! You all have been there for me since inception of the multicultural diversity inclusion music video idea. You have encouraged, motivated, and believed in me. Words cannot express how much I appreciate you all for being awesome, amazing, and great mentors.

I never told most of you this but people thought I was going to end up a failure. With God bringing you all to my life, we just proved them wrong! Having said that, this
award is not mine alone. We all won it. So, Congratulations! to us all.”

The second story is about Chad, a sophomore pursuing a social work degree. He grew up in orphanages, foster care, and group homes, and has been homeless much of his adult life. At age 35, he decided to pursue his bachelor’s degree.

A concerned faculty member discovered that Chad was living out of his car and referred him to the Dean of Students Office. Through collaborative efforts with other departments we were able to get this student back on his feet.

He finished his spring semester with a 3.6 GPA and a desire to get more involved with helping foster youth.

As a Strive for College mentor last spring he witnessed the impact he could have on helping disadvantaged high school students apply and prepare for college. For the first time, he feels like he has direction for his life and has the support to help him get there. He is passionate about using the Strive model to reach foster youth in high schools and rally Impact Scholar students to serve as their mentors.

Y’all, these stories are so powerful to me. Emmanuel and Chad are inspiring examples of the work we do and the impact we can have on students, and also of how students can impact other students. We don’t just owe them our best, we owe them our commitment to continually improve, so that tomorrow’s best is better than today’s.

Today I’m going to try something a little different. This is the interactive portion of our meeting. Y’all stand up. This is gut reaction time. I want you, in your loudest voice, make the sound that expresses your emotion when you hear the word I say.

Are you ready?!

Broncos
Kittens
Program Prioritization

Now we’re all clear how we feel about that. But we survived it, didn’t we? I want to talk about all the great things that came out of Program Prioritization. It was a monumental undertaking for the university as a whole. When the president submitted our report to the State Board of Education, the board members were very impressed with our work. They appreciated the gravity with which we approached the endeavor
and were extremely complementary of our efforts. If you’re interested in viewing the university’s report you can find it on the president’s website.

One of the concerns I heard most frequently during the process of program prioritization was that we would go through all of this work and nothing would come of it. I want to assure you, that is not the case. We’ve developed a timeline to respond to the initiatives we identified as our divisional priorities and we’re well on our way. For example:

- Staffing and organizational changes in Housing and Residence Life were announced in July.
- We moved Counseling, Medical Services, Health Administration and Wellness Service to the College of Allied Health in February.
- Student Union now manages the conference operations for the Stueckle Sky Center.

You can find the whole timeline on my website. It’s not too long and painful to read and it will give you a very clear picture of some of the priorities of the division.

For me the best thing about Program Prioritization was that it reinforced how important assessment is in our work. Without measurements, how do we know where we stand? And how do we show our stakeholders our progress? Assessment allows us to spend our time moving toward our vision and keeps us focused on our mission. Now we have a common set of criteria to measure the relevance, quality, productivity and efficiency of our work.

So what’s the next step? The Student Affairs Council will meet next month to develop assessment guidelines. Though I know many of you are already doing assessment, we want to put some structure into place and provide everyone in Student Affairs with the same tools.

Then, we’ll be able to re-focus on the strategic plan. If you remember we had four areas of focus for our two-year plan.

- Operationalize divisional messaging strategy
- Provide comprehensive professional development to all staff
- Enhance campus employment experience for students
- Engage in divisional program prioritization

I’m happy with our progress so far. We’re done with program prioritization. We’ve
kicked off the internship program, and we have gained enormous insights that provide an excellent springboard to reinvigorate our energy around our remaining initiatives.

I will update y’all next spring with another progress report.

One last thing before I let you go: I may already be scheduled on some of your calendars, but I’ll be making my rounds again meeting with each department. I always enjoy talking with y’all and learning more about what you’re doing. To paraphrase Emmanuel:

“I appreciate you all for being awesome and amazing.”