Hey y’all. Welcome. I always appreciate an opportunity to spend some time together. It gives us a chance to reflect on the challenges and successes of the past year and to look forward to the upcoming year.

Bronco Day
Wow. What a day and yes, we did it. We made the first Bronco Day ever a great success with approximately 1700 students and family members. Idaho residents comprised 69% of the attendees, with other large populations coming from California, Washington and Oregon. But we also had visitors from Hawaii and Georgia. Our social media reach for that day blew up. Posts generally hover at just under 50,000 impressions per day, but
on April 11 that number exploded to 235,631. People were having fun and sharing it with the world.

Many of you began working back in January to bring it all together. There were many subcommittees and departments across campus involved—but I would like to recognize a few folks on the steering committee that made sure this event occurred:

Kelly Talbert and her team were responsible for getting students here. She invited 92,000 prospective students via postcard, email, web, and telephone and maybe a few house-to-house solicitations. They also planned and staffed the general information sessions for the various groups of students and families.
Charlie Varland entertained them once they arrived. He oversaw coordination of the Opportunities Fair, the Pep Rally, and the tailgate party. Charlie said he couldn’t have done it without assistance from Ashlie Baty and Erin Mahn “who were instrumental in bringing to life both the fair and the activities preceding the game.”

And then there’s Sarah Shinn, the logistical mastermind who took the lead on everything from non-academic departmental tours to catering to parking to security to signage—even rentals on chairs, tables, and canopies. I learned more about renting tents than I knew I needed to know!! She answered email from potentially anyone on campus—you may have sent her some yourself. She also coordinated all the sub-committee leads into bi-weekly planning
meetings. Bronco Day would not have occurred without her, and I don’t exaggerate.

All three of them did this with a smile and “can do” attitude—and saying thank you never seems enough. But I do thank them. It takes a lot of hours of thinking and planning to put together a first-time event like Bronco Day, especially if we are trying to create a new tradition. So, once again, thank you to everyone who planned strategized and volunteered to make the first Bronco Day a success.

[SLIDE 3 ON A PLANE]
When it comes to recruiting, volunteers are an integral part of supporting our road warriors in Admissions. Nearly 40 extra volunteers from across the university
helped with Admissions events to recruit the class of 2019. They got in vans and on planes and demonstrated the support students will receive when they become Broncos.

Whether you go on the road with Admissions, work with prospective students on the phone, via email or when they visit our campus, YOU impact the decisions students and families make about where to attend college. Everything we do focuses on students—giving them the best college experience with our support and encouragement all along the way is our mission. It’s important to remind ourselves of that when we have a minute to think.

[SLIDE 4 CLASSROOM]
Professional development is one way that helps us continue to be the best at what we do, which is why it is part of our strategic plan. Professional development opportunities keep us up-to-date and informed:

In mid-July the Title IX Regulatory Compliance seminar will be held in the Stueckle Sky Center with keynote Peter Lake, professor of law at Stetson University. He’ll present on law and policy issues in higher education. Also speaking will be Charles A. Dana chair and director of the Center for Higher Education Law and Policy at Stetson University College of Law.

Oct. 8 and 9 is the Northwest Title IX Conference: Beyond the Law will feature nationally known researchers Dr. David Lisak and Dr. Chicora Martin. Colleagues from all over the region
will come to Boise State to get a broader perspective on topics such as sexual assault, stalking and the use of technology, and the LGBT community.

I’d also like to mention a series of conversations I’ve had with staff members who have worked for the university for three years or less, and who are relatively new to the Student Affairs profession.

It was an opportunity for me to share my 36 years of experience and give advice, and for them to ask me questions and share their knowledge. This reciprocal learning experience about the work in Student Affairs generated direct interaction with all levels of staff. It was such a rewarding experience for me and I hope it was just as rewarding for them and I continue to look for other ways
to get involved with various members of our Student Affairs family. We are working on expanding these conversations with me or other senior SA staff this year.

[SLIDE 6 KUDOS]

I always like to recognize awards. By the way, this is a hint. If I don’t know about your awards I can’t brag about them. I do have a few to brag about though. The Career Center received a NASPA Excellence Award (Bronze) for the Make College Count initiative. Tiffanie Hsu was awarded 2 “Inhouse Design” awards. A print award for the most recent annual report highlights publication and one in multimedia and interactive for the Campus Recreation website. Others of you have sent some information to us and some of our staff is involved with regional and
national work, so look for the blog post to better describe our work on behalf of students. Nice work!

[SLIDE 7, 8 VETERANS LOUNGE]
And while it’s not actually an award, I think our veteran students probably feel like it is. The new veteran student lounge opened up a few months ago. There’s a big screen TV, pool table and Ping-Pong table for relaxing and tables and chairs for studying and meetings. It took a while, but we finally got it done, didn’t we RK? I am thinking we need a rematch to that pool game soon, since you took it easy on me the first time.

[SLIDE 9, 10, 11 NEW HIRES]
We’ve also added quite a few new staff members in the division—everyone who joined us in the past six
to eight months, please stand and welcome to Boise State University. If I haven’t had a chance to meet and get to know you yet, I will soon.

It’s always fun to celebrate our successes and new folks and I have to say I like how we’re celebrating student success, too. I stood up here last year and talked about how impressed I was by the end-of-year celebrations and here I am again saying the same thing.

[SLIDE 12 STUDENT GRADUATION]
We continue to up our game, bringing these celebrations to an even higher level, and the marker for our success is in the higher number of students participating. The Campus Awards Ceremony, Rainbow Graduation, Graduating Student Leaders Celebration, ASBSU Inauguration and
First Forward Celebration—these celebrations are standouts.

So many programs and events are being created and managed by students with support from professionals at all levels, beginning to end: why they exist, how they’re planned, and the way they’re executed. This shows our students how much we think of them. Thank you for giving them your best work.

[SLIDE 13 EVENTS]
But it’s much more than these celebrations that show our students how much we think about them. Ya’ll we have spent the past year creating a wide variety of events and programs that our students value. We have more students attending football and basketball games, and I’ve seen more student engagement than since I
came here four years ago. Something special is happening all over campus sponsored by departments all over campus. Think about it:

More than 900 people attended the Blue and Orange Splatter Party in September on the grass intramural field to promote pride and community during Homecoming Week. Because of its success, it’s proposed again for this year.

Movie on the Blue/“22 Jump Street” was also held in September—more than 1,000 people went to this. The programming assistants coordinated this event and because of overwhelmingly positive response, they plan to continue it again this fall.

In the Greek community we have three new sororities and one new
fraternity, and the Multicultural Greek Council was established last fall. Overall, membership is more than 900 this year, compared to just over 100 in 2010.

The Boise State Abraxans Quidditch Club took home gold at their first Northwest Regional Championship. They sealed their victory with a win over the Western Washington Wyverns 180-60.

During the Boise State vs. UNLV men's basketball game in January, we set the world record for the most high-fives given by a mascot in one minute with a total of 108 high fives to Buster.

The Men’s Hockey Club earned a spot in the American Collegiate Hockey Association Division II Tournament (top 16 teams in the country).
In April, the Women’s Center partnered with 11 campus and community organizations to screen “The Hunting Ground,” about sexual assault on college campuses. Following the event, a panel of experts responded to audience questions and shared how Boise State University is working to prevent sexual assault, empower bystanders, support victims, provide a fair process, and create clear policies: 105 people attended, the Center's best attended event of the year.

Housing and Residence Life held the Bronco Roundup Student Tailgate, a huge success with attendance ranging from 300-1,500 students throughout fall semester at home football games; a collaborative effort among ASBSU, RHA, the Corral, SILC, Housing
and Residence Life, OIT, FO&M, University Dining, and Athletics. RHA also hosted "Neon Nights" with 500 students attending—the largest event RHA has ever hosted.

This is just a handful of examples for 2014-15. In an attempt to capture the many, many student engagement events for the president’s office, Jeremiah, with the assistance of Mikayla Mitzel, created a spreadsheet listing more than 800 events. That is a lot of events. Thank you! And a huge thank you to Mikayla for putting this spreadsheet together. It might have taken an hour or two (check in Mikayla’s direction).

It’s clear to me that many of us are involved in the work of student engagement and it’s working. We understand the value of what we do
and it’s showing. We—you all—are creating programs and services that today’s students will remember and tomorrow’s students will associate with Boise State. Our students are creating new traditions because we—all of you again—are giving them the tools to do so.

In addition to increasing opportunities for student engagement, and the great work being done to make students feel more valued, we need to remember our students who are in a place where they just need to survive the day and feel safe and comfortable.

I bring this up because it’s time to own that we still have work to do to insure the our campus is inclusive and comfortable for all. I overheard a conversation between two students in April, at the end of the semester. It
has stayed with me and I see it as powerful insight into the kind of issues some of them have on their minds:

[SLIDE 14]

Ro also shared some stories that I feel you need to hear.

When we announced the screening of “American Sniper" on campus there was much concern in the Muslim student community. Some of those students were able to get their voices heard before the screening and offered to have a debrief after the movie. Unfortunately, only staff stayed for the debrief, no students. Of course our Muslim and Middle Eastern students felt concerned that other students don’t want to have
conversations about how Middle Eastern and Muslim students feel.

It’s not just students who cause unease. Some of our students have voiced concerns about biased faculty. They feel singled out during exams and feel like they’re being watched. In one academic program two Black males were told not to sit next to each other during exams. This is not what we want to hear about Boise State, but we must start understanding that even with many of the very positive events and activities that occur on this campus, some of our students are still fighting to find their place here.

During debriefing sessions after racial incidents in Ferguson and Baltimore, our students had more stories. For instance, university police on the corner of University & Lincoln stopped
a black male student. He felt harassed for an extended period of time by an officer who seemed intent on making him feel uncomfortable. Two black female students were harassed downtown by Boise Police shortly after Ferguson.

Fortunately, these students felt comfortable enough to go to the Student Diversity Center to talk. Many of us in Student Affairs departments support underrepresented students as part of our daily business: Colleagues in the Disability Resource Center, the Women’s Center, Multicultural Student Services, and International Student Services.

But, you know, it’s not just their responsibility. Helping our campus community be comfortable with our “flaws” belongs to all of us. That is the
nature of Inclusive Excellence. We have students who are hurting and scared. We also have staff and faculty who are as well. I encourage you to look for more opportunities for conversations and strengthen our relationships with our students. I think we can lead our campus community in this effort and this is my challenge to you for 2015-16.

I have asked Francisco to lead our division through the exercise of Inclusive Excellence department by department, and I hope that you find the inspiration to think new thoughts and you’re your comfort zone about these issues of inclusivity this next academic year. I encourage you to use your new lessons to learn and to take risks and continue to try.
I’m leaving you today with what I think is some of the best advice out there. It’s a tweet by Aaron Levie written back in 2013. This is what he had to say about people's reaction to ideas:

[SLIDE 15]
Bad ideas: "That'll never work."
Good ideas: "That could work."
Great ideas: "That'll never work"

Go have some great ideas.