Good afternoon. It is my pleasure to join our other speakers in welcoming you to “Your” University – CSU Bakersfield. I want to start by congratulating you, students, on two things. First, congratulations on your academic performance to date which has qualified you for admission to a four-year institution. Second, congratulations on making an excellent educational decision – coming to CSU Bakersfield. Freshmen, you are members of our largest freshman class ever – over 1300 students. Transfer students, you are members of one of our larger transfer classes. You join our continuing students for a record total enrollment of more than 8,900 students for the Fall Quarter, 2012.

This New Student Convocation was established to welcome new students into this learning community, express our expectations for student learning, demonstrate our collective commitment to facilitating your success, and share our belief in your potential to graduate from the university.

Your university experience will be transformative. It will change your life. You will gain new academic knowledge, abilities, and skills, and expand your intellectual understanding of the multiple world views that intersect in our global society. You will better understand the basis on which other people have developed different values, even as you might choose to retain your own. A college degree will give you an income over your work life time that will be more than $1,000,000 higher than that of a high school graduate. You will be in a better position to take advantage of future opportunities, to improve your family’s quality of life and to contribute to your community.

When I sat in your seat more than forty-six years ago at Washington University in St. Louis, I was a first generation college student. My experience was transformative. After I decided to change my major from pre-med to psychology during my sophomore year, my plan was to get my degree and get a job. However, as a result of my active engagement with excellent and supportive faculty members and staff, I was encouraged to continue my education beyond the bachelor’s degree. In the course of that, I became aware of future possibilities and opportunities which had not been part of my awareness. I went on to complete a masters degree and a Ph.D. I had no idea while sitting in your seat that my career would lead me to become a University President.
We, the CSUB faculty, staff, students, administration, and alumni are here to assist you in your transformation and in the achievement of your educational goals.

Because it best exemplifies our commitment to each of you, I have chosen as the title for my remarks “You and CSUB: A Partnership for Your Success.” As you begin today as a student at CSUB, we are entering into a partnership with you.

Any partnership agreement includes stipulations about the responsibilities of each partner, along with the benefits to be derived from that partnership. I want to begin by telling you what you can expect from us, then what we expect from you, and end by talking about the benefits of our partnership for you.

**What you Can Expect from us**
Here is what you can expect from us as part of our partnership responsibilities:

1. Excellent academic programs that will advance your intellectual and personal development and assist you in achieving the University’s student learning outcomes;
2. Exceptional access to our outstanding faculty who will engage you in a learning-centered environment and challenge you to consider alternative perspectives for looking at your experiences and the world around you;
3. Opportunities for internships and service learning related to your career goals;
4. Co-curricular programs and activities designed to facilitate your personal growth and development;
5. More than 90 student clubs and organizations that allow you to explore a wide range of personal interests from academic to social to service-oriented;
6. Academic support services to facilitate your success, retention, and graduation;

As part of our goal to enhance the quality of the student experience, we are working with the Associated Students, Inc. (ASI), the Student Union Board, and student clubs and organizations to create a vibrant campus life which engages our diverse student body.

**What we Expect from you**
We expect you to be fully committed to our partnership by doing several things:

1. Strive for excellence in your academic work. You might have been able to do well in high school or in community college without giving your best effort. At CSUB you will need to be well-prepared and fully engaged from your first day and your first class, giving your best effort at all times.
2. Be proactive in seeking resources you need to be successful such as:
   - Seeing your academic adviser;
   - Going to your professors’ office hours;
   - Getting a tutor when you need one; and
   - Using health and counseling services when you need them.
3. Develop a vision for your future – what you want to be doing in 5-10 years in terms of your career and your life. You can start by declaring a major related to the career and quality of life you want. There are many roads and many roadmaps; the road you take depends on where you want to go in your life.

4. Assume the primary responsibility for achieving that vision. We are here to help and to facilitate, but you must take the lead.

5. Identify a mentor who can help you along the path you plan to take.

The Benefits of our Partnership for you
As a psychologist, I often say to students that the college years represent an unprecedented time in a person’s life when they have the freedom to focus heavily on their own development and preparation for their future.

You will achieve a set of university learning outcomes in six important areas of academic and personal development:

- Critical reasoning and problem solving
- Oral and written communication
- Discipline-based knowledge and career-based learning
- Numerical literacy
- Developing skills to become an engaged citizen, and
- Developing a well-rounded skill set

These university learning outcomes are contained in a booklet of the same name which will be given to each of you.

When you graduate from CSUB, you will be well-prepared to pursue graduate or professional school opportunities or to begin your career immediately, adding to the well-educated workforce our state and nation need to fuel our economic recovery and development.

An Exciting Time to be at CSUB
In addition to the important benefits of our “Partnership for Your Success”, this is an exciting time to be at CSUB.

- As a participant in our First-Year Experience Program, you will have a unique opportunity to begin your university experience by enrolling in CSUB 101 (freshmen) or CSUB 301 (transfers). These small classes will allow you to explore a range of specific topics which are all integrated through use of a common reader – “The House on Mango Street” by Sandra Cisneros. CSUB 101 and 301 will give you a small cohort of classmates with whom you can establish early and lasting relationships as together, you experience life in higher education.

- Our 75,000 sq ft Student Recreation Center has state-of-the-art facilities, equipment, and programs that facilitate physical health and wellness.
• A new 500-bed student residence halls project will be presented to the CSU Board of Trustees in November for final approval. It is projected to open in fall, 2015.

• Our athletics program competes in NCAA Division I. All of our sports programs are eligible to compete for Division I Championships. Opponents during this academic year will include: Cal, Stanford, UCLA, UNLV, USC, and Duke along with many others.

As an enrolled student, you can attend all athletics events free.

Adding to University Traditions
Finally, you have the advantage of coming to a young university. Harvard University, for example, is more than 375 years old. CSUB is now 42 years old. Harvard has long-established traditions which are extremely difficult to change. However, you can still add to our established CSUB traditions. If there is a student club or organization you think we should have, you could start it. Seven years ago we adopted a University fight song and alma mater. If you are a musician, for example, a new tradition you could start this year would be the establishment of a pep band that would perform at athletics and other university events.

Constructing your Identity and Creating your Future
In my first year as president, I taught a Senior Seminar in psychology on Identity Construction. I said at that time that a person can have an identity by default based on the perceptions of others, or they can construct their desired identity by taking proactive steps of self-definition. We are prepared to engage you where you are now, and where you will be as you use your transformative university experience to take proactive steps of self-definition in charting a course to create your desired future.

We look forward to engaging you in our “Partnership for Your Success.” Welcome to CSU Bakersfield — “Your” University.