Welcome to the Fall Semester! The campus is already off to a busy and productive start and I look forward to what the coming months will bring to us.

- **New Director of CSUSB Athletics:** This semester brings with it the hiring of our new director of athletics, Shareef Amer. At CSUSB, he will oversee 10 programs, including women’s teams in basketball, cross country, soccer, softball, track and field and volleyball, and men’s teams in baseball, basketball, soccer and golf. The men’s basketball team is coming off its most successful season ever, making an appearance in the NCAA Division II Final Four, and the women’s volleyball team won the NCAA Division II national championship in 2019. The Coyotes are perennial powers in the California Collegiate Athletic Association.

Amer joins CSUSB after five years at NCAA Division I Cal State Northridge, where he served as their associate athletic director for compliance before being elevated to associate athletic director for administration and operations in February 2019. In this role, Shareef oversaw the Compliance Services Office, facilities, events and game day management, and was responsible for strategic planning for the department. Additionally, he was the sport supervisor for the baseball, softball, women’s indoor volleyball and beach volleyball programs.

Prior to CSUN, Shareef worked within the Office of Athletic Compliance at the University of Southern California and the Compliance Services Office at the University of Michigan. He earned his bachelor’s degree from the University of Michigan and his law degree from the University of Tennessee College of Law.

- **News Shared at Convocation:**
  - CSUSB is proud this fall to welcome 40 new faculty!
  - As the last academic year wrapped up, we had some sobering news about the 2023-24 California State budget. As I stated in my message to the campus in May, the economic outlook remains uncertain as the State’s deficit was projected at $31.5 Billion in May, an increase from January’s projection of $22.5 Billion. The CSU’s budget augmentation remains unchanged from January’s figure, per the fiscal year 2022-23 Compact, of $227.3 Million. The Cabinet and I have worked over the summer with all university
divisions, including all the academic colleges, to address the budget deficit. We are currently not planning on furloughs or layoffs. The President’s Cabinet will continue to meet with the University Budget Advisory Committee. And a budget open forum is scheduled for October 9th to give details of the California State budget and its impact on our campus.

- As part of our strategic plan, our commitment to internationalization remains strong. And we have been making progress in this area. That includes our MOU with Lviv Polytechnic University in Ukraine, which I shared with you last June. We have a vision to be a significant player in the re-building of Ukraine. And while our Education Abroad numbers have yet to return to pre-pandemic levels, in reviewing the data from the last two academic years, overall participation grew by almost 62%.
- The two primary initiatives this year are the launch of our new strategic plan and the progress on our blended comprehensive $200 million campaign.

- **Strategic Plan 2023-2028:** We launched the 2023-28 strategic plan this fall. My thanks to task force co-chairs Dr. Kelly Campbell, interim vice provost for academic affairs, and Dr. Nicole Dabbs, professor and chair of kinesiology, along with members of the steering committee and work groups. And thanks to the entire campus community for your participation.

  Our new Strategic Plan’s thematic goal areas are: Student Success; Faculty and Staff Success; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion or DEI; and Internationalization.

  For Student Success, the current planned objectives are:

  - Acknowledge and value students’ cultural, linguistic and social identities;
  - Transform students’ understanding of self as agents in a global society; and
  - Empower students to apply competencies that enrich their communities.

  For Faculty and Staff Success, the current planned objectives are:

  - Ensure equitable and efficient work;
  - Promote a culture of trust and safety that values and integrates human differences and cares for the holistic well-being of staff and faculty; and
  - Enhance pathways and guidance for professional advancement.

  For DEI, the current planned objectives are:

  - Uphold an unwavering commitment to an enduring diverse, equitable and inclusive environment;
  - Strengthen our culture of belonging, acceptance and appreciation for the unique characteristics and contributions of all students, alumni, faculty, staff and administrators; and
  - Promote and support a campus environment that values and affirms human rights and protections for all members of our community.

  And for Internationalization, the current planned objectives include:

  - Enhance global learning opportunities for the campus community;
• Expand student, faculty and staff participation in education abroad programs; and
• Grow, diversify and engage the international student body.

Each objective will come with planned outcomes and the proposed strategies to achieve them. This will keep our engagement with the strategic plan fresh and ongoing and will allow us to assess our progress at the conclusion of each academic year and adjust, as necessary.

In sum, flexibility and accountability are once again built into our strategic plan, just as they were with the former plan implemented in 2015.

• **Our Defining Moment: The Campaign for CSUSB:** Supported by the campaign protocols established by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education or CASE—the leader in educational advancement—last fall we launched the public phase of our $200 Million blended comprehensive campaign.

This is the first fully blended campaign ever launched by a public institution of higher education in the United States. By “blended,” I mean, we are seeking investment from alumni, friends and corporate and foundation partners, along with revenue from sources not typically included in comprehensive campaigns, such as government agencies and tribal nations, which will leverage the impact of overall support.

I am proud to state that we have achieved our overall goal of raising $200 million already! However, we are still short of meeting our full philanthropic goal.

For those of you wondering about the connection between the campaign and our budget deficit: the deficit is an operational funding issue and donor funds are not used for operational expenses.

As you may recall, Our Defining Moment is organized around four pillars:

• Increase student success, diversity and experience through scholarships;
• Attract and retain world-class faculty;
• Improve and transform the Inland Empire through programs and research; and
• Capital construction to build innovative facilities, smart classrooms and creative spaces.

This $200 million milestone was achieved and surpassed thanks to the invaluable support of our university’s exceptional faculty and staff, dedicated friends and loyal alumni. Your unwavering belief in CSUSB’s vision has had a profound impact on its future, enabling us—as a higher educational institution here in the IE—to deliver outstanding academic and transformative experiences to our students. Thank you!

• **The New Performing Arts Center:** The PAC celebrated its topping out ceremony on August 29th to mark the completion of the structural support for the building. We also celebrated the gifts of Ellen and Stan Weisser, which resulted in the naming of the Foyer, and that of Jim and Judy Watson to bring a Katherine Gray original blown glass chandelier to the space. Advancement continues to work on donor naming opportunities including the naming of the building and the theater. Concrete deck pours for the building began on August 29th. The building is on schedule to open in Fall 2024.
• **The Palm Desert Campus Student Center:** The Schematic Design was formally approved by the Board of Trustees on September 12th. The project is currently in design development. LPA Architects is also working on planning for the 10,000 square foot backfill which will allow for additional faculty offices and academic programs to be offered at the PDC. The project includes a clock tower element that will require donor funding which Advancement is actively working on. Groundbreaking for the project is scheduled for June 2025.

• **MSPA Facility:** The Master of Science in Physician Assistant Program was fully funded by a $4 million line item in the state budget for 23/24, which will allow us to renovate and add a 2,500 square foot addition to the Yasuda Center to create a Center for this new program. This is one of two programs in the CSU and the only public MSPA program in Southern California. This expansion will allow the new program to accommodate a cohort of up to 50 MSPA students. This project is in permitting and is scheduled to begin construction in February 2024. The first cohort of the program is set to launch in August 2025.

• **New Alumni Center:** The campus is working to reassign space in the Student Union East building to create an Alumni Center. This will allow the Office of Alumni Relations to expand to provide an inviting space for alumni to gather and stay connected with the university. The space reassignment is underway, and plans are being developed to launch the new space this Spring Semester.

• **Public Private Partnerships:** CSUSB has partnered with financial advisors Ernst and Young to evaluate and develop Public Private Partnership opportunities for the San Bernardino and Palm Desert campuses. The goal of this partnership is to identify opportunities that could fund or assist in the financing of the expanded baseball and softball complex at the San Bernardino Campus as well as an expansion of the San Bernardino Children’s Center. These projects pose a challenge for funding, as they are typically not funded through the system-wide revenue bond program. Phase 1 of the Baseball and Softball complex is currently in permitting and scheduled to go out to bid later this Fall. The feasibility study for the Children’s Center project was completed in 2020.

• **Grants and Contracts Report:** I am proud to be able to share with you the latest information on our grants and contracts efforts for the 2022-23 academic year: Total dollars from successful grants in AY2022-23 were $51,714,771 from 165 grants awarded. From 2017-22, CSUSB ranked 8th among all CSU campuses for Research and Sponsored Programs Grants and Contracts Externally Funded Expenditures.

My congratulations to our faculty for their outstanding research work, along with my appreciation for the Office of Academic Research (OAR), the Office of Research Development, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and the Office of Sponsored Programs Administration. My additional thanks, for her leadership, to Cynthia Crawford, interim associate provost for faculty research.