Good afternoon. I’m delighted that our meeting today is being held at Penn State Wilkes-Barre, a growing campus about which you’ll hear even more from Chancellor Davis after my remarks.

Before delivering my official report, I’d like to introduce and welcome several new Commonwealth Campus chancellors. In January, Ralph Ford assumed his role as chancellor at Penn State Erie, The Behrend College. In February, Andrew Egan took the position at Penn State Greater Allegheny. We also welcomed two new chancellors earlier this month: Damian Fernandez at Penn State Abington and Jenifer Cushman at Penn State Beaver.

Dr. Ford had been serving as Behrend’s interim chancellor since last July. Drs. Egan, Fernandez, and Cushman came to Penn State from Manitoba, Canada, New York City, and Ohio, respectively. We are thrilled to have educators and administrators of such high caliber among our leadership. Please join me now in welcoming and congratulating them. <lead brief applause>
World, Enhancing Global Engagement, Driving Economic Development, and Ensuring a Sustainable Future—connect to, empower, and sustain our values as an institution.

The plan also highlights five thematic priorities: Transforming Education, Enhancing Health, Stewarding Our Planet's Resources, Advancing the Arts and Humanities, and Driving Digital Innovation. These strategic areas of focus leverage existing and emerging strengths and opportunities across the University. They also reflect the breadth and depth of expertise and interest where the University is well positioned to make profound and measurable contributions.

**JONES (Slide 4 – The Benefits of Penn State’s Unique Structure)**

I can’t emphasize enough that ours is a University-wide plan—one that we cannot implement and achieve without the involvement of all Penn State campuses and their constituents. That may seem complicated and daunting, but one intrinsic benefit of our unique structure—one university, geographically distributed—is that it provides for an accessible Penn State education with choices to fit most personal situations, preferences, and challenges. It also enables innumerable opportunities to operationalize our strategic plan throughout the Commonwealth.

Like University Park, our 20 Commonwealth Campuses, which vary in size and program portfolios, advance the University’s mission and serve their broader communities. Dr. Madlyn Hanes, our Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses, continues to demonstrate exceptional leadership in these areas, and we’re grateful for her commitment and dedication to the campuses’ success.

Penn State's structure has served well to fulfill its role as the Commonwealth’s land-grant institution, and we continue to take pride in and maximize the benefits of our unified, multi-campus approach.

**JONES (Slide 5 – The Big Picture)**

Penn State’s 20 Commonwealth Campuses, including Wilkes-Barre, are integral to our status as a growing and thriving institution of higher learning and research. They comprise six academic colleges—including five Campus Colleges and the 14-campus
University College—and one academic school, the Great Valley School of Graduate Professional Studies.

**JONES (Slide 6 – A Diverse Student Body with Modest Resources)**

About 55 percent of our first-year students—associate and baccalaureate—start at a Commonwealth Campus. These campuses are home to more than 31,000 students, constituting 36 percent of Penn State’s total residential student body. About 85 percent of these students are Pennsylvania residents.

Approximately 79 percent are traditional-aged learners, but the other 21 percent are adult learners, including more than 1,300 military veterans. Also notable: 37 percent of learners at our Commonwealth Campuses are first-generation college students, and more than 80 percent receive financial aid and work part time while pursuing their higher education.

**JONES (Slide 7 – Seamless Transitions)**

Of course, we’re still one University, and many students make transitions to take advantage of the unique opportunities that status enables. About 4,400 students transition annually among Penn State campuses. Of these, approximately three of every four students change assignment to University Park from a Commonwealth Campus. A growing number, however, move from one Commonwealth Campus to another, or from University Park or our online World Campus to a Commonwealth Campus.

**JONES (Slide 8 – Enabling Access to Education)**

All of these numbers, among others, illustrate the impact we’re making by enabling access to education, our strategic plan’s first foundational principle. Given the large number of students who need financial aid and the socioeconomic challenges that exist in communities throughout the Commonwealth, Penn State’s ability to educate students for productive careers is crucial. Penn State’s unique structure—one University geographically distributed—is optimally configured. Our highly regarded, long-
established campuses and our relatively new World Campus help to enable access by potential students, both flexibly and at a reasonable cost.

**JONES (Slide 9 – Academic Program Portfolios)**

During the past several years, the Commonwealth Campuses have expanded curricula that are strategically selected based on high prospective demand and student interest, and, to the extent possible, strong career orientation. Our Commonwealth Campuses have strong ties to area business and industry, so maintaining, developing, and evolving curricula that are relevant to the needs of regional industry remains a priority. As a result of this approach, campuses have added a variety of professionally focused programs that appeal to students and address regional economic needs.

Across our Commonwealth Campuses and the World Campus, Penn State offers 21 associate, 107 baccalaureate, and 35 graduate degree programs, and our substantial graduation rates in these programs reveal the significance and impact our people can have in the workforce in the many communities we serve. Incidentally, Commonwealth Campus faculty also teach about 30 percent of our World Campus courses across 13 academic programs.

**JONES (Slide 10 – Our Employment Impact)**

Our Commonwealth Campuses also have a substantial community impact as employers. With more than 3,700 full-time and 4,000 part-time employees, Penn State campuses throughout the Commonwealth are vital to their communities’ economic health and development.

**JONES (Slide 11 – Support for Economic Development)**

Driving economic development and community renewal is a key supporting element stated in our strategic plan. With campuses throughout the Commonwealth, we have a unique presence in, and commitment to, these campuses’ communities. Our health as an institution is drawn in part from the well-being of these communities, and we have a crucial responsibility to them.
We are helping to meet that responsibility in part through an initiative you’ve probably heard a lot about lately, called “Invent Penn State.” Envisioned as a way to leverage the University’s size and broad research strengths to help drive job creation, economic development, and student career success, Invent Penn State debuted with an introduction by President Barron in January 2015. He said then that, “Our aim is to accelerate the transfer of new ideas into useful products and processes.” He added that the University ultimately would commit tens of millions of dollars to this initiative, effectively blanketing the Commonwealth with new opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship.

We are taking advantage of Penn State’s numerous locations throughout the Commonwealth and enhancing their impacts as engines of local and regional growth. An inaugural group of six Penn State campuses—Abington, Behrend, Harrisburg, Lehigh Valley, New Kensington, and Wilkes-Barre—each received $50,000 in seed funding last year, aimed at enhancing local partnerships and entrepreneurial environments.

Last month at the Capitol in Harrisburg, Dr. Barron announced the next six Penn State campus recipients of $50,000 in seed funding: Altoona, Berks, Great Valley, Schuylkill, Shenango, and York. This development brings the number of Commonwealth Campus centers funded by Invent Penn State to 12.

These seed funds are also leveraged locally. Community partners in most cases have matched University seed support by contributing physical spaces, cash prizes for start-up competitions, and/or professional time and expertise to budding entrepreneurs.

The ultimate goal is to create flexible and vibrant physical spaces—entrepreneurial “boot camps” that will allow individuals and groups to incubate their ideas and develop viable businesses.
Invent Penn State isn’t limited to only Penn State students and faculty. Campuses involved in the effort also serve as hubs for their surrounding communities, giving residents resources to launch their business ideas and enabling new partnerships. For example, Penn State Abington partnered with the Abington Arts Center to create a co-working space combined with an innovation hub for Montgomery County. Dubbed the Abington LaunchBox, it serves as an idea lab, tech springboard, and meet-up space for entrepreneurs from the campus and the region.

Here in Wilkes-Barre, the Invent Penn State funding helps to support the city’s Innovation Squared Project to revitalize its downtown and expand businesses and jobs. Penn State Wilkes-Barre will support equipment needs and lecture and mentorship programs at the Entrepreneurial and Business Development Lab, an environment that gives local students, faculty, and business leaders access to a shared workplace.

A section of our strategic plan says specifically that, “Penn State will drive economic development in the Commonwealth, as well as in regional, national, and international industry.” Two other sections discuss the impacts Penn State can engender by enhancing partnerships with industry, government, and the communities we serve, and expanding access to University resources. Invent Penn State represents only one way in which we are already advancing these priorities.

Besides Invent Penn State, our campuses also are involved with a variety of initiatives and projects that align with our University-wide mission and vision, and our comprehensive strategic plan. For example, Penn State Evan Pugh Professor of Mathematics George Andrews founded the Pennsylvania Mathematics Initiative to improve mathematics achievement in elementary school grades. The initiative’s primary focus is building math fluency and expertise in teachers in grades K through 5, a goal accomplished through professional development workshops led by experienced mathematicians and educators. This summer, faculty from Penn State Brandywine and Penn State Greater Allegheny partnered with the University Park team and are bringing the workshops to a broader community.
Included in our strategic plan is a priority to partner more effectively with pre-college educators in meaningful ways, and this initiative clearly supports that effort.

**JONES (Slide 16 – Pathway to Success: Summer Start [PaSSS] Program)**

The Pathway to Success: Summer Start program, currently held at nine Commonwealth Campuses, allows select new students to jumpstart their college careers by taking two classes in a more relaxed summer setting. The invitation-only program, which lasts five to six weeks during the summer before students’ first years at Penn State, provides tools and resources that increase the likelihood they will graduate and earn their Penn State degrees on time, potentially saving them and their families thousands of dollars in tuition, fees, and other expenses. These students also can return for a second summer to take additional classes, all while earning money by working at a job on campus.

Making a comprehensive and useful education accessible to citizens of the Commonwealth was core to Penn State’s founding mission, and today programs like this continue this emphasis. We must place pursuing and completing a Penn State education within reasonable reach for students and their families.

**JONES (Slide 17 – Multi-Campus Research Experience for Undergraduates)**

Meanwhile, we recently launched a program designed to connect Engineering faculty across Penn State campuses and engage Commonwealth Campus students in research. In 2015, the Multi-Campus Research Experience for Undergraduates program, or REU, served 33 students from six campuses in its inaugural year, including Wilkes-Barre. Forty-nine faculty members participated initially. The current 2016 cohort has grown to 59 faculty working with 50 students and includes participation from 14 campuses and 12 Penn State engineering departments.

Each student’s research team had two or more faculty advisers, with at least one from a Commonwealth Campus and one from University Park. The students spent six to eight weeks on their projects. Two of the weeks were spent at University Park, with the remainder at their home campuses. The program provided valuable research experience for Commonwealth Campus undergraduates and facilitated new interactions
between campuses and engineering colleagues. It also has enormous potential to give students and faculty access to resources and industry across the Commonwealth.

Research impact in the sciences, engineering, and mathematics remains vital to Penn State’s mission and vision, and our strategic plan mandates that the University will continue to invest aggressively in these areas. This multi-campus REU is only one example of our commitment to this priority.

JONES (Slide 18 – The Power of Our People)

Beyond the strategic plan and specific programs and initiatives, we must always remember that Penn State’s biggest asset is its people. And at our Commonwealth Campuses, tens of thousands of students, faculty, and staff are doing great work to ensure Penn State’s impact is strong not only in Pennsylvania, but also worldwide.

Here at Wilkes-Barre, faculty and staff joined forces to raise funds to support the local Feeding America Backpack Program, which provides at-risk students with backpacks filled with healthy foods to eat during weekends and holidays when they may otherwise go hungry.

Students are accomplishing outstanding things, as well. Among them is Information Sciences and Technology student Vincent Munro, who was named Penn State Wilkes-Barre’s Outstanding Adult Learner for 2016. Originally from Long Island, Munro came to Wilkes-Barre after serving four years in the Army National Guard, during which time he was deployed to Iraq for 14 months. He didn’t have much of a technical background, but he wanted to challenge himself. He completed an internship with the campus ITS department and now works 20 hours per week at the campus Help Desk. He expects to graduate in the fall with a Bachelor of Science degree in IST.

JONES (Slide 19 – Penn State’s Global Impact)

Of course, great stories aren’t hard to find at our other campuses, as well. A couple of months ago, three Penn State Schuylkill students and one staff member traveled to Montreal, Quebec, to participate in a campus-sponsored, international
Habitat for Humanity Canada trip. Their goal: To break the cycle of poverty, one home at a time.

Last year, nine Penn State honors students, including five from Penn State Harrisburg, traveled to Peru for a study tour that focused on how to learn and serve in a cross-cultural environment.

**JONES (Slide 20 – Closer to Home)**

Closer to home, several Penn State DuBois students recently partnered with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and the Jefferson County Conservation District in habitat development efforts at Kyle Lake, a man-made body of water in Washington Township. The students helped Fish and Boat Commission workers place catfish boxes and turtle basking platforms in the lake—essential components of the habitat that are necessary for these species to thrive.

Meanwhile, creating positive change in the community is a mission that Kevin Cauley has approached head-on as a first-year student at Penn State Brandywine. With support from faculty, staff, and fellow students, he recently developed the student-run Philly Outreach Project, which aids Greater Philadelphia communities in need.

**JONES (Slide 21 – One University, United)**

Our Commonwealth Campuses are a large and dynamic part of the University, serving more than 31,000 students who are vital to our integrated Penn State structure. They are making a difference in their communities and helping the University to deliver on the ambitious goals articulated in our strategic plan.

We will continue to leverage our unique structure—including the Commonwealth Campuses and World Campus—to meet our obligations regarding educational access and affordability and fulfill Penn State’s land-grant mission.

Thank you for your attention. Have a good afternoon.

**END REMARKS**