Good afternoon. Today I’d like you all to grab your proverbial scuba gear and join me on a deeper dive into Penn State’s Strategic Plan for 2015-16 through 2019-20, about which we’ve made substantive progress in recent months. This plan represents Penn State’s blueprint for the future, articulating not only our institution’s mission, vision and values, but also its foundational principles and imperatives, strategic priorities and supporting efforts that will enable Penn State to thrive as we conclude the second decade of the new millennium.

As Eric mentioned, Moody’s release two weeks ago of Penn State’s Aa2 rating is excellent news. So, we’re doing great, right? Indeed, we are, which may lead some to ask why we need a new Strategic Plan. One of my colleagues and friends at Johns Hopkins, Benjamin Ginsberg, wrote recently that strategic plans for universities are essentially a waste of time and are “usually forgotten after they are promulgated.” In short, he suggests, the plans are about us and our perceived need to show our value by creating them, as opposed to truly driving a positive future for our institution.

With all due respect to Ben, I disagree and maintain that strategic planning is critical to Penn State’s short- and long-term success. The process involves vision and outside-of-the-box thinking, describing where we want Penn State to go, but not necessarily how we’re going to get there. Like all other “travel plans,” if we don’t establish clearly where we want to go, the details on how we’ll get there are meaningless. Put simply, strategic planning defines our institution’s future.
That defining of Penn State’s future begins with our Mission Statement. And as I proceed fairly quickly through this presentation—we won’t get too granular now with specific tactics or tools—understand that this Strategic Plan is still very much a substantial work in progress.

So, nothing articulated at this juncture should be construed or subsequently communicated as an official statement of purpose by or on behalf of the University.

Our working Mission Statement asserts that “Penn State is a multi-purpose, land-grant, public research university that educates students from Pennsylvania, throughout the United States and the world, and improves the well-being and health of individuals and communities through integrated programs of teaching, research and service.”

No mission statement is truly meaningful if it does not reflect our institutional values, and if our actions on behalf of Penn State don’t reflect those values. We’ve identified six institutional values critical to our mission: Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, Discovery, Excellence and Community.

Our Strategic Plan also includes a Vision Statement. Some ask how it’s different from the Mission Statement, and I typically say that a mission statement describes what we are doing, or want to do, right now, which helps in tactical planning.
The vision statement, however, is a bit loftier, articulating the institution’s world view and intentions for its future. Our working Vision Statement says that, “Penn State is committed to making a strong, positive, meaningful and measurable impact on the constituencies we serve: Impact through our world-class research and its translation; impact through the quality, scope, reach, and accessibility of our teaching and educational programs; and impact through our service and outreach activities.”

(Slide 6 – Imperatives and Foundational Principles)

Underpinning the planning process are foundational principles that drive everything the University does, and are imperatives for everyone and every part of Penn State. We’re committed to Enhancing Access and Affordability, Committing to Excellence, Engaging our Students, Serving a Diverse World, Creating Economic Impact and Student Career Success, Leveraging Technology, Sustainability and Global Engagement.

(Slide 7 – Five Thematic Priorities in the Strategic Plan)

At the heart of the Strategic Plan are its Priorities—five thematic areas of focus that embody the strengths and opportunities that emerged from Penn State’s 18-month, broadly participative strategic planning process. Working groups within the University Strategic Planning Council addressed each of these five Strategic Priorities: Education and Access, Cultures, Health, Managing and Stewarding resources, and The Digital Future.
Our first priority says Penn State will seize the opportunity to use its size, scope, reach, intellectual capital and resources to transform higher education, make it accessible to all sectors of society, and thereby make an indelible mark on the Commonwealth, the nation and the world. Achieving this goal will require several steps, including forging K-12 partnerships, leveraging online capabilities and digital assets, fostering a delivery-blind culture and curriculum, and equipping and empowering faculty.

Second, Penn State will promote cultural literacy through national leadership in the arts and humanities. Achieving this goal will require improving students' cultural knowledge and awareness, strengthening the arts and humanities by investing in key programs and activities, and promoting Penn State as a cultural destination.

Next, Penn State will harness its formidable set of health-related resources to position itself to be a leader in promoting the quality of life through personalized health. Achieving this goal will require Penn State to become a leader in interdisciplinary research on personalized health; to create innovative, interdisciplinary and inter-professional graduate and post-graduate programs; build partnerships within Pennsylvania; and improve our own community's health.
The fourth priority is that Penn State will be recognized as a pre-eminent university in leading the creation of ethical and sustainable solutions to the fundamental challenges of providing safe and abundant water, clean and accessible energy, plentiful and nutritious food, in an economical, ethical and sustainable manner that protects the environment for future generations.

Achieving this goal will require applying fundamental science to important problems and challenges related to water, energy and food. Also important will be development of enabling technologies and predictive models for practical application; fully utilizing and expanding multidisciplinary research structures; and forging partnerships with industry and government.

Finally, Penn State aspires to be the leader among institutions of higher education, digitally extending our impact and responding to the potential of technology to help us teach, research, and serve communities just outside our gates and across the globe.

Achieving this goal will require building a digital infrastructure and culture that crosses traditional academic boundaries; facilitating the transformation of learning; driving regional economic development; and establishing Penn State as the global leader in digital discovery and innovation.
The University Strategic Planning Council identified and developed three supporting strategies to ensure Penn State can pursue its institutional priorities. They are Organizational Processes, Academic Infrastructure, and Outreach and Engagement.

The first supporting strategy dictates that Penn State will design, develop and deploy effective and agile organizational processes that support the University's mission. Steps to accomplish this include improving current processes’ design and effectiveness; moving toward integrated processes; instituting processes for continual institutional assessment, improvement and innovation; and adopting multi-year innovation-oriented business plans.

Secondly, Penn State must think creatively and act boldly to ensure its academic infrastructure aligns with the University’s mission. Steps to accomplish this include building state-of-the-art information technology, investing in infrastructure-related research, driving innovation through collaboration, and developing an impact plan.

The third and final supporting strategy establishes that Penn State will become the world leader in cultivating student-engaged learning and service. It also will share globally its substantial research, creative works and scholarship. Steps to accomplish this include further building worldwide access to research and scholarship
across disciplines, enriching student learning experiences, forging critical partnerships, and creating a Land Grant Innovation Fund that would support community-based outreach and research initiatives throughout the Commonwealth.

(Slide 17 – Guiding Principles for Resource Allocation)

Part of the purpose of strategic planning is to strengthen the University’s ability to make sometimes difficult but informed choices and to allocate resources according to evidence, judgment and prioritization. Core principles include investment guided by institutional and unit plans, seeking positions of leadership and impact, understanding external realities and their impacts, leveraging existing resources and strengths and generating new ones, and seeking innovative partnerships.

(Slide 18 – The Strategic Plan: From Action to Impact)

A Strategic Plan as ambitious as this one requires hard work by all stakeholders, but Penn State is well situated to make it happen. For decades, this University has maintained its commitment to strategic planning across academic, research, and academic units, and this plan extends that productive-, action- and impact-oriented approach. We will meaningfully extend Penn State’s reach and impact through the core elements of our Mission: teaching, research and service.

(Slide 19 – Feedback and Questions)

Thank you for listening and for your support of our strategic planning process. I now have time for a few questions.

<Feedback/Q&A period occurs here>
At this time, I’d like to announce a new Chancellor appointment at one of our Commonwealth Campuses, and introduce a new Dean here at University Park.

Marwan A. Wafa has been named chancellor of Penn State Worthington Scranton; his appointment is effective July 1st. Marwan has more than 20 years of academic leadership experience, including his current position as vice chancellor and dean of Indiana University-Purdue University Columbus. He will take over for current Chancellor Mary-Beth Krogh-Jespersen, who is retiring June 30th.

Before becoming vice chancellor at IUPUC, Marwan served as dean of the College of Business and Management at Saginaw Valley State University. He also was dean of the School of Business and Technology at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, and he spent 14 years at the University of Southern Indiana, including two as associate dean and director of the MBA program in the School of Business. Marwan also has extensive teaching experience, including courses in financial management and business statistics.

Marwan earned a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from Kuwait University and a master’s in management and doctorate in industrial management from Clemson University.

I’m confident Marwan’s experience and commitment to student learning will make him a great asset at Penn State.

Next, I’d like to introduce Dr. Andrew Sears, our new Dean in the College of Information Sciences and Technology. I’m thrilled that Andrew can be with us today, and I invite him to the podium now to make some brief remarks.