

Thank you for joining me today for my first State of the Students Address.

My goal is not to stand here today and tell you that the forecast for our students is clear skies.

A storm is coming. Much like a storm, the state of our students is one of unpredictability, uncertainty and unrest.

In its uncertainty, we need our allies.

I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge those in attendance here today. Those who will be our allies in our endeavor for this year.

Now, before I continue, I'd like to take a step back and recount the history of Sacramento State and Associated Students, Inc.

The year 1947 signaled the beginning of many things. For the Sacramento community and students everywhere, it marked the founding of Sacramento State College. Along with the opening, 1947 also marked the establishment of Associated Students, a non-profit organization created with the sole purpose of advancing the welfare of Sac State students.

In 1986, such purpose was tested when ASI's Student Senate ruled to challenge the validity of an election that raised student activity fees from \$13 to \$26 a semester. Standing behind its students, ASI fought to have the results of the original election overturned; issuing a referendum to have the prior fee increase reduced. Thanks to student input and voting, the referendum passed. Even with that knowledge, campus President Donald Gerth and Ann Reynolds, the CSU chancellor, decided to follow through with the original increase.

Outraged, ASI took legal action. In doing so, President Gerth went to Chancellor Reynolds and requested that ASI's recognition of good standing be withdrawn. A move that threatened the future of ASI and student representation at Sac State. The end result was a compromise between ASI and the administration to allow the fee to be implemented the following semester. So what did ASI do? We pushed forward in our fight, doing what we do best, advancing the welfare of Sac State students.

It's instances like this that show that ASI continues to serve that same purpose today.

Through the operation and sponsorship of departments and programs, ASI serves more than 29,000 students annually with access to DOC funding, the Aquatic Center, Peak Adventures, Safe Rides and KSSU. We also support a number of campus-sponsored programs such as UNIQUE, the Women's Resource Center, the College Assistant Migrant Program and the Educational Opportunity Program, EOP.

To put it simply, ASI is everywhere.

Now, I don't mean Big Brother-type everywhere, I just mean that we are here to support you. We sponsor or co-sponsor several events on campus. I guarantee that if you attend all of this year's events, nearly half of them will be ASI-funded.

We are the ones who assist you with your events. If you need support, ASI is here. If you have a question, ASI is here. If you need help with any problem, ASI is here.

We're working hard for you. Taking steps to strengthen Sac State's academic, cultural and social opportunities. Hosting events that encourage campus and civic involvement. Promoting your interests both on and off-campus.

This is one of the several reasons I joined ASI. To ensure students are represented and represented well.

But ASI is more than just representation. It is more than just rallying at the Capitol, sitting in board meetings or providing money to clubs. It's a service. A service to students and to the college experience.

This is why we focus on getting students involved on campus. This is why we host events such as the Homecoming Rally and Days in the Quad.

We want to make it fun for students to be at Sac State. To be fellow Hornets. To bleed green and gold.

ASI is not just free a T-shirt, it is a tradition-starter. It's not just free pizza, it is a connection to students. We're not just government majors, we're community-builders.

And this year, while following in the footsteps of our ASI predecessors, the Board of Directors is treading their own path.

To prepare for the future, the Board has come up with a comprehensive strategic plan that outlines our goals for the year. These goals include – increasing student awareness of ASI, advocating for an accessible, affordable and quality education and fostering student participation on campus.

In increasing student awareness of ASI we wish to reach out to you. But why is this important to you? Well, it is important for you to know what your student representatives are doing. It is important for you to no longer take a back seat in the decision-making process. And, it is important for you to stay abreast of the issues affecting you.

ASI is going to do this by publishing an annual report and developing an integrated marketing campaign reaching out to you.

ASI is also committed to advocating for an accessible, affordable and quality education.

I think it's quite obvious why you would care about this. This affects us directly. The quality of our education is contingent upon its accessibility, and its accessibility is dependent on its affordability.

ASI will accomplish this goal by launching an educational campaign to increase voter registration and turnout, offering ASI scholarships in the fall and spring and establishing an advocacy award for the most involved club on campus.

Our final goal for the year is to foster student participation on campus.

The board feels that doing so would increase campus pride.

This is why we wish to collaborate with the campus community to establish a Homecoming and Causeway Classic rally, increasing student volunteerism in ASI programs and services by at least 25 percent, filling a minimum of 90 percent of student position on University Committees and organizing at least 1,500 students for a Capitol rally in the spring.

Now, I have talked to you about what ASI is – our history and our goals, but as I stated earlier, the state of our students is one of uncertainty.

This year, we face furloughs. Over the summer, we faced fee increases. And in the future, we face a possible reduction in our community's numbers.

What exactly the future holds is unclear.

But there is still the potential for further fee increases. For a loss in teaching faculty and course offerings.

We could face shorter semesters or larger class sizes. As of now, we don't know.

What we do know, is that your involvement is no longer an option, but it has become a necessity. Your participation is now a requirement.

I stand here today urging you to get involved and be an active member of the Sac State community. Sit on an ASI or University Committee, join a club, volunteer for lobby corps or attend a Sac State event.

It's also important for you to get involved and become knowledgeable about ASI and what we do. Stop by our office, attend our events and take full advantage of everything Sac State and ASI has to offer. While we work to serve students to the best of our abilities, progress cannot come without you. This is your campus; no, this is our campus. Together, we are the student of Sac State. We are the Hornets who live, work and play together.

I've always said that ASI is only as strong as the students involved.

I am only one man. While I can kick, scream and holler at the steps of the Capitol, my voice will be but one in the wind, if not joined by the buzz of my fellow Hornets.

There is nothing in our path too impossible to overcome. Nothing in our wake that won't resemble what we want. What we need.

So if you take anything out of this address, let it be this – your involvement is crucial to your education. It is absolutely necessary for our community. We cannot sit idly by and watch as decision makers affect our day-to-day lives. Join me and join ASI in making Sac State a better university not only for today, but for tomorrow as well.

And let us remember that together nothing is impossible, that we are ASI, and that change begins with you.