Good morning! Welcome to the 2021 San Diego State All-University Convocation. I’m Brittany Santos-Derieg, President de la Torre’s Chief of Staff. I could not be more excited to start today’s program, and we have so much good news to share throughout the hour. But first, it is my pleasure to introduce SDSU’s Tribal Liaison, Mr. Jacob Alvarado Waipuk who will provide the Kumeyaay land acknowledgement. We stand upon a land that carries the footsteps of millennia of Kumeyaay people. They are a people whose traditional lifeways intertwine with a worldview of earth and sky in a community of living beings. This land is part of a relationship that has nourished, healed, protected and embraced the Kumeyaay people to the present day. It is part of a worldview founded in the harmony of the cycles of the sky and balance in the forces of life. For the Kumeyaay, red and black represent the balance of those forces that provide for harmony within our bodies as well as the world around us. As students, faculty, staff and alumni of San Diego State University we acknowledge this legacy from the Kumeyaay. We promote this balance in life as understanding. We find inspiration in the Kumeyaay spirit to open our minds and hearts. It is the legacy of the red and black. It is the land of the Kumeyaay. Eyay e’Hunn My heart is good.

Thank you, Jacob.
I would now like to welcome again our guests joining us today in person, and also virtually.

No matter where you are, thank you for being a part of our Aztec family.

I would also like to recognize our new faculty and staff. We are pleased to welcome you to our San Diego State University family, and to see many of you...in-person!...for the first time this year.

SDSU is a wonderful and exciting place to work, to learn, to teach and to do research.

We look forward to the leadership, creativity and energy you will bring to our campus community.

Our wish is that your years at San Diego State will be both productive and rewarding. We extend our most sincere welcome to you all!

I would now like to acknowledge some of our university leaders and distinguished guests.

Members of the Council of Vice Presidents, Academic Deans Council and our Associated Students Executive Officers. Could you all please rise and be acknowledged?

Thank you for joining us.

I would also like to acknowledge our other guests joining us on stage:

Librarian and University Senate Chair, Wil Weston

President of Associated Students, Ashley Tejada, President of the SDSU Alumni Board of Directors,

Charlotte Ochiqui, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Salvador Hector

Ochoa, President Adela de la Torre and the eight recipients of the SDSU Alumni Distinguished
Faculty Award and the inaugural recipient of the SDSU Staff Lifetime Achievement Award.

04:45
Please join me in welcoming them.

04:59
Last year was a year of achievement for our SDSU community. We will now share a short

05:04
video that celebrates some of these moments, before President de la Torre provides her

05:08
convocation address.

05:10
And now please welcome San Diego State University’s President, Dr. Adela de la Torre.

05:21
Buenos Dias, and Good Morning! Bienvenidos and welcome to our 2021 Convocation!

05:25
It is incredible for me to believe that I am entering my fourth year as your president...

05:31
Time has rapidly passed by... Yet, it has certainly felt for many of us...

05:36
like decades ...given these last 18 months.

05:38
Nonetheless my enthusiasm for SDSU’s aspirations and possibilities have not waned...

05:42
As another school year begins, my HOPE is that we launch with even more excitement for

05:48
our future....

05:49
It is WONDERFUL to be here together... face-to-face, heart-to-heart... and...in person... back

05:53
on our beautiful campus, despite the ebb and flow of uncertainty... and the questions that

06:03
have plagued us during these last few months.

06:06
The pandemic is not over. We all know that.

06:11
But we are vaccinated at high rates. And we are wiser about avoiding the risks.

06:18
Our thoughtful actions make a difference.

06:20
Moreover, I marvel at the great capacity of our staff, faculty and students to nimbly respond when we are forced to alter a course of action for the sake of the community’s collective good... Because of all this... our university community is stronger and more resilient than ever...

This period has shown us something we already knew... we can succeed... and we can flourish no matter the obstacles... Because in the 124-year history of this great university community, we have done it again... and again.

The start of another academic year is a time to imagine new possibilities and adventures...

First and foremost: we are THE Transborder University of the region, of the state and of the nation.

No other U.S. University can claim stewardship of the complete border region of the state. From the Pacific to the Imperial Valley, our campus creates the intellectual hub for learning, research and community engagement.

Our regional impact through our Georgian programs similarly spans and impacts the entire country and its global border region. Our strong programs and groundbreaking research are only as limited as our imaginations and appetite for hard work.

So... we welcome the 2021-22 academic year with tremendous enthusiasm. We look forward: To what we can achieve together... To what we can learn from one another... And to how we can impact the lives of each other, the region and the world...
When I reflect on the last year and a half, I can honestly say that our willingness to collectively break down barriers in teaching and research, allowed us to survive and thrive during this period.

We embraced new ways to collaborate and support each other...

We were fluid as we came together through ever changing environments...

And we transformed work and teaching in ways we could not have imagined before the pandemic...

Consider, for a moment, the extraordinary partnership our 40-year-old School of Public Health forged with the San Diego County Department of Health and Human Services... and the broader community to fight this pandemic.

They advanced contact tracing for tens of thousands, with a particular emphasis on San Diego County’s under-served communities.... That collaboration directly helped our university and the region make real progress against the virus, and Save Lives.

Donors to San Diego State University also worked to ENHANCE lives this year, giving $133M to our students and faculty, and marking an all-time annual record for the university.

And more than $5M of this giving came from our own faculty and staff.

Today, each one of us is still out in the community... Active, fully engaged, and making a difference... SDSU has those values deeply embedded in our mission...

Without a doubt, SDSU is deeply embedded in the San Diego community... and although this
may be a common refrain for us ...it is unique within the context of a nationally recognized Public Research University...

And during the past 18 months, this purpose became crystal clear...

Our health is our community’s health... Our assets are the community’s assets...

While each of us may pursue our individual goals and accomplishments....

We also come to understand that our greatest satisfaction and reward comes in the service of something bigger...and greater...than ourselves...

I have been in higher education for over 30 years. We have all seen universities obsess over ratings, rankings and “best of” lists.

Certainly, we enjoy strong state and national rankings at SDSU. But more than that, we value people... and the tangible, positive change we are creating....

We can be the world’s model for a public, transborder university....

Many UCs, CSUs, and public universities in Arizona and elsewhere... have individual projects or programs focused on border issues, but few have regional prominence and faculty expertise like SDSU, which can create the synergistic elements needed to leverage these relationships for sustainable and integrated impact on shared issues and problems...

It is distinct. And it is defining.

Moreover, our faculty, staff, and alumni strive to make the world a better place in tangible ways every day.

We work to see every student who steps onto our campus graduate with
the passion, motivation
11:27
and skills they will need to compete today and in the future....
11:32
And we accomplish all that when we break down barriers, when we
11:37
connect with one another,
and when we avoid remaining in our own silos.
11:41
It is human nature to connect with others. To be in community, and
foster community in
11:48
others. If we had any doubt about that before the pandemic, we have no
doubt about it now.
11:55
A month ago, just as many of us were returning to campus for the first
time in 17 months...we
12:01
had a ceremony at SDSU Mission Valley. Community members, construction
workers, engineers...many
12:08
of whom are SDSU Alumni...came together to celebrate placement of the
final steel beam
12:11
on top of the new multi-purpose stadium rising from the ground.
12:15
This building... and the campus expansion it unlocks... represents the
economic engine
12:19
that will propel us into a dynamic new future...rich with
opportunities.
12:22
With the revenues these amenities will generate, we are freeing
ourselves from the ups and
12:26
downs of the state funding cycle...and opening the door to a state-of-
the-art mixed-use campus
12:31
expansion....
12:32
To innovation, new housing, more students, enhanced research,
thousands of jobs and more
12:36
than $3 billion a year in NEW economic activity....
12:38
As I watched people gather for that live event, I was struck by how
happy they were to see
12:47
each other again. People wanted to linger and talk. They yearned to
reconnect after
being apart for so long.
Those social instincts are part of our human character.
At San Diego State University, we are committed to this work of breaking down barriers and making connections. It is in our DNA as a transborder university. We know in our hearts and minds the importance of bridging divides and bringing people and ideas together for the greater good.
And we must...we MUST continue pushing these boundaries. We MUST integrate across departments...across borders... We MUST be transdisciplinary...and prepare our students to be transdisciplinary...because today’s workforce demands it... Our region demands it... The problems of today, and tomorrow, demand it. The monumental challenges of our age—climate change, homelessness, racial and social inequity, health disparities—can not be solved by innovating in one area... Nor can they be solved by one community, one department, one university, one system or one country alone....
Our chance for success only increases when we move away from the model that says “the individual is king” toward a more integrative and transborder model of community, collaboration and cooperation.
We see this need across our nation. America is deeply divided. We limit ourselves EVERY DAY by our stubborn devotion to separateness and isolating one group from another...
By creating a separate hierarchy of privilege and need when we can truly become more empowered and successful by fusing these needs...

When we come together without walls that separate us, we are a force to be reckoned with...

And we discover that we are more connected, and more in touch with the admirable aspects of our character.

The development in Mission Valley and our expansion in Imperial Valley underscores what I mean.

In Mission Valley, our vision for the land that we purchased from the city... just one year ago... was not handed down from on high. That inspired vision came UP from the community.

It was a citizen’s initiative first.

And so it was the region’s will...as a collective... that lifted that final steel beam last month... when no one expected this much progress so quickly.

And it will be the collective will of the San Diego State community that makes the next phase of Mission Valley a flagship for entrepreneurial partnerships...and for integrative research and learning.

I am delighted to say that this project is moving forward in record time because when you have the collaboration, coordination and will of the community behind you... glorious things can happen.

Our vision in Imperial Valley is also unmatched. We WILL grow our capacity and start graduating
the engineers and professionals that the regional workforce demands. I have met with local leaders,

business and industry innovators, and all are clear: a professional, highly skilled

LOCAL workforce is needed by all, and will dramatically accelerate economic growth and

minimize income inequality.

And by creating this more dynamic workforce, it is possible to accelerate new industries,

which diversifies the economy of the Valley.

As the only 4 year public institution in the region we not only have the potential, we
also have the responsibility.

And, recently, we have started to make good on this:

Just last year our faculty introduced the first STEM major in Mathematics...

We added new graduate programs starting this Fall...

And in collaboration with our College of Engineering, we are pursuing ideas for the build out of

200 acres of land in Brawley, connected with the web crawler Brawley development of an innovation district and the untapped potential of renewable and alternative energy, and its connections with climate change and the Salton Sea.

And our SDSU Global campus is expanding access to working students throughout the region and the world through many of our programs... such as our microsites at community colleges.

This was not done in a vacuum, nor from the perspective of one institution, one program,
or one individual... all of these strategies amplify access and were the
direct result
17:32
of consultation, collaboration, and new partnerships.. ACROSS systems ...
that forged our capacity
17:38
to meet the needs from the shared perspectives of all...
17:42
Simply put, what we are doing is not just about inclusion, it is about 
true PARTICIPATION
17:44
and a fusion of ideas across systems and constituencies. This is what 
makes our one San Diego State 
17:51
University special, and is included in our strategic plan—where we are 
Transcending
17:56
Borders and Transforming Lives.
17:57
When we launched the plan last fall, we were in the midst of the 
global pandemic and reeling 
18:01
from the devastating economic downturn that came with it. 
18:04
It was May 2020. And our strategic planning committee faced 
18:07
a decision: can we still launch and live this plan? 
18:10
Can we still push forward when the future is so uncertain? 
18:13
Like everyone else, we were distracted by the public health crisis. 
18:18
But the principles we identified together... and which are reflected in 
our strategic plan...
18:21
are more resilient than any disruption. Even a disruption of pandemic 
magnitude. 
18:27
They reflect the core principles of our 124-year university community, 
and the voices of thousands. 
18:32
They represent the hopes and aspirations of all those who have called 
SDSU home, and who 
18:40
see themselves in its future. 
18:42
I believed wholeheartedly in the strength of that plan when we 
completed it. And I believe 
18:50
in it even more TODAY.
Our strategic plan will steer us toward our North Star: Becoming the world’s best transnational university that is VALUE DRIVEN, and which is expansive, inclusive and dynamic.

As a great public research institution, how we build for the future must incorporate what we have learned these past months...

Indeed... as I have stated earlier, we cannot lose this capacity to remain nimble, thoughtful, and innovative to meet the pressing challenge of accelerating access and equity ....

Because of that...the words of Michael Crow, the president of Arizona State University...

President Crow recently wrote: “We know now the world is much more complicated than we thought. The globalization of the planet to eight billion people in highly urbanized settings is creating all kinds of complexities. Historic institutions that are non-adaptive are going to have difficulty adjusting to these kinds of high-speed changes. We need to instill the ability to adjust and keep performing our mission as a core part of what we do.”

At SDSU, we all get what he is saying. The ability to adjust, succeed, integrate, and connect our community infuses our strategic plan. It is all about: Becoming a premier public research university focused on access, excellence and impact. Being resilient enough to flourish no matter how we are challenged. Expanding our global impact through a common mission and identity that
unites all our campuses
20:28
and communities, Promoting equity and inclusion in everything
20:31
we do and by embracing our identity as a defining transborder Hispanic
Serving Institution,
20:36
And cultivating a university culture and infrastructure that supports
a truly student-centered campus....
20:40
As we usher in this new academic year with enthusiasm and hope, and as
we stay connected
20:46
and committed to the greater good, I have no doubt our San Diego State
University community
20:53
will continue to thrive.
20:54
Thank you all so very much for who you are, and for what you do in
service to our community.
21:01
Thank you, President de la Torre. It is now my privilege to recognize
the recipients
21:06
of this year’s Presidential Staff Excellence Award. If you don’t
already know these fine
21:12
individuals, I encourage you to greet them and get to know them. They
are a wonderful
21:17
group who collectively represent what is best about San Diego State
University.
21:21
Today, our awardees are joining us both in-person and virtually. For
those of you in the room
21:27
with us, please stand when I call your name. Let’s hold our applause
until they are all
21:33
introduced.
21:34
This year’s Team Effort award is the group behind the Virtual Faculty
Instruction Technology
21:37
Center, FIT, which launched in March 2020 as we found ourselves forced
almost overnight
21:43
into virtual instruction. We recognize: Chris Clements,
21:46
Sean Hauze, Z.Leo Lopez, Michelle Peterson
and Aurora Velasco.

Our honoree for community service is Dominiko Villa, an outreach specialist in the Office of Educational Opportunity Programs & Ethnic Affairs. Niko works closely with Morse, Lincoln and San Diego high schools, which all serve heavily underrepresented areas, and where -- because of his work -- we’re seeing an increase in applications to SDSU.

Our honoree for service to the university is Cathy Chavez --- administrative support coordinator for the School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences. Cathy played an essential role in the planning for the extensive environment improvements in the ENS labs, a vital part of the school’s research and teaching missions, and other workspace.

In the auxiliary support category, we have Peter Delaney, IT security and operations manager for the SDSU Research Foundation. At the outset of the pandemic his planning led to an easy transition to work-from-home. Peter has been a resource across campus, especially on critical matters of security, helping to fend off IT breaches and fraud.

In the innovation category, we recognize Greg Elliott --- director of mass spectrometry and major equipment for the chemistry and biochemistry department. Greg led a realignment of the department in response to COVID-19 and watched over critical equipment that needed regular attention to remain functional. He has also worked to ensure remote access to
instruments by students during the pandemic.

And our final honorees are for Manager of the Year. We are fortunate to have two recipients this year. Both recipients received multiple nominations from their colleagues and it is easy to see why.

Libby Skiles became a name known to everyone across campus as director of Student Health Services, standing at the frontline of the battle against an evolving and deadly pathogen just eight months after coming to SDSU. Every day she works to keep the campus aware and informed about this continuing threat and, most importantly, how to protect ourselves.

Now we recognize our second award winner for Manager of the Year.

Shareka White is associate director of Educational Opportunity Programs and Ethnic Affairs, and it’s in this position that she presents a welcoming and supportive face of SDSU both to prospective and admitted students. Last year, Shareka launched the Harold K. Brown Knowledge, Education and Empowerment Program to support Black students at SDSU, her own alma mater. She oversees a long list of additional engagement, outreach, recruitment and retention programs.

Once again, please join me in a round of applause for all of our 2021 Presidential Staff Excellence awardees. Congratulations!

It’s now my pleasure to introduce University Senate Chair Dr. Wil Weston.

Thank you, Brittany … and good morning to everyone.
On behalf of the faculty, staff, students, and administrators who serve in the University Senate – along with my fellow Officers (Vice Chair Nola Butler-Byrd, Secretary Jose Preciado, Treasurer Amanda Fuller, and Parliamentarian Bill Eadie) – it is my pleasure, as Senate Chair, to welcome you to our 124th Academic year.

I am also pleased to welcome our new faculty and staff – and welcome everyone else back to campus as we thoughtfully and carefully return to campus after a year and a half of working remotely through the Covid-19 health crisis -- together but apart.

This past year and a half has been especially challenging for the nation, SDSU, and each of us individually. Issues of diversity and equity have been a focal point for the nation and SDSU. The murder of George Floyd; the undermining of voting rights, white supremacy, continued attacks on the equal rights for women and LGBTQIA people, rising nationalism, and a political dialog defined by intolerant, illiberal, and undemocratic discourse – all while we lived, struggled, and worked resolutely through a Global Pandemic. Additionally, this year we have begun to experience some of the most dramatic impacts to our environment, our economy, and our health due to human-made climate change. The destruction of Lytton in British Columbia, forest fires raging in Siberia, record high temperatures across North America, record-breaking fires in the American West, another active Atlantic hurricane season,
and increased economic and state instability worldwide as we adapt to our increasingly volatile environmental and economic reality --- all of these challenges have created new pressing uncertainties. And -- as we face these new uncertainties, they will be reflected in how we teach, research, learn, work, solve problems, socialize, and build community.

However, even though we have so many challenges ahead of us, I want to still offer a message of optimism. Your very presence, your attendance, the work you do, the community that you build here at SDSU is a testament to our shared resilience and commitment to a cause, a mission, much larger than ourselves.

SDSU is an important, amazing, and unique academic community—composed of our campus here on the Mesa, campuses in the Imperial Valley, in the Republic of Georgia and, now, our NEW campus in Mission Valley. I hope you become as proud as I am to be a part of SDSU and a part of our ambitious enterprise -- of learning, knowledge creation, and cultivating social-justice.

Optimism -- persistent, tireless, hopeful optimism has defined our character as an institution for generations -- and inspired us to come together, as a community, as engaged and compassionate global citizens. Our faculty are recognized around the world for their innovative research, scholarship, creative activity, and clinical practices. Our dedicated staff who work tirelessly
to keep the university and university infrastructure functioning for us all. Our students, who
join our faculty and staff in this work, will go on to help shape our future. Together,
as a unique community, defined by our diversity, our commitment to inclusivity, our demonstrated
resilience, our tremendous human compassion, and our unflagging optimism, we will meet all of these challenges.

In closing, I want to recognize that our SDSU campuses are on Kumeyaay land. In our SDSU land acknowledgement we say that “For the Kumeyaay, red and black represent the balance of those forces that provide for harmony within our bodies as well as the world around us.”

So, as we pursue our goals of knowledge and learning -- we should honor the wisdom of the Kumeyaay and do so harmoniously, respectfully, and honestly.

Welcome! Welcome to San Diego State University!

Finally, one of the great benefits of my position is the opportunity to work with student leaders; I am so impressed by their dedication to SDSU and their eagerness to engage their student colleagues and the larger community. It is this unrelenting motivation that helps them balance their academics with their duties as officers.

I now have the good fortune to introduce one of those student leaders: Ashley Tejada, President of Associated Students. Ashley is a postsecondary educational leadership graduate student who recently graduated from SDSU with a bachelor’s degree in English and a minor in leadership.

Please join me in welcoming Ashley Tejada.
Thank you, Dr. Weston. Good morning and welcome.

It is an honor and privilege to be speaking today as Associated Students President and on behalf of our SDSU students.

We are entering a time of uncertainty, a time of adjustment, and a time of adversity coming back onto this campus, but more than anything, we are entering a time of limitless potential.

We have shown that throughout our students, our staff, our faculty, and our administration, we have grown to have more experiences in common than we ever would have thought. I’m not referring to Zoom exhaustion, to social disconnect, or to the struggle of unstable environments—although all of those may be true. I am referring to the adaptability, perseverance, heart, and passion that brought us all back here today. Together, we do not just aim for a smooth return, but we strive to return even better than before.

Associated Students is empowered by this concept. Not just rising above all of the trauma, burden, and obstruction this last year and a half has caused, but utilizing these times and experiences to create a momentum when moving forward, and a big one at that. San Diego State University is impossible to duplicate. A large reason being that students, faculty, staff and administration collaborate constantly in order to accomplish more. This has never been more evident than in this moment, where we are surrounded by one another where 6 months
ago it never seemed possible. Which is why this year, Associated Students
32:49
is excited to introduce the Year of CommUNITY. Now, the UNITY ending
32:57
is in uppercase. Because
we know that stepping back onto campus, progress, change, advocacy,
33:06
and pride is best achieved
when we are all united. From our students, to faculty, to staff, to
33:14
administration, this
year is here to be embraced.
33:17
Now the tagline is what I hold closest to my heart. “It Starts With Us.” Because
33:26
any one person can aim for unity with their entire being, but it takes
33:35
multiple to actually
achieve it.
33:36
I am proud to share our pillars this year that I genuinely believe can
be adopted by
33:44
every person on this campus and speak to this same standard of
partnership:
33:51
The first being … Execute Shared Governance through proactive
collaboration and communication
33:56
opportunities.— We take pride in being a CSU that strives for the
34:03
student voice in
each and every setting.
34:05
The second … Elevate the importance of mental health and overall
34:13
healing. Throughout this
pandemic, regardless of where you come from, where your passions lie,
what your aspirations
34:19
are, we can all relate to one thing, and that is the challenge of
mental health. This is
34:25
something we will be actively attending to this year, and working to
34:32
highlight the strength
34:33
in vulnerability.
And third ... Re-establish unity throughout our diverse SDSU community. Because there is no one identity that makes up the meaning behind an SDSU student. It is the different cultures, identities, and walks of life that make the SDSU family all that it is. But what brings us all together is our sense of pride, a love for the school, and a constant desire to see it made better. So Welcome Back! We appreciate all that has passed, are grateful for this moment, and look forward to all that is to come. Thank you.

It is now my pleasure to introduce Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Salvador Hector Ochoa and Ms. Charlotte Ochiqui, President of the SDSU Alumni Board of Directors. Alumni Association Provost Ochoa joined SDSU in July 2019 as the university’s chief academic officer. He came to us from the University of New Mexico and brings more than 20 years of academic leadership experience. Charlotte Ochiqui is Vice President of Programs, Planning and Development for the Education, Instruction, and Operations Department at the Neighborhood House Association, San Diego’s largest private non-profit organization in San Diego County. Charlotte graduated in 2000 with a Master of Arts degree in Public Administration from SDSU and has been involved with SDSU Alumni for 5 years. She is the current president of the SDSU Alumni board of directors and is a board member of The Campanile Foundation.
Please join me in welcoming Provost Ochoa and Ms. Charlotte Ochiqui.  
Charlotte stands up and waves at her chair. Provost Ochoa approaches podium to emcee SDSU  
Alumni Distinguished Faculty Awards. Provost’s name/title appear in lower third  
Provost Ochoa will introduce the video; at the conclusion of the video, the Awardee will approach the podium to accept the statue from Provost Ochoa and then Charlotte will present the honorarium check. The Provost remains at the podium and Charlotte sits down when each video plays.  
SDSU is an extraordinary university, in large part because of our extraordinary faculty.  
Among them are masterful, inspirational teachers; phenomenal researchers; committed and engaged citizens of our university community; passionate leaders of their scholarly disciplines (both nationally and internationally); compassionate servants of our SDSU communities and many who excel in all these areas of professional endeavor.  
Because of the generous support of SDSU Alumni, each year we are able to honor one impressive faculty member from each of our colleges with the SDSU Alumni Distinguished Faculty Award.  
It is with great pleasure that I stand before you today, to recognize the remarkable achievements of this year’s recipients of the SDSU Alumni Distinguished Faculty Award.  
Provost Ochoa says the college/campus name first and then the video is shown. Following the video, Provost Ochoa says the name of the awardee and they come up to receive their
From the Fowler College of Business, Dr. Chamu Sundaramurthy.
From the College of Education, Dr. Marjorie Olney.
From the College of Engineering, Dr. Thais Alves.
From the College of Health and Human Services, Dr. Carol Mackersie.
From the College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts, Professor Denitsa Bliznakova.
From the College of Sciences, Dr. Robert Zeller.
From SDSU Imperial Valley, Dr. Mark Wheeler
Please join me in congratulating all of our Faculty awardees!
And now I would like to welcome President de la Torre back to the podium.
Thank you, Provost Ochoa. It is now truly my honor to announce the recipient of the inaugural SDSU Staff Lifetime Achievement Award. This prestigious award was created to recognize an exemplary staff member who has made significant contributions to the mission of the university throughout their career.
In order to be eligible, nominated staff members must have served the university for a minimum of fifteen years and received at least three letters of recommendation to accompany the nomination.
We will now watch a special video highlighting this year’s inaugural recipient.
What a wonderful tribute to Jim and his countless contributions to this university. Before I
Invite Jim to accept his award, I wanted to share some words from those colleagues who nominated him.

Jim’s history and experience at SDSU are unparalleled. His boundless knowledge of dates, events, traditions, and individuals from the university’s storied past helps us grow and build a stronger foundation for our future.

Without Jim’s expertise, appreciation of how the university works, and endless connections, we would not have been able to save any of the university’s eight historic murals, hold successful public events for the anniversaries of Aztec Bowl, the President John F. Kennedy’s 1963 visit to campus, and the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.’s 1964 visit to campus, or plan for the university’s impending 125th anniversary in 2022-23.

I am not the first person to note that with Jim on your team, goals become attainable, collaboration runs smoothly, and projects simply become far more fun. Everyone who interacts with Jim is touched in a positive way. He knows how to bring light to a dark situation with his humor, how to fix a problem when plans go sideways with his clever way of thinking, how to read a crowd and interact with any type of personality, and how to strategize to maximize time and resources in an efficient way to promote a great outcome.

Jim’s contributions to the university’s Department of Athletics and SDSU Alumni, as
well as University Relations and Development, have provided the necessary foundation for SDSU to grow, thrive and rise in stature and reputation in the ranks of higher education nationally and internationally.

He has been integral in securing some of the most transformative gifts to the university, is a committed partner to our SDSU veterans, connects Aztec Alumni across the country and is the glue that keeps the morale of our entire division together.

One of the qualities that makes Jim so special and, in my opinion, so effective is his willingness (perhaps even eagerness) to share and outright give credit to others when it is truthfully due him. He is a doer, not a self-promoter.

Finally, and most importantly, Jim is our friend. In fact, he is a true friend to all who work at the university or are associated with SDSU. He is fun, authentic in his joy, and through his leadership-by-example gives permission for us all to enjoy what we do in our work and celebrate our achievements.

This is our opportunity to celebrate his many decades of contributions to SDSU. Congratulations Jim on this much deserved award!

Congratulations again to all of our award recipients!

A sincere thank you
for sharing your morning with us. We hope you enjoy the “grab and go” lunches that
will be distributed as
you walk down to Goldberg Courtyard.
Again, thank you for being here and best wishes for
a great year! Go Aztecs!