

Hello.

It's a wonderful time of year with Thanksgiving nearly here, and the semester's end following quickly behind it. I am looking forward to congratulating our December graduates whose degree attainment is our strongest evidence of student success. I want to say how thankful I am for what you do to make Indiana State University the vibrant, distinctive place that it is. We are all fortunate to be Sycamores.

As I reflect on our tremendous faculty; our bright, energetic students; and our dedicated staff, I am full of optimism heading into a new decade at ISU.

There's no limit to what you can discover, create, and achieve here.

I am especially proud that our university is recognized as a place that changes lives. ISU ranked first in the state in CollegeNet's Social Mobility Index in 2018 and we have high hopes for the upcoming 2019 results. The survey measures how well colleges and universities perform as "a conduit for economic and social advancement."

It's a credit to all of you that we excel in this vital area. ISU ranked first among the state's public institutions in the Social Mobility Index four times in the past five years.

We're continuing work on our Mission, Vision and Values statement. More than 200 people throughout campus have provided insights that will guide us as we create the next Strategic Plan. Thank you for participating in this important work.

I know many people are preparing for our September 2020 visit by the Higher Learning Commission. The accreditation process is important, and your efforts to demonstrate the quality of our programs is deeply appreciated. Thanks especially to Dr. Susan Powers and Provost Mike Licari for their leadership in this process.

Because of your great work, there is promising news on enrollment. Applications and admissions are up from this time last year. But it's still early. Amid budget challenges, we need those prospective students to understand the great value in following through and becoming a Sycamore. That's where you can help.

We hear often from students that they chose Indiana State because faculty and staff went beyond what other universities did to connect with them. It's the personal touch that makes us stand out. A faculty member taking time to speak with a prospective student makes a huge impact. A friendly staff member answering questions makes a big difference.

When people take a closer look at Indiana State, we reveal what a special place this is. It's about people who care. That's why everyone has a role in helping prospective students get to know us. This is how we will move ISU forward. This is the essence of what's distinctive about Indiana State.

This holiday season, please consider a gift to Indiana State University and/or a pledge to the ISU Campus United Way. We hope you will use this season to be a part of something

bigger than yourself. In this way we continue to transform lives by sharing with others as many of you do throughout the rest of the year. And students, please take time to thank the people who helped you get to where you are and will help you succeed in the future.

In the spirit of the holiday, the university will close at noon on Wednesday, Nov. 27, so you can have more time to spend with family and friends.

Final exams are around the corner. Finish strong. Then we'll take a well-deserved break before heading into the second semester re-energized for a new decade.

Thank you again and happy holidays, everyone.