State of The College  
Delivered January 12, 2015 by President Jeff Fox to faculty and staff

It is my pleasure to welcome you all back for the Spring 2015 semester. I hope you had a restful break with friends and family.

I ask you to remember former coach Jerry Hale, and Jim Massey, Bob Speyer and Don Puder, former faculty members who recently passed away.

Let me begin by congratulating Trustees Karl Kleinkopf and Bob Keegan on their reelection in a challenging Board of Trustees election.

We have had a busy year, to be sure. There were times I had occasion to recall Winston Churchill’s words, “If you are going through hell, keep going.” I am sure you too have had opportunities to explain events to your communities, friends and family. I am proud of how the College has handled the various high profile events and how we have kept our focus on education and our students. I commend all of you for your dedication to who we are and the students we teach.

Update on Legislative Matters
Later this month, higher education institutions will be in the capitol for Education Week at the legislature. I’ll be making presentations to the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee as well as the House Education and Senate Education Committees. The College’s primary request centers on our Student Success Initiative and involves positions for intentional recruitment and advising, educational coaching, and continued efforts in remediation reform. I’ll also be making requests for support in the areas of instructional design and institutional research. This last fall, we met with our local legislators on various occasions for lunches, breakfasts and our annual Legislative Dinner, and their responses have been positive and supportive. We hope they can help us out in this year’s legislature.

Today, the governor will present his State of the State Address. We expect higher education will be challenged to receive the support we are requesting this year. Also, we expect to lose about $400,000 from Enrollment Workload Adjustment, a calculation based on a three-year rolling average. On the positive side, we expect the governor to announce an increase in state employee compensation, somewhere between 1% and 3%.

Wellness
Last year at this time, I announced our intention to promote health and wellness. I believe we had a record number of people engage in wellness metrics and wellness activities, building on CSI’s vibrant wellness program and taking advantage of our partnership with St. Luke’s and Select Health. The effects for some are immediate—improved health, weight loss, tobacco use cessation, health awareness and proactive behavior. The long-term effects are sure to be positive as we care for ourselves and model the future of health care for our students and our community.
Update Innovation Circle Grants
This fall, a team of faculty, Brenda Larson from Philosophy, Jim Irons from English, Mike Youngman from Art, and R. D. Van Noy from IT embarked on a project initially designed to enhance a scholarly analysis and publication of *The Iliad*, work started by Brenda Larson. In response to the call for innovative work on the Frost Property in Hagerman, a multidisciplinary team of Scott Farkas from Music, Scott Rogers from P.E., Chance Munn from Horticulture, Jim Wilson from Agriculture, Judy Hansen from English, and Don Campanella from Biology will be examining possible educational uses and opportunities. I am excited to see the results of the creative teams, and these teams will be reporting out during In-Service this August.

The Future
Sometimes it is difficult to notice progress. We get so focused on the moment and on the future that it is a surprise when we stop and take stock of what we have accomplished. It is like climbing a mountain, the trail shrouded in fog. The way ahead is indistinct, a path leading up and into clouds. But if we stop and look back, we are surprised by how far we have come. Since January 2014, we have been forging ahead with some reorganization and significant, far-reaching plans for improvement in the areas of recruiting, advising, retention, and completion we are calling our Student Success Initiative. We have successfully opened the Idaho Falls Center and have assisted the city of Idaho Falls to begin the process of establishing Idaho’s fourth community college. The College continues its successful partnerships and nationally recognized work with economic development. We have started to modify and improve remediation, responding to local and statewide pilot programs and national researched best practices.

This spring, as you have heard, the College will embark on three major projects. The first is updating our strategic plan. The second is preparing for our Comprehensive Year Seven Accreditation site visit in April. Both of these projects are being led by Chris Bragg. Additionally, the Board of Trustees has approved a Request for Proposals for creating a new campus master plan. This is a comprehensive effort that will include every aspect of CSI’s physical plant and workflow.

Finally, this New Year begins the College of Southern Idaho’s Fiftieth Anniversary. Kathy Deahl is convening the Fifty Year Committee, and that committee has been at work already this fall. Kathy will be reaching out the larger campus community as events develop to celebrate this bicentennial event. I can share one key project associated with this, and that is Jim Gentry’s upcoming book which is the history of CSI. Since his retirement, Jim has been researching and writing this book, and it is in the final stages of editing. We hope to have the book published by fall.

In closing, I want to thank you for your good work in service to our students, to each other, and to our larger purpose. This college is rich in opportunity in so many ways.
This spring, I encourage you to be present with your students and with each other. Find time to attend one of the excellent plays and performing arts events. Visit the Herrett Museum to check out exhibits and arts shows. Make a point of attending one of or more of the outstanding lectures at the Herrett or the Fine Arts. Go to a basketball, baseball, or softball game. Go to the rodeo.

And so I would once again note it is an honor to travel this road together. Thank you for your dedication to this great enterprise we call CSI. Here’s to a successful spring!