Welcome everyone – students, faculty and staff, members of the Board of Trustees and friends – to the Fall Address!

It is wonderful to be with you this afternoon as we start another academic year. Thank you to Dr. Greg Teague, the chair of the USF System Faculty Council, for that very generous introduction. And thank you to all who have gathered here at the Oval Theater or who are watching online for your time, attention and contributions to the USF System.

This is my 15th Fall Address as President. Each year my pride in our accomplishments grows. This year marks many milestones for our institutions, with USF Sarasota-Manatee celebrating its 40th year, USF St. Petersburg celebrating its 50th year, and in 2016 the Tampa campus will mark its 60th year.

Also, it is our 10th year as a collective University of South Florida System.

Just recently, our history has been top of mind as we bid farewell to John Germany, who recently passed away at 92. He was the last surviving “Founding Father” of USF.

It was Judge Germany who teamed up with Representative Sam Gibbons and Governor LeRoy Collins to push through the legislation and funding to create the University of South Florida in 1956.

That’s why we named the park at the USF Tampa campus library in his honor. the John Germany Legacy Park.

At the University of South Florida, we do so many things:
We educate the next generation;
Create new technologies,
Save lives,
Engage internationally,
Share knowledge with the local community
And keep art and culture growing and thriving.

We are global citizens, yet deeply connected to the Tampa Bay Region.
We are driving the Tampa Bay region’s economy to a powerful future, not only as one of its largest employers, but also as a research and talent powerhouse.

The Big Picture of USF is really thousands of little pictures – a kaleidoscope of talent and creativity that constantly changes as it illuminates and transforms.

When you put the pieces together, it becomes clear that not only are we achieving our individual goals, but collectively shaping the future for the better.

Think about the pillars of our university: Student success, global and community engagement, research and innovation, institutional strength, and economic impact.

These are not singular efforts, they are all part of a continuum across the USF System that feed into one another and are deeply rooted in the belief that higher education is the key to individual empowerment, community stability and global prosperity.

The USF System is truly a catalyst for the transformation we see all across the Tampa Bay Region.

The positive change we see in our community starts with the USF System focusing on STUDENT SUCCESS.

Each one of the 48,793 students now enrolled in the USF System matters to us as an institution, but also to the future success of the Tampa Bay Region.

In the last academic year, the USF System conferred a record 12,883 graduate and undergraduate degrees.

This fall’s freshman class in Tampa has the distinction of holding the strongest academic record for an incoming class in the history of USF.
With an average three-part SAT score of 1804 and a high school GPA of 4.08, this class allows USF to surpass yet another one of the benchmarks established by the state for preeminent research universities.

As was recently noted by the *Tampa Bay Times*, USF has quickly risen in its standing as a top university of choice for valedictorians and salutatorians across the Tampa Bay region.

We now also have the largest Honors College in Florida.

It’s equally telling that this year the Morsani College of Medicine had a huge 24 percent increase in applicants, with 5,000 applicants vying for 170 slots, and its first-year class of medical students has the highest average MCAT scores in the entire state of Florida.

Our six-year graduation rate remains one of the fastest rising among public research universities nationwide. Now at 67 percent and destined to go higher, we continue to invest in greater academic support and build a campus environment that supports and celebrates success.

This year we graduated our first class of USF College of Pharmacy students and the first ever commencement ceremony for USF Health graduates. We also graduated our first international class of Muma College of Business students at USIL University in Lima, Peru.

The world is our classroom: Just ask the 97 students and seven faculty who spent their summer abroad in our first-ever USF in London program. We hope to double that enrollment next year.

USF also has a very productive academic and research partnership with the University of Exeter in England. This past summer, for the first time, a group of USF trustees met with Exeter trustees to brainstorm further opportunities for students and faculty.

While many of our domestic students travel the world, we are thrilled to welcome more than 4,000 international students who will join the USF System this year.
Nationally, USF is a leading university for military veterans – doing our part to empower these capable, experienced and much-needed leaders. In fact, both USF’s College of Nursing and the College of Public Health were rated the #1 program for veterans nationwide!

Our student athletes – 70 percent of whom are the first in their families to attend college – had one of the highest graduation rates in the conference along with post-season appearances for eight USF Athletics programs.

No group epitomizes the USF System’s transformation more than one specific group of students: Our national scholarship winners.

Did you know that in 2007, USF had just five national scholarship winners? Last year, we had a record number: 51.

USF also had its first Gates Cambridge Scholarship winner, Michael Calzadilla who is studying for a graduate degree in astrophysics at Cambridge University.

Like many USF students, Michael – who is from Brandon - is the first in his family to attend college. Until he came to USF, Michael had never even left the state of Florida. The USF faculty quickly recognized his brilliance and supported his efforts to apply for scholarships, research and international experiences.

As luck would have it, in England, Michael will be close to his girlfriend, Kaitlyn Deutsch, who is one of three USF Frost Scholarship winners studying at Oxford University.

Another student we came to know this year is Trang Luong was the outstanding graduate at this summer’s commencement ceremony.

Trang grew up in Ho Chi Minh City, and her parents believed in her ability and potential so much that they sold their home to pay for her education.

Trang came to USF through our very successful partnership with INTO and earned an amazing list of scholarships and fellowships. She finished her
undergraduate engineering degree in just three years. She’s now working on her master’s degree in engineering.

Now think about these students – from near and far – and how they were each drawn to USF and have been hugely successful thanks to our great faculty and staff who are devoted to helping our students succeed.

We’ve opened the world up to our students, and through their talents, they are giving back to the world.

As an institution, we’ve made strategic investments in programs that support our students’ academic success, but it’s also important to note that our campus community makes critical investments in our students in so many other ways.

USF’s online presence is expanding tremendously. From single courses to complete programs, from the new Winter Session and Maymester, where students can take an entire online course in a few weeks, to blended learning opportunities, which capitalize on both face-to-face and online expertise, USF is also poised to succeed in the virtual world.

At the Muma College of Business, the corporate mentorship program paired 89 first-generation college students with business leaders to guide them through professional development activities.

The result: 100 percent of the students had a job offer at graduation.

The team at Student Affairs has made a concerted effort to make USF a warmer, more engaging campus. At the start of every semester, you will see legions of staff welcoming students and helping them find their way. And at finals, our staff is back out there to ease the stress with words of support, snacks and lots of encouragement.

This year, our student organizations have led the way in building a new partnership with Feeding America for an on-campus food pantry for students. The Student Green Energy Fund has created the Share-a-Bull Bikes program for easy and free commutes across campus.
And when students go on that big job interview, USF can lend them career-appropriate clothing, through the “Suit-a-Bull” program.

We have worked hard to preserve access and opportunities across the USF System: We’ve had no tuition increases and no fee increases, with a focus on helping students limit and manage their debt.

The bottom line: We want our students to know we are 100 percent beside them every step of the way.

Talent is the key to our future, and that is most apparent when you consider our accomplishments as a research university.

One of the most anticipated annual markers of our rise as a research university is our annual total of grants and contracts.

In 2000, just shortly after I joined USF, the annual research total was a very respectable 171.3 million dollars.

Today, I am very proud to announce the new total:

**440 million, 577 thousand, 680 dollars!**

This figure represents an incredible amount of work by our faculty, staff and students on both a graduate and undergraduate level.

Our climb to number 43 among public and private research universities and our standing as a global leader in patents is a result of our unwavering focus on our research engine.

The most powerful means to impact the future is to create a culture of discovery and innovation that leverages talent to solve problems.

Our research is meaningful and life-altering all across the USF System.
USF’s College of Nursing is delving deep into saving premature newborns, understanding the challenges of cancer survivors and creating a better model to serve the elderly in traditionally underserved communities.

Meanwhile, a revolutionary therapy developed at Nursing to treat Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is emerging as a promising treatment available to veterans across the Tampa Bay Region all the way to the Walter Reed Army Hospital in Maryland.

At USF St. Petersburg, Dr. James McHale continues to produce groundbreaking work in the area of infant mental health.

This summer, McHale received a National Institutes of Health grant for nearly 3 million dollars for research into building stronger and healthier environments for babies born into fragile families.

This life-changing effort is at the heart of a new partnership between USF St. Petersburg and All Children’s Hospital/John Hopkins Medicine to establish the Center for Infant-Family Mental Health.

In The College of The Arts, faculty member Andrew Carroll produced his third video employing dance to confront social issues, the latest focused on suicide prevention in a video that has been viewed all over the world.

At the College of Marine Science, researchers won an impressive 20 million dollar grant to continue examining the lingering impact of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.

At the College of Behavioral and Community Sciences, Doctors Lorie Fridell and Wesley Jennings, with graduate student Matthew Lynch, have produced nationally-recognized work on police body cameras and policing bias. Their expertise proved to be timely and relevant as the nation struggles with how to create safer communities.

At USF Sarasota-Manatee, Dr. Jody McBrien and student Ashley Metelus have repeatedly traveled to Uganda to chronicle the stories of tens of thousands of women and children who have endured one of the world’s most brutal wars.
Across USF Health, faculty and students have teamed up with Stetson College of Law to help military veterans fight for their disability benefits.

These are just a few examples of the research and community engagement that makes a difference in the world and define the USF System. But it doesn’t stop there.

New this year is the USF Institute for Advanced Discovery and Innovation, which engages National Academy Members living both in Tampa Bay and around the country in our classrooms and labs.

For the fifth year, USF ranked among the top universities in the world in generating new U.S. patents. Did you know the Florida High Tech Corridor – which is USF, UF and UCF – now generates more patents than the famed Research Triangle in North Carolina.

Patents are the start of the process of creating new products, industries and jobs. Did you know that there are now 57 products on the market that were developed right here at USF? And there are nine new therapeutic drugs in Phase II clinical trials – an important step in bringing new treatments to the public.

One of the most exciting developments this year was the naming of USF by the National Science Foundation as an Innovation Corps Site, one of only 36 nationwide. This prestigious designation will help teach what it takes to successfully transfer knowledge into products and processes.

USF also earned the American Public and Land Grant University’s national designation as an “Innovation and Economic Prosperity University”. We’re just the second university in Florida to receive that honor that recognizes our impact on our region’s economy.

Our Student Innovation Incubator is now selecting its third class of new companies, while its 24 initial student-founded companies continue to benefit from services and mentorship of 200 CEOs willing to help the next generation of entrepreneurs.
The real-world application of our discoveries and technologies shows us how our intellectual power can spark new opportunities.

One especially exciting venture has been The Florida Center for Cybersecurity – known as FC-Squared – which was created just two years ago.

FC-Squared this year earned a National Center of Academic Excellence designation from the National Security Agency and Department of Homeland Security.

And FC-Squared has forged partnerships with leading national institutions such as J.P. Morgan Chase, which recently provided a $300,000 dollar grant to fast-track the training of newly retired military personnel as cybersecurity professionals.

Each of these projects supports our reputation as a research university, but also our credibility as a public institution effectively using resources to serve the greater good.

This year again, USF had an impressive showing in the Board of Governors ‘s performance-based funding model which has become the standard of accountability for Florida.

In the past three years, USF has ranked either first or second among Florida’s universities. Our continued high-achievement sends a very important message to the people of Florida: Their investment is well-placed in us.

As you may know, this past year also marked the culmination of two years of preparation for USF Tampa’s accreditation review from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

When the SACS team sat down with me to deliver their report, there was not one single criticism; not one recommendation. To me, that was the equivalent of an “A+”, something virtually unheard of in an institution as large and as complex as ours! This was a true team effort that encapsulated the essence of our university’s mission, vision and values.
We also celebrated the reaccreditation of the Morsani College of Medicine by the Liaison Committee for Medical Education. This is a rigorous review to ensure the college is meeting the highest national standards.

Just weeks later, the USF College of Pharmacy earned its first full accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education, marking a huge milestone for this young program and major endorsement for its innovative brand of education.

USF Sarasota-Manatee College of Education earned its separate national accreditation for the first time as well.

The outside validation of our efforts matters. It gives people confidence in investing and partnering with the USF System.

We had a successful legislative session this year with the USF System leading the State University System of Florida in seeing its construction projects funded. Several key priorities such as the USF St. Petersburg Kate Tiedemann College of Business and the downtown Morsani College of Medicine received significant resources amid a challenging budget session in Tallahassee.

I want to thank our Tampa Bay Area Legislative delegation, which spoke with one voice in support of the USF System. And thank you to the Florida Legislature and to the governor for endorsing our projects.

These projects will elevate the communities we serve and create new opportunities.

And because the wider community understands believes in the transformative power of the USF System, we’ve had another record year of giving to the Unstoppable campaign.

This is amazing: In the last year, the USF Foundation has raised an astonishing 130 Million Dollars! That means that the 1 Billion Dollar Campaign we launched less than two years ago has already reached 864 Million Dollars!
Our endowment has reached 420 Million Dollars, and with that financial security our institution can dream bigger and bolder than ever before. 1

In the last 12 months, we have celebrated gifts resulting in the naming of the Kate Tiedemann College of Business at USF St. Petersburg, the Muma College of Business, the Zimmerman School of Advertising and Mass Communications, and the Lynn Pippenger School of Accountancy.

Less than two weeks ago, we had another incredible gift from Barron and Dana Collier of 10.85 million dollars to support student success in the Muma College of Business.

What is equally worth celebrating is that most of these recent gifts came from USF Alumni who care about education and believe in giving back.

Our great friend and benefactor Frank Morsani says it best: First you learn. Next you earn. Then you return.

This year USF St. Petersburg is now able to begin construction of its new Kate Tiedemann College of Business, allowing it to shine more brightly as a dynamic institution on a vibrant waterfront.

As the only residential campus in the city, USF St. Petersburg students and faculty are actively driving a cultural and educational renaissance that is nothing short of spectacular.

Thanks to the USF Foundation, this year USF St. Petersburg was able to purchase an adjacent property to expand its science and technology facilities.

USF Sarasota-Manatee completed its strategic plan in the last year, and is now on its way to achieving its goals of offering the highest-quality advanced education programs for its community.

The campus also received approval from the Florida Board of Governors to fully grow its freshman and sophomore enrollment, allowing for greater course offerings in the future.
As I mentioned before, this year marks a decade since we have operated as one cohesive USF System.

For the first half of this year, the USF System Task Force took on the big question of what does it mean for us to be a system, and how can we maximize that relationship?

We can leverage our combined assets, provide cost-effective programs and services and be a model for effective regionalism, which we all know is greatly needed throughout Tampa Bay.

Forging a more cohesive system requires us to intentionally shape our culture into one based on shared values and accomplishments.

The Task Force had a number of meetings, conversations and observations and condensed them into a set of memorable guiding principles all under one name: BULLISH.

What does it mean to be BULLISH in the USF System? Well, let me tell you. It means being:

**Bold:** We look for innovative solutions to the world’s most challenging problems.

**United:** We are stronger together and seek new ways to maximize efficiencies.

**Leaders:** We nurture talent and value opportunities to develop professionally.

**Loyal:** We treat each other with respect, trust and integrity for the good of the system.

**Impactful:** We make a difference with our community ties and global citizenship.

**Student-centric:** Student success is at the center of all we do.
High-quality: We deliver quality service to students, faculty, staff, employers, and members of our communities.

Throughout the next year, there will be a number of BULLISH activities that will involve faculty, staff and students as we continue our work toward a more collaborative USF System.

Additionally, there are several new operational initiatives under way. One initiative is “Responsibility Centered Management” or “RCM” for the Tampa campus budgeting process.

RCM is a budget model in which individual units are directly responsible for the revenues and costs generated within their operations. This will provide more transparency, efficiency and a deeper understanding of budgeting across campus.

RCM is an evolving process, and the first complete phase will be implemented on July 1, 2016. Deans, chairs, faculty and staff from all over campus have been involved in this process.

Another initiative in the coming year involves our “Office of Research, Innovation and Economic Development”. A review by the Huron Group of our current research model offered several helpful recommendations related to indirect cost reimbursements, and we established a “Research Advisory Committee” to focus on aligning resources with responsibilities.

USF Health is proud of the quality of care provided to the community. With the implementation of a new information management system called EPIC, USF Health will further strengthen its ability to provide the best and most efficient care.

The USF Physicians Group is continuing to enhance its business practices, which is a key touchpoint in serving the community.

Finally, we will see the development of new strategic plans from USF Research, USF Health, USF Athletics, the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunity and the College of Engineering – all important pillars of our system.
We are continuing to work hard on one of the largest and most comprehensive public-private partnerships anywhere in Florida that would transform outdated housing on the Tampa campus into a vibrant student village.

We are working diligently with the Florida Board of Governors and await their approval on this project. While we are working through this process, be assured that new student housing is in USF’s future.

This new academic year will be one of great changes and new beginnings.

At this time last year, we were just beginning to picture USF in a new context: as part of the incredible redevelopment planned by Tampa Bay Lightning Owner Jeff Vinik, who is donating the land needed to co-locate the Morsani College of Medicine and the Heart Institute in this exciting new urban core.

This is the biggest project our community has seen in more than a generation, and with the support of the Florida Board of Governors, the Legislature and the Governor it’s going to happen.

While the Tampa Bay Region’s cities are on the move, the area surrounding the Tampa campus has a hopeful path ahead.

The idea for the Tampa Innovation Alliance was launched right here at last year’s Fall Address and we are so excited it’s beginning to take shape with a $2 million investment from Hillsborough County.

The Innovation District is already home to some of the largest and most important institutions in our region: Busch Gardens, Moffitt Cancer Center, Florida Hospital, the Haley VA, MOSI, and of course, USF!

This is an impressive fact: The Innovation District has nearly 49,000 workers in its area – that’s more than downtown Tampa.

Now we need a development plan to maximize the impact of USF and its neighbors to spur investment and help our area thrive.
Our leadership in the region matters. People look to us to set the standard and our institutions are gateways to the future.

**Beginning in early 2016,** all USF System campuses will be tobacco free. Policy changes are in planning now for USF Tampa to join the campuses in St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee as completely tobacco-free.

As part of our commitment to help students, faculty and staff who wish to quit using tobacco, the University will offer free cessation resources for those who are interested.

Our people are our greatest resource, and creating a healthy environment is an important part of our mission.

We have a big year ahead of us – and new challenges and goals to meet.

Everyone’s effort is important, and I hope you see how every individual across the USF System contributes to the greater vision of the future.

As a system, we’ve connected the dots: Student Success. Research and Innovation. Institutional Strength. Economic and community impact.

Every effort feeds into one another.

In a world where the single most important asset any community has is talent, anything you do to cultivate, grow, support and expand talent leads to a brighter future for people here and far beyond our campus boundaries.

That’s what’s special about universities – they harness the transformative power of talent.

That’s what’s special about the USF System.

Take a moment. Take a look at the people around you who make a difference – because you all make a difference!

It’s always that extra effort that drives our success. And that’s what makes the USF System the greatest place to be anywhere!
That’s the big picture of the USF System!

Thank you for all you do and for being a part of a truly special experience. And as always, Go Bulls!