Hello. I hope that 2017 has gotten off to a great start for you. It was a joy on the first day of Spring classes to greet students as they returned to campus. So many friendly faces excited to start the next step on their educational journey. These are exciting times at Ivy Tech Community College as we are just starting a journey of our own, our strategic planning process. I wanted to provide you an update on that process, along with another effort that is operating in parallel - the campus/regional organizational structure project.

Let me start there. Back in June when I visited campuses across the state as your President-elect I heard a number of concerns from faculty and staff about Ivy Tech’s structure - from the lack of role clarity regionally and statewide, to unclear campus-level leadership, to the challenges merged regions has caused. The concern was consistent across the state. At Ivy Tech our current campus leadership structure has almost everyone reporting up through the regional leadership. In other organizations, whether multi-campus community colleges or multi-location corporations, there is local control within the context of the larger organization. I felt more feedback was needed so we formed a steering committee made up of representatives from various departments from all 14 regions and central office in November.

Allow me to be very clear, there are no preconceived notions of the results of this project and it is not being used to identify and eliminate sites or campuses. This project is being launched in response to the many concerns I heard in June. As of late December nine chancellor interviews and nearly 50 group interviews have taken place at all 14 regions and in central office. Over 220 people have been interviewed as part of this fact-finding effort to assess the current state from the perspective of regional and central office staff.

At the same time benchmarking interviews were done with other community colleges including Lone Star, Northern Virginia, Virginia Community College System, Maricopa and Miami Dade. And we are presenting and asking for feedback from regional trustees into early February.

The committee members from the regions, and my cabinet, reviewed the findings from the regional visits and have identified the key facts or observations that will best focus this work moving forward.

To reiterate, there is no preconceived outcome that anyone is looking to validate and implement. There is no planned announcement on restructuring forthcoming. We will learn more when preliminary observations and recommendations are made in February. Those recommendations will be reviewed in March and a plan will be presented to the State Board of Trustees in April.

This project is critically important to improve all leadership effectiveness and communication at campus, regional and the statewide level. It will help determine operational definitions for our various locations - for example campuses and sites - and determine the baseline services and staffing levels necessary to support student success at each type of location. It will bring consistency and clarity around various leadership roles to support and foster a closer relationship between departments and the campuses and regions and central office and, if appropriate consider regional boundaries.

Of course at the same time we are kicking off our strategic planning process and some of those findings will likely influence this project. So a bit about where things are at with our strategic planning efforts. We kicked off strategic planning sessions with some of our external stakeholders in December and this month kick off our internal fact finding.
We will gather input from a couple thousand, or so, of our faculty and staff. The value of that input is immeasurable as we chart our path for the future. Over 100 sessions will be conducted at campuses around the state. Our goal is to have input from more than half of our full-time faculty and staff, along with input from our adjunct faculty. That is why this process starts in January and continues into April. It will be time well spent.

In addition, as I mentioned sessions are being conducted with external stakeholders to get that outside perspective on the important role we play in Indiana. With a background in leading strategic planning, I had the pleasure of facilitating a few of those in December and January. I wish I had the ability to facilitate every session at our campuses, but logistically that is, of course, not possible. Thus, we have trained 25 Ivy Tech team members from various departments, and regions, as facilitators. We wanted these facilitators to be our colleagues rather than individuals from the outside. A big thank you goes out to those individuals who went through four days of training to ensure we brought a process that allowed each voice to be heard, and big ideas for Ivy Tech’s future to emerge.

As part of this strategic planning process we are embarking upon, first we gathered a large amount of qualitative and quantitative research, including an environmental scan and current state analysis. You can find various reports that will inform the process, on MyIvy in the strategic plan section on the employee dashboard. I strongly encourage you to visit the page throughout the process.

Our fact finding, including the planning sessions, will take place into April. We have engaged Thomas P. Miller and Associates – TPMA - to support the College in the development of a comprehensive strategic plan. Their team will work in partnership with the strategic planning team and our facilitators. TPMA will analyze the research, along with our existing plans, and attend some of the planning sessions. Together with the facilitators they will review the findings from all 100 plus sessions. They will also assist in summarizing best practices and trends amongst community colleges. In the end, TPMA will help our team write the strategic plan report.

That report will help guide the creation of a first draft of the strategic plan, developed in early summer by the Executive Council. We will then spend late summer and early fall vetting the plan with our faculty, staff and external stakeholders locally, regionally and nationally. The plan will then be finalized by the December of 2017.

Thank you for allowing me to share an update on these two projects with you. And thank you in advance for sharing your further insights, perspectives and ideas and for being a part of this important process for Ivy Tech Community College, our students, our faculty, our staff and our state, as we craft our next strategic plan.

Have a terrific Spring 2017 semester.