

## **Accessibility Summit Opening Remarks (5–10 minutes)**

Good afternoon everyone,

Welcome — and thank you for being here for our second annual Accessibility Summit.

I want to begin with the big picture. Accessibility is part of the moral imperative of inclusive excellence: the belief that every person should have the opportunity to thrive at this university — and across the CSU system — free from constraints: intellectual, physical, and technological.

That commitment is not abstract. It shows up in the everyday experience of our students, our employees, and our visitors: whether someone can get to class safely, whether they can participate fully in a program or event, whether they can access information and resources without friction or barriers, whether they feel welcome and supported, and whether the systems around them are designed for belonging.

Today's summit is one expression of that commitment.

This event exists because of collective work — and I want to name, with real gratitude, the colleagues who have made this possible: the **Committee on Accessibility and Accommodation Compliance, the CAAC**, CDRC, ITS/ARC, our Accessibility Faculty Fellows, Facilities Management, students who have shared their experiences, and all of our campus and community partners.

Thank you for the time and care you've dedicated — not only to organizing today, but to the ongoing work of improving access in real, concrete ways.

It's important to say plainly where we are.

We've made progress, and we are moving — but we also have a lot more work to do.

Some barriers are visible: routes that are difficult or impossible to navigate, older buildings that need upgrades, and systems that haven't kept pace with what our community needs. Some barriers are less visible: communication gaps, unclear processes, or digital and instructional materials that create unnecessary obstacles. And we also know that many disabilities are not apparent, which means we have a special responsibility to build systems that don't require people to explain, justify, or repeatedly advocate just to participate fully.

So what are we doing?

We are making accessibility an institutional responsibility, not the burden of individuals.

We are building a coordinated approach that includes the physical environment — buildings, pathways, and transportation — and also the digital environment — instructional materials, web content, and campus communications — and also the human environment — our culture, our training, our expectations, and how we respond when barriers are identified.

A lot of that work is being advanced through CAAC's core areas of focus:

- **Physical access**, including how people move across campus and into the places where learning and community happen.
- **Communication and wayfinding**, including maps, signage, and making resources easy to find and understand.
- **Culture and education**, because lasting change requires shared awareness and shared responsibility.
- **Funding and prioritization**, because we won't meet our goals through goodwill alone — we need resources aligned with values. And we need to ensure that this work continues into the future and that we focus on priority areas so we make progress.
- And the ongoing partnership work across groups like the CDRC, ITS/ARC, Facilities, and others who carry this daily.

I also want to acknowledge something we don't always say out loud: accessibility work asks us to change how we think.

We've inherited systems where “that's the way it's always been” or “our campus is really complicated” can feel like an answer. But those aren't answers — not if we mean what we say about equity, student success, and belonging.

This summit is here to help us do what progress actually requires: talk honestly about what's working and what isn't, make visible the barriers people face, share resources and strategies, and build a shared sense of priorities and momentum.

And I want to thank you — everyone in this room — for being part of that.

If you're here as a student, a staff member, faculty, an administrator, or a community partner: your presence matters. Accessibility improves when we listen well, when we collaborate, and when we hold ourselves accountable to the lived experiences of the people we serve.

This is our second annual summit, and we intend to keep going — because this is not one event, it's an ongoing commitment.

So: thank you for being here, thank you for your partnership, and thank you for the work you're doing — every day — to move us closer to a university where every person can participate fully and thrive.

With that, it's my pleasure to kick off today's Accessibility Summit.