I would like to welcome you to Oklahoma State University. It’s an honor for me to be able to speak to you today. I am Burns Hargis, the president of OSU and I’m going to talk to you today about our university and how it will fulfill your educational needs.

OSU is a land grant university, which means we have received benefits from the Morrill Acts. These Acts fund our educational institution and grant federally controlled land to the states. The purpose of a land grant institution is to improve the lives of people in Oklahoma by focusing on teaching and research that will ultimately benefit the state. Our mission includes undergraduate, graduate, technical, extension and continuing education informed by scholarships and research.

One exciting event that highlights research at OSU is our annual Research Week, which seeks to spotlight the great research and scholarships that take place throughout the OSU System. This event is an opportunity for those inside and outside of the campus to be introduced to the many creative and innovative projects underway here at OSU. People who attend Research Week have the opportunity to be challenged and inspired by a variety of speakers whose work spans a broad range of disciplines. I hope you will join us as we celebrate creativity and innovation during OSU Research Week in February. On the other hand, research would not be possible without our generous donors.

We have a lot of great folks who help us out here at OSU such as T. Boone Pickens, Hubert C. Graggs and Ross and Billie McKnight. They share their love for this university and help support OSU through their generous donations. OSU offers a wide variety of scholarships that are funded at large by donations such as these. Branding Success is a program OSU has just launched to raise $1 billion dollars to accelerate learning and aid our students’ financial needs. As of right now, OSU has raised $560 million. Our good friend, Hubert C. Graggs has donated a $100 million gift for scholar development in honor of former governor Henry Bellmon. To add to this, T. Boone Pickens’ Legacy Scholarship will match this donation, making the total impact of the scholarship $1.75 million. This campaign will help students across the board with scholarship money and invite every student to dream big, work hard and exceed expectations. The reason why OSU’s alumni are so successful is due in great part to our exceptional staff. OSU is top notch when it comes to faculty and Branding Success will make it possible for OSU to hire and recruit the best faculty in the world.

We all know the economic climate isn’t at its best and I am here to tell you that there are many opportunities to make OSU a possible choice in your future. About 4,000 current OSU students are receiving no financial support from their families. OSU students received more than $221 million in financial aid, grants and loans last year alone. Besides these opportunities, there is another option for you guys. You can also qualify to receive a changeable, yearly tuition rate or you can choose to lock your tuition rate. Locked tuition means that your tuition is guaranteed to remain the same up to four consecutive years. This is a great chance for you because even if the tuition changes due to the economy, yours will stay what it was when you locked it. OSU also offers renewable tuition waivers based on your ACT and SAT scores. This means that if you retain a 3.0 GPA, your tuition is free. You can also get your tuition, books and fees covered for four years through the Oklahoma Promise scholarship. These are some of the financial aid opportunities that you should take advantage of. After talking about all this money, you might wonder what college degree you want to pursue.

Choosing a degree is a big decision, so don’t feel rushed to choose your future career today. Our university offers more than 250 degree programs to give students a wide variety of career paths to choose from. Besides an education, OSU is well-rounded and will provide you with athletic centers, services and organizations to meet your diverse interests.

University services on campus include an academic and career development center, student counseling center and student disability and psychiatric services. Many students utilize these services to improve their quality of life so that personal and intellectual growth can be advanced. To make sure our students stay healthy and active, we also have the university health center. This center is an outpatient care facility that provides cost effect, physician assisted services. It will also provide you with primary health care and information concerning current health issues.

Another way to stay fit is through the Colvin Recreational Center, which is an incredible addition to our university. It includes an indoor track, 10 basketball courts, machine and free weights, cardio equipment, designated golf practice areas, dance studios, an indoor and outdoor pool, a climbing wall and much more. The recreational activities the Colvin provides is a great way to stay entertained and fit. While we’re talking about entertainment, I know you’re all big OSU sports fans! OSU is ranked number one in the big 12 and number three in the nation for national championship titles. Our facilities are state of the art. The newly renovated Boone Pickens Stadium and Gallagher-Iba Arena are two nationally recognized athletic venues that have a notorious reputation for noise and an exhilarating experience. OSU offers discount tickets for its students so you guys should pick them up and meet me at all the games! After the games on the weekends, you can get involved with some of the campus organizations at OSU.

There are lots of ways to make friends and stay involved. OSU has more than 400 organizations such as the Student Government Association, degree-oriented clubs or you could even become a residential hall advisor. OSU has 25 residence halls, more than 30 dining options and seven family-first apartments. Our residential life provides more than 5,000 students with an exciting living environment. Another way to be active on campus is through Greek life. It has provided OSU with women and men fraternities for almost 100 years and its impact continues to thrive on campus. Greek life currently consists of nearly 3,000 students who focus on academic excellence, brotherhood and sisterhood, community service and responsible social interaction.

If you decide to live off-campus, OSU will provide you with transportation services to make your commute easier. This gives you guys free, convenient mobility around the campus to classroom buildings, remote parking locations, apartment complexes and other places such as Wal-Mart around Stillwater. Every seven minutes, two routes transport students around the main campus from 6:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. and after 7 p.m., the bus operates every 15 minutes. So, whether you’re arriving on campus early or staying late to study in the library, OSU will always give you a way to get home. With all this being said, it’s easy to say that OSU provides its students with the best care and services.

You are all probably wondering “what’s next?” or wanting to know how you can stay connected with OSU. OSU has created a social media networking website called CampusConnect. We are going to connect you with current OSU students to answer any questions you might have about our campus, the city of Stillwater or your potential future at OSU. I will also post daily information to keep you all updated. When you get home, go to CampusConnect.com to signup for a free mentor. I think this will make you all feel as welcomed and comfortable as possible at OSU.

I want to thank you all for taking the time to come out today to learn about what our university has in store for you. Thank you again for considering OSU as a potential choice of study and good luck on your tour!