Empowerment and excellence. Kristina M. Johnson unveiled a vision for excellence during her investiture as the 16th president of the university, committing to organizing for effectiveness and influence to help make Ohio State the absolute model of the 21st century land-grant university. As part of her plan to enhance academic excellence and lower barriers to a college education, Johnson announced the Scarlet & Gray Advantage program that will empower eligible students to earn their bachelor’s degrees debt-free.

Generous support. The Jay & Jeanie Schottenstein Family Foundation has pledged $10.15 million to create the Jeffrey Schottenstein Program for Resilience that will address mental health and support students across the university and fund an endowed chair position. The program will be led by Dr. K. Luan Phan, professor and chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health in the College of Medicine.

Collaborative effort. President Johnson joined National Science Foundation Director Sethuraman Panchanathan and others for a ceremony to mark the start of construction on the Energy Advancement and Innovation Center. The facility will be a platform for faculty, students, alumni, entrepreneurs and more to work together on smart energy systems, artificial intelligence, renewable energy and green mobility solutions. It is co-located with the Interdisciplinary Research Facility in the fast-growing Innovation District.

Back to the classroom. This spring, President Johnson will be headed back to the classroom, bringing her teaching skills and passion for research and conservation to a course titled Pathways to Net Zero Emissions. The project-based course will provide students an opportunity to work in small teams to develop a strategic technology energy plan to reduce Ohio State’s greenhouse gas emissions to net zero. Successful projects will be strongly considered for implementation.

Continued focus on safety. Ohio State launched a new program as part of an ongoing, holistic approach to safety and security resources for students, staff, faculty and visitors. Buckeye Block Watch works in collaboration with law enforcement to promote a safe and welcoming University District. Buckeye Block Watch members are given extensive training in how to deal with difficult situations and learn best practices for public engagement, including mental health responses, first aid and CPR.