



Media Contact:

Nicola Wissler
Communications Coordinator
(559) 713-5208
nicola.wissler@tularewib.org
www.tularewib.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 31, 2026

Fresno State President Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval to Keynote 2026 INNOVATORS by Design Conference

VISALIA, Calif. – The Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County (WIB) is pleased to announce Fresno State President Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval as the keynote speaker for the 2026 INNOVATORS by Design Conference, taking place October 7, 2026, at the Visalia Convention Center.

Dr. Jiménez-Sandoval will deliver a keynote presentation, **“Strengthening the Valley Together: Expanding Opportunity Through Partnership,”** exploring how education, workforce development, and regional collaboration can expand opportunity and help build a stronger future for the Central Valley.

Following his presentation, Dr. Jiménez-Sandoval will be joined by College of the Sequoias President Dr. Brent Calvin for a conversation about the opportunities ahead for the region. Together, they will discuss Fresno State’s role as the Valley’s university, the importance of expanding access to higher education in the South Valley, and how stronger partnerships between educational institutions, workforce organizations, industry, and community partners can support student success, economic mobility, and a more prepared workforce.

“Creating greater opportunity in the Central Valley requires us to work across organizations toward a shared vision for our region,” said Jennie C. Bautista, Executive Director of the WIB. “Dr. Jiménez-Sandoval has been a strong voice for the Valley and for the role education can play in transforming lives and communities. We are honored to have him join us for this important conversation and to explore how stronger partnerships can help create more pathways to education, quality careers, and economic mobility for the people we serve.”

A proud son of the Central Valley, Dr. Jiménez-Sandoval emigrated from Mexico at age 10 and grew up working on his family’s small farm in Fowler. He has served Fresno State for more than two decades and became the University’s ninth president in 2021.

Under his leadership, the University has continued to gain national recognition, including a No. 2 ranking in Washington Monthly's 2025 national university rankings. In 2023, Fresno State launched a five-year strategic plan centered on student success, research, community partnership, and inclusive excellence.

About INNOVATORS by Design

The annual INNOVATORS by Design Conference brings together workforce, education, industry, community, and intermediary organizations to share new strategies and ideas for strengthening career pathways, business engagement, and workforce development programs.

The conference includes the WIB's annual update, celebrates successes from across the local workforce system, and creates opportunities for attendees to connect with local and regional partners around common goals, ideas, and opportunities for collaboration.

INNOVATORS by Design 2026

October 7, 2026

Visalia Convention Center

8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Registration is now open. Workforce professionals, educators, employers, community partners, and others interested in strengthening opportunities for the Central Valley are encouraged to attend.

Register today at www.tularewib.org/ibd.

About the Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County:

The Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County believes that too many people are unemployed or in low-wage jobs that don't sustain their families, while too many businesses have quality jobs that go unfilled. The WIB serves as Tulare County's workforce leader, bringing together employers, educators, government, and community organizations to advance the economic vitality of the region. Through strategic investments, industry partnerships, and workforce innovation, the WIB helps residents advance their skills and connect to quality jobs while helping businesses develop the talent they need to grow.

The Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County, an equal opportunity employer/program, funds this project. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.