

Alumni Forum
President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D.
Oct. 5, 2012



Good afternoon and welcome home! It's great to have the energy of our Alumni back on campus during Homecoming Week!

I hope many of you will join me for the Students Matter Most 5k Run/Walk tomorrow morning at 7:30 at the Clock Tower. It's just \$20 to register and the monies go to support student scholarships.

If you're not up for an early morning run, join us at 1:30 p.m. at Lakin field as your mighty Yellow Jackets take on the West Liberty Hilltoppers.

I promise I'm not going to talk very long this afternoon, since the focus of the alumni forum is for me to listen and respond to any questions you may have or thoughts you'd like to share. So I'll be brief.

As alumni of this great University, we want you to make State a part of your future, as well as a fond memory of your past. We want you to join us for more campus events and activities tailored especially for you and your former classmates—and join our current students as they showcase their artistic, athletic, civic, and academic talents during the many activities on campus this week and in the months to come.

As I mentioned in my State of the University address earlier this week, I believe that West Virginia State University is on its way to becoming the most student-centered, research and teaching, land-grant university in the state of West Virginia and beyond.

Our new vision for State lives and thrives through the successes of our students and alumni, and in the economic and civic impact you all make.

We need your help to continue the momentum we are experiencing on campus. If you haven't joined the Alumni Association, I encourage you to sign up and get engaged! Those of you who attended the recent alumni events in Charleston, Cleveland, Washington, D.C., Atlanta and Detroit know that exciting things are happening for those who are reconnecting with their alma mater! We want you to enjoy and to become a part of that excitement. Here are a few examples I think you will enjoy:

- I'm very pleased to tell you that the University just received the largest gift in its 121-year history—\$1 million to be split equally between student scholarships and a new free-standing athletic complex at Lakin Field.
- In addition, construction begins this month on the renovation of Fleming Hall, which will include a 2,200-seat arena, enhanced technology, renovated classrooms and faculty offices, and a new lobby and concourse.
- The University is also just days away from selecting an architect to begin the design of a new residence hall—the first new residential facility built on campus since 1969!
- I'll just briefly mention just *one* of the grants the University has received in the past three months. State was notified last week that we will receive grant funds totalling more than \$1.6 million from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture! We are one of 18 institutions in the nation eligible to compete in the program, exclusive to the nation's 1890 Land-Grant Universities, but also one of the smallest—and we are receiving nearly the maximum amount allotted! The monies will fund seven proposed research projects for University faculty and students.

And that is just a very small sampling of what has happened lately at your alma mater. We'd love to communicate with you regularly and invite you to upcoming events. I encourage you to provide your contact information, if you haven't already, to Mrs. Belinda Fuller, our interim Director for Alumni Relations.

I promised I would save most of this time for you to ask questions, so I'd like to open the floor to discuss anything that is on your mind.