

FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
President Brian O. Hemphill
Oct. 5, 2012



Thank you for your dedication and for the important work that was accomplished here today and throughout this past year.

It's an exciting time to be at State! With the announcement of the \$1 million gift this week, the largest in our history, everyone on campus can feel the momentum toward a bright, sustainable future for students at State.

I'd like to take just a few moments to tell you about how we plan to grow that momentum through some key areas of emphasis at State this year.

First, I've challenged everyone at the University to become actively involved in student recruitment, retention, and degree completion.

Promising new initiatives are being adopted on campus and in the local high schools and surrounding states. Examples include

- The purchase of student names from ACT, based on proximity, scores, and interest
- The State Stride event to welcome new students
- The opening of a new Military Student Services Center
- Exit interviews in which we attempt to find solutions to students' need or desire to leave the University—and a follow-up program encouraging them to return if they do depart; and
- DegreeWorks, a web-based academic advising and degree audit tool that helps students stay on track to graduate

I look forward to reporting early results of these initiatives at the next semi-annual meeting.

We are also in the process of rebranding and finalizing a communication and marketing campaign for the University. Lately, you may have seen an increase in news and social media covering State events and activities. And, in a few months, you will see a completely different, fully-functional web site with user-friendly navigation and information that is important to our prospective students and their parents, current students, faculty, alumni and friends of the University.

We are committed to growing the research infrastructure as an important part of our land-grant mission and in response to the significant needs for innovation and economic development in West Virginia.

And we are well on our way. Just last week, State was notified that we will receive grant funds totalling more than \$1.6 million from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. WVSU is 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 State faculty and students.

We will also continue to expand our academic offerings based closely on the future economic and employment trends of this region. Three new Master's degree programs are in the process of review for approval. They include the:

- Master of Education in Multicultural Instructional Leadership
- Master of Public Administration, and
- Master's in Social Work.

In addition, we have some exciting 2+2 programs in the planning stages with the Kanawha Valley Community and Technical Collage, and will be actively pursuing similar articulation agreements with our academic partners at Southern, Mountwest, and Bridgemont CTCs.

Many of you are alumni, so you're probably aware that we are actively involved in outreach aimed at reengaging our alumni locally and nationally. The program is well underway and successful events have already been held in Atlanta, Charleston, Cleveland, Detroit, Washington, D.C. and on campus. And we are just getting started! Pat and your local Alumni Chapter presidents will keep you informed of our progress.

I mentioned philanthropic giving earlier, but I want you to know that we are not resting on the laurels of our recent \$1 million gift. As we discussed today, we have several similar proposals under review and some appear very promising.

The last key area of focus I will mention today is the enhancement of our campus physical and technological infrastructures. We will begin work this week on the renovation of Fleming Hall which includes:

- a 2,200-seat arena for graduations and athletic events
- upgraded offices
- enhanced technology, and
- a new lobby and concourse.

The University is also within days of selecting an architect to begin the design for a new residence hall, the first new residence hall to be built on this campus since 1969. The facility will provide high-quality, affordable housing for students. It will be a modern, living-learning-wellness community with suite-style facilities for approximately 150-300 students—and will include an honors floor, academic success center, meeting rooms, state-of-the-art technology and grab & go dining.

These initiatives will not happen overnight, nor will they come together successfully or in a sustainable manner without a structured approach. In the next few weeks we will begin a strategic planning process entitled *Vision 2020: State's Roadmap to the Future*. This process will provide the focus, foundation, and framework needed to bring our vision to life at West Virginia State University.

I believe that State is on its way to becoming the most student-centered, research and teaching, land-grant University in the state of West Virginia and beyond. I think many of you believe it as well.

Thank you for your dedication and your support.

GO STATE!