

GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS LEADER RECEPTION

President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D.

Dec. 10, 2012



Good evening everyone. I'd like to thank all of our Legislative and Governmental leaders for coming out tonight, and for all that each of you do to support every citizen of this great state!

Also, I would like to thank the business leaders for all that you do to keep the West Virginia economy strong and growing! I am excited to see that so many of our state and valley leadership were willing to take time out of their busy schedules to celebrate the holiday season with the West Virginia State family.

I extend a special thank our Board of Governors for remaining strong and committed through the transition of leadership at State this year, and to the members and my senior cabinet for the many, many hours of service they have dedicated to the progress and the future of this great university. We are already reaping some of the early fruits of their efforts.

I saved my most important thank you for last. To my beautiful wife, Marisela, I thank you for your unwavering support and encouragement, and I look forward to every new day we share together. Thank you.

For those who have not yet met him, please join me in welcoming the newest member of the State family, our new head football coach Jon Anderson. I knew he was the man for the job when he approached us with:

- a solid academic plan;
- an emphasis on civic involvement for his athletes;
- and a proven record of wins: 134-26 over 11 years, and 3 national titles.

Before we go any further, I'd like to just take a moment for us all to wish our dear friend Mrs. Betty Chilton a happy birthday. We're one day late, but I don't think she will mind.

My decision to come to West Virginia State was based on the great opportunities I saw for the University to grow and make a significant impact on the citizens, as well as the economic development of this region and the state. West Virginians deserve access to a great education at an affordable price and the opportunity to realize their professional goals right here in the neighborhoods where they live.

West Virginia State University is on the move and making progress toward realizing those opportunities. We need your help to continue with these exciting new endeavors

We are being blessed with a record year in the area of fundraising. As you know, the University received its first ever \$1 million gift from a local business leader whose name we will be able to share with the community in 2013. \$500,000 of this generous gift will support scholarships for deserving students at State and \$500,000 will be the lead gift in the construction of a new Athletic Complex that will provide much needed. State-of-the-art training facilities that will be used by all 204 of our student athletes.

I can say that this is just the beginning! Because, as I have spoken to most of you in this room, you have said, “How can I help?! I am pleased to bring an individual who made that very comment, and she said “Yes” when I said I needed her to lead our Capital Campaign. It gives me pleasure to introduce Ms. Diane Strong for a few comments. (Pause for Ms. Strong's comments.)

Thank you, Diane.

If you noticed the backhoes, big piles of dirt and construction materials when you parked your cars, you can see that the renovation of Fleming Hall is well underway. Give our legislative leaders a round of applause for supporting this project!

When completed in February 2014, the facility, that you see illustrated in conceptual drawings around the room, will include updated classrooms, a new lobby, and 2,200-seat convocation center that will allow us to return our commencement ceremonies to the campus without limiting the attendance of families and friends.

I am also happy to report that the University is within days of selecting the architects in order to begin the design and program work for a new residence hall. This is the first new residence hall to be built on this campus since 1969.

The images you see around the room illustrate what we are envisioning for State. This facility will provide high quality, affordable housing for State students. It will be a modern, living-learning-wellness community with contemporary, suite-style facilities for approximately 314 students. The hall will offer an Honors floor, academic success center, meeting rooms, state-of-the-art technology, and grab & go dining! We expect to break ground on this new residence hall in June 2013.

We're not just building new facilities here at State. We have placed an even greater emphasis on creating new, innovative academic programs.

Decisions about expanding our academic offerings are based closely on the future economic and employment trends of this region. State will educate men and women who will contribute to, and lead, industry in West Virginia. Many of these programs will be founded in newly cultivated partnerships with the Kanawha Valley, Southern, and WVU, to name a few!

In fact, last week we received approval from the HEPC to initiate the planning for the new Bachelor of Science in Nursing 2+2 complete program.

This is a collaborative venture with our partners at KVCTC and SCTC that will allow an RN with an associate's degree to transfer seamlessly into a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at State.

At this time, I'd like to introduce Dr. Orlando McMeans, vice president of Research and Public Service and dean and director of the Gus R. Douglass Institute, to tell you about some very exciting new research initiatives at State. (Pause for Dr. McMeans' comments.)

Thank you, Orlando.

We have a progressive and ambitious plan, but I'm confident that it's a very achievable agenda for West Virginia State University. With an intense focus on recruitment, retention, and graduation, State will help move the needle for the Valley and the State!

Everything we do at State is guided by our commitment to excellence, accountability, and being student centered.

With your support, we will become the most student centered, research and teaching, land-grant university in the state of West Virginia and beyond. Once again, welcome to our home, enjoy your evening, and Happy Holidays!