## STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESS President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D. Ferrell Hall Auditorium October 3, 2012



Good morning. Thank you, Chancellor Hill. Welcome to the future of the most student-centered, research and teaching, land-grant University in the state of West Virginia and beyond—West Virginia State University.

I'd like to begin today by introducing my rock and reality check—my wife Marisela Hemphill. I'd also like to introduce a group that is critical to our success, West Virginia State University's Board of Governors. Please join me in welcoming Chairman Larry Rowe, Mr. Larry Salyers, Dr. John Thralls, Mr. Gary Swingle, Mr. Tom Susman, Mr. Billy Lipscomb, Mr. Scotty White, Dr. Tom Gueztloff, and Ms. Millie Booker.

Let's give them a round of applause for the time, effort and commitment each of them give to promote the future of this great University.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Donna Simon, Mr. Yuma Nakada, and Ms. Clare Andres for all of the hard work behind the scenes for the State of the University.

I truly believe that West Virginia State University will become the most student-centered, research and teaching, land-grant University in the State of West Virginia and beyond. That is my vision for our University and I hope each of you will partner with me as we bring this vision to life on the campus of West Virginia State!

Visions can be elusive if they are not founded in the people and integrated in the processes of an organization. They can be as limited as a repeated mantra or they can become a part of who we truly are and inspire us to overcome challenges, to achieve great feats.

The vision will start with us, but it will live and thrive through the successes of our students, and in the economic and civic impact they make on this region. I believe that many of you are sitting in this room today because you want to be a part of that vision and a part of building a strong future for West Virginia State University that will continue to sustain this historically significant institution for many generations to come.

Before we embark on our plans for the future, let's take time to appreciate what you've accomplished in this past year.

Please join me in recognizing Professor Scott Woodard from the College of Arts and Humanities who was awarded first prize at the International Academy of Advanced Conducting Competition in St. Petersburg in August 2011. Professor Woodard was asked to host the 2012 Academy at WVSU, which was held on campus in July. Congratulations, Professor Woodard!

A reading of Professor Denise Giardina's new play, "Robert and Ted" was part of the opening events for FestivALL Charleston, 2012. Please join me in recognizing Professor Giardina.

In the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Dr. Jonathan Eya and his Biology research group published a paper titled "Association of mitochondrial function with feed efficiency in rainbow trout: Diets and family effects," published in *Aquaculture*. Dr. Eya also received a \$295,633 grant from the USDA to further his research on the growth, development and nutrient utilization efficiencies of rainbow trout. Please join me in congratulating Dr. Eya.

West Virginia State University's Student Chapter of the American Chemical Society earned the distinguished awards of Outstanding Chapter for Excellence in Outreach and Career Preparation—and for the third year in a row, the Green Chemistry Chapter! Please join me in congratulating our students and advisers!

Dr. Michael Workman, in the College of Business and Social Sciences, researched and wrote a historical context paper for the video documentary, "Living Monuments: West Virginia's Courthouses." The documentary received a regional Emmy nomination for Best Documentary in the Upper Ohio Valley Region. Congratulations, Dr. Workman.

Dr. Ted Muilenburg, Associate Professor of Health Human Performance and Leisure Studies, celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his Geri-Olympics grant. Geri Olympics has served approximately 3,500 nursing home residents, from more than 40 elder care facilities. Let's congratulate Ted for 25 years of excellence.

Of the numerous grants and publications achieved by members of the Research and Development Corporation, I will mention only two...The National Science Foundation Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) awarded the Gus R. Douglass Institute \$495,000 to enhance the Biotechnology Master's program. The monies allowed WVSU to purchase scientific equipment, support the research of six faculty members, a research associate, three graduate research assistants and four undergraduate research students. In addition, the funds will be used for outreach activities for students from kindergarten through  $12^{th}$  grade.

Ms. Melissa Stewart, of Extension Service, was awarded a five-year, \$660,000 grant from the USDA to fund a youth gardening, nutrition and entrepreneurship program, titled: Sustainable Community Revitalization in Appalachia Through Children's Hands. Please join me in congratulating Ms. Stewart.

I realize there are many, many more awards, publications and honors achieved last year, and if you were willing, I could go on all day...but in the interest of brevity, I ask that you pause to remember what you and your colleagues achieved last year and join me on one more round of appreciation for all those feats not mentioned today.

Delivering State's vision will require us to utilize the strategy of "One Message Many Voices" as we present a united effort and an alignment in nine areas key to the success of the University and our students.

First, it's no surprise to anyone here that we need to make student **recruitment** a priority at State. While our enrollment of new students was up at the 10-day census, that is not enough to sustain our growth going forward. We must reach out into our communities, our neighboring states and internationally to recruit the best and the brightest to WVSU, and to provide opportunities to those for whom a college education is not much more than a dream.

State's history is steeped in providing academic opportunities for students who may not fit the mold of the ideal student sought by other universities. We are proud of the fact that we welcome individuals, not just test scores, GPAs or those with strong financial means, to study, evolve and succeed in our "living laboratory of human relations" at West Virginia State University.

Recruitment doesn't just happen through the Admissions office. Every one of us in this room can impact the size and the makeup of our incoming class. When you're in your neighborhoods, your churches, your family barbeques and your civic groups, are you talking about what we're doing at State? About the fact that State has an internationally renowned faculty, is building and renovating student facilities and is the best four-year educational value in the State of West Virginia?

Are you telling your drycleaner and the young person who lives next door that State offers undergraduate students hands-on research opportunities with nationally known research scientists and professors?

There was a great story that came across the email this summer about a professor who had the opportunity to talk about WVSU at the local Kroger's Market. I love to hear how you're making the most of those opportunities! Every time we can tell our story, we can make a positive impact on recruitment. "One Message, Many Voices" makes a difference.

The second and third areas critical to achieving our vision are improving student **retention** and **degree completion**. Only 55% of our students who enter as first-time, full-time freshmen return for their sophomore year at State. Of those students who stay with us, only 24.5% earn their Bachelor's degree within six years. That's just not acceptable to me and I don't think it is to you either.

We are talking about our students' future success . . . personal, financial and social opportunities of these men and women. We must intentionally insert ourselves into the paths of these students before they leave the university. If they need help with a class, we can walk them to the tutoring center, show them how to log on to the SmartThinking tutoring site, or take them to their professor's office to make an appointment.

A 5- to 10-minute investment of our time may make a difference in a student persisting and graduating. Every one of us, including me, must be willing to invest time in our students' success. Year after year, and survey after survey, done by organizations like Noel-Levitz tell us that one thing students want most from college is engagement with their professors outside the classroom.

Student retention is everyone's job at State and every one of us can smile and greet students as we cross campus, we can take a few minutes to walk a student to an office they need to find, we can connect them with Collegiate Support and Counseling Services, or with a student organization to help them get engaged with their peers.

We've all worked really hard to get our students here, let me tell you some of the new programs and strategies we are putting into place to help them succeed academically, grow personally, and graduate.

- We are in the process of forming a team to implement Degree Works, a web-based academic advising, and degree audit tool to help students and their academic advisors negotiate State's curriculum requirements. We expect this to make a noticeable impact on students' progress toward graduation and State's graduation rates.
- Last month we opened the new Military Student Services Center where our veterans and active-duty military students can take advantage of advising and mentoring programs, and be connected with support programs designed to promote their success at the University and beyond.
- Engagement programs like State Stride are connecting our students to the University, during their first week on campus, and giving them a vision of their future, four years down the road, as proud alumni of West Virginia State University.
- We've developed an exit interview process that allows us an additional opportunity to listen to students' needs when they feel they must leave the university, and to intervene whenever we can, to help them remain in college with a renewed commitment to completing their degree. For those students who choose to leave the University, we intend to periodically reinforce the message that they are welcome to return and that we are holding a place for them to complete their degree at State.

All these efforts will enhance what each of you are doing inside and outside the classroom as we take an even more holistic approach to promoting the development, academic growth and graduation rates of our students.

The fourth area key to attaining our vision at State is our ability to **rebrand and market** this great University. If we don't tell our story, someone else will tell it for us. It's as simple as that.

We recently began a branding exercise and look forward to sharing with you the outcomes of that process. This exercise will help us focus our "One Message, Many Voices" movement. Everyone has a part in helping to rebrand and market the University, and I urge you to use our newly assembled communication team in Ferrell Hall to assist you with publication and design projects.

Some of you have noticed our increased presence recently in the news media and the social media. If you haven't become WVSU's friend on Facebook and aren't following our tweets, you're missing some important news, fun conversations, and great photos of campus life and off-campus activities!

We've appreciated the great news tips you've sent to the communication team, the stories of student successes, faculty innovations and awards, and human-interest stories. These have helped us to consistently tell our story—and some of our local media have begun to listen. We've had an increase in media interest and the stories published recently are trending toward more positive coverage for the University.

One area where you will notice a big difference in a few months will be our University web site. Here's a sneak peak at what you will see when you log on to wvstateu.edu, just a few months from now. It will offer online users a new, fully functional web experience with user-friendly navigation and information that is important to our students, prospective students and their families, faculty, alumni and friends of the University.

We've also designed this mobile template that will allow visitors to navigate the major areas of the web site easily from a cell phone.

Fifth, the envisioned success of State depends on the continued **growth of our research infrastructure**. Faculty inside and outside of the Research and Development Corporation have been successful in attaining research grants and establishing innovative programs to enhance student learning and the regional infrastructure.

Three WVSU research labs were recently opened in the South Charleston Regional Technology Park to house projects focusing on agricultural and environmental research. Just a week-and-a-half ago the University was awarded a \$500,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to recruit students into our STEM programs. This was the largest single grant from NSF that State has ever received on its own.

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. The monies will fund seven proposed research projects for State faculty and students.

But, we cannot rest on these successes. To become the most student-centered, research and teaching, land-grant University in the state of West Virginia and beyond, every faculty member must become involved in our research portfolio. We have the momentum to take research at State to another level. I encourage you to continue to collaborate on research projects and funding opportunities that will enhance the experiences and the employability of our students and our graduates.

Sixth, we will continue to **enhance and expand our academic offerings**. We're not growing just to be growing. Decisions about new academic programs 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.

Academic Affairs is responding to the demand for qualified workers with plans to begin a new M.Ed. in Multicultural Instructional Leadership that, once it's approved by the Higher Learning Commission, is expected to enroll graduate students in 2013.

In June, our Board of Governors approved plans to add a Master of Public Administration degree program. We're just waiting for HEPC approval before moving forward with this highly competitive program.

The University is also revisiting an opportunity to partner with WVU on a Master of Social Work and we eagerly anticipate admission of students into this program in the near future.

Some exciting additional 2+2 programs are in the planning stages with Kanawha Valley Community and Technical College and will be announced as plans and approvals solidify.

We will continue to explore additional programs with this valued academic partner, as well as Southern, Mountwest and Bridgemont CTCs.

The University is working to expand its portfolio of online courses and this semester has 255 courses with a web designation. Seventy-one of those courses incorporate at least 50% of the teaching online. In the past five years, the number of classes taught, at least partially online, has grown 173%. This growth is due, in large part, to the work of some innovative faculty members and the staff at the Center for Online Learning.

The seventh area of emphasis is one where I believe we have a lot of promise, and that's **alumni engagement.** Remember, when I said to you earlier, that our vision will live and thrive through the successes of our students and in the economic and civic impact they make? Alumni are our success stories just waiting to be told. Could I ask all of the alumni of WVSU to please stand! You represent many of the stories we need to tell! Let's applaud our alumni!

We have over 10,000 alumni living in the Greater Kanawha Valley, but we don't know their stories, because we've allowed our relationship with them to grow silent, in some cases. A sustainable University requires a strong alumni base. West Virginia State University is here, 121 years later, in part, because of the engagement and success of its alumni. Our alumni have become educators, mathematicians, chemists, nurses, judges, pilots, activists, dentists, ministers, actors, athletes, lawyers, military generals, artists, musicians, NASA personnel, CEOs, biotechnologists, coaches, and one Nobel Peace Prize nominee.

We've begun to make some progress in reengaging our alumni and have held successful events so far in Atlanta, Charleston, Detroit, Cleveland, Washington, D.C, and on campus. Additional events are planned for alumni in Charleston and New York. Several of you here today are alumni and some of you are legacy alumni. I'm counting on you to invite your family members who graduated from State, as well as your WVSU classmates, back to campus.

If you're not a member of the Alumni Association, I encourage you to join. If we don't believe in State, we won't be able to convince others to do so.

The eighth area of focus is on **philanthropic giving**. It's not news to anyone in this room that state and federal funding will not enable us to grow the University at the rate required for us to remain competitive. We must seek out friends of the University, charitable foundations, and partners who share our values and our vision for West Virginia State.

Several proposals are currently under consideration and at this time it gives me great pleasure to announce a very generous gift of \$1 million to this great university!

This substantial donation was given by one of our neighbors here in the Valley who wishes to remain anonymous and is the largest single gift ever received in the history of this University.

This amazing gift will provide \$500,000 for student scholarships to be given to deserving students studying Business, Computer Science, and Mathematics. It will allow us to compete for the best and brightest in the state and beyond.

The remaining \$500,000 is the lead gift to build a new freestanding Athletic Complex on the southeast end of the football stadium that will house locker rooms; showers; coach's offices; a meeting room; and a state-of-the-art weight room. This complex will benefit all 204 student athletes due to the physical training this complex will provide. This is truly a game changer for

our student athletes! We will continue to raise funds through this year and will break ground in Fall 2013.

Even though he wishes this gift to be given privately, please join me in appreciating our newest and most generous benefactor.

The ninth area of focus is the **enhancement of the campus infrastructure**. Plans are currently underway to systematically upgrade our physical and technological infrastructures.

After a successful RFP process earlier this fall, the University has contracted PJ Dick Construction to begin the renovation of Fleming Hall this month. The new design includes a 2,200-seat arena for athletic events and graduation ceremonies, upgraded offices, classrooms, enhanced technology and a new lobby and concourse. Construction is expected to be complete in February 2014.

I am happy to report that, after careful analysis, the University is within days of selecting the developer who will be recommended to the Board of Governors for approval, as we 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 image you see behind me is 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 300 students. The hall will offer an Honors floor, academic success center, meeting rooms, state-of-the-art technology, and grab & go dining!

These nine initiatives that I have just shared 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 to roll out Vision 2020: State's Roadmap to the Future. This strategic planning process will provide focus, foundation, and framework to ensure we are successful in bringing our vision to life.

Dr. Charles Byers and Dr. Donna Simon will co-chair the Vision 2020 strategic plan. They will be joined by:

- Dr. Orlando McMeans and Dr. Gerald Hankins who will co-chair the Academic Programs, Research Growth and Faculty Excellence & Reward subcommittee.
- Vice President Katherine McCarthy and Dean Robert Harrison will co-chair the Recruitment and Retention, Degree Completion, Marketing and Branding, and the Student Experience subcommittee.
- Co-chairs for Building and Renovation and Technological Infrastructure subcommittee are Vice President Melvin Jones and Mr. Marvin Smith: and

• Co-chairs for the Philanthropic Giving and Alumni Engagement subcommittee are Vice President Pat Schumann and Mrs. Belinda Fuller.

The yearlong process of creating the Vision 2020 strategic plan will begin with:

- A review of our mission statement;
- An organizational SWOT analysis, that will allow us to scrutinize our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;
- Establishing short- and long-term goals; and
- Identifying how, and with what frequency, we will measure our progress toward those goals.

We will have many successes at State, like the several just mentioned, and an occasional failure. But we will succeed... and we will fail... together.

West Virginia State University has a proud history and a bright future. Founded as one of the original 1890 land-grant schools and then gaining prominence as an Historically Black College and University, we are now fully integrated into an academic environment that reflects the diversity of America more accurately than any other college or University in West Virginia.

Could I ask all of the students to please stand? I say to you as your president, and I can speak for every faculty and staff member, that we are committed to excellence and accountability as we make West Virginia State University the most student-centered, research and teaching, landgrant University in the state of West Virginia and beyond.

Thank you and GO STATE!