

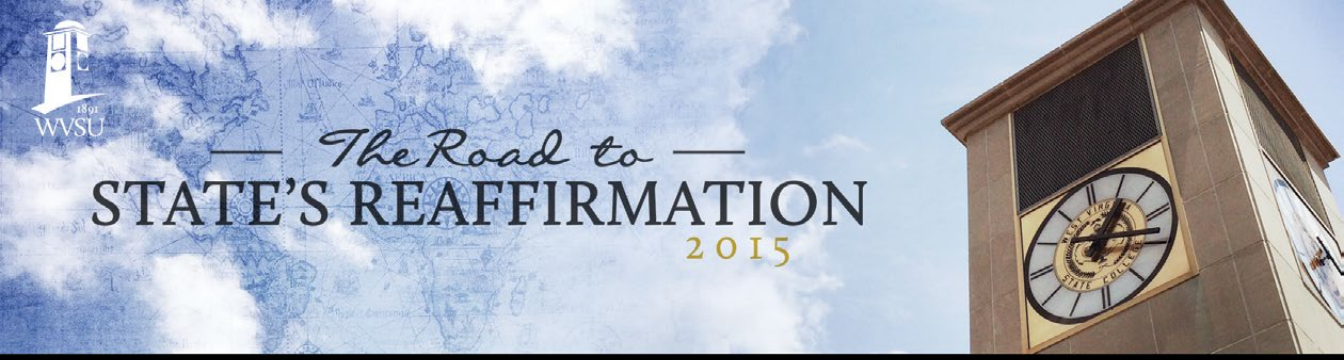
The Road to STATE'S REAFFIRMATION 2015

Significant Occurrences Since the 2005 HLC Visit

As we move along The Road to State's Reaffirmation 2015, let us briefly review just a few of the many significant occurrences that have taken place at West Virginia State University (WVSU) since the Higher Learning Commission's 2005 visit.

WVSU has faced numerous challenges while also making significant changes across the landscape of the University. Some of these include, but are not limited to, changes in academic program offerings, elevation of the research and public service mission areas, and installation of a new administration.

- **Separation from the CTC:** Mandated by state law, the separation of the Community and Technical College (CTC) from WVSU resulted in decreased enrollment for the University (the CTC accounted for approximately one-third of WVSU's enrollment) and transitional difficulty for students seeking to transfer credits from KVCTC to WVSU. Institutional enrollment included 3,003 students in 2008 and 2,677 students in fall 2013, representing a decrease of 10.9 percent over the five-year period. Despite experiencing a decline in student enrollment between 2010 and 2012, WVSU was one of only two higher education institutions in the state to increase overall enrollment from fall 2012 to fall 2013. In a one-year period, WVSU's enrollment of first-time freshman increased approximately 41 percent due to a series of new initiatives.
- **New Facilities:** The University partnered with a private developer to build a new residence hall creating modern, suite-style housing. The Judge Damon J. Keith Scholars Hall is now home to approximately 275 Yellow Jackets. Additionally, with the opening of the Gregory V. Monroe Athletic Complex in the coming months, as well as the D. Stephen & Diane H. Walker Convocation Center, West Virginia State University students are provided unparalleled academic and athletic facilities that rival those on the nation's premier universities.
- **Vision 2020:** The University's strategic plan, Vision 2020, focuses on the priority areas of Academic Programs, Research Growth, Faculty Excellence and Rewards, and Public Service; Recruitment, Retention, Degree Completion, Marketing/Branding, and the Student Experience; Building, Renovation, and Technological Infrastructure; and Alumni Engagement and Philanthropic Giving.
- **Technology Updates:** To address campus-wide technological issues, the University upgraded the information technology infrastructure and wireless capabilities, an area of priority and need as identified by all University stakeholder groups.
- **Energy Efficiencies:** The University also implemented several additional cost-saving initiatives and overall improvements, including energy efficiencies in lighting and water usage and holiday schedule planning to reduce utility expenses.
- **New Academic Programs:** The University is proud of the establishment of a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a concentration in Energy Management. WVSU is the first institution of higher education in the State of West Virginia to offer this degree with an emphasis in energy management.
- **Academic Articulation Agreements:** In addition to this new academic offering, the University has developed academic articulation agreements between several institutions in the State of West Virginia. Most recently (June 2014), the University signed an articulation agreement with Marshall University for an academic program leading to a doctoral degree in pharmacy. In November 2013, an articulation agreement was signed between WVSU and the West Virginia University (WVU) system. This agreement established a two plus two program for students wishing to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Engineering at WVU, who successfully completed the first two years of coursework at WVSU.
- **Online Course Growth:** WVSU first began keeping track of web courses during the 2006-07 academic year (AY). Since 2006-07, an average of 15 new online courses have been created each AY. The total number of new courses created since the 2006-07 AY indicate 940 percent growth in new online courses since that initial semester. WVSU is fully committed to expansion and diversification of online offerings. To that end, Vision 2020, the University's strategic plan, states that by the year 2020 the University will "implement five degree programs that may be completed entirely online. Online options should address student interest along with current and anticipated business/industry demand."



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- **Creation of an Honors Program:** WVSU has also established an Honors program for undergraduate students.
- **Expanded Degree Programs:** The first graduate course at WVSU was offered in the fall of 2002. Today, West Virginia State University now offers 21 undergraduate degrees and four graduate degrees.
- **Elevation of the Research and Public Service Missions:** On January 2, 2006, the Gus R. Douglass Land-Grant Institute was established and is comprised of three programmatic divisions: West Virginia State University Extension Service (WVSUES, 1890 Extension); West Virginia State University Agricultural and Environmental Research Station (AERS, 1890 Research); and the Center for the Advancement of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (CASTEM). There are also three support departments: Business and Finance (B&F), Communications, and Human Resources.
- **Marketing and Improving Image of the University:** The establishment of the University Relations and Operations Division in 2012 has restructured how the University communicates, thereby enabling the University to advance its public image tremendously through coordinated and integrated marketing efforts. This effort has resulted in a visually-consistent University brand identity across all areas of the institution. Beginning in October 2013, the Division designed and implemented the new integrated marketing communications plan with to goal to reintroduce WVSU to students through University rebranding, thereby improving recruitment and retention; and reposition the University as a leading institution of higher education in the State of West Virginia with a specific focus on the Kanawha Valley.
- **Fundraising:** The University developed the Division of University Advancement in 2012 to fully integrate programs in alumni relations and development and to create a strong working relationship with the WVSU Foundation. The results in the past two years have been dramatic. Total gifts and pledges increased from \$847,000 in fiscal year 2012, to \$2,352,000 in fiscal year 2013, and \$4,114,000 in fiscal year 2014.
- **Tuition & Fees:** In light of the past two fiscal years of reductions in state appropriation for higher education, WVSU's tuition and fees have increased and yet remain consistent with the statewide average.
- **Retention, Graduation Rates, Enrollment Management, and Recruitment:** Retention of first-time, full-time freshman students has generally trended slightly higher on average for West Virginia four-year schools compared to WVSU alone. The most recent data (fall 2012 cohort) reports a 60.7 percent retention rate at WVSU, while publically supported four year schools in West Virginia have an average rate of 73.6 percent. Enrollment management strategies have changed significantly over the past two years as the University has worked to implement best practices and a sense of urgency in recruitment and retention. Efforts outlined below, primarily, are new to the University since summer 2012.
- **Revisited Mission Statement:** The mission of the University is discussed in detail in Criterion One. The President has assembled a focus group to assess the mission statement to assess whether it reflects the current shared vision for the University. This focus group will meet in fall 2014. It is anticipated that the outcome will result in a clear and concise mission statement representative of all mission areas of the University, as well as all constituent institutional groups (student, faculty, staff, alumni, community, and business).
- **Increased Emphasis on Assessment:** Currently, numerous evaluation tools and methods exist on campus. In early 2013, the President requested that the University adjust the University's assessment process. The process, to date, has included hiring a consultant with extensive experience in both HLC accreditation and assessment. The assessment process adjustment is expected to be completed by the fall of 2014.

For more information about The Road to State's Reaffirmation 2015, please click [here](#) to discover in-depth information about the process, read the University's Self-Study Report, and more!