



2018 State of the University Address

Virginia Wesleyan University

President Scott D. Miller

August 24, 2018

Thank you for coming and thanks to those alumni and friends watching here in Coastal Virginia and worldwide via the Virginia Wesleyan University Digital Broadcasting Network.

Annie and I are excited to begin our fourth year with you, and remain grateful for the warm welcome and support we have received from the Virginia Wesleyan Family. Thank you all.

And again, thank you to our generous event sponsors. We're so happy to have representatives from each of your organizations here with us today.

I'd also like again to extend a warm Wesleyan welcome to the many special guests who have joined us this afternoon. We appreciate you being here.

In this, the start of our second year as *Virginia Wesleyan University*, with overflow in our residence halls, we truly are *Coastal Virginia's Premier University of the Liberal Arts and Sciences*.

When I consider the countless contributions of our University family—by faculty, students, and staff; Trustees and devoted alumni; our many friends throughout Hampton Roads; and our growing list of partners in business, education, the non-profit community, and elsewhere—I can only conclude that our future is more promising today than at any time in memory. Virginia Wesleyan is **the** institution to watch, as within the next few years, we continue to *make* history. I am confident that with your support, we will not only honor our heritage but also be guided by it as we establish new programs, partnerships, and traditions, fully realizing the potential of our institution.

First, however, let me offer a drone-like view of higher education—in our market and elsewhere—and it comes with some sobering images that we should heed and learn from. For these remain extraordinarily challenging times for colleges and universities of all kinds.

I have previously cautioned that we need to remain strong, alert, agile, and adaptable if we are to weather these challenges. More recently, in a column that I authored for the *Virginian Pilot*, I cited a 2018 report from *Inside Higher Ed* that mentioned increasing concerns about “cost, student debt, tenure, free expression, research topics, political makeup and whether colleges offer degree programs and skills that employers require.” Also mentioned are “changing demographic trends,” and ongoing enrollment challenges in “traditional markets.”

Consider the following:

- About a quarter of private, non-profit colleges and universities operated with deficits in 2017, according to Moody's Investors Service.
- Collaboration among small private colleges—sharing costs, offering joint academic programs, combining services—is becoming a way for some small private liberal arts colleges to operate more efficiently when “colleges are under increasing scrutiny to justify the cost of education,” says *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (2018).
- In “A Survival Guide for Small Colleges,” the *Chronicle* (2016) notes the drop in numbers of traditional college-aged students and lingering effects of the Great Recession as key factors that affect enrollment. Large endowments and well-defined market niches remain essential to survival.
- *Inside Higher Ed* (2017) cautions that if we claim we offer unique programs in “civic engagement, globalism...experiential learning...internships...and career preparation,” we should “do so in ways that resonate with the students,” helping them “to understand and value the nature of the educational experience they are being offered.”

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My intention here is not to be alarming but rather, realistic and transparent: although Virginia Wesleyan benefits enormously from our location, our revised branding, our transition to university status, our new and enhanced facilities, our vibrant campus life, and our outstanding faculty and staff who provide an excellent residential learning experience, we, too, confront forces that, for better or worse, are shaping that experience. Some institutions will not survive the challenges of enrollment, funding, and relevance. At VWU, we ignore those challenges at our own peril.

We also require an adjustment in the way we perceive our roles as members of a university community. All of us make essential contributions to our students' achievements. If I may paraphrase John Wesley, “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can...” I would add simply: we *can*, and we *should*. Our students depend on it, and so, of course, does our enterprise.

As we consider the tough times in which we work for higher education, let us also recognize the great strengths we bring to our efforts here at Virginia Wesleyan. In fact, we have had a very good year!

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As you can see, we've been busy! We have shared many memorable experiences in the last year and we have much to celebrate, including...

- Development of a new, academic-based strategic plan;
- Strong early enrollment for our online programs and other offerings within University College;
- Construction on our forthcoming Susan S. Goode Fine and Performing Arts Center;
- Recognition of two national-niche programs—the award-winning Greer Environmental Sciences Center and the Batten Honors College;
- Outstanding ties with our founding denomination, the United Methodist Church, and the Virginia Annual Conference in a time of great divisiveness within the United Methodist Church;
- A new softball complex at TowneBank Park and the new Betty S. Rogers Track and Field Center, joining numerous other improvements of our athletic facilities;
- Record fundraising as well as recognition of VWU this fall by the Association of Fundraising Professionals as Outstanding Non-Profit in Fundraising;
- Strong leadership by our Board of Trustees, ably chaired by David Kaufman;
- A continuing, exemplary record of teaching, research, and service by our faculty who publish an astounding volume of books, articles, reviews, and scholarly papers for a small university, and who obtain significant grants recognizing their success;
- A campus community devoted to inclusiveness, reason, and tolerance at a time when these values seem to be diminished in other areas of our nation;
- And an exciting intercollegiate athletic program highlighted by back-to-back, NCAA Division III national softball championships!

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Academics

Our students are learning in new and diverse ways and locations—in our conventional classrooms and laboratories (including outdoors), online, in evenings and weekends, at Westminster-Canterbury, aboard the *Ocean Explorer*, in the great museums and galleries of Europe, and as global scholars in other nations.

As we diversify our student experiences, we are also diversifying our enrollment profile. Going to college is no longer just for the traditional 18-to-21 population. We're teaching students today from age 8 to 85, from our Tidewater Collegiate Academy school to the popular continuing-education courses offered at Westminster-Canterbury.

At the heart of all we do is our commitment to our historic and valued mission—church-related, liberal arts instruction. Recently a campus committee of faculty and staff completed a revised academic-based strategic plan with a new mission statement for the University that is consistent with our best traditions, ideals, and aspirations. These documents were approved by our Board of Trustees at its February 21, 2018, meeting. *Preeminence '28* outlines six goals that speak to who we are and what we wish to become as an institution. Led by Provost and Vice President Dr. Tim O'Rourke, with representation from throughout our campus community, the strategic planning and mission-statement process reaffirms and expands our commitment to liberal arts instruction, vibrant co-curricular experiences, inclusiveness, and regional civic engagement. We thank Provost O'Rourke and the members of the committee for their thorough, thoughtful discussions and diligent drafting of these documents.

The strength of our academic programs is expressed in many ways. Two of the most visible have been construction of the Greer Environmental Sciences Center, offering second-to-none facilities for teaching and research of our natural world, and the rising this summer of the new Goode Fine and Performing Arts Center. Both projects have been capably managed by our construction partners at Hourigan, who have patiently offered numerous hard-hat tours and briefings on the projects while ensuring that they are completed safely, on time and on budget. Thank you, Hourigan.

As you know, the Greer Environmental Sciences Center earned LEED Gold Certification in January. We also received the 2018 Conservationist of the Year Award from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and advanced to the top-tier status in the Elizabeth River Project's River Star Business program.

We look forward now to highlighting our fine and performing arts programs with completion of the new Goode Center and expected improvements at the existing Fine Arts Building. We also seek to become an "All-Steinway campus" with an investment through private giving in those quality instruments. Again, we thank our lead fine and performing arts donors, Susan and David Goode, Henry and Eleanor Watts, and Joan Brock and her late husband Macon.

We remain deeply touched that shortly before his passing, Macon braved a chilly December day for the groundbreaking of the Goode Fine and Performing Arts Center. We look forward to the opening of the new building in March 2019.

Our strong programs in the natural sciences have led to new prominence for two of our faculty. Dr. Deirdre Gonsalves-Jackson, Associate Professor of Biology, was recently featured in a *Virginian-Pilot* article about “hidden figures,” women who have distinguished themselves in E-STEM fields. And Assistant Professor of Education Dr. Bill McConnell, with a grant from the Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation, oversaw an outdoor Environmental Explorers camp in partnership with YMCA Camp Red Feather.

Also, earlier this summer, thanks to an anonymous gift, the Virginia Wesleyan Environmental Institute: Summer Scholars Program for ninth-grade girls also took place in our Greer Center.

Around campus, we enjoy various centers of excellence.

Since May, Hofheimer Library has added three eBook collections, in total over 20,000 titles. They include a business collection to support the MBA program and two others that will support a wide range of disciplines. The library also now offers 15 online tutorials on topics ranging from a library orientation for new online students to searching shortcuts.

The Center for the Study of Religious Freedom continued its three-year partnership with WHRO Public Media on the “Race: Let’s Talk About It” initiative, which facilitates open and honest conversations about race, and focuses on how we can create a more just, inclusive, and civil society. The Center also led a Winter Session Study-Away course to Israel, and it will again offer a robust schedule of presentations and workshops this fall.

The Center for Sacred Music offered a full series of concerts, such as “An Evening of Bach” and the annual fall hymn festival, “Reforming!” which celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

The Lighthouse continued its programming on internships, study-away experiences, and undergraduate research. We value this continuing emphasis on experiential learning, and we have used a curriculum-planning grant from the Teagle Foundation to identify new ways for students to benefit from such learning.

The Faculty has approved a new general education program, to go into effect in fall 2019. The fruit of three years of study, the new program calls for two courses from each of the three

academic schools and introduces a series of seminars that promise academic rigor and a common experience.

In response to the calamity of Hurricane Maria, we enrolled two students on full scholarships from the University of Puerto Rico at Humacao to our campus for the spring semester.

Many hands have made this initiative possible, starting with Dr. Mavel Velasco, Professor of Hispanic Studies. VWU has signed an institutional partnership agreement with the University of Puerto Rico at Humacao.

On the slides behind me you have seen the names of several faculty members who have earned promotions and tenure in the last year and also the names of new professors we welcome to campus this fall. I congratulate our advancing faculty on their hard work and achievements and welcome these new faces to campus!

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Enrollment

Last year, I announced the establishment of University College to serve as the home for all Evening and Weekend, Online, Early Enrollment, non-degree-seeking and non-credit programs. Associate Provost Maynard Schaus has agreed to serve as Dean of University College, which will complement our traditional program and serve a broader audience. VWU Online will enroll 130 students this fall, and we expect it to grow to 175 during this academic year with a goal of over 300 in the foreseeable future.

Enrollment at Virginia Wesleyan is the highest it has ever been in our 58-year history. Total enrollment for the 2017-18 academic year was 1,660, a five percent increase over the previous year. Although our enrollment continues to trend positively as we reach out to prospective students beyond Coastal Virginia, as well as to other, non-traditional audiences, our on-campus growth remains hindered by lack of residential space. That becomes important as we recognize that the local enrollment market is down significantly, compelling us to recruit beyond our immediate region.

With construction expected to begin this fall on Coastal 61 at Oxford Village, across from our main entrance, our housing options will increase substantially. The bottom line is that while our headcount is at record levels, full-time enrollment drives the budget and must grow.

Led by Vice President for Enrollment David Waggoner, our recruiting team will continue to confront this challenge in the coming year.

This year, we start mandatory January Term for freshmen. This summer we saw a 54 percent increase in Summer Session enrollment, due mostly to online offerings for our traditional students. Each of these areas plays an important role as we seek to become more of a 12-month campus.

The Batten Honors College has quickly emerged as a national niche program of Virginia Wesleyan. Our newest full-tuition Batten Fellows have a collective grade point average of 4.21 on a 4.0 scale, an average SAT score of 1344, and an average ACT score of 29. Sixty-three percent hail from Virginia, and over 60 percent indicate an interest in a science discipline at Virginia Wesleyan. We look forward to welcoming them this afternoon and wish them the very best in their academic pursuits.

We remain grateful for the visionary leadership of Virginia Wesleyan Trustee Emerita Jane P. Batten, a force for change, improvement, and empowerment, who believes deeply that students of the highest academic ability will flourish through this innovative program, named for her and her late husband, Frank Batten, Sr.

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Student Affairs

Our thanks to Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. Keith Moore and his team for their countless contributions to student success on and off campus.

Now in its second year, the OPUS summer work program has assisted 36 students in working toward their goal of obtaining their VWU degrees.

The Student Health Center, managed by Sentara, is now entering year two after a very successful initial year at the University. The center averages 35 visits per week and offers both prescription and testing services, as well as general wellness guidance.

Our students in Bray Village will benefit greatly by \$1.9 million in privately funded improvements to the seven buildings in the Village, including upgraded restrooms and shower facilities in the four residential buildings. Slated to begin at the end of August, the project is expected to be completed by the middle of the spring semester.

And there is always something to do at VWU! The Wesleyan Activities Council (WAC), a student-led programming board, hosted 29 fall events and 23 spring events over the course of

this past academic year. An additional 264 events were offered by the University's more than 50 registered student clubs and organizations.

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Athletics

During this past year, we said thank you to Executive Director of Intercollegiate Athletics Joanne Renn for her 25 years of service to Virginia Wesleyan as she announced her retirement.

I am particularly grateful for her active leadership in the expansion, updates, and improvements of our athletic facilities.

We welcome as Joanne's successor Tina Hill, one of the most experienced and respected athletic administrators in NCAA Division III. Serving nearly 10 years as athletics director at Randolph College and also serving as chair of the ODAC Board of Directors, Tina joined the Marlin family this summer as a member of the President's Cabinet.

From my career-long involvement with the NCAA, I know that we have in Tina a superb leader, with impeccable integrity, who will frame appropriately the important topics impacting Division III student-athletes.

Tina inherits one of the finest NCAA Division III athletic programs in the country. First, congratulations to Coach Brandon Elliott and the women's softball team for their back-to-back, NCAA Division III national championships! We are scheduling a series of recognition events in their honor.

And we honor two-time National Player of the Year Hanna Hull, who is also academically strong with a 3.6 GPA and aspires to be an engineer. Let me say how personally proud I am of the team and coaching staff—not only for winning but for representing Virginia Wesleyan with such distinction as high-achievers in academics and athletics, and as public ambassadors for our University. Well done!

And we offer our very special thanks to former Trustee Bob Aston and Trustee Emeritus Tom Broyles for creating a new "field of dreams" for our softball team. "Broyles Field at TowneBank Park" will offer substantial upgrades to the playing and viewing experience for our softball athletes. These improvements join other recent gift-funded enhancements at our outdoor athletic complex.

We dedicated the Rogers Track and Field Center last fall. We are grateful to Trustee Emeritus Bill Shelhorse, Class of 1970, for his support which made the new complex possible. It is named for his late sister, Betty, and was funded in addition by an anonymous gift.

The new East Gate entrance is completed at our outdoor athletic complex (off Baker Road), and the Marlin Way street sign is up at the Smith Drive intersection.

Additional piping, grading, and seeding have also been completed to increase usable and fully functional space of 8.3 acres of previously unused land for intercollegiate athletics, recreation, leisure, and parking.

Virginia Wesleyan will also benefit from construction of a new multi-purpose sports center on lands adjacent to the Virginia Beach Convention Center. The indoor track there will be more convenient for our runners, who previously have had to journey to Newport News for indoor track events.

Our athletic programs deserve recognition for these exciting achievements...

Finally, we have a “new” Marlin! As part of our updating and trademarking of our institutional brand, Christine Hall of our Marketing and Communications Department revised the earlier Marlin to be zoologically correct. Like all marlins, ours now has no teeth—but don’t mistake being toothless for being weak on our athletic fields and courts.

The new Marlin is part of our ongoing rebranding and trademarking of VWU logos and graphics since our move to University status in 2017. With the assistance of Kaufman & Canoles, all logos and designs are being filed for trademark protection. We expect this process to be completed by early 2019. Special thanks to Dr. Mort Gamble for leading the exhaustive trademark registration process.

To enhance services to our 22 sports, I am pleased to announce that Sentara Sports Medicine and VWU have partnered for athletic training services.

Under the new agreement, Virginia Wesleyan will oversee the program through our Head Athletic Trainer, and Sentara Sports Medicine will supplement with a team of certified professionals.

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Finance and Administration

Turning now to Finance and Administration... It remains important to diversify our revenue streams and establish a stronger budgetary position. We are making strong progress toward these goals.

Mindful of public concern about the rising cost of higher education in America, we have taken critical steps to remain affordable and to support our students financially. We've capped tuition and fees at their current level for the 2018-2019 academic year; widened access to early- and dual-enrollment programs; made January Term affordable; added online summer courses; and expanded grants and scholarships. All of these changes will result in greater affordability, increased retention, and stronger graduation rates.

We also encourage prospective students and their families to think *value*, not just advertised cost. Our coastal campus in the middle of a great urban area that's perfect for internships, career starts, sports activities, and many cultural and recreational attractions. We offer classes at the Chrysler Museum of Art and the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center. Few colleges or universities can match the resources available to our students.

In 2015, during the presidential transition, the Board of Trustees commissioned an Institutional Review to assess the institution's current condition and provide recommendations for improvement. The review identified antiquated processes in the Finance and Administration area resulting in costly mistakes and inefficiency. We made the decision to employ top-five independent accounting firm KPMG to lead a two-year intensive process of rigorous review. Jim Cooper, Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Sylvia Shelly, Assistant Vice President for Finance, and the members of the Cabinet are constantly seeking new ways to better manage resources while monitoring costs, developing a right-sized organizational budget, and expanding revenue.

We used expert counsel to evaluate our banking services and long-term bonds. After extensive discussion and competitive bidding, the University transitioned its primary banking services to TowneBank, with a reputation as one of Virginia's top-performing community banks while being one of the largest and fastest-growing financial institutions in Coastal Virginia.

TowneBank has worked with the University to successfully refinance its long-term bonds, providing savings in interest and principal payments over our previous debt.

After two years of rigorous review by KPMG, the University has hired Brown Edwards to provide auditing and tax services. Brown Edwards is a Virginia-based accounting firm specializing in higher education with clients in Virginia and neighboring states.

On the screen is a snapshot of our current financial profile...

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Our food services, managed by Sodexo, continue to improve and expand offerings. Over the winter break, the Boyd Dining Center was refreshed with replacement of flooring in the main service area. In addition, a full-service Starbucks opened for the spring 2018 semester at the Marlin Grille.

We continue to increase our on-campus events, providing additional revenue and ensuring a busy campus all year long. We have maintained our longstanding relationships with Camp Horizons, Virginia Beach Leadership Schools, Camp Kid Jam, the United Methodist Licensing School, Virginia Beach Baseball League, and Norfolk Public Schools Summer Leadership Camp, among others.

Recently, the University's bookstore was officially renamed the A. Kenneth Scribner, Sr., University Store. Such operations sell much more than just textbooks. This follows a busy year in which the store participated in the successful rebranding of the College to University with revised and upgraded apparel. For the spring semester, the University successfully launched the online store, offering textbooks and University merchandise.

For over 25 years Aramark served as a contract service for management of our physical plant. After extensive external evaluation, we negotiated a new agreement with Aramark that resulted in a comprehensive, more efficient campus management agreement. We thank Don Coberly, Director of Physical Plant Operations, and his staff for their dedication to our beautiful campus facilities.

In March, the University announced its participation in Virginia Private Colleges' Multiple-Employer Plan for retirement. Scheduled for implementation this fall, it will save staff time, ensure compliance, and share fiduciary oversight and risk while providing our employees and retirees with better investment options and cost savings.

IT Services, under the leadership of Robert Leitgeb, launched our Intelligent Learning Platform in January, providing integration between Colleague, Blackboard and our new Portal. They also launched Touchnet's Marketplace, providing a secure and compliant platform for all of the University's credit card transactions. We have also tightened our cybersecurity.

We completed the upgrades of some of our administrative software systems. This includes use of an online self-service platform, allowing students real-time access to their financial aid packages and accounts, while providing a more efficient bill-pay experience. We are committed to expanding our technology through donor support.

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Campus Master Plan

Although we are just beginning Year Three of the Campus Master Plan, work proceeds on identified priorities.

We have begun restoration of the historic Bell Tower. With the project funded by a private gift, the "Beacon" will be a new symbol of the growth and soaring aspirations of Virginia Wesleyan while honoring our United Methodist heritage. Dedicated later today will be our new "SmartFlower," a fully integrated solar system that will supply power to Honors Village. We invite each of you to join us for the dedication at 1:30 behind the Greer Environmental Sciences Center.

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Advancement

Virginia Wesleyan closed a banner year in advancement thanks to the leadership of Senior Vice President Dr. Mort Gamble and Associate Vice President for Advancement and Board Relations Suzanne Savage. We've had exceptional giving for capital projects, significant growth in unrestricted giving, and strong alumni participation through The Excellence Fund and various events on and off campus, including our second-annual Spring Alumni Weekend in April.

On the screen is a listing of the construction projects made possible through gifts just this year...

The Virginia Wesleyan Alumni Council members are valued ambassadors for the University. We thank immediate past Alumni Council Chair Mavis McKenley '11 for her guidance of the Council and welcome Troy DeLawrence '93 as our incoming chair.

We thank the President's Parents Roundtable and the Corporate Leaders Council for their service and engagement with our campus community.

I am especially pleased and proud to announce that our strong advancement program has earned Virginia Wesleyan the 2018 Outstanding Non-profit in Fundraising Award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals. We will receive the award at the annual National Philanthropy Day luncheon on November 28.

I would like to take a moment to remember three influential leaders and donors—two of whom have served on our Board of Trustees—who passed away within the last year. Each was important to our development as an institution at critical moments in our history, and we remain grateful for their legacy of leadership and financial stewardship.

Trustee Emeritus Robert Friend Boyd was the last living founding member of the Board. In June of 1961, Bob led the delegation that took the charter for the institution to the State Corporation Commission. As a living connection to our early history and establishment—and especially to our United Methodist heritage—he will be missed dearly by our community.

Macon Brock, husband of Trustee Emerita Joan Brock, lived a life of leadership and devoted service to higher education, our community, and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Macon, Joan, and the Brock and Perry families have been dear friends to Virginia Wesleyan since our founding.

Anne Shumadine, a long-time member of our Board, was a guiding inspiration to her fellow Trustees and to our entire campus community. Anne's son Jim recently joined the Board, representing three generations of service by their family to Virginia Wesleyan. Offering a lifetime of community leadership, Anne was honored with numerous recognitions of her professionalism, integrity, and generosity.

The names of these valued members of our community can be found throughout our campus. They remind us not only of the power of philanthropy but their faith in all that we have become.

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We recently extended our partnership with Volunteer Hampton Roads by renewing our leasing agreement with them for an on-campus office. Their support of area not-for-profit organizations coheres well with our Center for Civic Leadership and Service Learning.

I am also pleased to announce a new partnership with The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities whose mission is to work with “schools, businesses, and communities to achieve success through inclusion.” VCIC will have an office on our campus.

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Goals for 2018-2019

In closing, let us support achievement of the following goals in the coming year:

Academics

- Implement Year One of the Academic Strategic Plan.
- Continue to aggressively market the Greer Environmental Sciences Center and Batten Honors College as national niche programs.
- Develop the Colleges/Schools organizational model including all non-credit programs in University College, increasing to 1,500 learners a year.
- Grow the Early Enrollment and Advanced Scholars Program.
- Develop The Wesleyan Plan, the four pillars of the University: undergraduate research, international experience, internships, and civic engagement.
- Develop a pilot three-year degree program.
- Develop ease of transfer for graduates of Tidewater Community College and Thomas Nelson Community College.
- Strengthen January Term and Summer Term offerings.

Student Life

- Focus on persistence, retention, and cohort graduation.
- Complete comprehensive improvements to Bray Village.
- Develop Coastal 61 at Oxford Village, our public/private partnership.
- Upgrade technology in the residence halls.
- Strengthen student-health and sports-medicine services provided by Sentara.
- Strengthen the overall student-athlete experience, including an outstanding recreation program.

- Expand the OPUS student work program to the full academic year.

Enrollment

- Achieve enrollment of 500 new full-time traditional students each fall and 55 new full-time traditional students each spring, meeting our desired academic profile.
- Grow VWU Online to 175 students enrolled this academic year and 300 in the foreseeable future.
- Expand international recruitment.
- Strengthen the Virginia Beach Success Scholarship with Tidewater Community College.

Finance and Administration

- Develop a long-term financial model utilizing new technology to replace antiquated processes and procedures, with a right-sized budget model based on realistic financial projections and enhanced revenue streams.
- Focus on cost and affordability of education.
- Implement a more efficient structure of summer camps and programs.

Advancement

- Increase giving from all sources for all purposes.
- Increase giving by the Board of Trustees, the Alumni Council and all alumni and friends through The Excellence Fund and other philanthropic opportunities.
- Build resources for capital improvements.
- Under new leadership in the Marketing & Communications Department, fully implement branding and trademarking; effectively tell our story to traditional enrollment markets; and develop effective publicity for non-traditional programs.

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Virginia Wesleyan remains an exciting work in progress, but we must be vigilant as we look beyond our campus. As a reflection of current economic conditions and the general state of American higher education, we must learn to do more with fewer resources.

If I may paraphrase the great novelist Charles Dickens, higher education finds itself today “in the best of times and the worst of times.” I say so cautiously. Despite the many challenges

confronting colleges and universities—some threatening the intellectual vitality and operational viability of more than a few of our fellow institutions—our prospects for contributing to the betterment of society remain strong. Our ability to deliver educational services has never been more multifaceted. Our faith in humanity’s inspirations and aspirations is undiminished. Along with many of our peers, our challenge at VWU simply is to guarantee the resources we need to prepare our students for the complex world they will inherit.

Each year, we rise to that challenge. With your steadfast commitment to our success, Virginia Wesleyan will have an exceptional year, with many more to come.

Thank you and, as always... *It's a great day to be a Marlin!*



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