



2019 State of the University Address

Virginia Wesleyan University

President Scott D. Miller

August 23, 2019

Thank you for coming and thanks to those alumni and friends watching in Coastal Virginia and beyond.

Annie and I are pleased and excited to begin our fifth year with you, and the support we have received from the Virginia Wesleyan Family is especially meaningful. Thank you, all.

As a recent article in *Business Officer* magazine points out, the last four years at Virginia Wesleyan have been phenomenal. Together, we have accomplished a lot! No longer a young institution but a dynamic center of maturing programs and enduring values, VWU thrives because of the countless contributions of our talented faculty and staff, an exceptional Board of Trustees, devoted alumni and friends, and, of course, our talented students. Clearly, we are no longer an aspiring college; we are an inspiring university.

In my 29th year as a college president, I have never felt more positive about the future of an institution, even during these painful times for American higher education. All of you have stepped up to the important work we do, and your support is having tremendous impact here on campus and throughout the region.

We love being in Virginia Beach, and thank the City for its important role in our progress.

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As we celebrate our success, however, we also pause to reflect on the recent unspeakable tragedy that claimed the lives of 12 individuals, engaged in nothing more than their daily jobs.

Among those lost was one of our own, Robert “Bobby” Williams, class of 1975, with whom we had interacted as we secured approvals for our campus construction. In recognition of his dedicated 41 years of service to the City and to us, we will name in his memory one of the trails traversing our campus, a place where he loved to walk as a student, and he will be honored

by the Alumni Council with a posthumous award for his leadership at Founders Day. I ask that you keep Bobby's family and those of the other victims in your thoughts. And please remember as well those lost and affected by other recent shootings around the nation. May we please have a moment of silence.

Thank you.

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You've often heard me speak of the challenges confronting small, private institutions. These last five years have been the most challenging times for private institutions that I've seen in at least three decades.

Liz McMillen, Executive Editor, Chronicle Intelligence, states, "The challenges facing higher education — financial, demographic, cultural — have rarely been as daunting or as complex as they are today. A look at the headlines conveys the urgency of current problems: Colleges are closing their doors, merging, scaling back. Public trust is eroding. Concerns are rising about college costs and escalating student debt at the same time a college degree is more necessary than ever."

My longtime colleague, Gordon Gee, President of West Virginia University, chaired the American Council on Education's task force on the Future of the American University, and recently spoke on the findings at the Columbus Metropolitan Club in Ohio. He said, QUOTE "(Many) small tuition- driven institutions are not going to survive because they have all replicated each other." END QUOTE. Institutions like VWU will survive, Gee noted, by QUOTE "differentiating themselves. If it's one size fits all and like a McDonald's stand producing the same thing, they're going to have real difficulty" END QUOTE. We have worked

hard during my time here to differentiate ourselves in a heavily congested market place in Virginia and the Mid-Atlantic Region.

What differentiates us from other private institutions?

First, Environmental Sciences. Since our founding, Virginia Wesleyan has enjoyed a rich history of abundant bio diversity and natural resources in a wonderful Coastal Virginia location. The addition of the Greer Environmental Sciences Center has brought national attention to our campus.

Second, a Center for the Study of Religious Freedom, led by a top scholar and attracting other top scholars to our campus for outstanding programs. My thanks to the late Bob Nusbaum for having the founding vision and to Joan Brock and her family for providing funding.

Third, the Batten Honors College – attracting the best and brightest in the world to an interdisciplinary program focusing on leadership, global perspective, and the environment. We thank Jane Batten for her vision and funding for this program, the Greer Environmental Sciences Center, and so much more.

As I visit with alumni, prospective students, and groups around the country, I also speak of our location: Yes, the beaches, but also the value-added's, such as our research vessel and relationship with the Virginia Aquarium; the Brock Environmental Center; the Chrysler Museum; NATO; and the internship opportunities with some of the top businesses in the country.

All of this is true to The Wesleyan Plan, the four pillars of a Virginia Wesleyan University experience: Civic engagement, study away, research, and internships.

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And now, let me offer some updates on how we've spent recent months addressing important issues.

Our founding denomination, the United Methodist Church, is no longer united—split by the church's decision to disallow gay marriage and gay clergy. Not only is membership in the Church shrinking, but United Methodist higher education is declining, as well. In recent months, two of our 93 United Methodist colleges have closed, two more will be merging with other institutions in the months ahead, and seven are on the brink. A number of our fellow affiliated institutions have announced they have disaffiliated with the Church, including Randolph College here in Virginia. Others have deferred plans of action for the upcoming academic year.

On behalf of the Methodist higher education presidents, I have served as a primary spokesperson for our clear message to the church: We will not bend on our commitment to inclusivity and equal treatment for all. We are about *whom we include*, **not** whom we *exclude*.

How it all may impact Virginia Wesleyan remains to be seen. For now, we have seven years remaining on our affirmation of affiliation by the University Senate of the Church that we are "Methodist." Financial support from the Virginia Conference continues to decline – at a rate of 13% a year—as membership declines.

In the meantime, I have accepted the position as president of the National Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities of the United Methodist Church (NASCUMC). My goal is to help this historic organization weather the current crisis and find ways to advance higher education's goals of social activism amid the uncertainties of their Methodist identity. In November, I will be leading a small group of Methodist presidents in Lake Junaluska, North Carolina for a historic meeting between higher education leaders and the Council of Bishops. On a related note, my work with affiliated presidents and deans these past seven months has led to

discussion about three guaranteed-admission agreements for our students intending to enter the ministry with prominent Methodist theology schools and seminaries – we have in place one with Emory University’s Candler School of Theology, and anticipate the same with Duke Divinity School and Boston University in the coming weeks.

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As a result of our national reputation in environmental science and my advocacy on the topic, I was elected to serve as Chair of the Climate Leadership Network – formerly the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment. It also provides a seat on the board of Second Nature. This form of social activism is consonant with our teaching, research, and outreach through the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and, of course, our Greer Environmental Sciences Center, where we are already performing outstanding work.

The clock is ticking on climate change, and I believe this institution must expand its leadership in the effort to preserve the natural world. In so doing, we join a select group of over 440 other institutions who have accepted the challenge of environmental stewardship and activism.

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For the last 15 years I’ve headed a national college and university presidents’ “think tank” that has led to 150 chapters for 15 books by some of the best and brightest higher-education minds in the world. Participants have ranged from the presidents of Arizona State University, California State University, Oregon State and Southern New Hampshire University, to smaller elite liberal arts institutions like Goucher College and Drew University. The 10 presidents a year we select to be authors are notable thought leaders whose campuses embrace

innovative philosophies and practices that give their institutions competitive advantage. I mention this, because all of these national leadership experiences provide the opportunity for me to interact with top innovators and discuss best practices that can benefit VWU.

And last year, we were invited to join the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities—100 like-minded public and private institutions situated in urban communities. CUMU member institutions represent a diverse range of academic institutions – liberal arts colleges, HBCUs, the Ivy League, and research institutions. However, each shares a common value – a dedication to serving their communities, recognizing that “our future as knowledge organizations will continue to be forged by sustained, reciprocal engagement with our cities.”

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In these national programs, we are grateful for the support of our Board of Trustees.

With the retirement of Chair David Kaufman—who will remain on the Board—we welcome our new Chair, John Malbon, an experienced Trustee and community leader. Thank you, John, for accepting this important post. We will continue to benefit tremendously from your guidance and commitment to Virginia Wesleyan.

David and John’s tenure have coincided with the greatest period of campus expansion in our history, all of it made possible by the Trustees and other leadership donors who have generously supported project after project. We thank them and you for this exciting list of achievements...

In March, of course, we dedicated the Susan S. Goode Fine and Performing Arts Center, the Joan and Macon Brock Theatre, the Eleanor and Henry Watts Grand Lobby and Gallery, and the Susan Beverly Grand Terrace and Pond. We remain grateful to these leadership donors for bringing to reality our dream of a new center for the arts.

On the evening of the dedication, this video premiered as a tribute to the Goodes' generous support of Virginia Wesleyan...

We are three-fourths of the way toward our fundraising goal for the old fine arts building. We will keep you informed of our progress, and naming opportunities are still available!

In May we broke ground for "Coastal 61 at Oxford Village," the public-private partnership with the Franklin Johnston Group that will increase our housing capacity and offer upscale living for community residents, as well. The plan calls for an eight-building, 248-unit complex on land that is, and will remain, University owned. We expect occupancy in 2020.

Last but not least, we are so happy to have The Beacon overlooking University Commons. Long a symbol of the light of religious faith, a guiding light that illuminates our Creator's work and inspires us to follow, a Beacon also makes possible safe passage away from danger. For a university, the light of reason and knowledge points us toward the better shores of understanding, inclusion, and social justice. We thank Jane Batten for giving us this renewed symbol of Virginia Wesleyan's heritage, the passion of our founders, and our ever-bright future.

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We have a new leader for our academic program. Dr. Maynard Schaus became Vice President for Academic Affairs on July 1.

Joining him as Associate Vice President is Dr. Susan Larkin and as Assistant Vice President, Dr. Loren Loving Marquez, who will also serve as Director of the Learning Center.

Maynard has appointed deans in each of our academic areas: Dr. Leslie Caughell, Dean of the Birdsong School of Social Science; Dr. Benjamin Dobrin, Dean of D. Henry Watts School of Professional Studies; Dr. Victor Townsend, Kenneth R. Perry Dean of the Joan P. Brock School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences; and Dr. Paul Ewell, Dean of University College.

And three deans are providing continuing academic leadership: Dr. Travis Malone Dean of the Susan S. Goode School of Arts and Humanities; Dr. Joyce Easter, Dean of the Batten Honors College; and Dr. Linda Ferguson, Dean of the Birdsong School of Social Science.

The following faculty have been appointed to directorship positions: Dr. Elizabeth Malcolm, Director of Campus Sustainability; Dr. Taryn Myers, Director of Academic Effectiveness; Dr. Jennifer Slivka, Director of the Women's Resource Center; and Denise Wilkinson, Director of Innovative Teaching and Engaged Learning (INTEL).

Congratulations to all on these new and continuing appointments.

Four distinguished Virginia Wesleyan faculty members received awards during our Commencement ceremony on University Commons: Dr. Travis Malone: The Samuel Nelson Gray Distinguished Teaching Award; Dr. Bryson Mortensen: The Frank and Jane P. Batten Distinguished Scholar Award; Dr. Clayton Drees: The Service and Community Engagement Award; and Dr. Mavel Velasco: The United Methodist Church General Board of Higher Education & Ministry Exemplary Teacher Award.

A new tradition, established by Academic Affairs, is to honor the longest-serving faculty member as Macebearer. That honor goes to Dr. Larry Hultgren who has devoted 51 years to Virginia Wesleyan. Congratulations, Larry.

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Partnerships enrich students' experiences. Dr. Brian Kurisky has provided strong leadership for Wesleyan Engaged, initiating many service activities and new partnerships.

Two important projects are the new Bonner Leaders Program, which will enroll 20 students on two-thirds scholarships each year for a total enrollment of 80 students after four years, and our plans for Carnegie Classification for Engagement, a prestigious national ranking. Thank you, Brian, for taking our service program to exciting new heights.

In July we welcomed the entire operation of Volunteer Hampton Roads to an office suite on campus. Executive Director Stephanie Gorham and her team envision many collaborative opportunities, and we're delighted to have them full-time with us.

This spring, Volunteer Hampton Roads honored Joan Brock with its Lenora Mathews Lifetime Achievement Award. Let's view the video tribute to this outstanding philanthropist and devoted friend and Trustee Emerita of Virginia Wesleyan, and to the late Anne Shumadine, longtime Trustee and recipient of VHR's Corporate Volunteer Excellence Award.

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Our popular Westminster/Wesleyan Lifelong Learning Institute, held at Westminster-Canterbury on Chesapeake Bay, looks forward to another exciting term of courses for their members. The program is flourishing after two years with 1,200 enrollments.

Our participation in Ed2Go for online continuing education is off to a strong start, and with completion of the Goode Center, programs offered by the Center for Sacred Music will grow, as well. Our Center for the Study of Religious Freedom is attracting wide support—a model for civil discourse and in-depth examination of complex issues.

They are working closely with the campus office of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, the only satellite office outside the organization's home in Richmond.

We welcome the following new faculty to Virginia Wesleyan: Mr. Frank Futyma, Visiting Instructor of Management, Business, and Economics; Ms. Amber Gruszczyk, Research Librarian; Dr. Felipe Hugueno, Assistant Professor of Hispanic Studies; Dr. Marielle Postava-Davignon, Assistant Professor of Biology; Mr. Gregory Snyder, Technical Services Librarian; and Dr. Garrett Wood, Assistant Professor of Management, Business, and Economics.

And we celebrate the promotions of these members of the faculty: Dr. Eric Johnson, Associate Professor of Biology; Sherry Matis, Assistant Librarian (Librarian II); Dr. William McConnell, Associate Professor of Education; Dr. Lisa Lyon Payne, Professor of Communication; Dr. William Pruitt, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice; and Dr. Jason Squinobal, Associate Professor of Music. The following faculty members earned tenure: Dr. Eric Johnson, Associate Professor of Biology; Dr. William McConnell, Associate Professor of Education; Dr. William Pruitt, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice; and Dr. Jason Squinobal, Associate Professor of Music.

In a further structuring of our academic program, we established the D. Henry Watts School of Professional Studies, honoring longtime Trustee, business leader, and benefactor Henry Watts. The Watts School consists of the programs in Business, Education, Recreation & Leisure Studies, and Social Work. We thank Henry and his wife Eleanor for their countless expressions of support to Virginia Wesleyan and their enthusiastic and frequent attendance at campus events.

Our faculty continue to produce an impressive amount of publications, presentations, grants, and other forms of scholarly activity. We commend their outstanding commitment to

teaching, scholarship, and service—and we are also proud of the many other academic highlights from the past year.

On the horizon... we must expand upper-level and graduate programs and continue to provide offerings through University College for the new “traditional students,” those known commonly as “non-traditional.” This is a highly competitive area in which we need to excel.

Finally, we need to add initiatives within our traditional curricular programs, capitalizing on existing strengths and, where possible, adapting them to cultural and societal conditions and concerns.

Accordingly, I am announcing that we have received a \$250,000 gift from Harvey Lindsay, a well-known business leader and civil-rights advocate, to begin the expansion of African-American studies at Virginia Wesleyan. Over the next few months, we will work with faculty to develop existing course offerings and to explore new ones through an interdisciplinary approach. As a top-20, national liberal arts institution in diversity, we are very pleased and honored to accept this gift.

Please join me in thanking Harvey for funding the vision of what this program can be for the enrichment of all of us...

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Under the leadership of Vice President Dr. Keith Moore and Assistant Vice President Jason Seward, our student life program continues to offer high-quality experiences on a campus that is very student-centered and committed to the comfort and safety of all who live and work here.

Our partnership for student healthcare and sports medicine with Sentara is highly successful.

For those needing special financial assistance, the *Opus* work program offers a way to pay down tuition obligations, build teamwork, develop pride in our physical assets, and graduate as planned. The program is now well-established and operating year-round thanks to initial financial support by David Kaufman and, more recently, The Landmark Foundation.

Cafeteria improvements and planned renovation of the Boyd Dining Center are forthcoming. Improvements to Bray Village, our oldest residential complex, have been made. Meanwhile, we continue to attract students of all ages through YMCA Camp Red Feather,

Tidewater Collegiate Academy, the Chesapeake Bay Academy, our summer environmental institutes, and the many athletic summer camps hosted by head coaches.

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And speaking of athletics, we are grateful for the leadership of Executive Director of Intercollegiate Athletics Tina Hill in her second year with us.

We had another strong year in Marlin Athletics. Our softball team, enjoying their new home at Tom and Betty Broyles Field at TowneBank Park where we played host to the 2019 NCAA Regionals, finished the regular season ranked #1 for the fourth year in a row.

Pitcher Hanna Hull made First Team All-American, All-State and NFCA Pitcher of the Year...all for the third year in a row, and most importantly First Team Academic All-American. She also had an impressive internship this summer with Norfolk Southern Corporation. Recently during the Norfolk Sports Club Jamboree, Hanna was presented with the General Douglas MacArthur Memorial Award denoting her as the Most Outstanding College Athlete who formerly attended a Virginia high school. Only five women have won this award in its 75-year history, including Hanna and world soccer legend Mia Hamm.

Jayla Harris of our women's basketball team finished as our all-time leading scorer with 1,931 career points, was ODAC and South Region Player of the Year, received the Norfolk Sports Club Award, the ODAC Marjorie Berkley Scholar-Athlete Award, and was nominated for National NCAA Woman of the Year.

Here are other exciting highlights from this past year:

- Softball is ranked No. 1 in the nation for the fourth consecutive year, earned NCAA Regional runner-up and won the ODAC championship for the third consecutive year.
- Women's soccer placed second in the ODAC Championship, advanced to the second round of the NCAA Tournament.
- Full renovation of basketball locker rooms; new scoreboard at Perry Field, added press box and upgraded bleachers at Birdsong Field; new sound system at Trinder Center; hammer/discus added at Rogers Track and Field.
- 131 student-athletes named to ODAC All-Academic List.
- 43 student-athletes were inducted into Chi Alpha Sigma Honor Society
- 84 student-athletes in the Fall and 82 student-athletes in the Spring were named to the President's List (4.0 GPA) or Dean's List (3.5+ GPA).

We're so proud of our athletics program and success they bring to the University on and off the field.

I am excited to announce that Virginia Wesleyan has thrown its hat into the arena....the eSports Arena. Today's fastest growing global sport and a projected billion-dollar industry in 2019, eSports are quickly expanding to college campuses across the country. Through private funding, we have positioned Virginia Wesleyan eSports to begin as a competitive club team as early as January 2020. The newly re-designed Marlin eSports Arena, located in the Batten Student Center, will house 15-20 state-of- the-art gaming stations allowing our team to compete at the highest level.

While especially attractive to those students who are “wired” for careers in technology such as computer sciences, engineering, and mathematics, our research has shown that the popularity of eSports spans all disciplines—and has immediate impact on the recruitment and retention of students.

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In these difficult times for American higher education, a common theme coming from the federal and state governments is that we must increase quality and decrease cost.

I like a parallel used by Michael Crow, president of Arizona State University, when he addresses cost. He says that no student should graduate borrowing more than the cost of a fully equipped Honda Civic—which is \$29,000. His suggestion is that a \$29,000 car depreciates the second it leaves the lot—whereas a college degree with a \$29,000 investment would *appreciate to more than \$1 million over a lifetime*.

A typical Virginia Wesleyan student owes less than that at \$27,000.

Our focus on accessibility and affordability continues as we have frozen tuition for the second year in a row, established new scholarships, offered a four-year graduation guarantee, expanded January Term and Summer Sessions and early- and dual-enrollment programs, and initiated the TCC/VWU Fair Transfer Guarantee.

These along with the Batten Honors College and the *Opus* student work program have made Virginia Wesleyan one of the most affordable private institutions in America. Simultaneously, we have improved communication with students, and made it easier for them to pay their bills and access financial-aid packages online via the new, donor-funded Portal.

Under the leadership of Jim Cooper and Sylvia Schelly, our business practices have continued to improve, our budgeting process has been streamlined, and our financial profile strengthened. We transitioned our primary banking services to TowneBank, known for its outstanding customer and investment services. Brown Edwards is our new auditing and tax-services firm. Commonfund has served as our endowment managers. We recently initiated a competitive proposal process to outsource our chief investment officer and endowment functions to increase expertise and efficiency. We value all of these professional partnerships and their strong record of service.

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Conference and Events, operated through Sodexo, brings growth and diversity to the University's revenue streams. Funds generated from outside conferences and events have nearly doubled.

The Scribner University Store continues to promote our rebranding through apparel sales. Our campus looks great and our partners from Aramark Facilities Management completed another busy year, with numerous upgrades around campus.

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Through an initiative that is a unique partnership, the University successfully implemented a Multiple Employer Retirement plan in April, partnering with 15 CICV-member schools to combine employee retirement plans. Through this plan, which joins the CICV consortium in which we participate for healthcare, we have streamlined operations, saved money, and improved retirement investment options and financial advising support.

We welcome Dr. Chris Davis as our new Chief Information Officer. Former Vice President and Chief Information Officer at the University of Central Arkansas, he has directed several initiatives with Ellucian to modernize and cloud-host Colleague, upgraded our data center, and negotiated with Blackboard to provide a cloud-hosted environment for our Learning Management System. Welcome, Chris, and thank you for your strong stewardship of these donor-funded projects.

In addition, I am pleased to report that we have a new contract with Cox Communications to upgrade our telephone system to Voice Over Internet Protocol and to triple our Internet bandwidth. For our students, this means improved Internet speed and a smoother streaming experience while viewing favorite content and gaming. Thanks to Chris, Keith Moore, and Jim

Cooper for bringing this project to fruition!

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Private gift support continues to propel our progress, and our fundraising operation enjoyed another banner year under the leadership of Dr. Mort Gamble, Senior Vice President, and his talented team. From capital projects and endowed funds to program initiatives, athletics, and the much-valued and—needed—Excellence Fund, gift support is essential. For example, all of our recent construction has been donor-funded, and we are grateful to those contributors for their direct investment in campus expansion and improvements.

In recognition of our efforts, Virginia Wesleyan received the Outstanding Non-Profit in Fundraising Award from our area's Association of Fundraising Professionals chapter last November. The University received a video tribute....

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We have made some important gains on the enrollment front, while still confronting slower full-time residential growth because of student demographics, the need for additional campus housing, and the incredibly competitive admissions market in this area and throughout Virginia.

I am pleased to report that overall enrollment at Virginia Wesleyan is the highest it has ever been in the University's history at 1,673 students for the 2018-19 academic year. Virginia Wesleyan is growing and thriving, while staying true to our mission as a student-centered institution with a small student-to-faculty ratio. Our institution's success story continues to be profiled in national publications.

Under the leadership of David Waggoner, we have seen growth in VWU Online, January Term, and Summer Session.

Our developing partnerships with Tidewater Community College and other members of the community college system are already paying welcome dividends. As mentioned, we have frozen tuition for the second year, increased our marketing of early- and dual-enrollment options, and benefited in multiple ways from the well-established, selective Batten Honors College.

Our challenge is to reach out effectively to the diverse, increasingly non-traditional market of enrollment today; to utilize the best tools of technology to communicate to prospective students; and to strengthen the case for attending an affordable, distinctive private institution with national-niche programs.

The good news in all of this is that we are innovative and well regarded. The bad news is that our competitor institutions are often copying what we do!

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I close with an overview of where we need to go in the future, beginning with the current academic and fiscal year and planning for the years beyond.

ACADEMIC GOALS

- While remaining true to our existing programs, we must place a strong, highly visible emphasis on promoting our regional and national niches—environmental sciences, the Batten Honors College, and the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom—and, of course, the academic "value-added" of our Coastal Virginia location.
- We must also, more aggressively, interpret the value of our four pillars—civic engagement, study away, internships, and research—to prospective students and their parents.
- We must continue to look at ourselves as a 12-month academic enterprise, developing offerings in January Term and Summer Session.
- We must develop new programs and expand offerings in VWU Online.
- We must develop dual-credit and the Advanced Scholars Program to attract the best and brightest students from our nine local private academy partners.
- We must expand dramatically the number of international partners to provide cost-effective, safe travel-abroad experiences for all students.
- We must continue to strengthen and selectively grow our guaranteed admission, early assurance, and dual-degree opportunities with prominent graduate-level institutions to provide cost-effective, high quality opportunities for our top students.

STUDENT LIFE/ATHLETICS GOALS

- In cooperation with academic affairs, fully implement the new comprehensive advising model as we explore ways to improve retention.
- Continue to fund improvements in the residence halls and expand housing options.
- Continue to expand and promote the strength and value of our community on campus and in Coastal Virginia through civic engagement, service learning, religious life, student activities, and the Greek system.
- Continue to strengthen our intercollegiate athletics program—a program that has excelled with outstanding students and mentors—to play a more focused role in enrollment and with a greater focus on alumni involvement and philanthropy.
- Continue to recognize the importance of lifetime wellness through an outstanding recreation program. This includes promotion of "The Trails at Wesleyan Woods" as a place for exercise and reflection.
- Grow our work program, *Opus*, to provide meaningful work opportunities for students and to utilize the program to make education here affordable.

ENROLLMENT GOALS

- Continue to refine our comprehensive recruitment model to achieve the profile desired for our traditional day population—ensuring our student body is scholarly and ethnically and geographically diverse.
- Meet annual goals for growth in the six parts of our enrollment plan: (1) First-Year and transfers for the residential liberal arts and sciences component, (2) Evening and Weekend, (3) Graduate Programs, (4) VWU Online, (5) Advanced Scholars and Early Enrollment, and (6) Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning.
- Continue to recruit top scholars nationally and internationally for the Batten Honors College, reaching our full capacity of 160 students by the fall of 2020.
- Position Virginia Wesleyan as a “transfer- friendly” institution by promoting our Fair Transfer Guarantee—our promise to graduates of Virginia community colleges that our recently revised transfer policies will save them credits, time, and money if they enroll here to earn their bachelor's degree.
- With Academic Affairs, develop new programs and grow programs in University College and VWU Online.
- Through our partnerships with Westminster Canterbury, Ed2Go, and the United Methodist Church, continue to grow non-credit programs for lifelong learners.

ADVANCEMENT GOALS

- Procure necessary funds to complete the upgrades to the old Fine Arts Building and the Boyd Dining Center.
- Continue to strengthen giving by all stakeholder groups of the University.
- Grow alumni giving participation through The Excellence Fund and other appeals.
- Continue to place an emphasis on growing revenues for endowment and operations.
- Raise funds to meet the year-five goals of the comprehensive campus master plan.
- In cooperation with the Center for Enrollment and the Center for Advancement, refine and strengthen our comprehensive marketing and communications strategy to effectively reach all Virginia Wesleyan audiences, including current and prospective students, alumni and friends, like-minded organizations, and funding sources, in part, by telling individual success stories of students and alumni.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION GOALS

- Continue our commitment to affordability, accessibility, and efficiency.
- Continue our focus on The Parthenon Group key indicators for long-term financial prosperity and growth.
- With our P-3 partners at The Franklin Johnston Group, complete and effectively market the Coastal 61 at Oxford Village mixed-use residential complex on the north side of campus.
- Complete the process of assessment and implement a more effective model of endowment management through an outsourced Chief Investment Officer model.

- Complete a comprehensive transformation of our technology and telecommunications system.
- With our campus-based partners, continue to grow auxiliary revenues as a source of supplemental income.
- Continue our commitment to maintaining a beautiful and functional campus, addressing corrective maintenance and adequacy of the physical resources in our master plan.

With your support, I am confident we will reach these goals that are vital to our success.

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In a recent column for the *Virginian Pilot*, I spoke of the many external forces that have enveloped higher education. Like the relentless rise of coastal waters, these threats have flooded small institutions, imposing new realities. They include changing demographics, rapid advances in technology, rising tuition costs, and students' customer preferences. All have shifted the campus ground.

Although our University has avoided many of the pitfalls impacting other institutions—indeed, has undergone positive and dramatic transformation over the past four years—we cannot be complacent. We must continue to transition from being “good” to “great.” Fortunately, we are well positioned to seize new opportunities, to expand our leadership and influence, and to prevail over some very challenging market conditions.

I ask for your continued support in achieving greatness for Virginia Wesleyan University, and I pledge my own full effort, and that of our University leadership, in writing the next transformational chapters in our story.

Stay tuned and stay engaged, and always remember, “It’s a great day to be a Marlin!”

Thank you.



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