



2020 State of the University Address

Virginia Wesleyan University

President Scott D. Miller

August 21, 2020

Good afternoon. Thank you to our campus community and friends who are watching here in Coastal Virginia and beyond.

Annie and I are grateful to begin our sixth year with you, and we appreciate the continued support we have received from our Virginia Wesleyan family. Thank you, all.

Thank you, also, for the generous support of the sponsors of today's State of the University Address:

- The Franklin Johnston Group—Taylor Franklin, VWU Class of 2004, Chief Operating Officer at The Franklin Johnston Group.
- TowneBank—Bob Aston, Executive Chairman, Morgan Davis, President and Chief Executive Officer, and Bobby Fox '94, Senior Vice President

....we thank you.

We also express appreciation for the tremendous leadership provided by our Board of Trustees. In particular, we thank Board Chair John Malbon for his innovative ideas, strategic thinking, and tireless support of the University.

Finally, we thank our advisory councils—the Alumni Council, President's Council, and Parents' Council. Your energy and devotion are second to none.

#

It is hard to believe that six months have passed since COVID-19 brought fear, tragedy, and unrest and disrupted all aspects of our everyday lives. In my 30 years as a college president, I have faced adversity in many forms. This virus, however, has brought some of the greatest challenges of my career.

I am so proud of how our entire campus community—students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends—have persevered through the difficulties that have emerged. All of you have stepped up to continue the important work we do, and your efforts have a tremendous impact here on campus and throughout the region.

I would like to thank our Emergency Response Team, led by Keith Moore, Vice President for Campus Life and Operational Management, and Maynard Schaus, Vice President for Academic Affairs,

for their hard work. For months, they have led teams from all areas of campus in defining our ongoing operational priorities and developing our plan for a safe return this fall.

In March, students embraced remote instruction with excitement and some, enjoying the novelty and convenience of class from their bedroom, considered continuing their education virtually. Eight weeks later, most of those same students and parents told us they were ready for campus to reopen. They missed being in a classroom, on stage, or in a lab; dropping into their professor's office with a question; and working together on a project in the library. As both fans and competitors, they missed athletic teams. They missed our student activities, Greek Life, ping pong in the Batten Center, and long lunches in Boyd. They missed Honors Convocation, Graduation, and all of the pomp and circumstance that comes with the end of an academic year. They recognized the value of the high impact residential experience.

In the short term, COVID-19 has required us to modify our operational model, reducing density while remaining true to who we are. For the longer term, we must continue to multi-task—addressing current events while also planning for a promising future. One thing is for sure: all of higher education will look different when we re-emerge from the pandemic. . .and it will take at least five years for institutions of all types to recover. For efficiency of today's address, I won't repeat analysis from our communication over these past six months. I will focus today, instead, on accomplishments from the past year and implications and plans for the future.

This year will continue to present unprecedented challenges in higher education and in everyday life on campus. Our confidence in our strength as a campus community allows us to embrace these challenges. We will need to come together to safeguard each other and continue adapting with agility and creativity. But I know that together we will make it an extraordinary and memorable, if unique, academic year.

#

Some may say the 2019-20 Academic Year will be remembered:

- For heat-induced rolling brownouts across the region in August that caused intermittent power outages and impacted parts of our campus infrastructure.
- For a tropical storm in late September that destroyed the roof of Smithdeal Hall.
- For the cyber attack in December that crippled operations for several weeks.
- For The unexpected passing of our Senior Vice President Mort Gamble in January.

- For the tragic and senseless deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and many others that reignited the desperate need for social change and equality in America.
- And, of course, for the global pandemic that continues to impact our campus, our country, and the world.

These events were painful and challenging in different ways, but they also provided a chance for reflection and opportunity as we plan for the future in ways we never imagined. So, on a deeper level, I look at last year as:

- An opportunity to recommit to assessing our practices, reflecting on our mission and culture, and further educating ourselves on how we can be part of the solution for much-needed positive social change.
- A chance to see the Virginia Wesleyan family band together through incredibly difficult circumstances, showing compassion, understanding, and resiliency...lifting one another up in a time of need.

And despite these challenges, we also found opportunity:

- To reevaluate and improve our campus infrastructure, both in facilities and technologically.
- To mark a record year of headcount enrollment.
- To continue campus construction in year four of our capital improvement plan.
- To further our commitment to environmental stewardship and education through development of our formal Environmental Guiding Principles.
- To expand our global presence with the joint acquisition of a campus in Tokyo—Lakeland University Japan and Virginia Wesleyan University Global.
- And to reimagine our affordability model to expand options and make a Virginia Wesleyan education more accessible to students.

More to come on each of these points a little later.

#

But now, I would like to return to the very important charge of addressing social change on our campus and in our community...

In 2019, Christopher Noxon's book *Good Trouble* was published. Ten months ago he was on campus in Blocker Auditorium discussing it. In the closing pages of the book, Noxon tells readers that if they ever wondered what they would have done if they had been alive during the civil rights movement, they need to realize that, right now, in this moment, we all have that choice.

In recent months we have seen frustration, sadness, fear, and anger, but we have also seen communities coming together, protesting and speaking out. Guns, riot gear, mothers protesting with their children, and pulling down monuments have become mainstream images and experiences as racism and inequality are being loudly called out. Regardless of how any of us frame those images, they highlight brokenness and a social contract that many people don't buy into. They highlight people wanting to make a change, and tell a story of people willing to make a stand against injustice.

In the middle of all of this, one unifying force—remarkably—was the life, and the death, of John Lewis, a key figure in the civil rights movement and a deeply respected congressman from Georgia. Lewis was the one who came up with the term "Good Trouble," recognizing that sometimes we need to get in trouble for good causes and that there are good ways in which to do so.

As a campus, I want us to pause and reflect on just two of the many profound and heartfelt testimonies about Congressman Lewis.

President George W. Bush said, "We the people, including congressmen and presidents, can have differing views on how to perfect our union while sharing the conviction that our nation, however flawed, is a good and noble one. We live in a better and nobler country today because of John Lewis and his abiding faith in the power of God, the power of democracy and in the power of love to lift us all to a higher ground."

President Barack Obama wrote, "Thanks to him, we now all have our marching orders—to keep believing in the possibility of remaking this country we love until it lives up to its full promise."

We have our marching orders, and I want Virginia Wesleyan to lead during this time. That needs to be part of our legacy. The deaths of John Lewis and of George Floyd have created a seminal moment in our nation's ongoing struggle for racial equity. Now, individually and as a community, we need to draw inspiration and motivation from the triumphs of John Lewis and the tragedy of George Floyd and so many others. There is much work to be done.

As we strive for higher ground, four aspects of our University's identity stand out. In 1866, exactly 100 years before the first class entered Virginia Wesleyan, this land—on which our University

lies—was used to help recently freed slaves make the transition to freedom. Our campus needs to continue to be a place where significant transitions occur in people's lives.

A second key to our identity can be seen in the figure of John Wesley, literally represented in a life-sized statue on campus. In his "Thoughts Upon Slavery," he questioned traditional claims of history, challenged the laws of Virginia, and highlighted abhorrent treatment of slaves, notably calling out Christians who were complicit. Wesley spoke out when others would not.

A third aspect of our identity came in 1996 when the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom was launched as a result of a letter written by Bob Nusbaum. Nusbaum saw diversity as the core of American civic life and saw dialogue as necessary for healthy expressions of diversity. This spring, the CSRF was renamed the Robert Nusbaum Center to honor the legacy of this man who, in the 1950s, publicly fought "massive resistance" to the integration of Norfolk public schools, who created "The Aid Fund" that provided scholarships to African-Americans struggling against racial discrimination.

A fourth aspect of our identity is our diverse campus itself. For three consecutive years U.S. News & World Report has ranked Virginia Wesleyan in the top 25 for "Ethnic Diversity" among National Liberal Arts Colleges. Diversity, however, has to be more than a number. That recognition means little unless we, as an institution, actually change perspectives and lives.

How do we do so?

Although the university has had a statement on inclusivity for a number of years, in the last two years we have made five structural changes so that we will grow both in our sensitivity to racial matters and in our efforts to acknowledge and address inequity, prejudice, and discrimination.

First, we have appointed the first Chief Diversity Officer in the history of the University: Brian Kurisky.

Second, we have made a home for the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities on our campus. Paula Bazemore, the Hampton Roads Program Manager, conducts regular workshops on microaggression and unconscious bias for faculty, staff, and students.

Third, in the last year we have developed course work that will lead to a minor in Africana Studies. Modupe Oshikoya, Assistant Professor of Political Science, has been appointed as the Program Coordinator for the upcoming academic year.

Fourth, the President's Council for Inclusive Communities will be meeting more frequently and proactively with its emphasis on identifying and seeking to end all racism and discrimination present in our community. We need to ensure that everyone has a voice here and feels welcomed, valued, and fully included.

And fifth, as I mentioned earlier, our campus center that focuses on diversity and dialogue, the Robert Nisbaum Center, is focusing even more on issues of race. We know that many people want to do good and to make constructive change, but they don't know how or feel like they don't have the power to make a difference. The Center's discussions, dialogues, and trainings this fall will focus on key and controversial issues and offer practical lessons that can inform our efforts today.

Be a part of these discussions. Be a part of the thinking, conversations, and actions that will make these difficult times a catalyst for meaningful change. Be a part of another moment that adds to the Virginia Wesleyan legacy.

Virginia Wesleyan is at its best when we work together, and I am grateful to those who have reached out in ways that lead to our growth. Thank you for sharing your thoughts, concerns, and ideas.

Black lives matter. They should matter to every American, every person of faith, and every student. And, because of Virginia Wesleyan's legacy, that message is vitally important to us. Black lives not only matter deeply to VWU, they matter deeply to me. As a white man, I recognize that I will never truly understand the oppression experienced by Black people, but I stand. I stand with our Black students, faculty, staff, and community near and far, and I intend for my deeds to be acts of solidarity.

I know that part of what that means . . . is listening. . . and—as President Obama said—to “keep believing in the possibility of remaking this country we love until it lives up to its full promise.”

#

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Now I turn your attention to progress and plans in the area of Academic Affairs. This past year has been one of growth and change for our academic program. The combination of new leadership and unforeseen challenges propelled us forward. As we addressed the challenges presented by the cyber attack and the pandemic, we found ways to accomplish our goals and also worked to turn adversity into opportunity. Our faculty, with impressive efforts and ingenuity, adapted to the need to shift to remote instruction after spring break.

My special thanks to Maynard Schaus, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Sue Larkin, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, for their outstanding leadership. This first year for them has provided its share of unique challenges.

As trends in higher education have shifted, it has become increasingly important that we make clear the relevance of the liberal arts. With the complex challenges currently facing us, an

education that brings together diverse perspectives and prepares students to be leaders, problem solvers, critical thinkers, and strong communicators has never been more important. We are growing our curriculum to open new avenues for students to acquire these skills and to capitalize on the interdisciplinary nature of the liberal arts and the interests of students and employers.

We are extremely excited about our new partnership with Lakeland University and the creation of Lakeland University Japan and Virginia Wesleyan University Global. This partners us with one of only two approved American universities currently operating in Japan and is fully accredited.

The Japan campus currently offers a two-year program with courses from across the liberal arts, all taught in English, to 400 students from 30 countries.

We will have graduates from the Associate's Degree program come to our Virginia Beach campus to earn their Bachelor's degree. This will add an increased international presence to our student body.

In our current global environment, a more diverse and international campus creates a richer educational experience for all of our students. We will also be able to send students and faculty to our campus in Tokyo. The campus is in Shinjuku, part of Tokyo's central government and business district.

This video gives an overview of the program and highlights this exciting new addition to our academic program.

On campus, the Batten Honors College continues to bring in strong, engaged students. Now going into its fourth year, we will experience our first full cohort graduation in May. The Batten and Shumadine scholars are dynamic additions to our campus community. We'll hear more about this elite program and our newest class later.

In partnership with the Sentara College of Health Sciences, we are establishing a joint Bachelor of Science in Nursing program.

Beginning in January of 2021, students will take their first three semesters of course work here at Virginia Wesleyan, completing General Education requirements and nursing program prerequisites. After that, students will continue to live on our campus and be VWU students, but will complete their nursing requirements at the nearby Sentara Health Sciences campus. We are excited about this partnership and the opportunities it will bring to our students. Deirdre Gonsalves-Jackson, Associate Professor of Biology, has been named Director of Nursing and Allied Health and will lead this program.

Our MBA program has continued to grow and now features concentrations in Marketing, Healthcare Administration, and Finance. Part of the Virginia Wesleyan University Global Campus, the MBA continues to attract students and gain kudos for its strengths and rigor. The Virginia Wesleyan University Global campus also continues to grow, launching majors in Information Systems, Digital

Music, Psychology, and Sociology and adding a minor in Communication to our online course offerings.

We added a new Bachelor of Musical Arts degree to our rapidly growing Music program and added a Bachelor of Science option to our Psychology program. New minors in Africana Studies and Data Science were created to capitalize on existing strengths of our faculty. We added certificates in Advanced and Applied Microscopy, Biotechnology, Civic Engagement, Music Technology and Sound Recording, and Supply Chain Management and Logistics, which support the interests of both our current students and other Coastal Virginia residents.

We are proud to have received the Carnegie Foundation's prestigious Community Engagement Classification. Virginia Wesleyan is among 119 U.S. colleges and universities this year to earn the elective designation, which indicates institutional commitment to community engagement. The classification is the leading framework for assessment and recognition of community engagement in U.S. higher education. We are proud of this accolade, which is a direct result of amazing work in the community by students, faculty, and staff.

With the dedication of the Susan S. Goode Fine and Performing Arts Center in March of 2019, Virginia Wesleyan now has a sought-after performing arts venue for artists from around the world.

This new facility, along with the growth of our Arts programs on campus, has led to the need to update the Fine Arts Building, now named Susan T. Beverly Hall with upgrades to the Visual Arts Studios, the Ensemble Rehearsal Room, the Entrance & Lobby, and the Music Studios. Later this fall, we will also be renovating Hofheimer Theatre.

We are also proud to announce that we are officially an All-Steinway Campus, with 90% of our pianos replaced with Steinway and Steinway designed pianos. The arts have played a crucial role in supporting all of us during these difficult times, and we are proud to support and develop artists and the arts in Coastal Virginia.

I have already mentioned how the Robert Nusbaum Center will continue to expand its mission to create a civil society through education, respectful dialogue, and mutual understanding. Under the leadership of Craig Wansink, the Joan P. and Macon F. Brock, Jr., Director of the Robert Nusbaum Center, the Center equips and empowers students and community members to be leaders and citizens who value diversity and who understand how the reconciliation of our religious, racial, and ideological differences create meaningful opportunities for civil solutions to difficult and urgent problems.

We have continued to restructure and streamline Academic Affairs. We consolidated several small departments to create more efficient administration and clarify reporting relationships.

We welcome two new Deans, Leslie Caughell in the Birdsong School of Social Science and Steven Emmanuel in the Susan S. Goode School of Arts and Humanities. We thank the outgoing Deans, Linda Ferguson and Travis Malone, for their strong leadership and many contributions to Virginia Wesleyan.

Our outstanding faculty had another strong year of scholarship, teaching, and service. We recognized excellence with awards and with promotions. And we also welcome new faculty to our campus.

Faculty Promotions

Bryson Mortensen, Associate Professor of Music

Audrey Malagon, Professor of Mathematics

New Faculty

Abdulla Al-Alaj, Assistant Professor of Computer Science

Rebecca John, Assistant Professor of Education

Clair Berube, Assistant Professor of Education

United Methodist Church General Board of Higher Education & Ministry Exemplary Teacher Award (2020)

Wayne Pollock, Associate Professor of Sport and Recreation Professions

#

CAMPUS LIFE

Let's turn to the area of campus life... With a new year comes new opportunities. Formerly known as Student Affairs, the new Office of Campus Life and Operational Management continues to meet the needs of our students in a broader sense.

Under the leadership of Keith Moore, Vice President for Campus Life and Operational Management, and Jason Seward, Associate Vice President for Campus Life and Operational Management, the division is efficiently managing the challenges of day-to-day operations that enhance the student experience.

Two other offices within Campus Life have also undergone a transformation and rebranding. Under the direction of Sarah Guzzo, Director of Student Activities, and Willie Harrell, Director of Recreation and Wellness, VWU's new Off The Hook program (formerly the Wesleyan Activities Council) and UREC (formerly RecX) will provide students with community based activities and experiences that promote and support social fellowship, educational enlightenment, and healthy lifestyle choices. Their operations continue to complement and enhance the residential program developed and implemented by David Stuebing, Director of Residence Life. In the age of COVID, these offices are challenged in developing meaningful experiences for our students that are creative and engaging, while adhering to best practices as they relate to social distancing and other safety initiatives.

The University recently launched the new Work and Learn Program. Supervised by Jason Seward, this new campus initiative will assist more VWU students financially while also supporting their personal and professional growth. I am pleased to share that for the fall semester, over 40 percent of our traditional students will benefit from this program.

Comprised of four components—the Federal Work-Study, *Opus*, Campus Cooperative (non-work-study employment), and Residential Leadership (resident assistants)—the WLP provides students with meaningful work opportunities that allow them to better engage with the Virginia Wesleyan community while developing the necessary skills and experiences to be competitive in today's job market. The program creates opportunities that provide the University with staff, while providing students with opportunities for reduction in the cost of their education. I'd like to thank Jason, Jessica Harrington, Director of Career Development, and Teresa Rhyne, Director of Financial Aid, for their commitment to this powerful initiative.

The Malbon Center for Technology has managed several high-profile projects this year, the most notable being the installation of a new VOIP phone system, a campus wifi upgrade, and a migration of our Colleague system to cloud-hosted platform. Thank you to the Malbon Center staff for their dedication in managing and recovering from last year's cyber attack. Their quick response and countless hours of work enabled the University to return to normal operations in record time.

We made significant improvements to the University's dining facilities over the last year. We begin this semester with a completely redesigned Boyd Dining Center, featuring a fully updated appearance and in-demand dining options with modernized service areas and contemporary seating. We opened the Coastal Market convenience store at the start of 2020 in the newly renovated Batten Plaza of the Jane P. Batten Student Center. Coastal Market offers more options than ever for our campus community, with on-the-go food options, toiletries, and many other items now available from

7a.m. to 11p.m. We also transformed the Marlin Grille into the new and improved Harbor Grill at the start of the spring semester.

#

ATHLETICS

We welcomed back Joanne Renn as our Executive Director of Intercollegiate Athletics. Joanne hasn't missed a beat providing sound leadership at the institutional and conference level at a critical time.

The former Convocation Center received a fresh new look thanks to the generosity of the TowneBank Foundation. This is TowneBank's second major contribution to Marlin athletics in three years—TowneBank Park is also the new home of our two-time national championship softball team.

The newly named *TowneBank Arena* now features a freshly re-surfaced floor with the updated Marlin logo, an increased capacity of 2,000 with custom stadium seating and grandstand seating added on each end, direct access to the second-level Marlin Athletic Fund entertainment suite, and a host of other upgrades. Here is a video that captures the excitement of this all-new venue.

Marlin athletics did have a number of memorable moments despite a shortened year due to COVID. The fall was highlighted by the volleyball program winning the Old Dominion Athletic Conference Championship and making their first appearance in the NCAA Tournament. Coach Andrea Hoover-Erbig earned Coach of the Year honors from both the ODAC and the Virginia Sport Information Directors association.

Men's cross country saw their first national qualifier in nine seasons in Skyler Lattuca, who finished 12th at Regionals and qualified for the National Championship meet.

Women's soccer placed second in the ODAC Championship, falling on penalty kicks after a draw in overtime.

Men's basketball finished 23-5 and narrowly fell short of an NCAA appearance.

Indoor Track and Field added two All-Americans: Geni Roberts for the men and Jaylyn Lane for the women.

Softball, despite having their season cut short, was on a roll collecting an 11-1 record in 2020. It was an honor to present the Norfolk Sports Club Outstanding Senior Student-Athlete Award to pitcher Hanna Hull in May. In my 30 years as a college president, I have never seen a student-athlete as dominant in any sport, on any level, at any school. Here's a video of the virtual award presentation.

As a result of the NCAA spring sport exemption, I am delighted that Hanna will be returning as a graduate student this year. She is just 16 wins from becoming the all-time winningest pitcher in NCAA Division III history.

Congratulations to all of our student-athletes and coaches on their many successes this past year. I am particularly proud of the 171 Marlins, who despite challenging circumstances, were named to the ODAC All-Academic team, and the 23 new inductees into the Chi Alpha Sigma Honor Society.

The 2020-21 season will be unlike any other we have faced as we navigate the ever-changing scenarios that COVID-19 throws our way. As it stands, the fall and start of winter seasons have been postponed until after December 31. The ODAC Board of Directors and Presidents' Council are meeting regularly to discuss the possibilities of playing all sports in the spring, however, that hinges upon the development of the pandemic at hand.

#

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

And now on to Finance and Administration... Thanks to Jim Cooper, Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Sylvia Schelly, Associate Vice President for Finance, for outstanding strategic leadership during the COVID-19 crisis. Even while addressing the challenges that were presented, they continued to focus on long-term issues and the good future of the University.

An exciting new project that will come to fruition this fall is the completion of Coastal 61 at Oxford Village—our public-private partnership with The Franklin Johnston Group. The new luxury apartment complex is located on the north side of campus adjacent to the main entrance on Wesleyan Drive. With the City of Virginia Beach, we agreed that only upper-level students, graduate students, and 12-month international students would be eligible to reside there. The complex is primarily designed to be an upscale auxiliary revenue source. It is an attractive addition to the campus, making good use of an awkwardly shaped, previously unproductive University asset. Let's take a look. . .

Last summer, we made the decision to move to an Outsourced Chief Investment Officer model for management of the University's growing endowment. The process immediately proved beneficial as early decisions have protected us during the current national fiscal crisis.

Following external review, we also outsourced certain accounting procedures resulting in greater efficiencies of operations and improved fund balance valuations to Adavaco, a firm that

specializes in endowment accounting. The result has improved processes, timeliness and accuracy of financial information.

In the fall, Jim, Sylvia, and Shane Boyd, Director of Institutional Research, completed work on the development of a multi-year financial plan, utilizing information gathered from key areas, including finance, enrollment, advancement and auxiliary services. The plan provides a basis to improve University budgeting and forecasting and takes into account best practices, ratios and desired modeling.

After a year of evaluation and planning, we undertook substantial renovation and redistribution of space within the Batten Student Center. A consolidation of services occurred with duplication, postal services, apparel, and books moved to a one-stop shop in Scribner University Store, and more accessible office spaces were created for Student Activities & Greek Life, Dining and Conference Services, and Human Resources and Payroll Services.

#

ADVANCEMENT

The critical area of advancement continues to produce outstanding results—in fact, the last five years have been the best fundraising years in the history of the University.

I thank Associate Vice President for Advancement Lori Harris for her outstanding interim leadership since the passing of Mort Gamble in January. Lori continues to provide strong leadership for our alumni program and stepped up to take on additional responsibilities this past spring.

It is also my pleasure to announce the appointment of Kimberley J. Hammer as our new Vice President for Advancement and Special Assistant to the President. Kim will join the VWU family on November 1. She is currently Vice President for Advancement at Carlow University in Pittsburgh and has served in several impressive development roles during her 28-year career in advancement. She is an accomplished academic leader with a proven track record in all areas of advancement. She brings a breadth of experience, talent and strategic thinking to this important role.

#

Board of Trustees member and 1994 Virginia Wesleyan grad Eric C. Nyman, who serves as president of Hasbro North America, gave the keynote speech during our 2019 Founders Day Convocation and was recognized with the Distinguished Alumnus Award. Virginia Beach Police Chief Jim Cervera was recognized with the Wesley Award for his leadership and service to the community.

As part of Founders Day festivities, the 2019 Alumni Awards recipients were recognized. These honorees are accomplished and talented, and bring great honor and distinction to Virginia Wesleyan University.

2020 Alumni Awards

- Eric C. Nyman '94, President, Hasbro North America (Distinguished Alumnus Award)
- Candice E. Driskoll '94, Executive Director, Access Partnership (Alumni Service Award)
- Wallace R. Driskoll '00, Captain (Retired), Norfolk Police Department (Alumni Service Award)
- Amari Agee '15, Production Coordinator, DreamWorks Animation (Graduate of the Last Decade Award)

We also honored Robert T. "Bobby" Williams, Class of 1975, with The Dennie Allen '70 Alumni Award in recognition of his 41 years of service to the City and to Virginia Wesleyan, and named one of the trails traversing our campus in his memory.

In February we hosted the Athletic Hall of Fame ceremony. We celebrated four former Marlin athletic greats and recognized benefactors Jane P. Batten and George Y. and Sue Birdsong and the Birdsong families for their decades of support to the University's intercollegiate athletics program. Members of the twelfth class are permanently recognized in the Athletic Hall of Fame in the Batten Student Center.

2020 Athletic Hall of Fame

- George Y. and Sue Birdsong and the Birdsong families
- Jane P. Batten
- Jessica Edelman Gosnell '13, Women's Soccer 2009-13
- Victoria "Tori" Higginbotham-Abbey '14, Softball 2010-14
- Nancy Mattox Moore '00, Women's Basketball and Softball 1997-00
- Chris Yeager '94, Men's Soccer 1990-94

The Alumni Council continued its ongoing efforts to increase engagement among fellow alumni, secure event sponsorships, support regional alumni gatherings, and encourage gifts to The Excellence Fund. Council Members making gifts in support of The Excellence Fund celebrated 100 percent giving participation for a second year in a row.

During the Faculty and Staff Campaign, "The Future is Here," 100 percent of Virginia Wesleyan employees who are also alumni participated in the campaign. The University boasted an overall participation rate of 73 percent, exceeding the goal of 70 percent.

The VWU Day of Giving was held in April and was bigger than ever. With our challenge match of \$5,000 from alumnus Billy Spain, Class of 1979, our Day of Giving support total was \$22,800 from 172 alumni, parents, and friends.

Thanks to a lead gift from the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges, the Student Life and Learning Fund was created to address the most pressing needs of our students during COVID-19 and beyond. Nearly \$70,000 has been raised since creating the fund in late March.

Corporate sponsorship continues to grow. In particular, the corporate partners program with intercollegiate athletics has produced 52 vendors and community partners. Banners signifying their support are displayed in TowneBank Arena and at outdoor athletic venues.

Through several lead gifts and donor support, The Robert G. Cabell III and Maude Morgan Cabell Foundation \$300,000 challenge grant was successfully matched, providing funds for building upgrades to the original fine arts building.

We're pleased to recognize lead donor Susan Torma Beverly, Class of 1972, with the naming of the renovated building. Other contributing donors included The Mary Morton Parsons Foundation, the Alison J. and Ella W. Parsons Fund, The Hampton Roads Community Foundation, James A. Hixon, and Clay Hofheimer Barr. We thank them for their generosity and support of the arts at Virginia Wesleyan.

#

ENROLLMENT

Onto Enrollment... Earlier this month we celebrated the retirement of Vice President for Enrollment David Waggoner. We thank David for his service to the institution and his strong leadership as we developed a comprehensive enrollment plan over the last five years. His work here was a fitting capstone to a decorated career in higher education. Stepping up to fill that role is 2004 Virginia Wesleyan graduate Heather Campbell. Heather has been an instrumental part of the program

for the last three years. She will serve as Chief Enrollment Officer and Acting Vice President for Enrollment.

Despite the unusual recruiting climate caused by COVID-19, we have hit a three-year high on first-year freshmen enrollment deposits in an environment where many private colleges and universities in Virginia are down between 10 and 20 percent.

I am pleased to report that overall enrollment at Virginia Wesleyan for 2019-20 was the highest in the University's history at 1,677. When we add in our students in Tokyo, we total 2,032 students for the 2020 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.

We know that cost continues to be a definitive factor in student and family decision making. Recent data provided by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia show the average cost of a four-year state school in 2020-21 is approximately \$25,000. The average cost to attend Virginia Wesleyan is *below* that figure at about \$23,000 once our average institutional award is applied—and almost all of Virginia Wesleyan's students receive some form of institutionally funded financial support. This means that for many students, the cost to attend VWU is actually *less* than the cost of attending a state school.

We are committed to making Virginia Wesleyan an affordable choice and this is evidenced through three years in a row of tuition freezes. Additionally, we have aimed to become more of a 12-month academic enterprise by providing low-cost January Term and Summer Session options, seamless transfer for area community college students, and establishing our Work and Learn Program. We will continue our efforts to make our education affordable and are already working to expand the Work and Learn Program to meet the needs of a greater number of students.

The Batten Honors College, which fully funds the tuition of 80 students and covers two-thirds tuition for an additional 80 students, continues to thrive and has developed into an elite, national niche program for the University. Entering its fourth year, our newest class boasts a collective grade point average of 4.21 on a 4.0 scale, an average SAT score of 1382, and an average ACT score of 30—both ACT and SAT are a four-year high. Students come to be a part of the Batten Honors College from all over the country and world.

Due to the Governor's stay-at-home order we implemented numerous virtual visit opportunities. Though we're now offering in-person tours again, the virtual options are still available.

VIRTUAL VISIT OPPORTUNITIES

- Virtual Marlins Day Open House
- Virtual Athletics Open House
- Daily Virtual Enrollment Information Sessions
- Daily Virtual Office Visits (with enrollment and other offices on campus)
- Virtual Transfer Sessions
- Batten Honors College Virtual Information Session
- Meet a Marlin Student Videos

Virginia Wesleyan University Global Campus continues to flourish under the leadership of Paul Ewell and with the recruitment direction of Larry Belcher, Director of Enrollment for all VWU Global Campus programs.

During the quarantine period we strategized on how we could help a hurting and wanting workforce. VWU Global responded with a series of workforce-related courses with 8,200 learners enrolling in these offerings during spring and summer. Yes, 8,200 learners in non-credit online classes addressing topics such as webpage design and business marketing.

Early enrollment programs continue to grow with Tidewater Collegiate Academy, Cape Henry Collegiate, Chesapeake Bay Academy, and Broadwater Academy as our largest partners.

I reiterate our excitement about the opportunities created by Lakeland University Japan and VWU Global. A significant number of students at our campus in Tokyo have indicated a desire to continue their concurrent enrollment in Virginia Beach during their junior and senior years.

Our Westminster-Wesleyan Lifelong Learning Institute with our partners at Westminster-Canterbury on Chesapeake Bay was going strong prior to the coronavirus. Soon to enter its fourth year, the program grew to over 3,000 attendees before the shutdown. We look forward to continuing this program once it is safe to do so.

#

GOALS FOR 2020-2021

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.

In Academics:

- We must continue to strategically develop new online and face-to-face programs, particularly interdisciplinary programs that build on our existing strengths and programs and bring the liberal arts together. This includes becoming more of a 12-month educational enterprise.
- We must further develop our relationships with our international partners, particularly LUJ/VWU Global, and advance opportunities for our students to study abroad in a cost-effective manner.
- We must learn from our remote teaching experiences and use this knowledge to reflect upon ingrained methodologies, so we are ready to incorporate new modalities and technologies where prudent and effective.
- We must continue to foster an inclusive and diverse campus community through a curriculum and campus programs that promote engagement, raise knowledge, identify and address prejudice, and build trust.
- We must continue to engage students in transformational curricular experiences that help them to transfer classroom content and skills into internships, research, study away, and civic engagement.

In Campus Life and Athletics:

- We must provide a meaningful and engaging student experience during a year of unprecedented challenges related to COVID-19.
- We must continue to provide a safe environment for students for their social, emotional, academic, and spiritual well-being.
- We must expand the Work and Learn Program, offering more employment opportunities throughout campus and developing a community cooperative externship program to make a Virginia Wesleyan education more affordable for students and families.
- We must continue to foster a campus culture respectful and accepting of all races, faiths, sexual identification, and socioeconomic backgrounds in collaboration with the President's Council for Inclusive Communities, the University's Chief Diversity Officer, and the Virginia Council for Inclusive Communities.
- We must 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, alumni involvement and philanthropy.

In Finance & Administration:

- We must continue our commitment to affordability, accessibility, and efficiency for our students.
- We must continue our focus on The Parthenon Group key indicators for long-term financial prosperity and growth.
- We must complete and effectively market the Coastal 61 at Oxford Village mixed-use residential complex with our public-private partners at The Franklin Johnston Group.
- We must continue to grow our endowment and develop an effective model of endowment management through our Outsourced Chief Investment Officer.
- We must work with campus operations and our campus-based partners to continue to grow auxiliary revenues as a source of supplemental income.

In Advancement:

- We must continue to develop a culture of philanthropy among all University constituents, improving and enhancing initiatives in alumni engagement, annual giving, corporate sponsorships, community partnerships, and major gift fundraising.
- We must increase the quantity of first-time gifts by employing innovative fundraising strategies and developing a pipeline to transition annual donors to major gift donors.
- We must improve donor retention through focused donor relations and stewardship strategies.
- We must increase total planned giving expectancies to all areas of the University.
- We must enhance early engagement strategies to strengthen the bond between VWU and its students and young alumni.

In Enrollment:

- We must continue to refine our comprehensive recruitment model to achieve the profile desired for our traditional day population.
- We must meet annual goals for growth in the six parts of our enrollment plan: (1) Residential First-Years and Transfers, (2) Evening and Weekend, (3) Graduate Programs, (4) VWU Global, (5) Advanced Scholars and Early Enrollment, and (6) Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning.
- We must continue to recruit top scholars nationally and internationally for the Batten Honors College, building upon the tremendous success of the first four years of the program.
- We must continue to position Virginia Wesleyan as a “transfer-friendly” institution by promoting our Fair Transfer Guarantee to graduates of Virginia community colleges.

- We must continue to grow non-credit programs for lifelong learners through our partnerships with Westminster-Canterbury on Chesapeake Bay, Ed2Go, and the United Methodist Church.

#

These goals remind us that even in the midst of these difficult times, we need to keep striving forward. The current social, political, health, and economic challenges have made clear how crucial it is that we can all think, analyze, communicate, learn, create, and embrace multiple perspectives. These skills are the foundation of the liberal arts and the core of what we do, and I would argue that what we do has never been more important. We must empower our students to be the next generation of leaders.

Though times are difficult, I know that we will prevail and emerge better and stronger than ever as an institution. Our organization is resilient and that strength will only grow as we continue to adapt, utilize resourcefulness and creativity, and demonstrate a deeper appreciation for one another.

Thank you for tuning in today. Stay engaged, and always remember, "It's a great day to be a Marlin!" Thank you.



5817 WESLEYAN DRIVE | VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA 23455 | VWU.EDU