



2021 State of the University Address

Virginia Wesleyan University

President Scott D. Miller

August 20, 2021

2021 State of the University
August 20, 2021 at 11:30 a.m.
TowneBank Arena

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 seventh year with you, and we appreciate the continued support we have received from our Virginia Wesleyan family. Thank you.

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

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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.

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It is hard to believe that 18 months have passed since COVID-19 brought fear, tragedy, and unrest, disrupting all aspects of our lives. The Virginia Wesleyan community is often described as special, and the challenges of the pandemic reminded us all of how true this is.

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. If time permitted, I would personally thank every one of you individually, for your efforts in the past months.

Even mundane tasks were far more challenging due to COVID, and I appreciate how we all came together to serve our students. These efforts were guided by our Emergency Response Team, led by Dr. Keith Moore, Vice President for Campus Life and Operational Management, and I'd like to thank him and them for their hard work. They have led groups from all areas of campus to ensure a safe environment for all of us.

While we all found ourselves adapting processes and overcoming unexpected challenges, there were a few individuals who went above and beyond the call of duty. Congratulations to the faculty and staff members who were recognized last week during the President's Appreciation Awards for their extraordinary service during the pandemic.

While all of these individuals provided outstanding service and support during a very uncertain time, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the special efforts of April Christman and now our Director of Student Health. April was the University's nominee for the Virginia Foundation for Independent College's Distinguished Service Award for Pandemic Support. April's meticulous attention to detail and her passion for our students were instrumental in ensuring the safety of our campus community last year, and I congratulate her on this well-deserved nomination.

As I watched our community rising to meet the challenges associated with the pandemic, I never doubted our commitment. While there were many variables out of our control, we controlled what we could and took everything else in stride—adapting, shifting, reorganizing and reimagining along the way. Out of 19 private institutions in Virginia, Virginia Wesleyan had the third smallest number of COVID cases throughout the academic year. This is especially impressive when you consider that the two schools with lower case numbers are located in rural settings with fewer students, fewer commuters, and smaller populations in their surrounding areas.

Needless to say, our efforts to mitigate COVID on campus were tremendous. I thank each and every one of you for the part you played in helping our students remain on campus for two full semesters of in-person instruction and call on your help once again this semester.

As you all know, the University has adopted a policy that mandates COVID-19 vaccination for all faculty, staff, and students. In yet another example of our community working to take care of each other, we have an extremely high vaccination rate. This, along with masking while indoors, will allow us to have a fall semester that is more traditional, and more fun, than our last three semesters. I look forward to the return of our traditions—like Homecoming and Family Weekend, Founders Day, and more. These kinds of extracurricular activities and events make all the difference in our students' college experience.

###

As we move into the Fall Semester, we do need to acknowledge that the pandemic accelerated an already challenging situation for American higher education that has developed over the last few years:

According to a recent article in *Forbes*, higher education institutions were already facing an eleventh consecutive year of decline in degree-seeking enrollments at two-year and four-year institutions before the pandemic. With revenue sources already strained, many colleges were forced to draw down on financial reserves during the pandemic without any real plan to replace these funds. With large federal stimulus dollars no longer expected, forecasts for higher

education expect both the consolidation and merger of some public institutions, as well as the closure and merger of many colleges and universities in our sector, in the next 1 or 2 years.

With this in mind, it has never been more important that Virginia Wesleyan University make sound, prudent decisions that give the institution the a strong, stable financial future. We still have a long way to go to overcome the losses of the last 18 months, but we have weathered the storm as well as could be expected. We are a leaner, more efficient learning community, and I am convinced that, together, we will rebound stronger than ever.

###

During the pandemic, we have devoted much time to planning. That collaborative planning led us to reflect on who we are, where we've been, and where we are going. While updating our long-range strategic plan, we have continued to pursue space utilization, corrective maintenance, and campus master plan priorities from the planning effort facilitated by Derck and Edson in 2015. We have aggressively pursued and surpassed fundraising goals, and we revised our strategic plan to focus on academic and student support programs.

There are over 500 liberal arts colleges nationwide, and approximately 200 are identified as National Liberal Arts Colleges. Many of these institutions offer similar programs. Some will die or merge in the coming years because they replicate themselves. Those that flourish will dare to be different.

While we have revised our operating model for staffing and expenditure levels to be more comparable to our peers, we have also carefully examined what we need to do to set us apart from other institutions in an extremely competitive market. We are a university that seeks innovative new partnerships and programs as well as diverse revenue streams.

###

A big piece of VWU's success is our commitment to affordability. In a recent study published in *University Business*, 74% of students say that they will base their decision on where to attend college on cost.

Virginia Wesleyan offers a multi-faceted plan of affordability that combines the fourth consecutive year of freezing tuition costs for the 2021-22 academic year, the highly selective Batten Honors College, an expanded Work & Learn Program for student employment, a concurrent enrollment program and Fair Transfer Agreement with all community colleges in Virginia, affordable out-of-semester 12-month course options, and a fifth-year tuition guarantee.

Virginia Wesleyan University's Work and Learn Program is dedicated to providing students with meaningful work opportunities that allow them to better engage with the VWU and larger community. This program engages approximately 40% of our student population and helps them develop necessary skills and experiences to be competitive in today's job market while actively contributing towards the cost of their education.

WesBridge offers select new students two classes for credit over the summer to transition them into their college education and help them build the skills needed to succeed at VWU. This program ties into affordability as it gives students the opportunity to earn six credits toward their graduation requirements with low financial risk, but high reward for those that successfully complete the program. I thank all the faculty and staff involved in implementing our first-ever WesBridge session this past month.

As you know, our highly selective residential Batten Honors College enrolls 160 academically talented students with full or two-thirds tuition scholarships. More on the Batten Honors College in a moment.

Virginia Wesleyan remains committed to affordability now and in the future. Students are not only highly cost-conscious, but also want their investment to produce sound results, namely degree completion and then getting that first job or acceptance into a graduate program. To be considered truly affordable, VWU not only has to have a competitive price tag, we also have to promote and enhance all the ways the University works to guarantee a student's success in the classroom and beyond.

Clearly, Virginia Wesleyan is a university of opportunity. We focus on who we include, not who we exclude. And we're committed to every student's success.

###

Despite all the financial challenges facing our students and the University over the last 18 months, our donors have remained true and provided record levels of support. In fact, fundraising from public and private sources has been the best in University history.

During the last six years we have attracted \$167 million of private donations, and over \$10 million in state and federal designated award dollars. This support has resulted in construction of new buildings and renovation of existing structures. It has resulted in new instrumentation and technology. It has enabled us to revise our position in the marketplace and be more responsive. It has led to increased opportunities for our students. This support has truly transformed us from an aspiring local college to an inspiring global university.

This transformation has inspired a series of private contributions, and I am pleased to announce that our endowment will top \$123 million in 2021-22. The endowment for the Batten Honors College will grow to \$80.2 million this year.

This is significant because it ensures the long term viability of this university for future generations. It also enables us to bring greater focus to a program that has developed into a national niche for Virginia Wesleyan.

I am pleased to share a new relationship with Brown Advisory of Baltimore for the management of the largest portion of our endowment.

In keeping with the most significant of the three pillars for the Batten Honors College, the entire \$80.2 million endowment for the Batten Honors College will be invested in an environmentally friendly way with Brown Advisory. This is part of our commitment to being good stewards for the environment and in keeping with our publicly stated goals with Second Nature and the Intentional Endowments Network as we pursue carbon neutrality. Brown Advisory supports the adoption of long-term investment strategies that create an equitable, low-carbon, and regenerative economy.

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Allow me to expand on the Batten Honors College as a defining program of Virginia Wesleyan University...

In 1997, Lawrence Milas, president of the F.W. Olin Foundation, asked the Foundation's board to use all of its assets to establish a new kind of engineering college. The Olin College of Engineering would graduate students passionate about careers that would combine technological knowledge and entrepreneurship during the emerging Knowledge and Information Age that has changed society so dramatically during this 21st Century.

Part of those Olin assets funded an experiential MBA program at the new Engineering College's neighbor, Babson College, for STEM undergraduates who were interested in entrepreneurial careers.

For the last 12 years, both of those schools have maintained #1 national rankings in their categories of institutions, categories that include MIT, Cal-Tech, Stanford and Harvard.

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In 2016, Jane Parke Batten asked Virginia Wesleyan—an institution she had long believed in—to partner in establishing an Honors College that would graduate gifted students across the professional spectrum who would commit to a single avocation: *saving a planet and population threatened dangerously by climate change and environmental degradation*. Do not bet against the Batten Honors College of Virginia Wesleyan University realizing Mrs. Batten's important vision so fully that it earns the kind of recognition that Olin and Babson have received. That is our intent, Jane. We thank you for believing in this university.

We proudly graduated the first cohort of the Batten Honors College in May. The first graduating class had a cumulative college GPA of 3.6 (on a 4.0 scale). Overall, the program boasts of a 93 percent retention rate and 88 percent VWU graduation rate. The Batten Honors College students are not only academically talented, but they contribute to the campus community through participation in clubs and student government, intramurals, athletics, student employment through the Work & Learn Program, and community service.

Moving forward, the Batten Honors College will continue to refine and strengthen the initial vision set by its founder with more emphasis on growing leaders who WILL address the pressing needs of our environment.

###

The recent series of gifts to our endowment will have an incredible impact on the financial future and security of the University, increasing our permanent net assets and ensuring the strong fiscal condition of Virginia Wesleyan for decades to come. More importantly, the endowment enables a predictable, permanent stream of revenue toward the operation of the University. This allows us to better plan for the growth and future of Virginia Wesleyan.

Endowment funds are meant to be invested, to act as seed for a future fruitful harvest if left to grow thoughtfully and carefully. As such, the University will continue to do more with less. Why? Because it is the responsible thing to do. We have proven year after year that we are innovative, resourceful, and resilient.

###

The challenges of the last 18 months have forced us to alter our focus and think differently. A prevailing theme in higher education is that effective institutions are collaborating more. We have been actively forging new relationships with institutions to discover best practices, to benchmark ourselves against our peers, to provide more opportunities for our students, and to continue learning and innovating to make our university the best it can be.

In June, we were invited to join New American Colleges and Universities, a selective consortium that includes 24 like-minded independent institutions from across the country.

Membership in New American Colleges and Universities is the third distinctive collaboration for Virginia Wesleyan in the last two years.

In 2019, we became one of three Virginia universities—and just 104 nationwide—invited to join the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities. It is the oldest and largest organization committed to serving and connecting the world’s urban and metropolitan universities and their partners. The organization focuses on strengthening institutions that are developing new responses to the pressing educational, economic, and social issues of the day.

At the beginning of this calendar year, the University joined an elite group of 68 National Liberal Arts Colleges collaborating to form the Liberal Arts Colleges Racial Equity Leadership Alliance, known as LACRELA, facilitated by the University of Southern California’s Race & Equity Center. E-convenings and resources from this group continue to inform and shape VWU’s initiatives for diversity, equity and inclusion.

VWU is proud to be a part of these national organizations, and we look forward to continuing our engagement in these organizations and the scores of opportunities and resources they provide.

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In addition to building partnerships with higher education organizations, we are also committed to strengthening our connections within our coastal Virginia community. Our partnership with

Cengage as an online program management provider for our growing non-credit courses continues to attract a strong response.

In the spring and summer of 2020 when so many were struggling, we wanted to help our community. Through a private initiative, we offered 10 continuing education classes at no cost for furloughed or unemployed local residents. 1,200 people enrolled in these professional development courses. This spring and summer we had a similar offering of seven courses and had 1,400 community members enroll. VWU's partnership with Cengage for non-credit online workforce development courses will expand this year to our Japan campus and will be offered through LUJ/VWU Global's Open College in Tokyo.

These no-cost continuing education programs caught the attention of Virginia Beach Economic Development, which has become a strong partner in workforce development. We are delighted for their support in this important initiative which is helping Coastal Virginia not only recover from the pandemic, but become stronger and more resilient.

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Our commitment to community is fostered in our Methodist founding. When Heritage United Methodist Church was constructed on university land in 1989, the University had a vision of mutual benefit -- service and collaboration rooted in the Wesleyan tradition between the college and its surrounding faith community. After more than 30 years, that vision has finally come true.

I am pleased to once again welcome Rev. Kotosha Griffin to Virginia Wesleyan as she serves in a dual role, serving as pastor at Heritage United Methodist Church and as chaplain at VWU. The collaboration will include student participation at Heritage for those interested in the ministry, with service-learning opportunities in the food pantry and coat closet, and opportunities for students in the musical arts with church services and special church events.

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Having completed my tenure as President of the North American Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges, and Universities, I am more confident than ever that the result of the upcoming vote will result in a new look for the United Methodist Church, one that is committed to inclusion for all. Although the Church's General Conference has been postponed until 2022, the separation is outlined in the protocols and has already begun. Under the scenario where the church splits, VWU would remain with the United Methodist Church so long as the protocols ensuring full LGBTQ rights are approved in 2022. While fracturing of the Church is regrettable, this is truly the best outcome for both parties to move forward.

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Now I turn your attention to progress and plans...

I am pleased to share that Mary Ryberg is our new Vice President for Finance. Mary joins us with 22 years of financial management experience, most notably at the Illinois College of Optometry in Chicago. We look forward to officially welcoming her to campus on September 7.

In campus construction, the former Fine Arts Building, one of the original buildings on campus, is now the beautiful Susan T. Beverly Hall. Thanks to very generous private gifts, the building has been modernized to meet contemporary needs with a digital lab, studios, practice rooms, and a refurbished Edward D. Hofheimer Theatre. We look forward to its official dedication on Founders Day in a few weeks.

I thank our wonderful donors for making this project possible.

The Barclay Sheaks Gallery in Hofheimer Library was completed earlier this year. The new gallery is much larger than the previous space and features a rotating exhibit of works by Sheaks from the University's permanent collection. The new location makes the paintings available to the public in the extended hours of the library.

The adjacent Neil Britton Gallery is committed to engaging both the Coastal Virginia and University communities in the visual arts. Changing exhibitions and programs include the work of both professional artists and students.

The relocation of the Sheaks Gallery in late spring provided additional space in Godwin Hall for our enrollment staff. Earlier this summer we completed the makeover of what is now the David L. Kaufman Center for Enrollment, named after our longtime Board member and friend. The new Kaufman Center for Enrollment now houses the entire enrollment team under one roof with a friendly and comfortable Welcome Center for prospective students and their families.

These updates have streamlined student recruitment efforts and allow repurposed space in the Malbon Center for Technology in Pruden Hall. The Malbon Center for Technology now boasts a collaboration studio and private workspaces. This is in addition to the new added features of the Virtual Malbon Center online.

Coastal 61 opened last fall and all units were quickly filled, providing the University with an important revenue source. Special thanks to our partners at The Franklin Johnston Group.

Other ongoing construction projects include DeFord Manor and Clarke Hall. Named in honor of longtime Trustees and benefactors Bob and Nancy DeFord, the facility is designed with extensive indoor and outdoor entertainment areas on the ground level and the president's private residence on the second floor. We expect the building to be completed in mid-November followed by a dedication ceremony in early 2022.

Clarke Hall has undergone a modernization of its classrooms to better support the teaching of business classes, computer science, and workforce development courses. These renovations also added a new business faculty office suite, a video production studio to aid faculty in creating resources for use in online classes or as supplementary materials for in-person instruction, and a

new testing center. These renovations were the result of grant facilitated by the City of Virginia Beach.

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I've stated many times that our institution has gone from an aspiring local college to an inspiring global university. We have all the pieces in place to continue to be successful and to graduate students who will, in turn, be successful in their chosen personal and professional lives. With our growing endowment, we are at a crucial crossroads to decide the next chapter of the Virginia Wesleyan story.

As we think about how to write the next pages of that story, my friend and colleague Jay Lemons of Academic Search recently used this analogy that I find rather appropriate...

To decide the next chapter, will we use *The Goldilocks and the Three Bears* approach? Do we look around, satisfied with our status and trajectory, and decide that we're "just right?"

Do we relate more to *The Tortoise and The Hare* approach? We keep moving slowly but steadily to win the race.

Or do we gravitate to *The Jack & The Beanstalk* approach? Growing quickly while always protecting the golden egg.

There have been points in Virginia Wesleyan's history where each of these storybook lessons have been the strategy of the time. Over the last 6 years, one could make a good case that we have used the *Jack & The Beanstalk* approach. It has been a time of unprecedented growth in terms of physical assets and academic programs on campus.

But I look at it like this--we had to grow physically to grow mentally, like any young being or institution. Now, it's time to mature, to focus on our strengths and maximize what we do best.

With that in mind, let's take a closer look at the various areas of the institution.

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In Academic Affairs, we have overcome incredible adversity. Many thanks to Dr. Maynard Schaus, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and our outstanding faculty for their innovation, flexibility, and incredible efforts. The creativity and resourcefulness of faculty and the resilience of our students was inspiring. Now, we are excited to move forward with purpose.

We intend to build upon the innovation and creativity that served us so well during the pandemic. We have learned where technology can make our classrooms even more dynamic places that can serve an increasingly diverse student population.

And while notions of traditional students are changing, our experiences working remotely confirmed the value of a residential, liberal arts education focused around small classes, personal interactions, and a strong intellectual community.

We have added several new programs to further enhance this intellectual community. In the D. Henry Watts School of Professional Studies, the Education department has launched a second master's program and restructured its on-campus undergraduate programs to include majors in Elementary Education, Special Education or Education Studies. These programs join the already existing Master of Arts in Education on-campus degree.

In the Joan P. Brock School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, we have also added a major in Computer Information Systems and a minor in Cybersecurity. These programs bring a liberal arts perspective to fields that are in high demand.

The Susan S. Goode School of Arts and Humanities now offers a priority admissions program with the Boston University School of Theology. This guaranteed admission program streamlines admission and provides scholarship opportunities for qualified students into both the Master of Divinity and Master of Theological Studies programs. This agreement joins our similar arrangements with Duke University Divinity School and Candler Theology School at Emory University.

In the Birdsong School of Social Science, we grew our partnership with NATO. In addition to hosting the Model NATO Challenge once again, we hosted NATO's worldwide Concept Development and Experimentation Conference, too. These opportunities offer our students a wealth of real-world experience with renowned international partners.

The Batten Honors College welcomed Dr. Travis Malone back into a leadership role as the new dean. Dr. Malone previously served as the Founding Dean of the Susan S. Goode School of Arts and Humanities.

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Our outstanding faculty had another strong year of scholarship, teaching, and service. We recognized excellence in many of our faculty with promotions and welcome our newest faculty member.

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CAMPUS LIFE AND OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

The pandemic did not stop our Campus Life and Operational Management team from offering quality programs and services to our campus community over the past year. Hats off to Sarah Guzzo, who I once overheard say, "What pandemic?" Sarah, along with Willie Harrell, combined Student Activity and UREC forces to create The Fun Zone, a rich series of activities that engaged our students in a way that also respected the need for social distancing. Whether it was an online magician or bubble soccer on the Quad, our students weren't able to say "there's nothing to do." Even during an international crisis, there was plenty of fun and excitement, and I'd like to thank Sarah and her team for their vision and ability, which made it all happen.

The pandemic's lasting impact has increased the need for mental health services and support among college students. With a stressful year behind us, we want to be certain we are able to meet the needs of our students as they transition back to campus.

I'd like to thank Greg Skinner and the IT staff for their dedication to meeting the technology needs of the VWU community. The staff has begun several new projects, including a data conversion and cloud migration through Ellucian, which will improve the efficiency of our information while also offering increased security through cloud storage.

Wesleyan Engaged had another active year and offered students numerous ways to remain engaged in efforts to impact our campus and surrounding communities. Virginia Wesleyan scored highest in the Commonwealth among institutions of higher education participating in the "All In- Campus Democracy Challenge." VWU also received a perfect score on the "Campus Pride Index," which rates institutional attention and support for student leaders and campus groups working to create safer, more LGBTQ-friendly learning environments at colleges and universities.

Our campus commemoration of the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in January began with an acknowledgement of the recent naming of the Mavis McKenley Award in honor of our valued Class of 2011 alumna and Board of Trustees member.

The Mavis McKenley Award is given annually to a student who practices the ideals set forth by Dr. King—courage and conviction in valuing differences, commitment to seeing beyond borders by building inclusion, compassion for humanity, and/or commitment to social change. The 2021 Mavis McKenley Award was presented to recent graduate India Khanna. Mavis is with us today, and I thank her once more for her leadership and support.

Finally, I'd like to thank the Facilities Management staff under the direction of David Peterson, Tim Lockett with Dining Services, and David Stuebing and the Residence Life staff for their efforts and ability over the past year. With an increased need for cleanliness, changes that impacted serving options and meals, and managing room changes and food delivery related to isolations and quarantines, all three teams met the challenges associated with the pandemic head on, and we all appreciate their dedication during that trying time.

ATHLETICS

The fall, winter, and spring athletic seasons were defined by a constantly evolving landscape. "Flexibility and patience" was the mantra echoed on a daily basis to coaches and student-athletes. Despite many challenges due to COVID, our Marlin student-athletes persevered.

In the outdoor Track and Field season, Jaylyn Lane and Geni Roberts qualified for the National Championship meet. In the triple jump, Jaylyn placed thirteenth and Geni finished sixth nationally, earning him All-American honors. He is now the highest-placing Marlin in VWU history.

Our softball team won their third national championship in four seasons behind solid veteran leadership. Jessica Goldyn was named the NCAA Division III National Player of the Year, the National Catcher of the Year and the NCAA Tournament Most Outstanding Player.

And then there's Hanna Hull, arguably the most decorated player in NCAA Division III softball history. She set the new NCAA Division III career wins record of 132. Adding to her two National Player of the Year accolades from past seasons, Hanna was named the NCAA Division III National Pitcher of the Year as well as the NCAA Tournament Most Outstanding Pitcher. She was four-time ODAC Pitcher of the Year, and four time All-American. The top vote getter, she was Academic All-American and, along the way, earned her bachelor's and master's degrees.

Behind a great team is a great coaching staff, actually the best in the nation. Coach Elliott also surpassed the 500 career-win milestone this season.

Congratulations to all our softball players and coaches on another record-setting year!

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Our athletic facilities continue to be upgraded through donor gifts. Betty S. Rogers Track and Field will soon have a 10-lane digital scoreboard. Thank you to Bill Shelhorse, Class of 1970, for his generous donation to complete this project. And thank you to John Trinder for his gift to upgrade the women's locker room and facilities at the Trinder Center.

Four years ago, we announced a state-of-the art softball complex provided through a generous gift from TowneBank. Two years ago we shared another gift for the renovation of our already beautiful indoor venue to be named TowneBank Arena. I again thank TowneBank for their support of our University.

Andrea Hoover-Erbig started as our Executive Director of Intercollegiate Athletics on June 1 and welcomed our first group of student-athletes back to campus this week. We look forward to an exciting year ahead in athletics, fully opening our venues to Marlin fans and allowing our student-athletes a more normal team experience.

###

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Finance office continues to modernize and update policies and procedures as the University grows and changes.

Special thanks to Sylvia Schelly for leading this process and for serving as the Interim Vice President for Finance since July. Sylvia has served as Associate Vice President for nearly four years.

Special efforts were dedicated this year towards retention efforts. The University received \$10 million in stimulus funding, of which approximately one half has been distributed to students.

The institutional portion of the stimulus funding was used to balance last year's and this year's budget while providing a 2% salary increase and simultaneously funding important initiatives.

Last year we consolidated postal services, packaging, duplication, the bookstore, and apparel, into a more contemporary University Store operation. In April, we partnered with Akademos to offer an online textbook store for our students and faculty. As a best-in-class online college bookstore and course materials solution provider, Akademos makes multiple formats, delivery options, and subscription-based materials available through a personalized, efficient and cost-effective service.

Textbooks and course materials, as well as other packages sent to campus, are now more efficiently and conveniently available. This summer, the University partnered with Parcel Pending to provide a package delivery system via Amazon-style lockers. The branded lockers are located outside the University store. This solution will not only improve campus services, but is less staff-dependent.

###

ENROLLMENT

A year ago, Heather Campbell was named Vice President for Enrollment and has provided outstanding leadership during unusual times.

Despite the strange recruiting climate caused by COVID-19, we have enrolled 404 new traditional students this fall. This is better than most of our competitors. Unfortunately, community colleges have taken a significant hit in their enrollments over the last two years which directly impacts our transfer recruitment pool.

Last year I reported that overall enrollment at was the highest in the University's history at 1,674. This year, we have weathered the enrollment storm well. While headcount was 4% lower than our record-high enrollment in the 2020 academic year, student enrollment remained over 1,600 students. While so many in higher education faced much steeper declines, we clearly held our own while staying true to our mission as a student-centered institution.

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

We connected virtually with our Lakeland University Japan students over the last year, and we look forward to strengthening those relationships with in-person visits when the pandemic allows. We expect our first LUJ students to join us in Virginia Beach this fall and look forward to sending students to Tokyo in 2022.

Lastly, our VWU Online programs continue to grow. Our non-credit classes in partnership with Cengage enrolled over 1,400 learners this summer alone and we are ready for another launch

next month. The Master of Education and the Master of Business Administration continues to attract leadership-minded students from around the state and nation.

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ADVANCEMENT

The critical area of Advancement continues to produce unparalleled results. As I mentioned earlier, private dollars raised have never been higher.

Kim Hammer, joined us in November 2020 as Vice President for Advancement and Special Assistant to the President.

Anthony Walters, President and CEO for the YMCA of South Hampton Roads delivered the keynote speech during our 2020 Founders Day Convocation and was recognized with The Wesley Award for his leadership and service to the community.

As part of Founders Day, the 2020 Alumni Award recipients were recognized. These honorees are accomplished and talented and bring great honor and distinction to Virginia Wesleyan University.

Postponed as a result of the pandemic, the induction of the Athletic Hall of Fame is now scheduled for Saturday, October 2. We are excited to offer this event during Homecoming and Family Weekend and know it will be worth the wait.

The Alumni Council continued its ongoing efforts to expand outreach and increase engagement. The University extends its sincere gratitude to Alisa Crider for her tremendous leadership as Council Chair and for hosting bi-monthly Virtual Wesleyan Wednesdays to enhance alumni involvement throughout the last year.

During the pause in play for sports teams last fall, Athletics teamed with Advancement to raise funds for unrestricted purposes. Scores of donors, including 300 new donors, raised \$60,000 in sponsorships and gifts for operations and an additional \$56,000 to cover the costs for the NCAA-required COVID-19 testing.

The Marlin Family Campaign for Faculty and Staff raised over \$41,000 from 158 faculty and staff members. A noteworthy accolade from the campaign is that we had 100% participation from our alumni working full-time on campus. We are humbled by the Marlin family's generosity.

Our Day of Giving was the most successful to date with 131 gifts for a total of \$30,010. The success was thanks in part to the matching gift challenges from Trustees Tim Bailey and Gary Bonnewell.

We sincerely thank all of our donors for their continued support.

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GOALS FOR 2021-22

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 ahead.

In Academic Affairs:

- We must use our experiences to help us reflect upon ingrained methodologies and incorporate new modalities and technologies where prudent and effective.
- We must be mindful of the challenges facing all of higher education, including changing student demographics, and continue to be reflective practitioners who maintain the quality of our education but adapt our classroom methodology to best serve our current student population.
- We must further develop our relationships with our international partners and strengthen the connections between our campus here and our campus in Tokyo.
- We must continue to add programs that allow us to bring our liberal arts perspective to areas that meet student needs and utilize our faculty expertise.
- We must continue to commit to the thoughtful work needed to ensure that we are an inclusive and welcoming campus that embraces diversity and provides all students with voice and community.

In Campus Life and Athletics:

- We must meet the emotional and psychological needs of our students by providing support through outreach, programming, and mental health related campaigns.
- We must meet our students' developmental and social needs through enriching co-curricular and extracurricular activities that bring value to the collegiate experience.
- We must provide opportunities for our students to make a difference within our campus, the surrounding community, and around the globe through initiatives like the Batten Honors College, Wesleyan Engaged, the Lighthouse: Center for Exploration & Discovery, and beyond.
- We must continue to focus on affordability through initiatives such as freezing tuition for another year, growing opportunities through the Work and Learn Program, enhancing Federal and State funding support, and increasing opportunities during January Term and Summer Sessions.
- We must continue to place focus on corrective maintenance with priority to the residence halls.
- We must continue to attract alternative sources of revenue to support our highly competitive intercollegiate athletics program.
- We must continue to recruit and retain top student-athletes who will benefit from the NCAA Division III experience.

In Finance and Advancement:

- We must continue to develop a new model for managing our growing endowment.
- We must do more with less, closely tying decisions in all areas of the University with fiscal responsibility, not only spending wisely but investing in academic and co-curricular programs that are innovative and focused on the workforce of the future.

- 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 our efforts to secure state and federal grants that will enhance our academic programs and student life across 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 expand our graduate offerings.
- We must continue to grow non-credit programs through partnerships.
- We must continue to work towards and maintain a level of affordability for our students.

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Thank you for joining us today and for all you do every day to support our mission--building meaningful lives in Coastal Virginia, the nation, and the world. Stay engaged, and always remember, “It’s a great day to be a Marlin!” Thank you.



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