



2019 *Senior Class* : *Class of 2019*

*Virginia Wesleyan University*

*Building on Faith, Learning, and Service*

*August 2, 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 29<sup>th</sup> year as a college president, I have never felt more positive about the future of an institution, even during these

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.

###

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 complexr*

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?

And now, let me offer some updates on how we've spent

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

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.”

###

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

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.

###

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, D(Dr)JTJETQqJT TTTT.rdsoc-5(e)4( )JTJETQq0.00000912



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.

###

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.

###





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

###

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-

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.

# # #

Conference and Events, operated through Sodexo, brings growth and diversity to the

Cooper for bringing this project to fruition!

###

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....

###

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!

# # #



## **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

