

## **Fall Faculty Meeting**

**“The State of the University” – Sept. 11, 2017**

As you know, today is the 16<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center. Sixteen years ago, we were united as a country like I had never seen before in my lifetime. As we stop to remember those who perished on that day, let us think that a fitting tribute to their memories would be to work to bring our country together in a spirit of cooperation and compromise.

It is my pleasure to be here today to update the faculty.

I want to preface my remarks by commenting on the events around the Charlottesville tragedy. As a university community, we must continue to speak out against racism, hatred, violence, and incivility.

I hope this semester that we can continue with the Campus Conversations about civility that we had last year through Academic Affairs and the discussions about race and diversity led by Student Affairs. I want our university community to be examples of behavior that others want to emulate.

I hasten to add that we will continue to honor the First Amendment and free speech on this campus. I want our students to know that it is great to be passionate about issues, but that it is not acceptable to try to suppress or quiet those with whom we disagree. We must convince our students that they cannot allow their passion to turn to anger against individuals. We certainly can agree to disagree, but we want our disagreements to be civil.

Many times we refer to the President’s talk at the General Faculty meeting as the “State of the University.” So let me begin by saying where I think we are.

I think the university is at a crossroads, in many ways just as our state is. I would also say that this crossroads is a point of great opportunity. We have been through some tough financial times and I feel like we have been able to stabilize the financial base of the university.

The crossroads opportunity of which I referred is to move Marshall University forward. We can either advance our university with growth or stay where we are today and fall increasingly behind.

Our salaries will be increasingly noncompetitive unless we can find new resources. I will tell you later in my speech that we need to increase our financial resource base in order to advance and improve Marshall University.

I have spoken about my goals for Marshall University many times since I arrived 20 months ago, but I am not sure that all of you have been in those discussions.

We are handing out a list of my long-term and short-term goals. This document is posted on my website and we will send it out to all faculty and staff at a later date.

### **Long-Term Goals (5 to 10 years)**

1. **Increase enrollment.** In order to grow the financial base of the university, we are going to have to increase our student numbers. My goal is to have 15,000 students by 2021.
2. **Improve student success.** We need to raise the freshmen retention to 80% and 6-year graduation rates to 60%.
3. **Enhance our national image.** To become more recognized as a leading university, we need a directed marketing campaign. A regional and national effort can raise our stature and ranking as a university. A goal would be to move up in the U.S. News and World Report rankings.
4. **Expand research.** More research dollars and more scholarly publications are both desirable. We need to explore ways to encourage research. An annual research award amount of \$50M is the target.
5. **Encourage fund raising.** As state funds decrease, we will need more private dollars. Need-based scholarship will be an emphasis. We will be starting a capital campaign this fall.
6. **Improve salaries.** Our staff and faculty deserve to have competitive salaries. The goal would be to identify resources through increased enrollment and other means to move salaries closer to local market levels for staff and to mean peer averages for faculty.
7. **Expand outreach.** We will increase our community engagement and our efforts in economic development. The goal is for Marshall to be recognized as a leader in the state for engaging with local and regional groups and in helping to create jobs and attract new businesses.

Our legislature will support us more if they recognize us for all our strengths and all of our contributions.

8. **Add PhD programs.** I would like to see the addition of PhD programs in both the STEM fields and in the humanities. A goal would be to identify several new programs that could be added without excessive additional resources.

### **Short-Term Goals for 2017-2018 Academic Year**

1. Increase enrollment and improve retention with special attention to minority enrollment. Diversity is important and strategic in moving Marshall forward.
2. Develop a major program to fight addiction. Our newly formed Substance Abuse Coalition should continue to look for opportunities to make a positive impact.

3. Create an enhanced undergraduate research program. As research activity is encouraged, we need to make opportunities available for undergraduates to be involved. A priority allocation of \$166,000 for undergraduate research was made for 2017-18 and will be continued annually.
4. Increase student activities, including more service learning. To better engage students we need more extracurricular and co-curricular activities available. This will absolutely help with retention.
5. Expand economic development and community outreach statewide and with local emphasis in the Fairfield community. I have taken steps this year to enhance our involvement in economic development. We will also show our commitment to our local neighbors in Fairfield by seeking out ways to interact and assist.

In other updates, **Enrollment** is going to be flat or slightly down this fall. We'll have final numbers on Census Day next month. If it is indeed down, that, of course, will impact our tuition revenue negatively. We must and will be vigorously pursuing new avenues to increase our enrollment, particularly in strategically targeted, out-of-state markets.

On a brighter note, I'm pleased to state again that the **Budget** is back to being *almost* fully funded with recurring money. As you may remember, we used this year's 9% tuition increase primarily to help fix the budget hole we have been carrying from year to year. That hole was due to one-time fixes to balance the budget in the face of ongoing cuts from the state.

But we are still not quite on solid ground. We will be continuing to freeze open positions and looking for cost savings from restructuring, which I will talk about in a minute. I have asked CFO Mark Robinson to develop a summary of our budget situation and university finances so faculty and staff can understand where we are.

It is quite possible the legislature may cut us again this year. I am sure not excited about that prospect, since we have already lost \$14.5M over the past five years or so. We will deal with that possibility in the upcoming months.

**Restructuring.** Last week we announced some administrative changes in Academic Affairs and Student Affairs—to consolidate reporting and to change some reporting lines. The aim is to improve our ability to manage and grow. It will also save a little bit of money.

However, we are continuing to consider other academic restructuring plans and will be talking with Faculty Senate leadership tomorrow and with the respective academic units about potential restructuring plans in those areas, too.

**Salaries.** The restructuring efforts I just spoke about will save us some money over time, perhaps as much as three-quarters to a million dollars if we do everything we are considering.

Once the budget is fully balanced, I would like the vast majority of new money go back into salaries. Our salaries are not competitive and I know it. You probably know it better than I.

I can't raise salaries without identifying a means to fund the increases. There are several options but the best option is to increase our revenues through student enrollment. While my goal is to direct monies to salaries, there has to be money to fund those salary increases.

When you hear the presentation by Mark Robinson, I think you will see there is no extra money. We will show that increasing enrollment is the best way to raise the revenue to devote to salary increases.

I hope that the faculty and staff will help me in increasing enrollment by seeing that this is the best way to have resources to increase salaries. Enrollment needs to be everyone's priority.

**Increased undergraduate research and enhanced student programming** are items that are starting up this fall. I just mentioned them. I am excited to get more undergraduate students into research, because that experience certainly changed my own life.

I also want to mention our ongoing commitment to work with the Fairfield community in various ways.

Service learning is something we are also encouraging as we look for ways to put our students into meaningful learning experiences outside the classroom.

Undergraduate research efforts will be complimentary to our current research initiatives. John Maher and Gayle Ormiston are forming a Creative Works and Scholarly Activity Council. John Maher will chair it and it will have reps from each college and an ex-officio member from the Center for Teaching and Learning.

This group will discuss and create guidelines for:

- Undergraduate research awards
- Undergraduate research intensive course development awards
- Faculty research awards (John Marshall University Scholars Award and the John Marshall Summer Creative Works and Scholarship Award)

Timeline:

Discuss with deans in mid-Sept  
Nomination of college reps in late September  
Organizational mtg in early October  
Solicit proposals in October  
Make awards early January

**Diversity.** I want to **commend two Marshall employees**, Kelli Johnson who is a faculty member in the Library and Tim Melvin a staff member in Academic Affairs. They have taken the initiative to work with a committee of people at Marshall to explore ways to have an impact on diversity, equality, and inclusion. We are discussing the idea of establishing a formal structure so that this group can help us make our campus and our city a more inclusive community. I hope that we can make that announcement in the coming weeks.

**New program in biomedical engineering.** I have invited a number of young stars in biomedical engineering to visit our campus this fall and give us advice on starting a major research effort in biomedical engineering that will span the medical school and the College of Information Technology and Engineering. There will be a number of public seminars and I would encourage you to attend. We are seeking assistance from experts about how to direct and start research in biomedical engineering.

**New alliance for economic development.** You may have read about my announcement a couple of weeks ago at the Business Summit that southern West Virginia's higher education institutions have joined for a major effort to help attract businesses to West Virginia and create jobs.

This new Alliance for the Economic Development of Southern West Virginia is led by Marshall and is made up of nine two- and four-year higher education institutions focused on marketing the region to prospective businesses. The presidents of these institutions are committed in the strongest possible terms to linking our considerable resources with the State's efforts to diversify and grow southern West Virginia's economy. We are tremendously excited about the opportunities we see.

In closing, I want to thank each of you for your service to Marshall University and our students. You are indeed the heart of our institution.

And thank you for your attention today.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the General Faculty Meeting.