



STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESS

Anthony L. Jenkins, Ph.D.
President
West Virginia State University

2017 State of the University Address:

“Good afternoon and welcome to the State of the University Address. This gathering represents one of the many great traditions at West Virginia State. The State of the University Address is an important opportunity for me to strategically outline our pathway toward a stronger future; while also seizing an opportunity to reflect and acknowledge our collective accomplishments. What we achieved this past year, our first year together, will leave you with no doubt that our community of scholars, learners and leaders has more than earned the right to celebrate!

As President it has been a privilege to be a part of these milestones as they occurred. Hence, I am honored to share these community accomplishments with our special guests who have taken time to be with us. Their presence speaks volumes about their support for higher education and West Virginia State University in particular.

To:

- Our elected officials and their representatives;
- Our Board of Governors;
- Members of the WVSU Foundation Board;
- Dr. Lateef Saffore, President of the National Alumni Association;
- Ms. Taylor Conaway, President of the Student Government Association;
- Dr. Richard Ford, Faculty Senate President;
- Ms. Robin Tabor, Classified Staff Council Chair;
- My Cabinet; and
- Our academic deans.

Please accept my sincere gratitude for your exemplary leadership and passion for STATE. Thank you for all that you do. Please stand and be recognized.

Most of all, I want to thank the West Virginia State students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends, and supporters for your dedication and efforts — efforts that have helped increase the quality of our brand, our growing reputation, and our rise in prominence.

And finally, please join me in acknowledging my amazing wife and our First Lady, Toinette Jenkins.

Our pursuit to expand access and opportunity are at the core of our land-grant mission and symbolizes who we are as a university and what we value. For 126 years, we have been dedicated to extending educational opportunities to citizens from all backgrounds. Ours is a University that, from its inception, embraced diversity - long before many institutions in higher education realize it as the right thing to do. Today, more parents and students are finding encouragement,



reassurance, and fulfilment in the quality education we deliver and the supportive and nurturing learning environment we continue to develop.

This fall, our enrollment increased more than 10 percent and we welcomed more than 3,800 early enrolled, freshmen, transfer, online, and graduate students to the Yellow Jacket family. The growing interest in West Virginia State University is transcending the borders of our state. This past year we have been acknowledged nationally for strong academic performance in:

- Business
- Biology
- Communications
- Education; and Social Work

Our incomparable rise inspires questions about what is going on at West Virginia State University, and what does the future hold for the institution, ranked the second best public college or university in West Virginia – based on academic quality, diversity, and return on investment. Today, I can tell you that the ascent of STATE to its next level as a premier university is happening right now!

Our enrollment is but a page in the far more compelling chapters of our progress, one that we all are composing together. Despite the wave of budget cuts that we have absorbed starting in fiscal year 2014, our university is on the move.

As we connect the dots on what is happening at STATE, a picture emerges on how the Hometown University is becoming even better, even stronger, and even more impactful. Where's the evidence? It is found in areas that include:

- Our growth in quality students
- Our community impact across the state
- Our research and economic development efforts
- Our expanding prominence, and
- Our tireless commitment to transforming lives through a high-quality education.

STATE offers a world-class faculty, an engaging learning environment, and a high-value education that transcends the teaching of facts, figures, and theories.

I have often stated that size nor location should dictate one's ability to compete or be successful at the highest levels. We challenge the notion that a small university in Institute cannot compete and/or outperform larger and better-funded institutions. Our education has helped develop students and provide them the self-efficacy, as well as the intellectual fortitude and self-confidence to excel in any arena they enter.

Students like Carly Settle. She received the 2016 "Outstanding Accounting Senior Award" from the West Virginia Society of Certified Public Accountants.



Or Edwina Barnett who took first place in the undergraduate student research competition during the Association of 1890 Research Directors 2017 Biennial Research Symposium in Atlanta.

Or our three recent business graduates who competed in a business simulation competition against more than 5,200 teams from around the world and finished in the top 50.

And of two Art majors, Allison McComas and Nichole Westfall, were selected to paint a pillar in Gallery 64 underneath the Interstate in Charleston during the summer of 2017. Only six designs were selected and our exceptional students were among them.

Our commitment to fostering growth and development is not only reserved for the students enrolled at our beloved STATE. We also thrive on engaging with youth and going deep in our community efforts to bring the State experience to everyone. Over the summer, the Health and Human Performance and Education Departments, led by Dean Paige Carney, brought 100 fourth graders from Clay Elementary to our campus. Faculty from both departments provided hands-on learning, centered on fitness activities. I was honored to meet and interact with these future leaders, but my fondest take-a-way was when several students, unsolicited, approached me and expressed their intentions to enroll in STATE. The life of any institution depends on future generations seeing you as a value and a place of choice.

Thanks to the efforts of Dean Naveed Zaman, as well as 60 Natural Sciences and Mathematics students, for the first time, more than 1,000 students from area elementary schools invaded campus for NASA Day in April. The program featured NASA Langley's travelling exhibit and included a robotics station, rocketry station, a flight simulation and an exhibit on journeying to Mars. The program was a tremendous success. And I learned very quickly, that I am not smarter than a fifth grader.

Under the direction of Associate Professor Patricia Wilson, STATE is having a profound impact on the students who attend school on the West Side of Charleston. Our education students are working with elementary and middle school students to provide academic coaching and other important developmental assistance. All told, WVSU students provide more than 2,300 hours of support for students in West Side schools.

As a land-grant university, our Extension Service team members are planted and actively engaged in 38 West Virginia counties. These agents oversee and provide services to aid over 20,000 West Virginians a year.

Through the efforts of these agents an innovative series of educational discussions and follow-up social work services called "Healthy Grandfamilies," the WVSU Extension Service is helping to ease the transition for grandparents raising their grandchildren, a national growing issue in which the state of West Virginia currently ranks fourth in the nation. Through our efforts, 43 grandparents, raising a total of 90 grandchildren, were able to increase their understanding of modern-day parenting and feeling less alone in their situation by completing the program.



Launched last year in Kanawha County, Healthy Grandfamilies has since expanded its service area into Clay, Jackson and Putnam counties.

All of these aforementioned examples are reasons why we can ill afford to lose focus. Too many families, young people, parents, and grandparents across West Virginia and beyond are counting on us to help them fulfill their educational dreams and hopes.

Speaking of dreams for the young men and women who have the privilege of representing STATE in athletics, the Yellow Jacket Nation is proud of you and your accomplishments in the arena of competition, but what we are most proud of is how well you perform in the classroom.

West Virginia State University Athletics won the 2017 NCAA Division II Award of Excellence for the Mountain East Conference. The award honors positive campus and community engagement events hosted by colleges and universities during the academic year.

This past year, 32 Yellow Jacket Athletes made the All-MEC Academic Team and Commissioner's Honor Roll (GPA 3.2 – 4.0). On top of that, nearly 60 percent of STATE student-athletes maintain a grade point average of 3.0.

And in the words of the late great ESPN sportscaster Stuart Scott...our Women's Tennis team when on the court "is as cool as the other side of the pillow."

Congratulations to them and Head Coach John Simms for winning their fifth straight regular season conference championship. And to Laura Isbey for being named the Mountain East Conference Women's Player of the Year – and Kierstin Hensley, Intercollegiate Tennis Association Division II Rookie of the Year.

Our Yellow Jackets Women's basketball team also had an impressive season under first year Head Coach Charles Marshall, advancing to the MEC tournament. Our ladies did us proud and we know they will be back in the tourney this year.

I would also like to recognize our women's volleyball team under first year Head Coach Kris Kern. This team started their season with three straight victories to win the Pfeiffer Classic volleyball tournament. Great job, ladies. Will all of our outstanding student-athletes please stand to be recognized.

In our efforts to further boost the visibility of our outstanding student-athletes and our university - this fall we launched an exciting new chapter in Yellow Jacket Nation sports with our new online apparel shop and the debut of the Yellow Jacket Nation television show. Now, STATE swag can be purchased from anywhere in the world...and every Saturday morning at 9 a.m. on WVAH Fox-11 fans can tune in to learn more about the Yellow Jacket Nation and WVSU. I would like to thank Athletic Director Nate Burton, Governor Paul Konstanty, and Jeff Barnes and the Barnes Agency for their leadership and support on this project.



As a research university, we understand the importance of research and there is no question that West Virginia's Urban Research University is a sound investment for our state. Our commitment to research and economic development is garnering attention at the local, state, federal, and global levels.

Take for example our Economic Development Center (EDC), located on Charleston's West Side. The Center is southern West Virginia's first co-working facility that specifically targets the state's emerging creative economy. The facility features a co-working space for entrepreneurs to collaborate, short-term and long-term meeting and office space, a fully equipped digital conferencing center and professional-grade voice recording and green-screen video production studios. Our EDC serves more than 3,000 clients annually and is home to 28 creative media businesses. More than 20 new businesses were launched by EDC clients last year alone.

As a University, we have amassed an annual budget of approximately \$40 million dollars with a statewide economic impact of \$75.2 million dollars. We employ, directly or indirectly, over 630 individuals and generate nearly \$2 million dollars in state tax revenue. It is estimated that for every dollar the legislature spends on WVSU, the University provides \$16 in economic activity. Placing us among the top-tier universities in West Virginia.

The groundbreaking research conducted by our faculty, places them at the frontier of knowledge. Despite having never received our full land-grant federally mandated state-match, our faculty continue to engage in research geared at enhancing the quality of life and making lives safer for West Virginians and all Americans by focusing on:

- Bioenergy;
- Environmental Remediation;
- Socioeconomics;
- Human Health;
- Water quality;
- Environmental Microbiology and Biotechnology;
- Crops, Production Systems, Plant breeding and so much more.

Like, Dr. Sanjaya who has been granted a shared patent with Dr. Benning at Michigan State University on "Genetically Engineered plants with increased vegetable oil content". Our first such patent at the University.

Collectively, our researchers on average, receive \$15 million dollars a year in federal, state and private grant funding. And while this is impressive for a university our size...we are poised to do more. Our University's goal is to reach \$25 million annually by 2020; thus, this would position us as the state's second highest producing research university.

Our success over the past several years has in large part been possible because of the growing number of alumni, friends, and supporters who are willing to invest in State. During this year's fifth annual Black & Gold Gala an audience of nearly 400 turned out to help us say thank you to some loyal friends. Through corporate sponsorships, ticket sales and proceeds from a silent auction



the Gala raised more than \$135,500 – making this the largest attended and the largest financial grossing Gala to date.

The Fall Festival on the Quad continues to grow and introduce the community to our beautiful campus. Our second annual festival was held just a few weeks ago and brought an amazing crowd from the community to Institute to enjoy an afternoon of fine food, music, and fellowship. In addition, we raised over \$31,000 dollars from the event to go for student scholarships.

See, our brand has never been stronger at State. The University's most recent television commercial was recognized at the 38th Annual Telly Awards. Our "You're Going to Love State" commercial was awarded a bronze Telly in the local television and local cable, schools/colleges/universities category in this prestigious national competition. This was the second year in a row our commercials have received national recognition through this awards program.

These individual and collective accomplishments are the results of hard work from so many extraordinary people, and I am pleased to see their achievements have not gone unnoticed. Last year, I articulated my vision that we aspire to become a premier land-grant research university that is nationally recognized for its quality education, innovative teaching and experiential learning.

Based on the latest rankings we are well on our way. Recently, College Choice, based on data provide from US News & World Report, National Center on Educational Statistics, and Payscale, ranked WVSU the No. 2 best public college or university in the state of West Virginia the highest we have ever ranked. College Choice also recognized the University as the 14th best historically black college or university in the entire country the highest we have ever ranked. Today, among small colleges and universities we also boast national recognition as having:

- The 3rd ranked Best Biology Degree program
- The 3rd ranked Best Business Administration Degree program
- The 9th ranked most affordable institutions of higher education in the entire country by Great Value Colleges, as well as by Best Value Schools.
- The 10th Most Affordable school for a Social Work Degree

These rankings build upon our already sound reputation. Moreover, these accolades and achievements continue to facilitate a buzz on campus, and an excitement that is drawing more people to want to live, learn and become a part of the Yellow Jacket Nation.

These milestones I have noted are a direct result of the collaborative approach that serves us well. Moreover, they are strong indicators that STATE is a major player in higher education in West Virginia, the region, the nation and the world. We are not just saying the right things. We are doing them.

As we pivot towards the horizon, there is no mistaking the profound impact of WVSU. For 126 years State has been at the forefront of many groundbreaking American moments. We are the University that changed the face of the National Basketball Association. We have produced over 900 military officers, 100 LT. Colonels and 15 Generals; we helped to train the Tuskegee Airmen



who went on the change military aviation combat history, and we helped America win the space race.

And while our past is incredible and we will always honor our past, we at STATE understand we must turn our attention to the future. Now is the time for us to focus on the future implications of our institution, and how we will sustain that historical greatness beyond tomorrow. This is the focus of my presidency.

As we look to the future, we must do so with bold confidence and steadfast resolve. Together, we must usher in a new era at STATE. One that requires us to think differently, act differently, and look at ourselves critically and in more innovative ways.

If our university is to remain viable we must be committed to ensuring the academic programs and support services we offer prepare our students to meet the needs of industry not only today but years from now. We must be open and willing to assess, revamp and/or curtail programs and services that are no longer relevant or desired by our students. We must ensure our limited resources are used in ways that make us stronger. To this end, I have charged Provost Jayasuriya with developing a strategic plan for Academic Affairs.

Under this effort, the Provost will assess every aspect of Academic Affairs and put forth recommendations that outline our academic pathway into the future. Based on such assessment - recently, the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approved two new programs for our students. I am pleased to announce that after more than a decade of gridlock and unsuccessful attempts, beginning fall 2018, we will begin offering our new bachelor's degree in engineering and I would like to thank Chancellor Paul Hill for his support throughout this process. STATE will become only the 10th 1890 Land-Grant University in the nation with an engineering program. Next fall to go along with the six fully online programs we rolled out this past year, we will also begin offering a new face-to-face master's degree program in sports studies. These new programs are great examples of how we will continue to work to keep STATE at the forefront of higher education.

The demands and needs of our society will require an educated citizenry with profound creativity, leadership skills, and emotional intelligence. Therefore, we, at STATE, must educate our students to be deep critical thinkers who are prepared, willing, motivated and committed to solving the world's most challenging complex human problems.

This will require us to develop an education environment that is transformative and experiential. Thus, I am charging the Provost and the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs to develop curriculum and co-curriculum that are intentional and integrated to enhance the capabilities of our students – that deepen subject matter, heighten curiosity, strengthen leadership, and foster the pursuit of self-understanding.



These are the opportunities before us...but only for a short time. If we do not take advantage of these opportunities now...someone else will. We will find ourselves on the sideline watching others lead areas that used to be our strong holds.

I am of the opinion that we must focus on four strategic areas:

- Experiential learning
- Enrollment Growth
- Partnerships and
- Philanthropy.

With regard to experiential learning: we must continue to implement the shared vision I articulated in my first State of the University Address a year ago.

It is up to us to identify and provide more students with opportunities for internships and for meaningful undergraduate research. This past year we have seen more students engaged in internships gaining valuable real world experience. We must continue to invest in the opportunities for our students to also study abroad.

Provost, Deans, faculty, directors we need your help to build these opportunities into our curriculum in a way that does not lengthen time to graduation or significantly increases the cost of a degree.

Thanks to our Enrollment Management and Student Affairs team, we have seen a significant uptick in students' participation and engagement in campus life activities. The national research is clear - students who engage in these opportunities are more likely to have greater relationships with faculty and staff, have higher retention and graduation rates, and a more fulfilling college experience.

As it relates to enrollment growth, we have to go beyond commitment and move to action. The growth of our university does not rest only with the Division of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs... this responsibility belongs to all of us. Beginning with me. As President, it is my responsibility to ensure we are all actively engaged and advocates for creating opportunity to all students regardless of generational status, zip code, household income, or results from flawed standardized testing systems. And as we focus on increasing access for more students, we must find ways to become more affordable and not less.

Partnerships will also play an important role in our future growth and success. We must identify mutually beneficial partnerships with other universities, industry, government and foundations. The challenges we face today cannot be solved by a single individual or university working alone.

Partnering is about bringing together complementary strengths, attracting talent, and working to eliminate obstacles. These partnerships can help advance our university, and create better educational benefits for our students. It can also enrich our research.



We are confident our new research center, the former F. Ray Power building, will help foster our overall research efforts. With the building scheduled for completion in spring 2018, it will house research activities and provide space for multi-purpose amenities including conferencing, instruction, labs, and extension activities. This renovation work has employed dozens of men and women right here in West Virginia, once again showing the importance the University plays in the local economy.

Philanthropy is part of the lifeblood of a university. At STATE it is an essential part of our budget. Our alumni, partners, friends, and supporters help us provide scholarships and endowments that help so many Yellow Jackets. And this year, we have a goal to raise \$2.5 million dollars.

Students who come to STATE with hopes and dreams of a better future do so because they believe in us and the quality of our university. Unfortunately, in these difficult economic times, many of our students face financial challenges.

I have read heartfelt letters from parents and students who have the desire, potential and ability to be successful at STATE, but have seen their educational dreams end because they simply did not have the financial means they needed to stay enrolled.

We have some of the most loyal and engaged alumni, friends, and supporters anywhere. This is why I am asking everyone to join Toinette and me in raising \$300,000 for the Presidential Scholarship. All of these funds will go to help Yellow Jackets stay in school and one day join the ranks of our incredible alumni. My sincere gratitude to everyone who has already contributed to this effort --- we are not there yet and need your help. It is not too late to invest in the young men and women seated in this auditorium and walking around our campus.

As I engage our supporters to continue their investment in State, internally we are focused on strengthening the fiscal foundation of our university. We are cognizant of the continually escalating costs of higher education, as well as the growing cost to operate a university. In our efforts to reduce cost, it is crucial that we help students stay on track and decrease their time to degree completion. Therefore, we are placing greater emphasis on our retention efforts – like the development of our first ever University mentoring program and the First Lady’s Sisters of STATE initiative. In addition, to also helping better balance tuition cost and cost savings, I have developed a Budget Efficiency Task Force. This team is co-chaired by Provost Jayasuriya and Vice President Jones. Our goal of financial stability will require us to have greater financial discipline, accountability, and a new budget model. These efforts will make STATE more agile.

Over the coming months the Task Force will assess the operations of the university and identify cost saving measures that position us to become more efficient, right size our university, and leverage our internal investments. The team will seek to achieve this task by looking at four components of the university – Efficiency, Programs, Services and Personnel. This important undertaking will require partnerships and collaborations across the University. The Task Force will have its recommendations to me by the end of November.



Recently, we unveiled our WVSU Loyalty initiative for high school students enrolled in our Yellow Jacket Connection program. Beginning fall 2018, the WVSU Loyalty Program “My State, My Rate” will freeze tuition rates for four years for students completing at least six credit hours in the University’s early enrollment, or collaborative programs.

With the cost of college tuition increasing on average of 7 percent per year, the WVSU Loyalty Program can help save West Virginia families on average \$5 - \$8 thousand dollars on tuition over a four-year period. The WVSU Loyalty Program has received overwhelming support from principals, students, and parents from Kanawha and Putnam counties. And I appreciate their support.

Additionally, we are developing a new program in conjunction with community and technical colleges in West Virginia to ensure a seamless transition for those who earn an associate’s degree and desire to continue their studies and earn a bachelor’s degree. Through the University’s new Straight 2 STATE program, students from participating community colleges will be guaranteed admissions into STATE and their major and have all of their credits count toward their degree; thus decreasing time-to-degree completion and saving students’ money.

We will also continue to build on our already growing international student population. Our partnership in China and our strong ESL program are two examples of our commitment to diversity and the value we know it brings to the educational environment and the holistic development of our students. This past spring, Provost Jayasuriya and I finalized our partnership in China and this semester there are 80 students enrolled in the program that start today! We also continue to strengthen our partnership with our friends in Mexico. All of this is happening as we expand our footprint globally and continue to look at potential opportunities including a partnership in Nigeria.

To briefly recap, moving forward, we must continue to focus on Experiential Learning, Enrollment Growth, Partnerships, and Philanthropy.

There are many things we can and will do to address the university’s future direction; however, focusing on these four areas now can help position us for a stronger tomorrow.

Some may ask is all of this effort worth it. Are we as a university willing to do the right things – regardless of how difficult it may seem.

For 126 years we have done what many considered impossible. Among our students is the cure for cancer and HIV, the next Steve Jobs, great teachers, scientists, military officers, athletes, social workers, CEOs, Judges, musicians, actors, and more. These Yellow Jackets are ready to make this world a better place. So when people ask is all of this effort worth it...I ask - are our students worth it...you bet they are!

Our world needs our students. What does our history and our “Can do attitude” call us to do? The opportunity for STATE to emerge as a university of national distinction is right before us, this is our moment.



WEST VIRGINIA STATE
UNIVERSITY

Find *Your* Passion.

Despite the challenges that we face, I am more confident than ever that our best days are ahead. I am optimistic because during my first year as President I have seen the passionate commitment that so many have for this university and to its continued growth.

The Yellow Jacket Nation truly is an amazing group of people dedicated to education and service. The stories and accomplishments of our State family that I have shared with you today, inspire me. And I hope they inspire you.

As President, I am not asking you to follow me...I am asking you to join me.
Let's go get it done in the spirit of the greatest nation on the planet...the Yellow Jacket Nation.

Thank you, God Bless, Enjoy Homecoming and Go STATE!"

President Anthony L. Jenkins, Ph.D.
West Virginia State University