State of the University Address, 2012

John R. Broderick
President John R. Broderick  
Tuesday, August 21, 2012

Good Morning!

I'd like to thank you for coming, and especially thank our faculty and staff for your efforts every day in making Old Dominion, Virginia's forward-focused metropolitan research university.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to my wife, Kate, whose tireless efforts, on my behalf and on behalf of Old Dominion, are an integral part of a successful presidency. More importantly, you should know she received a Humanitarian Award for her work with ODU students from the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities.

Finally, I want to thank our Board of Visitors and my leadership team, who help me guide this extraordinary institution, as well as the Faculty Senate and other volunteer leadership.

Today, there are a number of achievements that must be celebrated. If our state of the university is strong -- and it is -- it is because of the commitment to excellence that permeates our campus.

So let me boast of Old Dominion University's selection, for the second consecutive year, as a Chronicle of Higher Education Great Place to Work. In a survey conducted with more than 40,000 employees at over 300 colleges and universities, you rated Old Dominion as an institution that excels in 8 recognition categories, including collaborative governance; teaching environment; respect and appreciation; and diversity.

We concluded a successful visit in the spring by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools re-accreditation team. While we won't receive official news on our reaffirmation until December, the team forwarded our application with no recommendations for improvement and gave specific kudos for our Quality Enhancement Plan and Distance Learning. In our business, accreditation is everything, and so this is a significant accomplishment.

Let me turn to students -- both in terms of ensuring their success and celebrating it.
As you know, we launched the new Student Engagement and Enrollment Services division. As a result we now provide a seamless support network to our students, from the recruitment stage through graduation and beyond.

We have spent the better part of the last two years honing our retention strategy and solidifying our optimal enrollment mix and size.

Moving forward, plans are in place to increase our six-year graduation rates, increase our retention rate to 83 percent, continue enhancing our academic profile, and maximize student engagement and satisfaction.

While we will be holding our freshman class size steady at 2,700, we will explore growth in transfers and distance learning. Our fall enrollment will be approximately 25,000 students on campus and through our distance learning network.

We will also increase our internationalization commitment by growing the number of international students - we currently have more than 1,000 - expanding joint research programs with partners abroad, and dramatically increasing the number of students participating in study abroad over the next decade.

In the all-important area of STEM-H - science, technology, engineering, math, and health science - we are third in Virginia in providing graduates.

While we strive to motivate students to achieve their highest goals, our students' achievements are the daily inspiration for each of us to fulfill our role in their journey.

Students like Matthew Portner and Rebecca Michel from the Darden College of Education's counseling program. The pair won the top national awards in the American Counseling Association's international honor society competition.

A team of accounting students bested teams from coast to coast to win the Association of Government Accountants' 2012 Case Challenge. It is the second year in a row that Old Dominion students took this top national prize.

Business administration major Nathaniel Brown was selected for the highly competitive White House Internship program.

And none of us will forget public health student Devon Taylor, whose perfect grades and national prominence as an undergraduate researcher earned him an invitation to the prestigious "Posters on the Hill" event in Washington and a full scholarship from Harvard Medical School.

Make no mistake, Old Dominion University students can -- and do -- stand with the best students in the nation.

And so, it is imperative that we continue our mission of "access to excellence."

Tangible symbols of that commitment are seen in the $10.2 million Learning Commons and Student Success Center at Perry Library. Both facilities opened last fall to rave reviews.
It can also be seen in efforts like the $500,000 we invested in student employment, teaching financial literacy in the Monarch Millionaire course, advising assistance through the Center for Major Exploration, and career assistance through the Career Management Center. More student employment ensures our students needing work to pay tuition can do it in an atmosphere where classes take precedence.

I mentioned advising and while we are on the topic, I'd like to congratulate Sandra Waters and Professor Tom Socha for their recognition as Outstanding Advisors by the National Academic Advising Association.

Our hallmark at Old Dominion is live-action learning. Education here gets students involved and engaged both in the classroom and outside it. Internships, student research, clinical training, fieldwork leadership and community service...our hands-on learning approach challenges students and provides knowledge and leadership experience in countless different ways.

Old Dominion places students in more than 5,600 career-enhancing opportunities each year!

Inside the classroom, students engage with acclaimed professors whose experience brings lessons to life and connect theory to the real world. Our faculty are pioneering authors and creators, cutting edge thinkers and doers, innovative scientists, and savvy business leaders.

I'm proud to report that Old Dominion continues to make gains with the National Science Foundation. Our overall research and development expenditures are approaching $100 million and the university attained top 100 rankings in 18 research areas.

Groundbreaking discoveries and research keep Old Dominion's Reidy Center for Bioelectrics at the international forefront of developing electric pulse technology and bio-medical applications of it.

The National Cancer Institute called researcher Andrei Pakhomov a "pioneer" and cited his promising work and Old Dominion for having the first research center in the country dedicated to this burgeoning field.

Reidy Center Director Richard Heller received a grant from the Center for Innovative Technology's Commonwealth Research Commercialization Fund, which supports research with commercial promise.

Modeling and simulation is a key component to our region's economic development, and Old Dominion's efforts grew and continued to diversify to ensure our future viability in an ever-changing economic market.

A $600,000 grant from the Virginia Office of Economic Adjustment will enable the National Center for Collaboration in Medical Modeling and Simulation - a joint venture between ODU and EVMS - to extend the partnership into vital new areas.

VMASC researchers also teamed up with surgeons from Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters to continue a legacy of innovation that has made Norfolk the top location in the world for the common children's deformity known as "hollowed chest." Professor Rick McKenzie developed a tool to make the surgical cure much easier.
This fall, we'll be opening the Center for Innovative Transportation Solutions in Virginia Beach Town Center, positioning the city and the university at the forefront of this research.

The Center is an outgrowth of the University's designation last spring as a Tier 1 Center by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

This year, we will complete the phase-in of our new undergraduate modeling and simulation engineering degree program, with nearly 50 students enrolled. Our graduate program enrollment already exceeds 100 and we introduced an online master's degree program.

VMASC is a great Commonwealth investment in research, partnerships with private and public sectors and creating a needed workforce.

Congratulations are in order to Political Science Professor Steve Yetiv, who was honored with the SCHEV Outstanding Faculty Award in February. He is the 26th Old Dominion University faculty member to receive this honor, which is more than any other school in the Commonwealth, except one, since 1991.

Engineering Professor Sylvain Marsilliac received more than $2 million in grant funding in the past two years to continue his groundbreaking work in state-of-the-art solar cells. With the help of Dominion Power, he assembled a 5,000-watt solar panel on campus as he seeks to make solar energy more efficient.

A $310 million energy upgrade is underway at Jefferson Lab and will feature a drift chamber built by a team of Old Dominion faculty led by University Professor Larry Weinstein. Some 14 of our physicists are affiliated with the lab.

The Center for Educational Partnerships received the largest single award - nearly $25 million - in the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation grants competition. Led by Professor John Nunnery, the project is aimed at improving math achievement for high-need middle school students.

The Center also received public attention from Second Lady Jill Biden, who visited in April to tout a partnership with Newport News Public Schools on a $2.5 million Department of Defense grant to address challenges faced by military children due to transitions and deployments.

Business Professor Michael Seiler has been a sought after expert commentator by media from coast to coast for his trailblazing research on strategic mortgage default. The Wall Street Journal and the Los Angeles Times were among those featuring his work.

It's been nearly two years since we launched the Climate Change and Sea Level Rise Initiative and our efforts have received attention and traction. Kathryn Sullivan, the assistant secretary for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, told us she was "tremendously impressed by the fusion of expertise" brought together by our initiative.

Oceanography Professor Larry Atkinson, who directs the sea level rise initiative, has partnered with engineering professor Ariel Pinto, the Hampton Roads Planning District and the Virginia Sea Grant
Consortium on a project to address the Hampton Roads climate adaptation challenge. The initiative is funded by a National Sea Grant.

Additionally, Dr. Pinto and Business Professor Michael McShane received a grant from FM Global to develop instructional modules in loss prevention and control. Next spring, Dr. McShane will collaborate with a visiting scholar from the University of London on a comparison of flood insurance policy in the two countries.

In two years' time, we've also made significant headway in our Community Engagement efforts. More than 100 community-oriented activities and events were held on campus or had Old Dominion participation in the last year.

The university was named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, which recognizes the nation's leading colleges and universities for their commitment to community service.

I am proud to say Old Dominion has partnered with the CIVIC Leadership Institute to locate the program here on our campus. An exciting result from the partnership is a college-level leadership program to retain more of our best and brightest minds right here in Hampton Roads, not just from ODU, but from all schools.

The Old Dominion University Business Gateway had a busy year and teamed up with Tidewater Community College and Opportunity, Inc., under a $1.8 million U.S. Department of Labor grant to provide entrepreneurship training to Hampton Roads residents.

Of course, none of Old Dominion's achievements would be possible without support from the Commonwealth and from private donors.

Over the past several years, the university has had significant levels of funding from the General Assembly, with more than $30 million added to its allocation in the past two years. I want to publicly thank Governor McDonnell, Secretary Fornash and the Hampton Roads delegation for their support.

If the contents of this address are any indication, I believe their visionary investments in Old Dominion's efforts have paid dividends for Virginia. The additional funding also helped us keep our tuition increase to its lowest in 10 years and lowest dollar increase among the state's public research universities.

It has also been a banner year for private support.

In April, we opened the Goode Theatre, thanks to the generosity of philanthropists and art enthusiasts David and Susan Goode. The 185-seat facility is a unique combination of both live theatre and film.

With this new facility and the Gordon Art Galleries, the university's Arts in the Village vision is now taking shape.
Old Dominion will begin construction early next year on a new art building at 47th Street and Monarch Way. The building will house the art program, offices, studio space and the university's Hofheimer Art Library.

In an exciting collaboration, Old Dominion signed an agreement with The Chrysler Museum of Art to locate its Jean Outland art research library in the new art building! The library's more than 112,000 rare and unique volumes makes it one of the most significant art libraries in the South. Its location on the Old Dominion campus will provide a valuable resource worldwide for students, art historians and researchers who regularly utilize the collection.

I want to thank the Chrysler Museum's Board of Trustees, its director, Bill Hennessey, and community leaders Dick and Carolyn Barry for their philanthropy in creating this exciting new chapter for the arts in Hampton Roads! Another arts-related milestone will be announced soon thanks to Macon and Joan Brock.

In the world of athletics, the Monarchs continue to excel both on and off the field.

**Five Old Dominion athletes recently competed in the 2012 Olympic Games in London.** Football's Ronnie Cameron was named the Colonial Athletic Association Scholar Athlete of the Year and our women's golf team was recognized by the NCAA for its perfect academic progress rate of 1000.

In May, the university accepted an invitation to join Conference USA, effective next July. The move includes a reclassification of our football program.

As many of you know, my one condition to support this conference change was that it could not be done with an increase of student fees. I am proud to report that the support from alumni and the broader community was overwhelming and more than $3 million was raised in the weeks leading up to our announcement!

I also want to thank alumnus Larry Hill for his generous gift to our athletic program. This fall, we will hold a ceremony to officially name the Powhatan Sports Complex in his honor.

Before I move on to what the future holds for Old Dominion University, I'd like to acknowledge the hard work and effort of the men and women in our public safety department. Under the direction of our new Police Chief Rhonda Harris, the department engaged students, faculty, staff, and neighbors to create a safe atmosphere for our entire community.

As impressive as this inventory of accomplishments is, Old Dominion University must always look forward.

This year, the College of Health Sciences will be launching the Center for Global Health, which will improve the health and quality of life locally and around the world by leveraging the unique strengths of our region for education and research.

The college will also be opening the Monarch Physical Therapy clinic to serve the surrounding area and provide practicum and research opportunities for students and faculty.

This fall, the College of Business and Public Administration will open a real-time trading room, featuring 25 state-of-the-art Bloomberg Terminals, as a resource and educational tool for students.
From a long-term perspective, it is crucial to examine several critically important issues to the university. These areas tie directly into the university's strategic plan goals, on which we have already made significant progress.

The first area is military. While the university has been recognized nationally as a military-friendly institution and we have been in the forefront with a wide variety of academic programs with our military, the landscape is ever changing. Our review will determine the university's next generation of support and services for our men and women in uniform. More than 25% of our students are military affiliated.

Simple geography makes the port and maritime industry a priority of the university. The port is a critical component of the economic vitality of the Commonwealth and the region. With support from Virginia's Secretary of Transportation, Old Dominion is examining ways to extend its research and academic programs to help grow this resource.

Location is also at the heart of the third initiative: our regional higher education centers. Established with the purpose of better serving the Hampton Roads community, these centers in Virginia Beach, Hampton and Portsmouth continue to have extended importance in Old Dominion's commitment to accessible and affordable education. After several decades of operation, however, a strategic review is necessary to chart a course for future successes.

Lastly, since the mid-1980s when we delivered our first course via technology, Old Dominion remains the Commonwealth's leader in distance learning. Yet, even as we offer greater numbers of degree programs in online formats, our charge remains to be an innovator and pioneer in the use of technology to educate. Therefore, the fourth initiative is to ensure the university's strategic approach to the changing marketplace.

There has been much written about coming paradigm shifts in higher education. Our tradition at Old Dominion University is one of change and adaptation. Because of that, we are uniquely situated to handle these challenges. But we cannot - and will not - cease in our efforts to remain at the leading edge, our entrepreneurial spirit guiding our way.

In closing, I would like to leave you with a thought from Leonardo da Vinci. Although it was written in the 15th century, its sentiment exemplifies the Old Dominion University of 2012.

"I have been impressed with the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough, we must do."

Ladies and gentlemen, I am proud to lead this Idea Fusion community of scholars and learners as it applies its knowledge and transforms our world.

Thank you!