State of the University Address, 2013

John R. Broderick

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/administration_stateoftheuniversity

Part of the Higher Education Commons
Good morning and welcome!

Before we turn our attention to the State of our University, I want to acknowledge the people whose wisdom and expertise have made Old University the excellent academic institution it is.

Thank you to our Board of Visitors and Rector Fred Whyte for your steadfast stewardship of the university.

To our faculty and staff, words cannot convey my gratitude. You are the greatest asset this institution has.

I also want to thank and acknowledge my wife Kate. I would be hard-pressed to think of anyone who fulfills her role at any institution better than she.

Lastly, let's all remember Al Rollins, Old Dominion's third president, who passed away at the age of 91. Al was a great leader and his legacy will be felt for generations to come.

For more than 80 years, Old Dominion University has been an integral part of the rich fabric that is Hampton Roads. We are inextricably joined - Old Dominion's success buoys the region, and the region's success enables the university to flourish. For the Old Dominion Monarchs, Hampton Roads is our pride!

Just as the region has grown and become a cosmopolitan crossroads, so too has the university. Prospective students see our dynamic culture and want to be a part of it. Our freshman class of 2,700-plus will once again contain a growing number of students with academic distinction.

When I began as president in 2008, one of our first tasks was to create a strategic plan that would guide our efforts to 2014. Through the collective effort of individuals representing a cross-section of the university, we created a plan that was bold, entrepreneurial and ambitious; a plan that - when complete - would leave no doubt as to Old Dominion University's transformation into a top-tier national, research-intensive university.
As some like to say on campus, this is not your father's ODU.

We began where any institution of learning should: student success. In today's world, graduates must possess skills learned inside the classroom, and out. And so it was paramount that our plan focus on providing students with those tools.

In this year's budget, we added 50 new faculty positions to ensure students have access to smaller classes and one-on-one opportunities with professors. We are incorporating new advising protocols; broadening an innovative math tutoring initiative; and increasing efforts to connect with students earlier in the semester.

Because of these initiatives and more, our retention rate has risen more than 7 percent over the past five years!

We increased our commitment to undergraduate research and initiated an annual Research Symposium, where more than 100 students participated, demonstrating work that's being both published and presented.

Speaking of hands-on experience, the Career Management Center helps students obtain practical experience. Students earned more than 6,400 credit hours and some $3.3 million in wages from employment and internships.

One of Old Dominion's strongest attributes is the diversity of its alumni and student body. To some, a typical college student is a recent high school graduate.

But the reality is that fewer than 15 percent of college students across the country are. According to the American Council on Education, almost 40 percent of college students are older than 25 and more than 20 percent are older than 30. Nearly a quarter are parents, and one-third are employed full time.

At Old Dominion, our classes are filled with the traditional 18-year-old freshman who lives on campus, the working adult trying to further her career, the active duty military member, the international student, and the distance learner. This incredible diversity mirrors the world in which our students must compete, but more importantly, partner.

So just what does student success look like?

At Old Dominion, it looks like Mariam Abdel-hamid.

As president of the Student Government Association and student representative to the State Council of Higher Education, Mariam launched the "Finish in Four" campaign, urging her classmates to take a full load of credits and stay on track to graduate. While at Old Dominion, Mariam also completed three internships.

In May, just three years after starting, she graduated with dual business degrees in finance and decision sciences, with honors. Congratulations Mariam!

Another strategic plan goal is to grow our national reputation through key academic programs and scholarship.
Old Dominion has a number of acclaimed programs, like creative writing, physical therapy, oceanography, physics, nursing, early childhood education, counseling and maritime and supply chain management, to name a few.

And I realize, I am now off the list for at least 55 departmental holiday parties.

But, during the course of the past five years, we launched several new academic programs, including a bachelor's degree in modeling and simulation engineering. The program, the only one of its kind in the nation, graduated its first students in May.

These four pioneers are all going on to graduate programs at either Old Dominion or MIT.

They are also filling a vital need in the workforce. According to industry experts, there are currently 2,000 unfilled jobs for modeling and simulation workers in Virginia alone.

I noted creative writing as one of our marquee programs. Recently, a report to Congress sounded an alarm about enrollments in the humanities.

At Old Dominion, not only do the humanities remain steady, our arts and letters faculty are recipients of national and international honors regularly.

Tim Seibles, one of America's foremost poets, was a finalist for the 2012 National Book Award. The university's graduate program in international studies became the first American program to be accredited by NATO. And half of our 26 SCHEV Outstanding Faculty Award winners - the state's highest award for teaching excellence - are from Arts and Letters.

With apologies to Mark Twain, the reports of the death of the humanities have been greatly exaggerated.

Going back to the 1980s, Old Dominion was pioneering distance learning long before MOOCs became a topic.

What started from a campus studio, matured into a full complement of online and video streamed programs that meet the demands of today's students and employers.

In fact, Old Dominion's online psychology bachelor's program was recently ranked #18 in the nation and lauded as a top "Best Buy." U.S. News and World Report listed our online graduate nursing program as the 28th best in the nation and graduate engineering at 43rd. Another publication named Old Dominion's online computer science program the fourth best.

Let me turn to research. Just as academic quality attracts a diversity of minds to our campus and prepares our students for success, research excellence draws innovative thinkers who contribute to students and society in a myriad of ways.

Such a philosophy leads us to another strategic plan goal: invest strategically to spur economic growth.

In 5 years' time, we've improved our total research and development ranking among public institutions without a medical school to 55th. This year, Old Dominion was awarded its 100th, 101st and 102nd patents and signed 5 licensing agreements. In partnership with EVMS, we've filed a
provisional patent for an ultrasound training simulation technology that could replace the stethoscope as the tool of choice for bedside diagnostics.

The Frank Reidy Center for Bioelectrics Research continues to break new ground. The center's researchers hold more than 40 U.S. patents related to malignant tumor treatment, wound healing, and plasma creation for disinfection and treatments. Thanks to a generous 3.5 million dollar gift from Frank Reidy, the center's life-saving efforts continue to advance.

Promising work in melanoma treatment by Dr. Richard Heller is in clinical trials on the West Coast. One of the world's leading scientists in vascular cell research, Dr. John Catravas, joined us as the Sentara Chair in Bioelectrics, which was generously supported by a 2 million dollar gift from Sentara Healthcare. Dr. Michael Kong, a leading researcher in the biomedical applications of cold atmospheric plasmas, joined our team as well.

A key aspect of economic development anywhere in the world is improved transportation. To that end, we opened the Center for Innovative Transportation Solutions in partnership with the City of Virginia Beach. Six internationally known engineering researchers lead our efforts there.

If traffic congestion can alter growth, imagine the impact of flooding. Old Dominion has partnered with Norfolk, Virginia Beach and a number of others to address our region's risk from sea-level rise, the greatest for a metro area its size, save for New Orleans.

In 2010, we launched an interdisciplinary initiative to facilitate research and education in all aspects of climate change and sea level rise. The initiative also addresses many other aspects affecting coastal cities, such as public health, disaster preparedness, escalating insurance and how to better educate and inform the public.

Recent studies identified a "hot spot" of accelerated sea level rise from Cape Hatteras to Boston, which, in conjunction with the sinking land, begins to explain why this region is in the crosshairs of a crisis. Oceanography professor Tal Ezer discovered that besides the well-known causes, there is a new source: changes in ocean currents.

His findings, published in the Journal of Geophysical Research, explain why in regions such as ours, the sea level has been rising two to three times faster than the average global sea level. This discovery will now aid municipalities as they calculate mitigation tools.

Hans-Peter Plag, an internationally known expert in global change and sustainability has joined our initiative. He brings a wealth of experience and knowledge from leadership roles in South Africa, Germany and the United Kingdom.

This summer, we partnered with Dominion Virginia Power to install more than 600 solar panels on the roof of the Student Rec Center. The panels will generate power for about 35 homes and tie in to the photo-voltaic research of Professor Sylvain Marsilliac. Sylvain has his own solar structure on the roof of Kaufman Hall, supported by a $500,000 grant from Dominion, that demonstrates the viability of Virginia as a great solar market.

Over in the Business Gateway, the university opened a Small Business Administration Women's Center, targeting women entrepreneurs in the Hampton Roads region. It nicely complements other
Gateway initiatives such as the Veterans Business Outreach Center, Hampton Roads Procurement Technical Assistance Center and the Technology Applications Center.

There are more than 8.3 million women-owned businesses in the U.S., generating nearly $1.3 trillion in revenues and employing more than 7.6 million people. Delivering resources to this rapidly growing segment of the business community is critical to creating jobs and strengthening the economy.

You will note our research priorities mirror our graduate programs and tie nicely into regional strengths - federal labs, the port, military, Chesapeake Bay and health care.

Before I leave the topic, I'd like to acknowledge Dr. Rodger Harvey, who joined the leadership team this summer as interim Vice President for Research.

As one of Virginia's more international institutions, we set forth to expand those connections too.

One way is to create a campus environment where international perspectives are represented. Old Dominion hosts a global community of more than 1200 international students from 113 countries, for example.

Of course, study abroad remains the mainstay of intercultural learning. We increased scholarship funding for students to take advantage of offerings like professor Jennifer Fish's annual trip to South Africa to study women's issues, or professor Annette Finley-Crosswhite's moving spring break mini-course, examining the Holocaust in Paris and Germany.

Chinese cultural performances marked the April opening of Old Dominion's Confucius Institute, in partnership with China's Minzu University.

In just a little over three months, the Confucius Institute has sent 8 students to China for study abroad and has gained approval for Old Dominion to become the first university on the east coast sanctioned to train Chinese faculty. This year, the institute will work to expand Chinese language instruction in neighboring public school systems.

With more than 100,000 alumni, 25,000 students, 3,000 faculty and staff, and campuses in Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Portsmouth and Hampton, Old Dominion is like a city unto itself. And so another of our strategic plan goals was to enrich the quality of campus life.

We now have a residence life model that sets the tone for being a Monarch Citizen, establishing Living-Learning Communities and guaranteeing housing to first and second year students to support student retention.

Through our Quality of University Life initiative, led by Vice President Sanderlin, we implemented service standards throughout campus. We've also worked hard to provide an additional 1% to the salary increase approved by the General Assembly.

But where I'd like to draw particular attention is campus safety. Under the leadership of Chief Rhonda Harris, university police have redefined their focus. This strategy and the hard work of our men and women in the Police Department, has resulted in a 75 percent decline in robbery, and significant declines in burglary and theft, too.
Old Dominion University also recognizes its obligation to the larger community. So committed are we to service, that a goal of the strategic plan is to build even stronger civic and community engagement.

We do that by expanding our outreach, such as the State of the Region report, our annual Lambert’s Point summer program, and specialty courses for teachers with emphasis toward the children of military families. Thank you Professor John Nunnery, and your colleagues, for that important work.

Take a drive along 43rd Street, to see the beautiful new community created by ODU’s Community Development Corporation that is building more than 50 townhomes as affordable housing for working families.

But nowhere can our community commitment be seen more than in our volunteer efforts.

More than 11,000 students engaged in community service last year. This equates to more than 375,000 hours spent tutoring, offering health check-ups, reading to the elderly, beautifying neighborhoods, and cleaning local waterways.

Faculty and staff provided another 54,000 hours of service for more than 800 organizations.

So strong is Old Dominion’s culture of engagement, we were recognized for the second consecutive year on the President of the United States’ Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.

This month, a new era in Monarch sports begins as the university became a member of Conference USA.

My most meaningful moment with athletes, however, occurred in January when I stood on the basketball court at half-time with 175 Monarchs who were named to their respective college’s dean’s list in the fall. That number means more than a third of our student athletes were recognized for academic excellence.

As I look back over the past five years, the changing landscape of our campus is a tangible indication of this institution’s transformation.

Since I began, Old Dominion University has completed or started some $325 million in capital projects and our first-ever, free-standing dining hall will soon be constructed along 49th Street. Not only do these projects create a state-of-the-art campus, but they also mean jobs for Hampton Roads residents.

In January, we launched a master plan process to review our facilities and how we will continue to meet our aspirations for the future. I want to thank Chief Operating Officer Harnage for his leadership of this critical initiative.

While we anticipate releasing the plan soon, we recognize a need for considerable academic space to accommodate our growing research portfolio and enrollment. But make no mistake, we will accomplish this within our existing footprint and through the use of our higher education centers.
Since 2009, the Virginia General Assembly has increased its support of Old Dominion University by nearly $30 million, for which I am grateful. But we must continue to seek more resources to hire additional faculty to further lower our student-to-teacher ratio.

Private support of Old Dominion has been tremendous as well.

We've raised close to 100 million dollars in gifts and commitments, including 21 gifts of more than $1 million each.

Dick and Carolyn Barry's 2 million dollar donation is the foundation for a new art building now under construction in the University Village. A 1 million dollar gift from Jim Hixon will fund a connected art studio building and an arts endowment. When finished next spring, the two buildings will house classrooms, studios and the Chrysler Museum's Jean Outland Art Library.

An outdoor amphitheater, supported by a 1 million gift from Macon and Joan Brock, will be a site for concerts and performances when it opens next summer on the north end of Monarch Way.

These new venues will join the existing Gordon Art Galleries, David and Susan Goode Theatre, and University Theatre, all within a three-block stretch, to create a dynamic Arts in the Village community along Monarch Way.

In athletics, a 1 million dollar gift from the Mitchum family brought our proposed basketball practice facility one step closer to reality, and Larry and Kathy Hill's donation of 1 million dollars continues to support our athletic programs. In gratitude the university's Powhatan Sports Complex was named in the Hill's honor.

So, as we begin the 2013-2014 academic year, let us look forward to our future goals and how we will build toward them in the coming years.

Later this fall, Old Dominion University will embark upon the creation of a new strategic plan that will carry us to 2019. It will be led by Provost Simpson and Vice President Neufeldt to ensure academic priorities are lock-step with student success.

Though not a single word has been inked, some goals remain clear.

We must continue to support and move forward our academic and research strengths, and champion engaging and innovative teaching.

We are committed to keeping tuition low and managing our enrollment, where retention and graduation rates take top billing.

We remain committed to being the engine that drives the Hampton Roads economy. A recent study by the Virginia Business Higher Education Council estimated the total economic contribution resulting from Old Dominion University operations to be more than 2.1 billion dollars in gross domestic product.

But beyond the revenue and jobs created by our operation, we have a responsibility and a desire to use our intellectual capital and infrastructure to better serve the region and the Commonwealth.
We are strategizing with the Community Foundation Organization and others to lay a blueprint for expansion of our economic development initiatives and create programs that are relevant for future job expansion in key clusters.

We are utilizing $125,000 from the General Assembly to study a joint school of public health with Eastern Virginia Medical School. While there is still much ground to cover to determine its feasibility, such a school holds great promise for the people of Virginia. EVMS President Richard Homan has been a great partner in this review.

We remain committed to serving and partnering with the military. With about 23 percent of our student population consisting of active duty service members, veterans or dependents, ODU has forged strong ties that extend from Hampton Roads to the international community.

I'm proud to introduce Retired U.S. Navy Vice Adm. David Architzel, who recently joined us as military affairs director. I can think of no better liaison than a man who brings more than 40 years of distinguished naval service.

The Darden College of Education is about to launch a much needed Early Childhood Development Policy Center to be the state's central authority on data on this topic. Partnering with the Elevate Early Education organization, we plan to issue an annual report on the state of early childhood in Virginia.

Gaining real world experience as a student is the hallmark of an Old Dominion education. Student competitions - such as the Solar Decathlon and the College Fed Challenge - are excellent ways and a growing priority to put classroom knowledge into practice.

One of our commitments moving forward is to create an endowment to support such student participation and I'm pleased to announce that Donna Fischer, president and CEO of DLS Engineering Associates, has given a lead gift of 1 million dollars. Thank you!

So colleagues, please know, I am committed to pursuing another 200 million-plus in private gifts and public funding over the next four years to support the initiatives I've mentioned and those still to come from our new strategic plan. When we succeed, we will have generated in excess of 650 million dollars in private and public funding in about 8 years. I proudly share the credit for this achievement with Alonzo Brandon, Elizabeth Kersey and all of you.

Finally, I have spoken at length about our dedication to both student success and economic development of the region. When I consider that tomorrow's entrepreneurs are today's students, the university's responsibility is clear: to teach, grow and nurture those innovators so they are prepared to propel our economy to the future.

We are launching a major initiative to develop an entrepreneurial curriculum that will be geared to students across all disciplines. Such a focus will not only help create the next generation of CEOs, but it will also foster creative thinking among future teachers, nurses, engineers, political scientists, and chemists.
I am thrilled to announce that our vision is also that of Old Dominion University alumnus Mark Strome, and his wife, Tammy, who through their Strome Family Foundation have donated 10 million dollars to make it a reality!

In addition to teaching entrepreneurship, the Strome gift enables us to establish an entrepreneurial center and co-curricular programming, like mentoring and competitions. Moreover, cultivating a culture of entrepreneurism on campus will have a beneficial effect on our research and IP commercialization efforts.

Overall, the gift will help us build a full continuum of entrepreneurial opportunities with a point of entry for every level of experience.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in closing, I'd like to leave you with this thought.

In 1930, two men had the daring and boldness to believe that Norfolk should have a college of its own. Everyone told them it couldn't be done; yet they persisted against all odds.

In 2013, that same enterprising spirit lives on in our students, faculty, alumni and supporters.

We are Virginia's forward-focused research university for high-achieving students.
We are nationally recognized faculty and cutting-edge researchers.
We are an economic development leader that creates jobs and fosters entrepreneurial growth.
We are a community partner that works to improve lives, our region, and the world.
And, we are more than 100,000 alumni making a difference locally and globally.

Ladies and Gentlemen, We are Old Dominion University.

Thank you for coming.

Converted from the ODU Website (August 13, 2020)
https://www.odu.edu/stateoftheuniversity/2013