State of the University Address, 2014

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President John R. Broderick  
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Good morning and thank you for coming!

As I embark upon my seventh State of the University Address, I can’t help but marvel at the achievements this institution has attained in such a short period.

Old Dominion enrolls nearly 25,000 students from all 50 states and 127 different countries. We educate tomorrow's leaders - as evidenced by our 129,000 alumni who are forging new paths across the globe -- and serve as a hub for groundbreaking research, innovation and economic growth.

I may have the honor of touting these successes, but we know they come from the hard work and support of everyone in this room and many others across our campus and centers.

As Vice President September Sanderlin reminded me this morning, while we have over 1,000 people here, many of our colleagues in facilities, parking, police and dining are hard at work readying the campus for the opening of school.

So please tell those folks you see today, how appreciative and thankful I am for their service!

I'd especially like to acknowledge our Board of Visitors and our Rector Fred Whyte, for superb leadership.

To our outgoing board members -- Jeff Ainslie, Dee Gilmore, Luke Hillier and Marc Jacobson - and to Jodi Gidley, who sadly died earlier this month -- I am grateful for your commitment and stewardship. You will be missed.

I am confident that our new members -- Will Sessoms, Carlton Bennett, Lisa Smith, Jay Harris and Ross Mugler -- will build on the strong foundation you developed.

I also want to thank my wife, Kate, who devotes much time and talent to Old Dominion's success. While Kate retired from the University’s Office of Educational Accessibility, she continues her active public service. She serves on the boards of the Chrysler Museum, the Norfolk Forum and Norfolk
Collegiate ... and was appointed to the State's Rehabilitation Council.

Kate, thank you for exemplifying the university's commitment to civic engagement through your work as first lady.

Each fall, the campus is brimming with the promise of the year to come. Knowing the great heights our faculty attain, I am excitedly awaiting new frontiers they will conquer next.

During the spring semester, Carolyn Rutledge became Old Dominion's 27th recipient of the Virginia Outstanding Faculty Award from the State Council of Higher Education. She was recognized for her superior teaching, research and service in health care.

Meanwhile, Community and Environmental Health's Steven Becker was appointed by the National Academy of Sciences to a panel examining cancer risks in populations living near nuclear facilities.

In economics, Gary Wagner is participating in a Federal Reserve Bank initiative that produces macroeconomic forecasts for the United States. He also co-leads the economic forecasting project, including the annual State of the Region Report, with Board of Visitors Professor of Economics and President Emeritus Jim Koch.

This report, as well as ones produced by the Center for Real Estate and Economic Development and the Social Science Research Center, provide a glimpse into life and the future economy of the Hampton Roads community.

Doug Ziegenfuss, Chair of Accounting, was named the 2013 Educator of the Year by the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, the world's largest organization in that field.

The poetry of English professors Tim Seibles and Luisa Igloria were recognized with national awards.

Assistant Dean Leigh Butler received the Outstanding Advising Award by the National Academic Advising Association. Her Education colleague, Bill Owings, received the 2014 Distinguished Fellow Award during the National Education Finance Conference.

The National Science Foundation bestowed a prestigious career development award to Environmental Engineering's Sandeep Kumar for his groundbreaking work in algae biofuels.

Engineering Technology's Carol Considine earned the National Excellence in Teaching Award by the Associated Schools of Construction.

Two Old Dominion scientists were elected fellows of the American Geophysical Union, an honor earned by less than one-percent of its 62,000 members. Eileen Hofmann, from Oceanography and Kenneth Mopper, from Chemistry were 2013 recipients.

Clearly, our faculty are among the best in the nation.

For our students, that translates into engaging and relevant learning opportunities that foster creativity, encourage independence and teach critical thinking skills.
And indeed, ODU students are remarkable.

Our top six graduates at May’s commencement were a diverse group of learners, like our campus as a whole. These achievers included an international student, a returning adult, a ROTC midshipman and someone who graduated in less than four years.

Take, for example, Mechanical Engineering’s Mark Levenstein, who was able to conduct research with Professor Ali Bes-kok in his freshman year and won a Fulbright Scholarship at the University of Leeds.

Erin Heller, a graduate student in Biological Sciences, received a National Science Foundation Fellowship for her studies in avian ecology and behavior.

Eight theatre students garnered recognition from the Kennedy Center for their work on campus productions.

Lucia Bonino, Glenn Bond, India Tyree and Shermese Epps were recognized for acting, and Samantha Alonso, Amanda Labonte, Jaren Hawkins and Kelsey Moran for their production work.

Nia Wilson and Carina Wicker both landed coveted intern positions at the White House, where they spent the summer working in the Office of Presidential Correspondence.

I think it is important for me to note, as well, that we at Old Dominion strive to prepare our students for a world that is getting smaller and increasingly interconnected. In the last academic year, nearly 400 of our students participated in faculty-led study abroad trips, including one led by History Professor Annette Finley-Crosswhite that probes the horrid realities of World War II-era concentration camps in Poland and Germany.

From our founding nearly 85 years ago, Old Dominion’s entrepreneurial spirit was strong and it guided our growth and mission. Today, it remains robust and provides great economic and social value to the region.

At last year’s State of the University, I announced an $11 million gift from alumnus Mark Strome and his wife, Tammy, to support an entrepreneurial initiative.

I am pleased to report that the Strome gift has already inspired several others.

To acknowledge the Stromes’ generosity, the Board of Visitors voted to rename the College of Business and Public Administration -- the Strome College of Business...

And the Strome Entrepreneurial Center will also be dedicated in September.

Alumnus Lee Entsminger’s desire to promote a university-wide entrepreneurial culture is so strong, that he funded a program where six faculty members attended the Price-Babson Symposium for Entrepreneurship.

Congratulations to Entsminger Fellows Janet Brunelle, Charlie Daniels, Roy Ogle, Bryan Porter, Avi Santo and Lisa Koperna.
Thanks as well to Vice President Brandon.

Let me now turn to research, where our interdisciplinary efforts are seeking solutions to a local and national issue -- sea level rise.

We recognize at ODU, that seldom are complex problems deciphered by a single perspective.

This campus-wide effort has evolved with stakeholders from all six colleges. In June, we launched the mitigation and adaptation research institute, with Oceanography's Hans-Peter Plag at the helm.

In June, we hosted "TechSurge," a first-of-its-kind conference for government, and industry planners to develop a comprehensive local strategy to combat increased flooding that will serve as a national pilot project.

The university was then the logical site for a bipartisan forum, sponsored by Senator Tim Kaine and Congressmen Rigell, Scott and Whittman. This event promoted action in mitigating and adapting to sea level rise among all branches of government.

The hard work of Military Affairs Director David Architzel and NOAA liaison Ray Toll has led to a significant expansion of Old Dominion's outreach in this area.

Old Dominion's legacy of partnering with industry earned membership with the Commonwealth Center for Advanced Manufacturing, which serves as a bridge by taking research to industry, and ultimately, to consumers.

These initiatives tie nicely into our regional research strengths—the federal labs, the port, military, Chesapeake Bay and healthcare, to name a few—promoting job creation and retention.

Another collaboration is our expanded partnership with Newport News Shipbuilding and the Apprentice School, where apprentices can now earn a mechanical or electrical engineering degree while gaining on-the-job experience.

More than 1,000 Newport News Shipbuilding personnel already call Old Dominion their alma mater.

As I mentioned, innovation can be found across campus in all disciplines.

Declan Depaor from Physics received a $2 million grant from the NSF to develop virtual geology expeditions using Google earth.

Instructional Technology's Helen Crompton is part of a United Nations team studying informal learning as a result of widespread mobile usage.

Three faculty members in the Strome College of Business - Xu He, Li Ling and Li Xu - along with psychology's Ivan Ash, received an NSF grant for their study of the factors affecting cyber security behavior in the workplace.

Earlier in the spring, we launched the Virginia Early Childhood Policy Center, the only one of its kind in the Commonwealth, to look at early education, health, family support services and special populations.
Center directors Angela Eckoff and Peter Baker released their first statewide report.

Of course, our marquee programs in sea level rise, modeling and simulation, bioelectrics, and photovoltaics continue to expand.

As our research flourishes, I’m pleased to introduce Morris Foster as the Vice President. I have tasked him with some ambitious goals to raise our profile and to work with faculty to develop a comprehensive review process for our enterprise centers.

I want to thank Rodger Harvey, who served as Interim Vice President for the last 12 months.

As we begin the fall semester, we open our new College of Continuing Education and Professional Studies at the Virginia Beach Higher Education Center. It will offer professional development training and will cater to the needs of nontraditional and adult learners.

Let me talk for a minute about our military-friendly ethos.

For more than three decades, Old Dominion has understood its unique location and responsibility to members of the United States armed forces. As the military has changed, we have transformed, too.

We created the Military Connection Center, so our 5,000 military-affiliated students could navigate the resources available to them, while the Veterans Business Outreach Center provides free entrepreneurial services for veterans.

These are just a few of the ways Old Dominion supports our military and part of the reason the university is consistently ranked among the best schools for military members, veterans and their families.

Engagement with the community is another duty of our university.

This year, Old Dominion students, faculty and staff participated in more than one thousand service activities, including an award-winning partnership to assist military-connected children, led by John Nunnery.

Not to be outdone, many of our alumni chapters took part in projects to benefit community agencies like the Food Bank, Save-the-Bay, Richmond Children’s Hospital, and Washington D.C.’s Carpenter’s Shelter.

Monarch athletic teams serve as another means to delight our community. But while you read the winning box scores in the newspaper, it’s the academic notoriety that excites me.

The NCAA recognized three of our teams for earning a graduation rate of 100 percent. Congratulations to the men’s swimming, women’s golf, and field hockey teams for their excellence.

It also marked the third consecutive time our women’s golf team achieved a perfect rate of academics and retention through the NCAA APR report. They were recently joined on this prestigious list by women’s soccer and men’s tennis.
The Old Dominion wrestling team had the second highest grade point average of all Division I programs in the nation, second only to Harvard. Wrestler Tristan Warner, who maintains a 3.97 GPA in communication, was named to the all-academic team and the NCAA's elite 89 award-winner in wrestling.

Kudos to our student athletes, Wood Selig, and his staff.

While we’re on the topic of athletics, I’d like to point out that despite public perceptions, the new university master plan is about so much more than a possible stadium.

In fact, it provides:

Academic and student space;
Strategies to modernize our residence halls
3,600 parking spaces;
New and modern dining facilities;
Safety enhancements; and

Growth opportunities at the Virginia Beach Higher Education Center.

Thanks to Chief Operating Officer Dave Harnage, the master plan supports the university's academic and research enterprises and provides students with modern living, recreational spaces and world-class learning opportunities.

With continued support from the Commonwealth and our public-private partnerships, our vision will come to life.

In June, I was disappointed when Virginia revenue projections proved lower than anticipated. The $15 million earmarked for Old Dominion would have transformed our academic and research endeavors and leveled the playing field for student support, with our sister institutions in the state.

But be assured ... that Elizabeth Kersey and I will redouble our efforts towards adequate state funding for Old Dominion in 2015 and beyond.

This fall, you will see the start of construction on the new education building on the corner of 43rd street and Hampton Boulevard, and the university's first freestanding dining hall on 49th street.

In the coming year, we will push for capital funding, for a new $70- million science building and expanded health sciences facilities, a testament to our leadership as the second largest producer of stem-H graduates in the state.

With significant private help, we will officially open the Barry Art Building, Hixon Studio and Brock Commons this year.

Thank you Dick and Carolyn Barry, Jim Hixon, and Macon and Joan Brock for your continued
commitment to the Old Dominion mission.

The secret of change, according to Socrates, is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.

To that end, I'd like to outline some of the future we will build together.

Next month, the Board will vote on what I believe is a bold strategic plan. I'd like to acknowledge Provost Simpson and Vice President Neufeldt in this effort.

In the next five years, we will enhance our reputation for academic and research excellence by investing in programs that have demonstrated strength, considerable potential, or identified areas of critical national or regional need.

One such program is a public health initiative with EVMS. Another is the Commonwealth of Virginia graduate Nursing Consortium. A third is our expanded role in cybersecurity.

We can already boast of nationally-ranked programs in counseling, creative writing, port and maritime, nuclear physics, physical therapy ... and mechanical and aerospace engineering.

I pledge to do everything in my power to hire new faculty members, to retain the our world-class faculty and continue lowering our faculty-student ratio.

Recent faculty additions have lowered it from 21-1 to 20-1, but our ultimate aspiration is 17-1.

To attract the best and brightest, we will establish a graduate school and increase stipends and tuition assistance packages.

Additionally, our graduate students now have access to a new health insurance program for the very first time.

In the next five years, our plan calls for limited enrollment growth, but positions ODU to improve our retention and graduation rates where we expect - to reach 83 percent first-year retention and 60 percent graduation.

As a diverse university of learners, we will both promote our high-quality distance learning programs to a broader audience and support the traditional on-campus population.

This is part of the reason I was pleased to join 50 other presidents of Virginia's public and private institutions in writing to express our concerns about the higher education rating system proposed by the Obama administration and its linkage of the rating system to the award of federal student aid.

While I fully support the transparency of data concerning our institution, I feel that linking aid to the proposed new rating system will disadvantage many of our students with limited means.

At Old Dominion, we want to continue keeping education affordable.

To partially accomplish that, one of our philanthropic goals is to increase financial aid funding by $2.5 million, to further enhance our overall graduation rate.
Overall, we will strive to raise an additional $350 million in new public and private resources during the next strategic plan.

We will strengthen an environment that promotes the health, safety and well-being of all, such as proactively becoming a model for sexual assault prevention and bystander intervention programs.

Rest assured. On our campus, there will be zero tolerance for this behavior.

In the classroom and through extracurricular activities, we will ensure active engagement is a distinctive feature of an Old Dominion education.

A recent study by the Virginia Business Higher Education Council said the total economic value of ODU to the Commonwealth is more than $2.1 billion. We remain committed to being the engine that drives the Hampton Roads economy.

We are on track to create a Center for Enterprise Innovation that will offer a collection of integrated services for existing and new businesses. And we will have much more to say about this in the coming weeks.

As you can see, our vision is bold and our future is bright.

In closing, I'd like to leave you with this thought.

Back in 1905, another college president, Woodrow Wilson, spoke of the need for education at Princeton to be linked with patriotism, science, commerce and citizenship of the world.

Almost 110 years later, I believe Old Dominion University lives up to those Wilsonian ideals very well.

Finally, thanks to ...

Thank you, have a terrific semester.