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State of the University Address, 2016

John R. Broderick

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President John R. Broderick Wednesday, August 24, 2016

Good morning and welcome to my ninth State of the University address.

In Chinese culture, the staff of our Confucius Center reminds me, the number nine represents good fortune, harmony and longevity.

So let me begin on that positive note. We are a university community where intellect, persistence, initiative and discovery have lifted our ship new heights.

We've done that together in these last eight years, building a vibrant, nimble institution that has taken the lead worldwide in fields such as bioelectrics, oceanography, and modeling and simulation.

I hope my remarks today will increase your pride in Old Dominion.

During a summer already full of political speeches, I am reminded of a forgettable one. President Taft was never known for economy of language and weather conditions didn't limit his words, either.

One incredibly hot and humid afternoon, the president spoke for nearly 90 minutes. When he finished, an aide told him he received a standing ovation. Once the president left, another aide quipped, it looked more like a "jail break than an ovation to me."

I promise, if you are still here in 30 minutes, it will be the food keeping you.

Let me start by recounting five landmark achievements we've enjoyed recently:

- The largest gift in the university's history, a \$35 million dollar donation from Richard and Carolyn Barry. Their generosity will lead to the construction of an art museum on 43rd Street and will elevate the stature of our Arts Village as a premier cultural destination.
- Our new research professor, Sviatoslav Timashev, a Russian scientist who was a member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, that was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007. Our oceanographer Eileen Hoffmann also was a member of the prize-winning panel.
- Extending our trailblazing work, we just launched the Commonwealth Center for Recurrent Flooding Resiliency, a partnership with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and William and Mary.



In doing so, we are taking a much broader view of the word "resilience." In fact, I am happy to announce the formation of the ODU Resilience Collaborative, which will expand our research in cybersecurity and health care, while delivering breakthroughs and creative approaches to the challenges facing the world.

- A significant transformation of the physical plant. When you walked in, you couldn't have missed our towering new Education Building, opening for classes in January. Across campus, we're about to open the Dining Commons, where our students will be eating better than we ever did. The future list for campus construction includes \$71 million dollars for a chemistry building and \$75 million dollars for a health sciences facility.
- Finally, the most important of the five: Record student success. We awarded over 3,600 degrees at our last two commencements. That should come as no surprise. Our graduation and retention rates have steadily risen and are at their highest levels ever. In the most recent report for which statewide data is available, ODU awarded more doctoral degrees to African-American students than any other institution in Virginia. Our achievements in other areas will be empty if we cannot continue an upward trajectory for students.

Our progress relies on the support of many. My first thank you goes out to my life partner and best friend Kate Broderick, who has been a spirited leader on issues from community service to student mentorship.

She spearheads the Women's Initiative Network where promising female students are paired with prominent women business leaders. Thank you, Kate, for sharing your life not just with me, but also with this university.

We could not continue progressing without the support of our friends in Richmond. A special thank you to the members of the General Assembly here with us and to Elizabeth Kersey.

One of you actually has a new job, where I'm sure you will be equally effective and supportive of Old Dominion. I want to welcome Norfolk's new mayor, ODU graduate Kenny Alexander.

As we do every year, I want to acknowledge our new Board of Visitors members, Bruce Bradley, Larry Hill, Toykea Jones, Kay Kemper and Petra [Sue-nehgi], as well as extend our thanks to outgoing members Ron Ripley, David Bernd, John Biagas, Judy Swystun and Charles Chiou.

On the academic side, Chandra de Silva retired after serving as provost, and deans Oktay Baysal, Charles Wilson and Shelley Mishoe concluded their distinguished service to take on new roles. An equally talented group of administrators succeeds them.

I welcome Provost Austin Agho, Engineering Dean Stephanie Adams, Dana Heller, interim dean of the College of Arts and Letters, Giovanna Genard in strategic communication and Robert Wojtowicz as dean of the graduate school. I want to add I am impressed with the developing vision for grad programs presented by Robert and Vice Provost Brian Payne. We must now begin to invest in this direction.

For me, one of the most memorable parts of the past school year was our celebration of the university's 85th anniversary. Many of you rose to my challenge to contribute 85 hours of community service. Collectively, you racked up an impressive 534,000 hours.

Now, let me briefly take you back to the first decade of our existence.

The division's catalog in 1938-39 assured students they would be well-prepared "for entrance in medical, dental, or law schools" and "special training in engineering courses." Two years later, our catalog vouched for a "first-rate education at a fraction of the expense."

Some things don't change.

We still provide an affordable education.

Our tuition increase this year amounted to \$135 dollars per semester, and Old Dominion's tuition remains the lowest for a doctoral university in Virginia.

As noted in the 1930s, we provided a quality education in science and engineering. We still do.

Old Dominion has the second largest percentage of degrees awarded in STEM-H fields among the state's major universities.

Professor Bob Ash, inspired 20 of our students, nearly all undergraduates, to develop cube-sats, which are tiny satellites, that NASA will launch to learn more about the lower atmosphere and space weather.

Back in the day, the division prepared students for service in World War II. We still support the military and its veterans: one-quarter of our May graduates were affiliated with the military, and Military Times ranks the university No. 14 in the nation.

Today we remain dedicated to addressing the most critical needs of the region, the Commonwealth and the country. And our contributions have been recognized. Remember what Secretary of State John Kerry said in this very arena last year?

"The work that ODU is doing with climate change and sea level rise is work that every university should be doing."

Our goal is to earn similar attention and respect in other fields. We're already off and running in cybersecurity, with the establishment of the Center for Cybersecurity Education and Research, the introduction of an academic major and the hiring of Michael Wu as the first Batten Chair of Cybersecurity.

We also see opportunities to connect with the Commonwealth's Go Virginia initiative, which is why ODU, NSU, William and Mary, NASA-Langley, the cities of Virginia Beach and Norfolk and the local private sector are developing a blueprint for how to grow cybersecurity here.

Please join me in saluting Charles Hyde, professor of physics, who received an Outstanding Faculty Award this year from SCHEV. Dr. Hyde was the university's 29th winner and our third recipient in the past three years, following Gail Dodge and Carolyn Rutledge.

Across this university and beyond, you are extending the boundaries of scholarship, research and instruction.

Let me offer one example from each of our colleges:

The College of Health Sciences is about to launch a Ph.D. in kinesiology and rehabilitation sciences, advancing research and expertise in athletic training and speech and language pathology.

Sara Maxwell, a biologist in the College of Sciences, won the prestigious Sloan Research Fellowship to track the migration of seabirds to the Chesapeake Bay.

In the College of Arts & Letters, Tim Seibles was just named Virginia's Poet Laureate.

In the Batten College of Engineering and Technology, Khan Iftekharuddin won a \$1.6 million dollar NIH grant to expand research regarding diagnosis and treatment of brain tumors.

In the Strome College of Business, Ling Li and Wayne Talley led the development of a master's degree in Maritime Trade and Supply Chain Management, that responds to local needs but will have an international appeal.

In the Darden College of Education and Professional Studies, Chris Glass received the Innovative Research in International Education Award from NAFSA.

In the College of Continuing Education and Professional Development, I recently joined Jim Shaeffer in awarding graduate certificates in public sector leadership to 21 civilian and military personnel from the U.S. Fleet Forces Command.

Four ODU students organized the first Student Company Expo last spring which featured 25 student-owned companies. One of the attendees, Aron Blade Taylor, has taken 3DXtremes, his 3D printing company, to a level where he is garnering contracts and advancing the industry by training others.

Our students continue to shine after they leave Old Dominion. DeVon Taylor, a 2012 graduate in health sciences, recently finished Harvard Medical School and just began his residency at Duke University. Drew Ungvasky, a 2002 graduate, now owns Grow, a digital marketing agency, and has become a leader in the efforts to transform downtown Norfolk to attract more millennials.

In athletics, our women's lacrosse team advanced to the NCAA tournament for the first time and Chris [Mec-cot-ee] was our first wrestler in 40 years to earn back-to-back all-American honors.

But here's the most important news - our athletes are excelling in the classroom. We had more students on the C-USA Commissioner's Honor Roll in the spring than any other school, with 291 athletes, or nearly 60 percent, earning GPAs of at least 3.0.

Student life is flourishing at Old Dominion, with more than 325 organizations.

The credit goes to our energetic and ambitious student body, as well as our terrific team in student engagement and enrollment services, led by Ellen Neufeldt. The perception of Old Dominion as a commuter campus was outdated years ago. This month, we are adding two living-learning communities in service learning and cybersecurity. We now have nearly 5,000 students living here.

And when we complete The Hugo A. Owens House, named after a distinguished former rector who was the first African-American to serve in that position, it will be our 15th residence hall, adding 500 beds.

The reason for this strategy is clear: Students who live on campus get more involved and do better academically.

No doubt, this has been a challenging year for our country and world. We have suffered too many tragedies, and our thoughts go out to members of the African-American, international, law enforcement and LGBTQ communities. We must continue to advocate daily for diversity and inclusion, to eradicate the intolerance that leads to such brutal acts.

To that end, the Student Government Association plans a candlelight vigil in remembrance of the victims and to stand against hate. The vigil presents an opportunity to stand together as a Monarch community.

In so many ways Old Dominion shines as a beacon of diversity and inclusiveness, but we can't stop working to do better. This year, we will again designate a speaker in the President's Lecture Series to focus on this very topic. Michele Norris, the former NPR host who launched the Race Card Project, will be here in February.

In addition, this semester we launch a pilot program for gender-inclusive housing, as well as a policy to address students by their preferred names. How we did this is just as important as the end-result.

Much of the impetus came from our Student Government Association and other leaders, and we've worked with them to see it into reality.

That's what inclusion is all about: Not just diversifying our numbers, but also making sure everyone is part of the decision-making process.

That's why we formed the 1ODU advisory board, and the Inclusive Excellence Task Force, further empowering students, faculty and staff to ensure a welcoming campus for all. SGA President Rachael Edmonds and colleagues Renee Dunman and Stephanie Sanders have been instrumental in moving both initiatives forward. Inclusion, means providing a safe and comfortable environment and why I stress again there is zero tolerance on this campus for violence, bullying or discrimination of any sort.

This leads to my deep appreciation for those who participated in our Green Dot program, which provides bystander training to eradicate sexual assault, and our DiversAbility workshops to better understand those in our community with disabilities.

In terms of the economy, Old Dominion is a significant driver, contributing \$2.1 billion dollars a year. We are the fifth largest employer in the city of Norfolk. Our objective, though, is to do more. We've made huge strides fulfilling one of the goals in the university's strategic plan: to create an "entrepreneurial culture."

If you're on Kaufman Mall, I encourage you to drop by the Strome Entrepreneurial Center or see first-hand what Lisa Koperna and her colleagues are offering at Monarch Physical Therapy on the other side of Hampton Boulevard!

In November we will introduce Lion's Lair, sponsored by the entrepreneurial center, the Entsminger Fellows and the Alumni Relations Office. The competition will identify the best business and product ideas, with awards in three categories. That same day, we will honor the new inductees into ODU's Strome entrepreneurial Hall of Fame.

Our work with local companies is going full steam ahead thanks to Dean Jeff Tanner. Strome Solutions, a research collaboratory where faculty and students partner with companies, is about to launch its first set of studies. Its newest sponsors include Smithfield Foods.

And last month, Gov. McAuliffe and Mayor Alexander attended the ceremony for a new downtown innovation center, the result of a partnership between our Center for Enterprise Innovation and the city of Norfolk. Special thanks to City Manager Marcus Jones, David Harnage and Marty Kaszubowski.

Fundraising is another form of entrepreneurship. There, too, we have reaped the benefits of the hard work of our development office and the loyalty of our supporters. Giving for 2015-16 exceeded \$19 million dollars, not counting the Barrys' donation.

That total included an anonymous gift of \$2 million dollars and donations of \$1 million each from graduates Dick Thurmond and Richard McGrath.

In addition, last year's Day of Giving, tied to our 85th anniversary, raised \$1.1 million dollars from nearly 1,000 donors.

I'm excited about the coming year. We will welcome about 6,000 - - freshmen, transfers and graduate students. Some will not be a regular presence on campus, but that's OK. Forty-three percent of our students took at least one online class in the spring of 2015 and more than 20 percent are fully online.

And we're launching Mane Connect, which will deploy student success coaches to work one-on-one with incoming freshmen to set and reach academic goals.

We also are introducing a new Data Science initiative, capitalizing on our considerable expertise in quantitative disciplines, including Modeling & Simulation. Consider it our own digital transformation.

We will discover previously unrecognized linkages to uncover knowledge and commercial possibilities, along with training a workforce that will make Hampton Roads an attractive location for data-driven businesses.

As is our habit, we will partner with both the Jefferson Lab and NASA-Langley.

What unites all of these promising developments? The infectious can-do spirit that permeates ODU.

As 25,000 students flow back to campus, our mission is to capture that electricity and channel it to maximum power. Society depends on our success educating the next generation of scientists, artists and leaders.

As Thomas Paine said, "The mind, once enlightened, cannot again become dark." Let's go forth from here and shine the light on our students, the region and the world beyond.

Thank you, and I wish you a successful and productive school year.

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<https://www.odu.edu/stateoftheuniversity/2016>