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## **State of the University Address, 2017**

John R. Broderick

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## **President John R. Broderick** **Wednesday, August 23, 2017**

I was struck recently looking at the photos of Old Dominion's previous presidents. I realized, entering my 10th year, I had served longer than any of them except for Jim Koch.

I then thought back to my first State of the University address. I was acting president and a search was underway. As I approached the auditorium at Mills Godwin, I heard someone refer to me as a placeholder.

Suddenly, my nervousness disappeared. I wasn't angry, but I was determined that word would not define me. In fact, it inspired me, and it still does.

And please be warned: Nine years later, the ears still work fine.

Serving as president has been a significant journey, and I appreciate your devotion to this institution and its students.

Together, we have reinforced the truth said often by President Truman: "A pessimist is one who makes difficulties of his opportunities; an optimist is one who makes opportunities of his difficulties."

Truman's give-'em-hell spirit pervades Old Dominion from faculty and staff to students and alumni. We also live by Dr. Martin Luther King's credo, "The time is always right to do what is right."

The latest example of that comes from the Women's Initiative Network, co-founded by First Lady Kate Broderick and Pam Kirk. These leaders have been mentoring first-generation female students with inspiring results. WIN is taking that mission one step further with its "Bridge the Gap" campaign.

In essence, WIN wants to ensure every ODU student competes on an even playing field. We estimate, despite our commitment to keep our tuition low, the typical student here is about \$1,700 short annually. WIN wants to literally bridge that gap to ensure that our students remain in school and graduate.

Thank you, Kate and all the WIN members, for recognizing it is time to do the right thing.



I'm delighted now to recognize our other distinguished guests. From our federal congressional delegation, Ryan Jackson is representing U.S. Rep. Bobby Scott. I also extend greetings to former U.S. Congressman and longtime Old Dominion faculty member G. William Whitehurst.

We have almost a quorum from the General Assembly. Welcome to Delegates Cliff Hayes, Daun Hester and Lionel Spruill and, on behalf of Sen. Lynwood Lewis, Jessie Williams.

We have broad representation from the cities of Hampton Roads: Portsmouth Mayor John Rowe, City Council members Andria McClellan of Norfolk and Ella Ward of Chesapeake, Suffolk City Manager Patrick Roberts and Randy Keaton, county administrator for Isle of Wight.

We also have a large contingent from our local school systems: From Norfolk, we have Superintendent Melinda Boone and School Board member Noelle Gabriel. Virginia Beach is represented by Superintendent Aaron Spence, Chief of Staff Marc Bergin and School Board members Dan Edwards and Sharon Felton.

ODU is enhanced by its military connections, and we're happy to have Captain Rich McDaniel, commander of Naval Station Norfolk, and Rear Admiral (retired) Ann Phillips.

The people who give Old Dominion the benefit of its wisdom and support are known as the Board of Visitors. We are fortunate to have with us Rector Carlton Bennett, Vice Rector Lisa Smith, Secretary Yvonne Allmond and former rector and current member Ross Mugler. Other members in attendance are Kay Kemper, Frank Reidy, Donna Scassera and Robert Tata.

I'd also like to acknowledge our new Board of Visitors members, Jerri Fuller Dickeski and Maurice Slaughter, and we'd like to thank outgoing members Richard Cheng and Dr. Mary Maniscalco-Theberge.

We are also happy to have former vice rector Pam Kirk back on the Board of Visitors.

As well, we will welcome Aubrey Layne Jr. to the board in January after he leaves his position as Virginia's secretary of transportation. He will succeed Mr. Tata, who will continue on the board until then.

We also have with us a number of former board members - Gil Bland, Ronald Ripley, Judy Swystun and Jeff Ainslie and Elaine Lustig, representing her husband, Wayne Lustig.

At this time, I want all of us to remember Fred Whyte. Fred was a former rector who passed away in July. He was a steadfast friend to the University and to me.

We have with us Ivan Militar, the student representative to the Board of Visitors, and past student representatives Kevin Muchiri, Rodin Ndandula and Bo Ram Yi.

We are also glad to have Henry Light, a member of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

On the administrative side, I want to offer a warm welcome to Kent Sandstrom, the new dean of the College of Arts & Letters, and Gail Dodge, the new dean of the College of Sciences, as well as 60 faculty members who joined us this fall.

We also have a number of new faculty administrators, including Gregory DuBois, the vice president for administration and finance; Eric Weisel, who now directs the Virginia Modeling, Analysis and Simulation Center; Jutta Page, the executive director of the Barry Art Museum, and Nikki McCray-Penson, the women's basketball coach.

This State of the University speech will be different in the amount of time I will spend on ambitious new initiatives. We have big plans for this University, and I want to share them with you today.

That's a good thing.

Since you and I don't want to be here all morning, that will mean less time on past successes. But I still want to celebrate the many times we "did what was right." Here are some examples:

- The organization Education Trust cited Old Dominion as one of the 15 universities with the best track records of graduating African-American students.
- In partnership with George Mason, Old Dominion has launched the Online Virginia Network, led here by Ellen Neufeldt, our vice president for student engagement and enrollment services. The network will provide a convenient way for thousands of Virginians to complete their degrees.
- Business Insider, examining data from U.S. News & World Report and the Chronicle of Higher Education, last month named Old Dominion the most affordable college in Virginia.
- Old Dominion this summer will have recorded the highest graduation rate in our history.
- What is the common thread of these achievements? I think it's our unbending commitment to provide education to a diverse spectrum of students and to empower them to reach the finish line.

And our students and our alumni have distinguished themselves.

Taylor Bobrow, an engineering graduate, is headed to Johns Hopkins with a full scholarship to pursue a doctorate in biomedical engineering. Lamar Giles received his M.F.A. after having already published a handful of novels for young adults. Betsy Duke, an ODU M.B.A. recipient, last week was appointed the chair of Wells Fargo, becoming the first woman to lead a major U.S. bank.

Service, too, continues to be a cornerstone of our students' experience.

Taliah Connor, who's double-majoring in business and women's studies, spent time as a child in a homeless shelter. She now returns to volunteer there and one day hopes to manage a shelter for women and children herself. In the College of Health Sciences, dental hygiene students provided more than \$100,000 in free services, while Kleopatra Moditsi, who is double-majoring in political science and international studies, and Megan Trent in psychology spent spring break volunteering in a refugee camp in Greece.

Our students literally grabbed the spotlight in the arts in the last year, too.

Forty from our Concert Choir sang at Carnegie Hall. And the Monarch Marching Band performed at Disney World. Our blossoming partnerships with the Chrysler Museum and Virginia Symphony Orchestra will yield additional opportunities for both our faculty and our students.

Our faculty and staff members continually lift the institution to new horizons.

Two professors received the Outstanding Faculty Award from the State Council of Higher Education: Jennifer Michaeli in engineering technology and Anatoly Radyushkin in physics. We're up to 31 winners of the state's most prestigious award for faculty members. No institution except William and Mary has more.

In the Strome College of Business, Li Xu was elected to the prestigious European Academy of Sciences.

Under Silvana Watson's leadership, the Darden College of Education and Professional Studies won a \$2.1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to improve English-as-a-second-language instruction.

Robert Bruno and Patrick Sachs in the College of Health Sciences continued their grant-funded work in stem-cell research, which offers hope for new therapies for cancer and tissue repair.

In Arts & Letters, Adolphus Hailstork's "Fanfare on Amazing Grace" was performed by the National Symphony Orchestra to commemorate the opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Like our students, our alumni, faculty and staff distinguish themselves daily in community service.

We've also made huge strides to smooth the way for community college students working towards bachelor's degrees. We have signed more than 190 articulation agreements in Virginia; about one-third of them allow students to complete their bachelor's degrees in 120 credit hours. The College of Continuing Education and Professional Development just launched one of those programs with Tidewater Community College, leading to an interdisciplinary bachelor's in leadership.

That initiative also represents a step forward in our efforts to keep education affordable. The leadership major will be our first z-degree, meaning zero money spent on textbooks for students.

Among our new academic programs this year are: undergraduate majors in real estate and enterprise cybersecurity, and master's degrees in sport management and in park, recreation and tourism studies.

Those last two degrees illustrate Old Dominion's thrust to maximize our potential in graduate education. In the past year, we created the Graduate School and for the first time held a separate commencement right here in the Constant Center.

I want to thank Dean Robert Wojtowicz, as well, for his leadership in planning the Barry Art Museum. That is one piece of a dramatic transformation reshaping our landscape.

Just look at the buildings that have opened, some just a few yards from where we are this morning: The Education Building. The Broderick Dining Commons. The Mitchum Basketball Performance Center.

Among those to begin in the near future are the Hugo Owens residence hall, a new Child Study Center, the Chemistry and Life Sciences Building and then a Health Sciences Building.

Since I'm on the subject of buildings, I want to recognize the master builder, David Harnage, who recently retired but is here with us today.

In addition to building upwards, we are building beyond our boundaries by strengthening partnerships. It is appropriate that we helped Naval Air Station Norfolk celebrate its 100th anniversary. Old Dominion has been a pioneer in ROTC training. One-quarter of our student body is affiliated in some fashion with the military, and we're very proud of that.

We also commemorated the centennial of a longtime research partner, NASA Langley, and last month a rocket launch from Wallops Flight Facility carried a payload designed by a group of our students.

This year, we enhanced our partnership with the Port of Virginia to help this vital Hampton Roads institution better plot its future. Our connection is deepening with Eastern Virginia Medical School, with whom we collaborated on sepsis research that generated headlines worldwide. We also celebrated the first anniversary of the Commonwealth Center for Recurrent Flooding Resiliency, a joint effort with William and Mary and VIMS.

Our work in this important field has broadened across the disciplines with the creation of our Resilience Collaborative. Ben Hamlington, in Ocean, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences, conducted path-breaking research, which is upending conventional wisdom.

I also want to refute the fallacy that nothing ever happens on a college campus over the summer.

- We hosted four Research Experiences for Undergraduates, funded by the National Science Foundation, in clean fuel, climate change, cybersecurity and nuclear physics.
- Our Summer Advantage program brought 45 incoming freshmen to campus for six weeks to prepare them for classes.
- Our many summer academic camps included Advanced Robotics, 3D Modeling and BLAST. That last camp, led by Cindy Tomovic, professor of STEM education and professional studies, provided 150 rising ninth- and 10th-graders engaging hands-on experiences that brought scientific concepts to life right here on this campus.

In STEM-H, we continue to graduate the second largest percentage of degree-holders among doctoral schools in Virginia. We try to uncover new methods to increase the pool of students. Cecelia Tucker, director of community relations, and Stephanie Adams, our engineering dean, organized a screening of the film "Hidden Figures" for 200 public school students, most of them girls.

In athletics, our Cheerleaders won a national competition, the football team won the Bahamas Bowl, and the women's golf team captured Conference USA. But here's the most important athletic achievement: 281 of our student-athletes made dean's list, and our women's soccer team had the highest collective GPA - an impressive 3.5.

In student life, I want to highlight Walk A Mile in Her Shoes, an annual event that last year drew a record 400 participants, including many of you. Together, we all must daily repeat the message loud and clear that there is zero tolerance for sexual violence at Old Dominion. The recent tragedy in Charlottesville makes it equally important for all of us to stand up against racism, anti-Semitism and

other forms of prejudice and redouble our efforts on this campus to maintain a climate of open dialogue and respect for all on a daily basis.

Through the efforts of students, our Student Engagement and Enrollment Services division, plus faculty and staff, we further strengthened our commitment to diversity and inclusion. I want to congratulate Johnny Young, Brian Payne and Don Stansberry for spearheading two initiatives that will yield significant dividends in that regard: One is Brother 2 Brother, while the other consists of programs for first-generation students.

Soon, I will be asking many of you to "pardon our dust" in Webb Center as we create more space for students from different races, ethnicities, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities and cultures to gather with one another, as well as the broader community. We also will provide more room for student clubs in Webb, as well as create a gathering space for veterans and other military-affiliated students in the old Education Building.

We've also made more space for our flourishing entrepreneurship programs. In fact, one opened this week right across the street, at 4306 Monarch Way. It features the products of students, alumni and faculty business owners.

Just a few blocks south, the Center for Enterprise Innovation helped nine businesses get started and offered a helping hand to dozens more. Our Strome Entrepreneurial Center continues to pulse with creativity, generated by a growing corps of student businesspeople. One of them, Janay Brown, the founder of Full Belly Delights, was recently named a winner in the annual American Small Business Championship, proving hardly anyone can resist gourmet bacon.

Our efforts in Richmond represent a different form of entrepreneurship.

Since 2012, ODU received \$28 million in new operational funds, by far the most of any institution. To help put that in perspective: We would need to raise \$450 million from private sources to provide that level of funding from endowment allocations.

Since my first State of the University address, Old Dominion was awarded nearly \$500 million in capital funding for a variety of academic, research and student projects. This is remarkable, and I would like to thank Elizabeth Kersey, assistant to the president for local, state and federal governmental relations, and all of you for helping me make our case.

Finally, we have done well on the private side in recent years, with more than \$240 million coming from philanthropy, thanks to significant gifts from Robert Mitchell for the School of Accountancy, Dick and Carolyn Barry for the Barry Art Museum, and Elza Mitchum and his family for the basketball facility.

If your math skills are locked in this early in the day, the bottom line is that we're more than \$765 million in a northerly direction since nine years ago. That's something we should be happy about.

However, the task is far from finished.

We must embrace a greater challenge in fundraising. Student success, academic and faculty enhancement as well as athletic purposes must be directly in our sights at all times.

While I identified one key need with bridging the gap, our commitments to students must extend to scholarships, internships and study abroad. We want to ensure deserving students who qualify for an internship or a study abroad can say yes rather than "No, I can't afford to go."

We also need to have more support to ensure the best and brightest choose Old Dominion. We also must continue to enhance funds for our faculty, teaching and research. The deans will closely work with the development office in delivering those resources back to their colleges. I know the deans are excited to engage with alumni and community constituents to make sure that happens.

Finally, we must continue to shift more support of intercollegiate athletics from fees to fundraising and corporate sponsors. Athletics, too, will work with development to gain more private assistance for scholarships and projects such as the football stadium. The good news here is \$25 million has been raised in the last three years to do just that.

We will soon announce a process to select a women's volleyball coach. The team will practice in a renovated space in the Jarrett Building by 2019 and begin play in 2020.

Overall, I believe we must raise another \$200-plus million over the next several years for these projects.

If we can meet that goal, we will be approaching \$1 billion in new public and private resources. *That* would be a remarkable milestone for our still-young university.

I've emphasized today the many ways we've helped our students build their lives and their future, benefiting the surrounding community. Imagine how much more they'll be able to accomplish if we're successful.

On the Commonwealth side, you should know our top three priorities for the next year are operating funds, faculty-staff salaries and financial aid. We have made inroads in all three and hope to continue that upward trend.

I'd like to close with two other initiatives that will benefit faculty and students.

While our commitment to the city of Norfolk certainly is unwavering, under the leadership of Provost Austin Agho, we will also further expand our presence in Virginia Beach. Later this fall, we will outline additional graduate health sciences programs and centers, including telehealth, resiliency and water technology efforts, which will be a very good fit for what we are attempting to do in Virginia Beach.

Finally, we need to take more robust research projects to the next level and capitalize on their potential. I am pleased to announce this morning that we experienced our greatest commercialization success with the release of shares valued at \$41.6 million to the university and to our bioelectrics researchers from Pulse Biosciences. That's the publicly traded company created in California to pursue this important cancer-fighting work. I want to offer my congratulations to Frank Reidy, Karl Schoenbach, Richard Heller, Alonzo Brandon and so many others for this remarkable research achievement.

We are creating a game plan to commercialize more of our intellectual work as well as expand economic development efforts to better align our approaches with GO Virginia and Reinvent HR.

One of the 20th century's foremost researchers, Albert Einstein, once said, "I never think of the future. It comes soon enough."

I, however, prefer the philosophy of another Nobel winner, Malala Yousafzai, the young Pakistani who bravely champions women's education. "Let us make our future now," she said, "and let us make our dreams tomorrow's reality."

I wish all of you a productive and fulfilling academic year. Our 24,500 students are ready to go.

Thank you for all you do, and let's have a terrific academic year.

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<https://www.odu.edu/stateoftheuniversity/2017>