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State of the University Address, 2022

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STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESS

Friday, September 2, 2022

Old Dominion University President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D.

10:00 AM

Chartway Arena

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



Good morning, and welcome to the State of the University!

As we join together for the beginning of a new academic year, I am pleased to report that the state of our University is strong and poised for another banner year that will define our institution in profound and lasting ways for many years to come!

The State of the University is an annual event that provides an opportunity to reflect on our past, celebrate our recent progress, and plan for our bold and promising future!

Without question, Old Dominion University has a rich history of research, teaching, and service. Our significant impact on campus and in the community is the very foundation of our important work and our proven success!

With an unparalleled commitment to serving the Commonwealth of Virginia and local communities, our incredible students are transformed by their Monarch experience.

Indeed, our campus community is special due to the people that devote their time, talent, and treasure to our mission and our vision.

As such, I am pleased to acknowledge a few of these critical groups as we begin.

Let's begin with members of the Old Dominion University Board of Visitors, my bosses, who are in attendance today.

These individuals are strong advocates and true supporters of this University.

They are all accomplished in their own right and spend their precious time ensuring that future Monarchs have even greater opportunities to continue our storied history and lasting legacy of transformational excellence!

When I call your name, please stand:

- Bruce Bradley;
- Murry Pitts;
- Yvonne Allmond;
- Rob Broermann;
- Jerri Dickeski;
- Dennis Ellmer;
- Rudy Middleton;
- Elza Mitchum;
- Ross Mugler; and
- Armistead Williams.

Please join me in giving my bosses a hearty round of applause!

In addition to the Board of Visitors, Old Dominion is honored to have the service and support of several volunteer organizations, including the:

- Alumni Association Board of Directors;
- Athletic Foundation Board of Trustees;
- Barry Art Museum Board of Directors;
- Educational Foundation Board of Trustees;
- Real Estate Foundation Board of Trustees;
- Research Foundation Board of Trustees; and
- All of our college advisory boards.

Members of these boards, who are in attendance, please stand so that we can acknowledge your tireless efforts!

Every University has a senior leadership team, which provides unwavering support to ensure seamless operations, while also boldly advancing the institution.

This talented team here at ODU is second to none and includes a broad range of administrators, who are experts in their given areas and proud champions of our institution.

At this time, I would like to ask members of the Leadership Council to please stand.

Please join me in recognizing these dedicated individuals for their daily efforts on behalf of the Monarch Nation!

Recent advancements in our academic and research mission were made possible due to the dedicated efforts and hard work of our world-class faculty.

Our faculty are well represented in institutional matters through a governance model that is successful due to the engagement of the Faculty Senate, which is led by its Chair - Dr. Michael Carhart.

At this time, I would like to ask Dr. Carhart and members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, who are in attendance, to please stand.

Let's recognize these devoted Monarchs for their steady leadership, strong advocacy, and selfless service!

Old Dominion University is honored to continue its strong legacy of being a student-centered institution.

We are fully invested in the success of our talented students.

Our student body is fortunate to be represented by Student Government Association President Zaria Gassaway and her talented cabinet.

Zaria and members of your team in attendance, please stand and be recognized by your ODU family for your commitment in providing the very best possible experience for all students!

And, last, but certainly not least, I would like to acknowledge my lovely wife and your First Lady - Dr. Marisela Rosas Hemphill.

She cares deeply for others and gives so much of her time to both encourage and support her fellow Monarchs!

Marisela, please stand as we recognize you for all that you do for this great University on a daily basis!

On September 12, 1930, the Norfolk Division of the College of William and Mary opened its doors in the old Larchmont School building!

And today, just 10 days shy of another celebration of our historic founding, Old Dominion University now stands as the academic, cultural, and research cornerstone of Hampton Roads!

This institution and our campus are vastly different from our humble beginnings.

For many years, ODU has consistently been focused on the engagement and success of our students, as well as making an impact on our region, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and beyond.

These are defining hallmarks of our powerful legacy and will continue to propel us as we move forward together.

As we reflect on the past year, one of our most significant accomplishments was the manner in which this campus supported each other on the journey in returning to in-person engagement and operation following the COVID-19 global health pandemic.

Throughout the pandemic, we had a team fully dedicated to COVID-19 planning and response.

That team, which was led by Dr. Don Stansberry, provided guidance, insight, and support to our entire campus.

Don and members of the team, please stand and remain standing!

Also, we must acknowledge a few groups that truly went above and beyond in a time of uncertainty.

Could I ask representatives of the School of Medical Diagnostic and Translational Sciences, who operated the COVID Testing Lab, to please stand and remain standing?

These individuals carried out over 19,000 COVID tests during the past academic year with very rapid turnaround times to help keep the University safe for students, faculty, and staff.

Also, could I ask employees within Student Health Services, Risk Management, and Housekeeping - just to name a few - to please stand?

All of the individuals standing were instrumental in successfully navigating the Delta variant surge in late 2021 and the Omicron variant surges in early 2022.

Let's give these dedicated individuals a hearty round of applause for the power of partnership and the community of care provided throughout the pandemic!

With the power of partnership on our minds, this past year, campus stakeholders have been engaged in a comprehensive process to develop a five-year strategic plan, which will determine the short-term focus and long-term success of our institution.

Nearly 300 individuals have been serving on a total of 12 groups.

While a majority of these groups have completed their work, the Steering Committee, the Budget Team, and Writing Team will continue their worthwhile efforts.

We are nearing completion of a DRAFT plan for presentation to the Board of Visitors in just two short weeks.

A final plan will be presented to the Board for their formal consideration in December.

Through embracing a culture of innovation across a total of 31 goals and 102 strategies in seven focal areas, the future has boundless possibilities!

With an anticipated January 2023 implementation, I am pleased to announce that the plan will be titled "Forward-Focused: Where Innovation Meets Possibilities."

This title is a reflection of the bold and innovative goals and strategies that were brought forth by those directly involved the planning process.

Please know that every member of our campus will have a voice as we prepare to share the DRAFT plan for a thirty-day comment period.

At this time, I would like to ask Dr. Austin Agho and Dr. Suzanne Wright, as well as members of the strategic planning groups to please stand and remain standing.

The individuals standing before you have given much of their time to think and rethink about the possibilities for our institution.

As their work enters the final stages, it creates great excitement and opportunity for current and future Monarchs!

In addition to our broader planning efforts, there are two groups that stepped forward this past year to provide a detailed review and thoughtful recommendations around two critical areas of our campus.

The Branding, Marketing, and Communication Task Force, co-chaired by Dr. Brian Payne and Ashley Schumaker, began their work last fall and completed their report in November.

And, the ODU Online Task Force, co-chaired by Dr. Morris Foster and Dr. Helen Crompton, began their work last fall and completed their report in January of this year.

Now, their analysis and recommended actions will come to life under the leadership of two vice presidents, Jaime Hunt in University Communications and Nina Rodriguez Gonser in Digital Learning.

Could I ask the co-chairs of both groups, our inaugural vice presidents, and individuals who served on both task forces to please stand?

This past year was certainly a time in which Monarchs stepped forward and answered the call to serve.

And, today, I am pleased to share that the University's administrative and professional faculty have joined together to establish an AP Faculty Senate.

The framework for this level of advocacy and support was created under the leadership of September Sanderlin and with the support of Dr. Veleka Gatling.

Could I ask both of these individuals to stand, along with the committee members who were instrumental in the planning for the AP Faculty Senate?

Thank you for your willingness to represent your colleagues in a manner that advances our institution!

Perhaps one of the most significant highlights of the past year - in addition to our great work on the strategic plan - was earning the prestigious Research 1 status by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

Old Dominion University is now recognized as one of the nation's top research institutions.

We are one of only 146 institutions in the country recognized for the highest level of academic research activity.

This prestigious recognition was made possible due to the researchers, faculty, and administrators who are proud to make ODU a hub for knowledge and discovery.

This is truly a significant accomplishment and will forever change the future possibilities for our institution and our students!

We are truly committed to moving up among our R1 counterparts with a bold and aggressive agenda across all research areas with a special emphasis on maritime, coastal resiliency, offshore wind energy, data science, cybersecurity, autonomous systems, and healthcare.

Could I ask Dr. Morris Foster, all of the researchers in attendance, and team members in the Office of Research to please stand?

Let's applaud their collective success and individual expertise!

While much of our research enterprise is housed within our academic colleges, there is a special place that has proven its importance for ODU.

Just last month, ODU joined with local, regional, state, federal, and industry leaders at VMASC.

25 years ago, VMASC was established as the direct result of a close collaboration between the U.S. Department of Defense and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The overarching goal was to create an academic center of excellence in modeling and simulation to support critical research.

Now, 25 years later, that mission has been accomplished as VMASC is one of the most productive research units at ODU supporting over 100 research faculty, scientists, technical professionals, and students.

I have toured VMASC twice, and I continue to be impressed with their research from drones to digital shipbuilding and the opportunity to watch my Chief of Staff crash an amazing jet...virtual of course!

At this time, I would like to ask Dr. Foster, Dr. Eric Weisel, and VMASC team members - both past and present - in attendance to please stand.

Please join me in applauding these accomplished individuals for a job well done!

At ODU, there is a great amount of synergy between our research efforts and our academic program offerings.

Look no further than our School of Cybersecurity, which was established in 2015 with just 11 students and has grown into a thriving academic unit serving more than 1,100 students.

Over the same time, cybersecurity has generated more than \$20 million in research grant awards!

Recently, the bachelor's degree in the School of Cybersecurity received the prestigious designation as a National Security Agency Center for Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense.

The resounding success of our School of Cybersecurity stems from its unwavering commitment to balancing research, student success, and service.

Reflecting this commitment, in attendance are 13 cybersecurity students who will be inducted into ODU's Cyber Leaders program later today.

Supported by a \$3.9 million National Science Foundation project, these students receive full scholarships, stipends, and professional development in exchange for agreeing to work for the federal government for a set amount of time after graduation.

These are the Monarchs who will be protecting our cyberspace well into the future.

At this time, I would like our Cyber Leaders and their family members who have joined them today to please stand!

Let's applaud them for their individual success thus far and all that they will accomplish in their future endeavors!

With the proven results of our cybersecurity program as a guiding framework, this summer, we announced a new School of Supply Chain, Logistics, and Maritime Operations.

With anticipated approval of the school by SCHEV this fall, we are looking forward to building greater synergy across campus and expanding existing relationships with industry partners!

This is a growing area for the local economy and has the ability to provide an immediate and lasting impact for our institution and the region.

And, today, I am pleased to announce that we are in the final stages of proposal submission to SCHEV for the establishment of a School of Data Science.

This school will be made possible through unique partnerships with Jefferson Lab and NASA Langley in which data science researchers from these national labs will have ODU faculty status.

And, in turn, ODU faculty and students will have special access to national lab collaborations and facilities.

This is truly a win-win for ODU and our partners.

Additionally, it is an important area in which we have led this region and the Commonwealth.

In recent years, we have averaged annual enrollment of more than 2,000 students in data science programs with nearly 400 graduates each year.

At this time, I would like to ask Dr. Brian Payne to stand and be recognized for his visionary leadership in the careful planning of these important initiatives.

I would also like to ask faculty in cybersecurity, maritime, supply chain, logistics, maritime operations, and data science to join Dr. Payne.

Let's applaud these individuals for embracing interdisciplinary initiatives that breakdown silos, increase engagement, and maximize outcomes!

With our R1 status, the 25th anniversary of VMASC, and concentrated academic program efforts, now is the time for us to acknowledge the excellence and prominence that our world-class faculty and researchers bring to ODU - international prominence if we want to state it more clearly!

In total, ODU faculty and students have earned 88 Fulbright awards, including:

- 60 scholar awards;
- 17 specialist awards; and
- 11 student scholarships.

Additionally, we have hosted 18 foreign Fulbright faculty members and 72 foreign Fulbright students, who earned master's or doctoral degrees right here at ODU.

Our newest awards include six faculty members, who have been selected as Fulbright scholars to study overseas with one being recognized as a Fulbright scholar Alumni Ambassador.

Dr. Chezan in the Darden College of Education and Professional Studies will spend time in Romania to raise awareness for applied behavior analysis and effective interventions for children with autism spectrum disorder.

Dr. Fish in the College of Arts and Letters was named to the Fulbright Senior Specialist Roster.

Dr. Richman, also in the College of Arts and Letters, was named to the Fulbright Specialist Roster.

Dr. Time in the College of Arts and Letters will research how disputes are mediated outside of court at the grassroots level in Kenya.

Dr. Wang in the Batten College of Engineering and Technology will conduct environmental-based research in Australia for four months starting in January.

Dr. Gray in the School of Nursing has been selected as a Fulbright Scholar Alumni Ambassador.

Drs. Chezan, Fish, Richman, Time, Wang, and Gray, please stand, so that we can acknowledge your incredible work!

Today, I am also pleased to announce the first phase of a multi-year effort to increase stipend levels for our graduate assistants.

Previously, master's students with teaching assistant duties were provided a \$10,000 stipend for their work to engage in both teaching and research functions on our campus.

With the start of this semester, graduate assistants will now receive a \$15,000 stipend, which will allow them to be more focused on their studies and contributions to our academic and research communities.

Additionally, stipends for our doctoral students have been increased from \$15,000 to \$20,000 effective immediately!

The success of our students is at the heart of our work on campus and in the community.

Without question, our talented students are excelling both in the classroom and in athletic competition.

Our 494 student-athletes averaged a GPA of 3.2, a department record with 97 student-athletes having a perfect 4.0!

Let's applaud the academic achievements of our student-athletes at both the individual and collective levels!

During the most recent year, we were honored to have two championship teams.

For the first time in ODU women's soccer history, they won both the regular season and the Conference Tournament.

And, with an appearance in the NCAA Tournament, they nearly beat No. 1 seeded Duke.

Although they fell short on the scoreboard in the final seconds, they played their hearts out and represented ODU with a great deal of passion, pride, spirit, and strength!

Coach Angie Hind and members of the women's soccer team, please stand, so that we can applaud you for a job well done!

We are equally proud of Coach Dominic Manilla and the ODU women's tennis team for a remarkable season, which ended in a championship victory and multiple NCAA appearances.

Without question, women's tennis excelled at the individual and collective levels with recognition by the Women's Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA), multiple Scholar-Athlete awards, and All-Academic Team designation.

Coach Manilla and the team, please stand and allow us to share in the excitement of another great season and certainly one to remember!

On July 1, 2022, we entered a new era in ODU Athletics with our membership in the Sun Belt Conference.

For ODU, the conference movement was always about providing the very best experience for our student-athletes, as well as our fans!

We are honored to join the Sun Belt and look forward to a great deal of collaboration and competition in our inaugural season and beyond!

Dr. Wood Selig did an outstanding job as Athletic Director as we navigated some choppy waters!

Wood, please stand as we applaud you and your work!

In addition to our new conference, we are making advancements in our athletic facilities.

With the support of generous donors, we are embarking on a major project to enhance and expand our baseball stadium.

Our baseball team has an incredible history and soon it will have a state-of-the-art facility to showcase its talent!

As a side, I learned early on that our alumni and donors were upset that ODU could not host the first round of NCAA Tournament in 2021 and had to travel to the University of South Carolina.

Mind you, I was not officially president when I started receiving complaints about the situation.

But, in that moment, I learned about the passion of Monarchs!

The baseball supporters and alumni went to work.

As several donors stepped forward to make this project a reality, I want to pay tribute to a very special man, Dennis Ellmer, who is a staple in Hampton Roads.

Dennis has led Priority Automotive to a thriving business in multiple states.

But, perhaps what has defined Dennis is his love for others and his desire to create change and opportunity as far and wide as possible!

As a result, ODU is honored that the expanded facility will be known as the Ellmer Family Baseball Complex.

Dennis, please stand and allow us to share our sincere appreciation for your continued kindness and incredible generosity, as well as your Monarch pride and family values!

This summer, ODU Athletics was in the national spotlight as Women's Basketball Head Coach DeLisha Milton-Jones secured her spot in the history books.

The winner of the 1997 Wade Trophy when she played at Florida, two WNBA championships, two Olympic gold medals, two FIBA World Championships and being selected as a WNBA All-Star three times, Coach Milton-Jones entered the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame surrounded by loved ones!

Coach, please stand as we honor your legendary career as both a player and coach, profound impact at the highest levels, and true love of the game!

Old Dominion University is truly a place where students find their passion.

That pursuit would not be possible without access to state-of-the-art facilities that create a learning environment that is second to none.

Currently, the Health Sciences Building is under construction.

This capital project of more than \$76 million is taking shape with substantial completion scheduled for the summer of 2023.

We are excited for the future possibilities for the students and faculty in the School of Dental Hygiene, School of Rehabilitation Sciences, and School of Medical Diagnostic and Translational Sciences, which will occupy this three-story building!

And, just this past legislative session, we were able to secure \$188 million in project funding for a new Biology Building.

With more than 160,000 square feet across five floors, this much-needed building is slated for completion in 2026.

I would like to take this moment to applaud individuals affiliated with our government relations and facilities work.

Annie Gibson, Ashley Schumaker, Chad Reed, and others involved in these important projects, such as Design and Capital Construction, please stand and be recognized for your advocacy, planning, and implementation efforts to ensure our campus and our facilities remain on the cutting edge!

In the months and years to come, we will continue to advocate for our infrastructure needs in order to accommodate for our growing focus on data science and our long history and celebrated work in the arts!

As we look to the future, there is much excitement and opportunity on the horizon for our campus, our community, and the Commonwealth.

One of those exciting initiatives is our expanded work with Eastern Virginia Medical School and our deepening partnership with Sentara Healthcare and other critical partners.

Since last summer, we have been meeting to explore the establishment of an academic health sciences center.

Separately, ODU and EVMS have storied histories with impactful legacies in the City of Norfolk, Hampton Roads, and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Collectively, we have stepped forward to publicly make a clear commitment to address the alarming health disparities facing our region and its people.

While much work lies ahead, the goals of the proposed integration are multi-faceted and include becoming a nationally recognized leader and "hub of excellence" for diagnostic validation, clinical translation, and community-engaged population health research.

A strategic integration between EVMS and ODU would result in an academic health sciences center that offers the highest number of academic programs and the largest enrollment in health sciences in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

By coming together, we can and will enable greater educational opportunities for current and future students through coordination between health sciences programs and other academic areas.

In addition, ODU's recent designation as a Research 1 institution makes the integration an opportunity to further drive research and innovation.

Meanwhile, EVMS has its own history of winning highly-competitive grants and funding through prestigious entities, such as NIH.

An academic, clinical, and research partnership among ODU and EVMS presents exciting opportunities for collaboration and scholarship.

A specialized focus on research and STEM education presents economic benefits for the Commonwealth of Virginia by driving the local economy in Hampton Roads, which makes up 20 percent of all economic activity in the state.

The proposed integration will strengthen and grow the workforce pipeline in Hampton Roads, which in turn creates an economic impact of \$4.9 billion for Virginia.

And, in turn, we will be better equipped to address health disparities in Hampton Roads and Virginia as a whole.

At this time, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Alfred Abuhamad, who proudly serves as the President, Provost, and Dean at EVMS.

Dr. Abuhamad has a proven history of success and partnership at EVMS dating back 30 years. Throughout this work, Dr. Abuhamad has become a close colleague and true partner!

Alfred, please stand and remain standing.

Ladies and gentleman, please join me in providing a warm Monarch welcome to my dear friend, Alfred, who has joined us today!

Complex and important work of this magnitude cannot be accomplished without the sheer dedication and hard work of many.

At this time, I would like to recognize members of the initial vision and strategy groups, as well as the nine functional teams that are now working and will continue to engage over the academic year in our robust planning and implementation efforts.

Please stand and be recognized for all that you have done and all that you will continue to do to make this vision a reality!

As I began, the state of the University is strong.

We are strong - Monarch Strong!

This family - our ODU family of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends - has engaged in unbelievable efforts to push ourselves and each other beyond what we thought was possible.

The truth is that our possibilities are endless.

Why?

Because, each and every person in this room and so many others have the desire and drive to turn challenges into change and obstacles into opportunity.

I have no doubt that Monarchs across the world will be proud to see the future success of Old Dominion University and be honored to play a vital role in making it possible!

As Monarchs, we are genuine in our efforts.

And, we are grounded in our work.

As our campus, our communities, and the Commonwealth are counting on us, we are poised and prepared to proudly demonstrate our individual abilities and collective strength each and every day.

Our mission is worthwhile.

Our vision is clear.

And, our future is now.

GO MONARCHS!