



*2016 State of the College Address*

*Virginia Wesleyan College*

*President Scott D. Miller*

*August 23, 2016*

Good afternoon! Thank you for coming and thanks to those alumni and friends watching worldwide via our webcast.

Annie and I are pleased and excited to begin our second year with you, and we thank all of you for the warm welcome we have received since joining the Virginia Wesleyan Family. We absolutely love living in Coastal Virginia, and we thank each and every one of you for your friendship and support.

We are proud of our College, and grateful for the strengths that attracted us to this institution. Our heritage with the United Methodist Church, valued tradition of the liberal arts, outstanding students and faculty and staff members, strong teaching, and family atmosphere continue to impress us.

Most of all, it's the tradition of friendliness that makes each day worthwhile. I'm greeted every morning with a smile by Diana, Jessi, Sheila and Patricia on the first floor of Godwin Hall. It's Miss Polly at the register in the dining center, students working the hub in the Batten Student Center, Barbara at the gatehouse, and many, many more.

It is loyal Marlins like Professor Larry Hultgren, who has devoted 47 years of his life to academic excellence here.

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I want to also thank Gary Bonnewell, class of 1979, and the first graduate of the College to serve as Chair of the Board of Trustees, for his steadfast support and engagement with Virginia Wesleyan. Gary and our incoming Chair, David Kaufman, were instrumental in our move here.

I hope you'll join us on September 8 when we celebrate the College's first Founder's Day and recognize Gary as well as Virginia Wesleyan legend Stephen Mansfield with honorary doctoral degrees.

This afternoon, let me reflect for a few moments on the past year and outline some progress and priorities for the new academic and fiscal year, 2016-2017.

From the announcement of my appointment in February of 2015, we moved quickly to address the top priorities of the College.

As I reported to you last year, these are extremely challenging times for all of higher education. Why is this so? Three main, interrelated issues have converged: competition for students and resources, the resulting impact on finances, and the expectations of value for the tuition dollar that drive the enrollment competition and financial realities. For the colleges and universities that I know well, including Virginia

Wesleyan, complacency in the way we manage the enterprise is not an option. Competition for students and dollars will only increase. And we are constantly searching for ways to meet students' expectations while challenging them to embrace our mission and become lifelong learners and contributing citizens.

We should welcome these challenges, for they will make us a better institution and a stronger one. But we ignore them at our peril.

We know that this is an outstanding academic institution, and milestone achievements of the past year confirm it—the 10-year reaffirmation materials were among the best I have ever seen in my career. The visit in September affirmed our strong standing with SACS, a 10-year reaffirmation of accreditation with no recommendations and no follow-up reports. That's outstanding! Thanks to Tim O'Rourke, Joyce Howell, Sara Sewell, Marty Sharpe, and many more for their superlative work leading this process.

Early on, the Board of Trustees commissioned an external Institutional Review Team, led by noted national authority and former Old Dominion University President James V. Koch, to assess the College's overall condition and to assist in establishing the priorities for the first year. A Council for Big Ideas, a group of highly regarded former college and university presidents with connections to me and Virginia Wesleyan College, assisted in this analytical process. I also value the wise counsel of longtime college and university president Dr. David Black, who has worked with me on a number of special projects since his retirement three years ago. I'll share more with you on these initiatives in a few moments.

A President's Innovation Fund, established by loyal friends and donors, has funded several projects including a space- utilization study and the extensive 10-month process of the development of a corrective maintenance plan and 10-year campus master plan.

Collectively, each of these groups and initiatives brought a fresh set of eyes and important innovative thinking, all very helpful to a new president.

In short, we are a very good college. And with the application of sound strategy and business principles, we can be great. As many institutions are finding in these challenging times, we must reinvent ourselves to move forward.

While our academic programs and student services areas are strong, many of our operational processes need updating.

For example, we must remain affordable, student-centered, and environmentally sound, recognizing as

well that our aging campus has corrective maintenance needs. Enrollment has been uneven for the past 10 years, while staffing, fixed costs, and debt service have continued to grow. We have been faced with some tough decisions for the short term while also addressing our soundest prospects for the future. Thank you all for your patience and support as we have worked through this process.

As I commented in my last address to you, we must explore new ways of generating revenues from a wider variety of sources. We need to think creatively about attracting more students to the College. We must invest in our core mission and values, for they will sustain us in the busy, challenging years ahead. And we should always find ways to honor our heritage and maximize our strengths, while sharpening our academic and co-curricular programs to meet the needs, expectations, and ambitions of our students.

Accordingly, from the start of my term here, I sought ways to turn these challenges into opportunities—to break new ground, and to make what was familiar into something even more spectacular.

I am therefore pleased and honored to announce this afternoon that we are charting a special pathway to the future, uniting some of our best traditions with new perspectives on teaching, learning, and living at Virginia Wesleyan College. A process begun several months ago with the strong support and leadership of Academic Vice President Dr. Timothy O'Rourke, and honoring several of Virginia Wesleyan's most devoted patrons, has brought us to a defining moment in our history as we lay the groundwork for prominence and pre-eminence in our academic profile.

As we continue to strengthen our academic programs and elevate their "brand," I am pleased to announce that Dr. O'Rourke will become Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Maynard Schaus has been promoted to Associate Provost. Please join me in expressing appreciation to these talented leaders...

Because how well we teach is the heart of all that we do here, it is especially gratifying that these institution-defining initiatives flow directly from our academic strengths and energize our plans for the future. It is with great pride and excitement about our prospects for an even more vigorous academic program at Virginia Wesleyan that I share these announcements with you today.

Virginia Wesleyan College has no truer individual friend than Jane Batten, Trustee Emerita. With her late husband Frank, her steadfast commitment to our growth and reputation as Coastal Virginia's pre-eminent national, liberal arts college has resulted in landmark contributions over many years.

She has been a force for change, improvement, and empowerment, and she has stood with us and for us when we have needed her the most. She believes deeply that students of the highest academic ability would flourish in Wesleyan's innovative 4 X 4 curriculum, including theory and research with our exceptional faculty and experiential learning at places like the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Brock Environmental Center. She believes just as deeply that those students would later be major contributors to a society that turns around its environmental degradation, and has a place at its economic table of "enough" for all who will work – diligently and creatively – to mention just a few descriptors of such a society. To attract those students to this exceptional community of interpretation and formation and to recognize the Battens' outstanding contributions to this institution and the society it serves, we have established the Batten Honors College at Virginia Wesleyan and Jane has provided funding.

Jane, we applaud you and all that you have done for the College.

# # #

Recruiting has already begun for the Batten Honors College, which will open during fall term 2017. A Director of Admissions for that program will be appointed soon.

The Batten Honors College celebrates the unique and vibrant intellectual journeys of selected students. Benefiting from small-class, personalized instruction and especially vigorous faculty-student interaction, The Batten Honors College will serve the special academic aspirations of students. Establishment of the Batten Honors College coincides with academic innovation, construction of our new state-of-the-art environmental sciences center, and increased regional and national outreach at Virginia Wesleyan. All students at the institution will benefit from these and other initiatives. Through an undertaking of a joyful and rigorous course of reading, analysis, and conversation, students at The Batten Honors College who bring a common passion for learning will have special opportunities to pursue individual excellence.

In planning for the Batten Honors College, Dr. David Black, a former long-time college president, founder of the Templeton Honors College at Eastern University, and currently Special Counsel to the President here, worked with Dr. Joyce Easter, who I am pleased to announce will be the first dean of the Batten Honors College, to develop a framework for a highly contextualized honors college at this particular

institution, in this particular society. Dr. Easter and a group of Wesleyan Honors and Scholars faculty then developed a vision, mission, and distinctive programmatic elements of the Batten Honors College.

Key components include:

--The Batten Honors College inspires, engages, and prepares academically talented students to become leaders, environmental stewards, and impactful citizens in the global community.

--The Batten Honors College provides a transformative experience for high-achieving students and equips them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of an ethical, thoughtful, and influential global citizen who understands the complexity of contemporary society, our interdependence with the natural world, humanity's impact on the natural world, and the interrelatedness of society, culture, economics, and the environment.

--Twenty full-tuition academic scholarships each year to attract the top scholars. Students will be selected through an extremely competitive process that will include a day-long competition at the College. When fully implemented, a total of 80 learners will be known as Batten Fellows. They will add to the existing number of academically talented students in Wesleyan's Honors and Scholars program to ensure a critical mass of top national scholars on our campus.

--Batten Fellows will pursue a core learning experience designed to build skills in analysis, synthesis, problem solving, communication, and leadership. Rigorous experiential learning will be part of that experience.

--Batten Fellows will take these core classes and co-curricular learning experiences while pursuing Wesleyan's established academic majors and honor's courses.

--Batten Fellows will live in The Batten Honors College Village – currently known as Village IV – and will be joined there by a number of Honors and Scholars students. Weekly residential roundtables on current events will be conducted.

--Batten Fellows will experience study-away opportunities during their junior year.

--The first class of Batten Fellows will study a wide array of societal problems, but all will study this local estuary's and the globe's major environmental problems.

Jane Batten has been a devoted supporter of this institution throughout our history. Her passion for education, combined with her total engagement with the life of the College, is an inspiration to all of us.

Jane, we thank you for your visionary leadership, and invite you to accept again the gratitude of the Virginia Wesleyan College community.

# # #

For many reasons, it also has been an opportune time to elevate our academic programs, to highlight their central role in furthering our mission, and to “brand” them for new generations of Marlins. Accordingly, we have structured and named our academic departments into three schools. Our purpose is to unite the strengths that all departments have individually and collectively, and to prepare comprehensively for the academic and co-curricular needs and expectations of students—and to equip and empower those who teach them—as we go forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Accordingly, and first, we announce today The Susan S. Goode School of Arts and Humanities.

Named for community leader, philanthropist, volunteer, and Virginia Wesleyan Trustee Susan S. Goode, the School of Arts and Humanities embraces traditional yet highly relevant disciplines of the liberal arts. The study of languages, art, religion, philosophy and other fields spans the history of the human experience, its highest aspirations and sources of inspiration, and the means by which we express our understanding of that experience. As a premier, national liberal arts college, Virginia Wesleyan proudly celebrates the establishment of The Susan S. Goode School of Arts and Humanities which will advance the study and underscore the critical importance of these disciplines. Susan and her husband David are longtime community leaders whose generosity will be recognized later this year by receiving the Association of Fundraising Professionals’ Outstanding Philanthropist award, a well-deserved and distinctive honor.

Susan and David are with us today, and will you please join me in thanking them both for their service and many contributions to Virginia Wesleyan College...

I am pleased to announce that Dr. Travis Malone will serve as the Dean of the Susan S. Goode School of Arts and Humanities.

# # #

The study of the technical, natural, and physical world is fundamental to the human experience. With the addition of a new state-of-the-art environmental center, advances in experiential learning, and expanded faculty-student research collaboration, The Joan P. Brock School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences will

place Virginia Wesleyan College in the forefront of small-college instruction in vigorous, accelerating disciplines.

Established to honor the generosity to Virginia Wesleyan College of business leader, philanthropist, and former Virginia Wesleyan Chair of the Board Joan P. Brock, along with that of her husband Macon, The Joan P. Brock School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences promotes teaching and research at an uncommonly high level for a small college.

Joan and Macon are well known for their community leadership, their generosity and vision, and they are among the closest friends of Virginia Wesleyan College. They are with us today. Please join me in extending our appreciation to them.

# # #

I am pleased to announce that Dr. Chris Haley will serve as the founding Dean of the Joan P. Brock School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. Through an endowment created by the Perry and Brock families, Dr. Haley will be the Kenneth R. Perry Dean of the Joan P. Brock School. Kenneth Perry is Joan's late father.

It is also appropriate at this time that I recognize the Goodes and the Brocks for something very special to the heart of this College. For many years, Virginia Wesleyan has aspired to construct a new arts building in support of the mission and purpose of the College.

David and Susan Goode initiated the process with a lead gift of \$5 million. Trustees Henry Watts – and his wife Eleanor – have pledged \$1 million to the project. An anonymous donor has pledged another \$1 million.

It is with gratitude that I announce that Joan and Macon Brock have just pledged \$5 million to this project –giving us \$12.7 million in gifts and pledges. This gift places us within reasonable reach of the \$14 million Phase I goal needed to construct a new, beautiful 28,200 square-foot building with impressive glass gallery in the front and 300- to 350-seat auditorium. This will include renovation of the existing fine arts building. Two other phases will be added in the future totaling an additional 22,000 square feet at a cost of \$14.2 million.

The building will be named the Susan S. Goode Fine and Performing Arts Center.

Susan, David, Joan, Macon, Henry, and Eleanor...we thank you.



# # #

In the diverse, complex society in which we live, study of the social sciences is invaluable to students' understanding of human behavior and relationships. The fields of sociology, political science, and psychology, among others, are highly relevant for life and career preparation—especially as students take their places in a global society. In recognition of this essential work that benefits all of society, Virginia Wesleyan College is proud to announce The Birdsong School of Social Science.

The institution does so with recognition and deep appreciation for the many contributions to the College throughout its history by Harvard R. Birdsong, a Charter Member of the Board of Trustees of the College; longtime Trustee, now Trustee Emeritus, from 1989 through the present day, George Y. and his wife Sue B. Birdsong; Thomas H. Birdsong, III, his wife Jane Birdsong; the Birdsong family; and the Birdsong Corporation. The Birdsong Family has supported many substantial projects throughout our history including Birdsong Hall, an endowed scholarship, an endowment for the Office of Community Service, and our new and impressive Birdsong Field.

At Virginia Wesleyan College, study and research through The Birdsong School of Social Science complement arts, humanities, and the natural sciences in exploring and evaluating the human experience, in answering questions that frame students' research with faculty, and in fulfilling the College's mission of service and outreach to the wider community. Students in the social sciences sharpen their powers of observation, analysis, and communication, seeking precise answers to complicated questions, and contributing to new knowledge for a challenging era.

George and Sue are with us this morning, joined by Thomas H. Birdsong, III, and his wife Jane Birdsong. Please stand and accept the greetings and warmest thanks of the Virginia Wesleyan community...

I am pleased to announce that Dr. Robert Albertson will serve as the first Dean of the School of Social Science.

# # #

The Batten Honors College and Goode, Brock and Birdsong Schools will require some of the best academic leadership that we can provide. We have that in the talents of superb members of our academic community—Tim, Maynard, Joyce, Travis, Chris and Bob.

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It is important to note that the Battens, Goodes, Brocks and Birdsongs first became a part of the life of Virginia Wesleyan College during the presidency of Lambuth Clarke, the second president of our College, who served for more than a quarter century.

A president of wise and perceptive leadership, Dr. Clarke planted the seeds for the new academic organization that we celebrate today. His wife, Alice, is with us, and please join me in welcoming her back to campus on this special occasion...

# # #

Let us now highlight accomplishments of the past year and discuss where we need to be going in the future.

**First, Academics...**As mentioned, SACS recently reaffirmed the accreditation of the College for another ten years. The Commission gave the College a complete clean bill of health, asking for no further report on any of the 97 standards on which the College must comply.

As part of its reaccreditation effort, the College developed a Quality Enhancement Plan, or QEP, which is a comprehensive blueprint to bring about significant improvement in a key aspect of the College's operations. The College's QEP has taken physical form in The Lighthouse: The Center for Exploration and Discovery, which brings together under one roof in Clarke Hall three enterprises critical to the development of fully engaged, well-prepared students: undergraduate research, study away, and career development and internships.

Virginia Wesleyan has a distinguished faculty who are, first, demanding and caring classroom instructors who are current in their disciplines. But, in addition, they have a record of scholarly engagement more typical of a major research institution than of a small liberal arts college. At the April "Feather in Your Cap" event, more than forty faculty members displayed their recent articles, books, and artistic works. Over the past academic year alone, ten faculty members published new books.

Our faculty are also able writers of grant proposals, and we congratulate them for securing needed funds to continue their research. Here are the impressive results.

It is important to highlight that more than \$1.5 million in National Science Foundation grants have been received in recent years.

# # #

Virginia Wesleyan College is a national leader on curricular reform, and we are expanding our offerings.

During the past year, the Faculty Assembly approved three certificate programs within the curricular framework. Supply Chain Management; Online Pedagogy; and International Organization and Diplomacy.

Earlier this year the Faculty Assembly and the Board of Trustees approved a plan under which the College will offer two masters-level programs—an online Master of Business Administration degree and a traditionally delivered Master of Arts in Education. The College is working with our regional accreditation agency to secure approval for these new programs, which are expected to begin in 2017.

With the expansion into graduate-degree offerings, the College also plans to begin an online degree-completion program, working in partnership with The Learning House, a private firm with substantial expertise in the marketing and delivery of online courses.

We have secured active partnership agreements with other institutions of higher education in order to expand post-graduate opportunities:

Early-assurance agreements for eight graduate programs at Eastern Virginia Medical School; 3-4 program agreement with Shenandoah University's Pharmacy School and a 3-2 agreement with Duke University's Nichols School of the Environment.

We have initiated degree-completion and/or guaranteed admission programs for associate degree students from Tidewater Community College, Thomas Nelson Community College, Eastern Shore Community College, and Richard Bland College of the College of William and Mary.

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Our new Advanced Scholars Program and dual-credit initiatives in partnership with private academies in the region have received a favorable initial response.

The College's partnership with Busch Gardens, which brings Chinese undergraduate students to Williamsburg to serve a six-month internship and earn academic credit through our Recreation and Leisure Studies program, continues to expand. Next year the program will begin to enroll students from the Philippines in a culinary-oriented internship.

Working through the Center for Innovative Teaching and Engaged Learning, we enlarged our partnership arrangement with NATO-ACT, again hosting the Model NATO Challenge in March (the

College will do so again in 2017) and planning additional activities with the NATO Innovation Hub. The College continued to expand the scope of activities under the Western Bayside Community Partnership, and welcomed Volunteer Hampton Roads, providing office space for this important community outreach enterprise that will expand opportunities for our faculty and students.

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At its May meeting, the Board of Trustees approved promotions for nine faculty.

And we have four newly named Batten Professors for 2016 – 2019:

- Dr. Paul Ewell, Associate Professor of Management, Business, and Economics, and Director of the MBA Program
- Dr. Kevin Kittredge, Professor of Chemistry
- Dr. Taryn Myers, Associate Professor of Psychology
- Ms. Sharon Swift, Professor of Art

We congratulate these outstanding faculty members. Thank you for your commitment to excellence!

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We have some new academic staff:

- Dr. Jeffrey Toussaint, Assistant Professor of Sociology/Criminal Justice
- Mandy Reinig, Director of Study Away
- Mollie Robertson, Director of Career Development and Internships

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**And now let me turn to the all-important area of student life and what I like to call The Wesleyan Plan...**

A Virginia Wesleyan education occurs not only on this beautiful 300-acre campus but also in the surrounding Coastal Virginia community. It takes place in the glass-blowing program at the Chrysler Museum of Art, and on our research vessel (*Ocean Explorer*) at the Virginia Aquarium. It is internships throughout our community.

**It also takes place through The Wesleyan Plan.**

There are 168 hours per week in a student's life. Allowing for fifty-six hours a week devoted to sleeping -- perhaps more in some cases! -- the remaining 112 hours per week are up to us to help them fill

meaningfully—in the classroom, on the athletic field or court, performing service learning, taking part in Greek life, or enjoying co-curricular programs. The advantage of a small, residential campus is the range of choices for study and recreation that make the undergraduate experience truly special and memorable. The Wesleyan Plan is not just about learning in the classroom, but learning to live beyond the academic halls. It should include internships, student research, international experiences, and service learning.

I thank each and every one of you who contribute in some way or another to making these and other experiences significant. And a special thank-you to Dr. Keith Moore, Vice President for Student Affairs, whose collaborative leadership makes the vibrancy of our campus life possible, and the comfort and security of our students the priority that it must be.

We enjoy an exceptionally vibrant campus life. For example, community engagement and service to others is an institutional commitment that requires a genuine effort from all campus constituencies. We have one of the best service learning programs of any college in the country, directed by Diane Hotaling. With programs such as our Winter Homeless Shelter and our partnerships with Western Bayside and Volunteer Hampton Roads, the College is on the path to becoming a leader in civic engagement among institutions of higher education.

We thank the Birdsong family for the endowment that drives the operating budget of this process.

Marlin Ministries, under the direction of Chaplain Greg West, has grown to 20 Life Groups, each of which is comprised of students coming together to discuss various topics relative to exploring their faith. Additionally, the Sunday Chapel Service drew an average of 50 students each week. Campus spiritual life is vibrant.

To support the student experience at Virginia Wesleyan, we have formed the Student Engagement Team consisting of: Kate Griffin, Diane Hotaling, Keith Moore, Joanne Renn, Jason Seward, Sara Sewell, Don Stauffer, Greg Baptiste, R.P. Patillo, and Denise Wilkinson.

With 75 registered student organizations on campus, 225 programs were offered over the course of the 2015-16 academic year. There is never "*nothing to do*" at Virginia Wesleyan!

After a revitalization of the College's New Student Orientation, which was offered this past June, our incoming students and their visiting parents and families were treated to an exciting conference-style

program, complete with individualized advising sessions. Kudos to Keith Moore and Dean of Freshman Jason Seward for leading this new emphasis on welcoming our students and their families to campus.

Virginia Wesleyan has exceptional programs that serve our campus community and those beyond our borders. Our Center for the Study of Religious Freedom, led by Dr. Craig Wansink – the Joan P. and Macon F. Brock, Jr. Director of the Center—and Kelly Jackson, will celebrate this year its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and continues with a robust schedule of programs. We remain indebted to Robert Nusbaum, the Founding Fellow of the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom, for his visionary support and ongoing engagement with the Center.

Our campus Religious Life program, the Boyd Institute, and Center for Sacred Music all broadly support and foster our church-relations connections and position us as a leader among United Methodist Church-affiliated institutions in this state and among the 119 UMC schools, colleges and seminaries nationwide.

Likewise, our athletic program benefits from the energy and guidance of Executive Director of Athletics Joanne Renn. Thanks to her, our coaches, and other staff, we have a top NCAA Division III intercollegiate athletic program. Highlights from the past year show an exciting series of milestones and achievements:

- Sophomore Evan Cox won the NCAA Division III National Championship in Golf after becoming the first Marlin to win the ODAC Championship and ODAC Player of the Year
- Softball won the ODAC Championship and finished the season #1 in the country—the first #1 ranking in program history
- Volleyball advanced to the ODAC Championship match for the first time in school history, winning a program-best 24 matches in the process
- 7 student-athletes earned All-American honors, 30 earned All-Region, 24 earned All-State, 88 garnered All-ODAC accolades and three head coaches were honored as Coach of the Year in the College Division
- Birdsong Field was dedicated, giving a new artificial turf home to VWC's field hockey, men's and women's lacrosse programs as well as practice space for multiple other sports and intramurals

- Men's tennis went unbeaten in ODAC play for the first time as Graham Wilson earned ODAC Player of the Year, a first for the Marlins tennis since 1994
- Softball freshman Kandis Kresinske earned National Freshman of the Year and Cassetty Howerin was named College Division Player of the Year
- Men's and women's tennis and men's track and field received All-Academic Team honors
- Athletics saw two Academic All-District from CoSIDA (Brittany Wentzel - women's soccer, Courtney Bogan - softball) while Bogan also earned CoSIDA Academic All-American honors
- Josh Currier set the ODAC points record with 353 career points, while becoming the first men's lacrosse player to ever be named First Team All-American. Currier was also named State Player of the Year and NCAA National Statistical Champion in points per game and goals per game
- Ricky Perrault (men's soccer) and Kandis Kresinske (softball) swept the rookie awards on the year, earning ODAC Rookie of the Year and State Rookie of the Year
- Women's golf becomes an intercollegiate sport this year and, through private gift support, men's and women's swimming will begin in the fall 2017

# # #

Our congratulations to the student athletes and coaches for these successes. And I offer special thanks to our coaches for the vital role they play in the success of our recruitment program. One hundred and eighty new students will enroll at Virginia Wesleyan this fall as a result of their outstanding recruiting.

The Marlin athletics program benefits from leadership gifts from key alumni and friends. Since the construction of the Batten Student Center in 2002, Virginia Wesleyan has had a beautiful swimming pool, utilized by swim clubs and schools throughout our region. However, we've lacked our own swimming program. Through the generosity of Trustee O. L. Everett and former Trustee John Lingo, swimming will be coming to Virginia Wesleyan in 2017.

Over at the baseball field, a wide variety of improvements will be made including upgrades to the dugouts, backstop, stands and a new press box. A contribution by Macon and Joan Brock will make these improvements possible, and we will recognize Joan's father Kenneth R. Perry by naming the field in his memory. I again thank Joan and Macon.

We remain grateful for George and Sue Birdsong's making possible our wonderful new Birdsong Field, and for Trustee Tassos Paphites '79 supporting the Pavilion. New stands were recently installed at Birdsong Field as a result of another donation.

And thank you, all, who contribute to the support of Marlin athletics.

During the past year we have established a contemporary business model for enrollment that focuses on three main entry points each year for traditional learners. This has provided flexibility in recruitment, and will yield significant enrollment and budgetary benefits in the years ahead as today's students are more mobile and explore many options for their college careers.

We've added an evening call center, drastically expanded early assurance and dual degree offerings, and partnered with nine local private academies in our new dual credit and Advanced Scholars Program. Graduate and online programs are on the horizon.

Special thanks to Tom Murray, who has worked tirelessly leading the call center, and Debbie Hicks and Hilve Firek for their early leadership in facilitating opportunities in our academy partnerships.

The good news is that our residence halls are full—beyond capacity—for this fall, but we need to revisit our entire enrollment model. This is vital if we are to meet our overall enrollment goals to meet our budgetary requirements and to offset a declining demographic.

The recruitment program is led by an outstanding, experienced Vice President for Enrollment, David Waggoner. David joined us last December, having served as a chief enrollment officer at five other institutions throughout his career. He also was a partner in a national admissions and financial aid consulting firm and head of a higher education marketing/communications firm. He is assisted by Beth Clarke, a Virginia Wesleyan alumna, who did an amazing job last fall in the interim until David arrived.

As I mentioned earlier, we now clearly state our enrollment criteria, and recruit students who we think are a good fit. As such, we have a 67 percent acceptance rate. Our philosophy doesn't focus on whom we exclude, but whom we include and how we ensure their success. We admit students with an SPA score of 1050 and above -- which means B and better.

We must take better advantage of our reputation as an outstanding liberal arts college with an exciting location. We must also do a better job of explaining cost and return on investment. And we must focus our attention on overall enrollment for the entire year – not just the fall semester.



# # #

It is a pleasure to work once again with my longtime colleague Dr. Mort Gamble, Vice President for Advancement, who joined us in February. His 43 years of experience both as a faculty member and administrator, combined with a strong and talented staff in the Center for Advancement, have positioned us for success in annual giving and through our current capital campaign.

Veteran major-gifts officer and Associate Vice President for Advancement Suzanne Savage is leading various initiatives being funded by the capital campaign, a multi-year process that is vital to our future.

Providing leadership for The Excellence Fund are Lori McCarel '94, Executive Director of Annual Giving and Alumni Relations, and Coordinator of Annual Giving Kristin Williams, whom we welcomed back to our staff in July.

The goals of the campaign are capital improvements, scholarships and professorships, a more robust endowment, and funding for needs and opportunities across the entire institution.

# # #

In the all-important areas of finance and administration, under the good leadership of Vice President for Finance Cary Sawyer, we are managing our financial resources very well, but we must develop a business model that benefits from resources from multiple revenue streams—enrollment, fundraising, auxiliary enterprises, and special initiatives. I am confident that we have, and will continue to enhance, a more appropriate financial model for the College.

We will look to our two contract service providers, Aramark and Sodexo, as contributors to this process. Under the able leadership of Bruce Vaughan and Tim Lockett, respectively, we will challenge them to operate more efficiently and explore ways to create new revenues from our beautiful but sometimes underutilized campus facilities. As part of our planning, we foresee development of 12 acres directly across from campus along Wesleyan Drive for high-end housing.

We are also moving ahead on the following:

1. Evaluating the effectiveness of our budget-reporting model while developing a new long-range budget model, and
2. Securing the resources to create the position of controller – a badly needed, credentialed professional.

I am also pleased to welcome Robert Leitgeb as our Chief Information Officer. Robert joined us in January from Fresno Pacific University. Robert arrives with extensive knowledge of technology in higher education. His experience transcends the normal boundaries of IT as he engages with departments for business process redesign through leveraging technology.

He brings strategic leadership in preparing our technology for Virginia Wesleyan's future online programs and students.

# # #

I would like to close with an overview of where we need to go in the future, beginning with this current academic and fiscal year and planning for the years beyond....

**In academics:**

1. We must implement online degree-completion programs for adults at the undergraduate level and launch a Master of Arts in Education and online Master of Business Administration.
2. We must expand Winter Session to improve cohort graduation rates and as a source of supplemental revenues.
3. We must expand Summer Session offerings including recruiting students from other colleges living in this community for the summer.
4. We must expand dramatically the number of international partners to provide cost-effective, safe travel-abroad experiences for all students.
5. We must develop dual-credit and the Advanced Scholars Program to attract the best and brightest students from our nine local private academy partners.
6. We must engage students in The Wesleyan Plan, offering a value-added for all students enrolled here, a world-class experience including internships, student research, globalization, and service learning.
7. With the completion of the Greer Environmental Sciences Center and the initiation of the Batten Honors College, we must create niche programs that will expand new opportunities to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Brock Environmental Center, the Virginia Institute for Marine Sciences, and the elite Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy at the University of Virginia.

**In student life and athletics:**

8. We must continuously explore ways to improve retention.
9. We must find ways to fund improvements in the residence halls and expand housing options.
10. We must expand and promote the strength and value of our service learning, religious life, student activities, and Greek system.
11. We must continue to strengthen our intercollegiate athletics program—a program that has excelled with outstanding students and mentors.
12. We must continue to recognize the importance of lifetime fitness through an outstanding recreation program.
13. Through private gift support, we must establish new men's and women's swimming programs.

**In enrollment:**

14. We must consistently recruit annual new fall enrollments of 400 freshmen and 125 transfers; 100 new mid-year transfers; and 25 new summer transfers, meeting our desired academic profile.
15. We must recruit through a competitive selection process 20 full-tuition scholarship scholars per year for the Batten Honors College.
16. Upon receiving approval from SACS, we must implement online undergraduate offerings, a Master of Arts in Education, and an online Master of Business Administration.
17. We must grow our relationship with the United Methodist Church, enrolling 150 learners per year in the Robert Boyd Institute, our outreach program for the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church.

**In advancement:**

18. We must complete the next phases of the \$60 million capital campaign while increasing alumni participation by at least 10 percent.
19. We must complete Phase I and continue the funding campaign for the new Susan S. Goode Fine and Performing Arts Center.
20. In cooperation with the Center for Enrollment and the Center for Advancement, we must implement a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy.

**In finance and administration:**

21. We must develop a long-term financial strategy that focuses on affordability, accessibility, and efficiency.
22. We must develop new sources of revenues including summer camps, conferences and catering.
23. We must develop an apartment complex on the 12 acres immediately across from the campus, to be known as Oxford Village in honor of John Wesley.
24. We must complete construction of the Greer Environmental Sciences Center and the YMCA partnership building within available gift revenues and budget.
25. We must complete necessary revisions to our business model to meet the December 1 compliance date for the new U.S. Department of Labor overtime law.

# # #

These are ambitious but realistic goals—desirable, attainable, meaningful. This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the matriculation of the first students at Virginia Wesleyan College.

It is an anniversary worth remembering and celebrating, for in the long view of higher education, institutional traditions and milestones define us, sustain us, and inspire us. We have much to do here, many obligations to honor and many new responsibilities to consider. As we go forward, we should remember that we are still young enough to shape our future, but also experienced enough to commemorate our success and to build upon it wisely.

Thank you all for your steadfast support of Virginia Wesleyan College. May God bless us, and our work in the exciting year unfolding before us. It's a great day to be a Marlin!



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