

Fall 9-12-2016

# Marshall University: State of the University Address, Sept. 2016

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## Recommended Citation

Gilbert, Jerome A. PhD, "Marshall University: State of the University Address, Sept. 2016" (2016). *State of the University*. Paper 1.  
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## **State of the University – General Faculty meeting**

September 12, 2016

It is my privilege to be with you today to talk about the State of the University. I have just completed eight months in the job and I have learned a lot. I am still learning a lot each week but the slope of the learning curve has been reduced.

It has been a pleasure getting to know many of the faculty, and I am looking forward to getting to know more of you in the future. I have been a faculty member in academia since 1982. That's 34 years and 4 universities. And I am proud to say that I am teaching a UNI 100 class this fall. I have sat in on a number of your classes and hope you will continue to invite me, time permitting, to visit more of them.

I have had the chance to observe a lot in 8 months and I have studied the university as well. The overall state of the university is good but there are certainly things to be addressed.

I use the word “good” because most of our fundamentals are good and we have a lot of potential at Marshall to become truly great. And when I use the word “great” I mean national prominence and an institution regarded as an emerging leader in the nation as an engaged university.

I recently wrote an op-ed piece for the State Journal that I anticipate appearing in the near future. I used the terminology “engaged university” because an engaged university is a relevant university with faculty, staff, and students who are involved in activities that make a difference. Of course, the heart of the university is learning. We have a long history of a liberal arts university with a recent focus on the STEM areas, the health-related professions and engineering. We deliver a quality broad-based education.

There are service learning activities and faculty research and service that help solve real world problems. Our students are gaining experience inside and outside the classroom that makes them critical thinkers, entrepreneurs, and young leaders for our country and the world. We are about to roll out a new substance abuse coalition that brings together over 50 people on campus, faculty and staff, who are individually involved in efforts to attack the opioid crisis. This coalition will provide synergy and focus.

Just last week, two of our English professors Kristin Lillvis and Kristen Steele, produced a piece entitled “Addiction in Appalachia: Our Stories.” I understand that it was a set of powerful monologues. This is just one of many examples of our faculty (and students) being engaged and making a difference.

As a bit of an aside and in the spirit of being an engaged university, I want to mention for just a moment a few words about the United Way. The United Way is a community-based national organization that allows us as community members to provide financial support for local agencies. We are about to start a campaign at Marshall and Leah Tolliver in the Women's

Center has agreed to head up the campaign. I would ask you to consider giving, even just a small amount, to show our support for our local community agencies.

We will be soon starting a Strategic Planning process that will be led by faculty. The provost and I will be meeting with the faculty committee which will be headed by Drs. Cam Brammer and Carl Mummert. We will be seeking the input of the Educational Advisory Board. I will be sharing with them my ideas on 8 priority areas including:

Enrollment growth, student success, faculty & staff salaries, increasing research, increasing fundraising and private contributions, marketing of Marshall and our national reputation, expansion of our doctoral programs, and community outreach and engagement.

I have set targets on many of these and will cover a few of them later in my talk.

I will shift gears a bit and talk about the fundamentals of the university, and I will begin with the budget. We have sustained over 15% in cuts to state appropriation over the past several years. That's a decrease of \$8.7 million in appropriations for our non-medical school operations. The School of Medicine has seen a \$1.5 million in their appropriations.

We have taken steps through the 20/20 process and through the academic review process to tighten our belt and save money. Through these efforts we have not had to have involuntary separations or layoffs as part of our cost savings. We modestly raised tuition this fall by 5% to help meet expenses. It was still necessary to borrow over \$2M from our cash reserves to balance our budget for this year. Included in this was a gearing up of our recruitment efforts and other investments in the future.

This is a bit akin to the state borrowing from the rainy day fund. This borrowing of reserves is not something you should do on a regular basis. But because of our strong financial position and our conservative budgeting, we thought that was a prudent thing to do and the Board of Governors approved this. We expect to repay some or all of the reserves as the finances improve.

Since I have brought up reserves, let me tell you about our cash reserves which is expressed in number of days of operations. It is basically how many days you can run the university strictly with your cash on hand.

This is a standard measure of financial health called "number of days of cash." A July report from the HEPC showed that we had roughly \$68M in cash on hand on July 30, and that represents about 99 days of operations.

That compares to other 4-year universities in the state which range from 13 days to 127 days with an average of 63 days. We are in a very healthy financial position. There are only three universities in the state that are around 100 days like us or over 100, and of that group of three, we are the largest university.

In terms of discussing budget, Marshall's total budget is around \$221M which of this the state appropriations portion is \$49M or 22%. The state supports us at a level of 22%. Tuition in our most recent year was \$87M. Tuition makes up 39% of our total operating budget.

Research represents \$29M, and I have a goal to raise that to a level of \$50M in the next 5 years. I have hired consultant Marty Fuller and he has already helped us land a couple of extra million. I think this goal is aggressive but achievable. We are forming new partnerships with agencies and with other universities and it is paying off.

My plan to grow enrollment will be one way to raise additional revenue for the university. I have recently moved the enrollment and recruiting effort to report to Vice President Cedric Gathings of Student Affairs. He and Beth Wolfe will be looking at new ways to expand our in-state and out-of-state recruitment with a goal to have at least 300 additional new students next fall.

We will be sending out more materials, hiring additional recruiters, and looking at innovative scholarship strategies that will yield more students. I hasten to add that as we add new students, we will be looking at the need to hire additional faculty members to meet the growing demand for classes.

Hand-in-hand with our new recruiting efforts will be a new marketing effort which is already underway. We are putting more emphasis on our connection to John Marshall, and you probably are starting to see the banners around campus and other material that talks about being a son and daughter of Marshall and the emphasis on academics, leadership, and character. You will be seeing more billboards, radio ads, and print ads in the future. We will also be sending new materials to our peer and peer plus institutions as we spread the good news about Marshall.

My goal is to create more awareness and excitement about Marshall as an engaged and progressive university that is positioning itself to be a formidable force in academia. This is going to help me when I and other interface with our alumni in the fund raising mode. We need to get more private support to help us garner the resources we need to be an even greater university. Ron Area and I have been discussing the idea of laying the groundwork so that we would be able to launch a major capital campaign.

All of the budget talk brings me to my plan to address the salary issue at Marshall. Our faculty salaries and our staff salaries are not competitive and I want to change that. I am working with Mike McGuffey and Interim Finance VP Mark Robinson to craft a 7 to 8 year plan to raise our faculty salaries to 105% of our peer average. Right now, we are at around 93% overall of the median of our peer group in the SREB. I am not promising that we will absolutely raise salaries to 105% of our peer group but this is the goal and I will work to try to make it happen.

It is going to take a methodical raise commitment and a means to generate additional revenue. I have talked about adding new students and raising the number of students over the same

time period to about 18,000. That and tuition increases will be necessary to generate the required additional funds. We are creating a model so that we can adjust parameters and see how things are impacted. But improving salaries will be a top priority. So I hope that you can support me in this effort and get faculty support for doing the things necessary to accomplish the goal.

I know that this report is getting long but there are a few more things I want to cover.

I think that we are improving communications from the central administration and trying to get information out to the faculty. I am meeting regularly with Chair Paige Muellerleile and so is Provost Ormiston. I also continue to meet with Staff Council and other groups.

Provost Ormiston has scheduled a series of Campus Conversations on the topic of Civil Discourse. They are Wed, Sept 21 at 6 p.m.; Thur, Oct 20 at 6 p.m.; Thur, Nov 3 at 6 p.m.; and Thur, Nov 17 at 6:00 p.m.

In addition, the Student Association is hosting some discussions called Sit Downs: Sept 14 at 5:30; Sept 20 at 5:30 p.m.; and Sept 26 at 7 p.m. These are all about the campus environment and the notion of civility and student life on campus.

I want to reiterate at this event what I have stated a number of times previously about sexual assault. We will have a zero tolerance for sexual assault at Marshall and we will do a better job of training our students, faculty, and staff about sexual assault and violence. We are currently updating our policies with regard to sexual assault and will be looking at ways to do extensive training across campus. Leah Toliver in our Women's Center has been proving good leadership in this regard.

Coming soon will be an announcement about a new economic development initiative at Marshall. We want to be more involved in helping stimulate economic growth and job creation. I have had discussions with Charlotte Weber and John Maher about how we can better focus our efforts.

Lastly, I want to mention some new leadership changes. I have already mentioned Mr. Cedric Gathings who is our new VP for Student Affairs. We also have a new Interim Dean of Business, Mr. Bob Simpson, and a new Director of Housing Ms. Mistie Bibbee.

All in all, I remain very excited about the future of Marshall. We have some challenges but we will get through them.

Thank you for your attention.