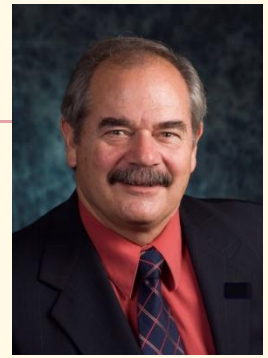




Annual Fall Welcome

President Greg R. Weisenstein
Emilie K. Asplundh Concert Hall
12:30 p.m., September 16, 2010



Welcome, everyone, to a new academic year at West Chester University. I hope you have enjoyed watching one of our new marketing videos.

I want to begin by welcoming our newest colleagues in the faculty and administration. Would you please rise when I call your name and remain standing to be acknowledged? Members of the audience, please save your applause until everyone has been introduced. This year we welcome 23 new faculty:



1. Beatrice Adera, Special Education
2. Richard Barndt, Accounting
3. Brian Bowen, Mathematics
4. Kim Bridgford, English
5. Lisa Doherty, Nursing
6. Brian Halsey, Marketing
7. Erin Hurt, English
8. Monica Joshi, Chemistry
9. Christine Karpinski, Health
10. Theresa Klinefelter, Applied Music
11. Allison Kolpas, Mathematics
12. Wendy Ann Mortimer, Nursing
13. Stephen Ng, Applied Music
14. Gina Pazzaglia, Health
15. Emily Rogge, Theatre and Dance
16. Tammy Russell, Pre-major Academic Advising
17. Jessica Schedlbauer, Biology
18. Cassie Ann Striblen, Philosophy
19. Greg Tully, Undergraduate Social Work
20. Allison Turner, Political Science

21. Bahar Ulupinar, Economics and Finance
22. Marcia Welsh, Nursing, and
23. Dazhi Zheng, Economics and Finance

We also congratulate eight colleagues who are assuming new responsibilities:

1. Adel Barimani, Vice President for Information Services
2. Michael Bell, Interim Associate Dean for Curriculum and Accreditation, College of Education
3. George Drake, Interim Dean of the College of Education
4. Judith Greenamyre, Special Assistant for Academic Policy
5. Michelle Patrick, Associate Dean of the College of Business and Public Affairs
6. Gopal Sankaran, Interim Assistant Vice President for International Programs
7. Hyoejin Yoon, Faculty Associate for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, and
8. Gil Wiswall, Interim Associate Vice President for Academic Administration

In addition, I would like to ask the other staff members who have joined us since last September to stand. Now please join me in welcoming all of these colleagues. You may be seated.

To all of you here this afternoon, I want to extend sincere thanks for our many accomplishments this last year, and for your sustained focus and efforts to make West Chester University the best regional comprehensive university in the country. It seems only a few short months since my inauguration as the University's 14th president. During the months leading up to the inauguration and in the year since, many of you have shared your dreams and hopes for our university's future. Much of your thinking has already influenced our institution or is part of our work in progress as we begin defining the future of WCU. Your passion for this great university is apparent in the more than 260 suggestions you've shared through WCU Ideas Online and the many hours already devoted to transitioning dreams into reality. Your suggestions and hard work have not only helped the University be more resourceful and responsive to its constituencies; they are also making WCU an even better place to work and helping us respond positively to the unwelcome challenges that now confront higher education.

In the next few minutes, I will give some examples showing how, as a result of your involvement, we have moved rapidly forward with many of the priorities we have identified. We

can all be very proud of West Chester University for its strong traditions, its many accomplishments, and the very bright future that together we will be growing over the next few years.

RESOURCES FOR EXCELLENCE

Let me begin with one of the thornier issues we confront: the budget for 2010–2011 and the years that will immediately follow. I know that higher-education financing is of concern to all of us, and the subject has captured a good deal of media attention. The structure and distribution of higher-education support are changing nationally, and we must all work together not just to keep up with these changes but to stay ahead of them. In 1990, approximately 60% of our budget was met through support from the Commonwealth. By 2000, this figure had dropped to about 48%, and currently, in 2010, we receive 31% of our budget from the Commonwealth. This steep trajectory downward began during prosperous economic times and has continued. It is unrealistic to expect that the trend will now reverse itself during difficult economic times. The Commonwealth provides what it can. We appreciate the support we receive, and we make the best use of every dollar.

Another factor is that tuition has not kept up with the needs of the PASSHE institutions. With flat or decreasing Commonwealth funding and tuition increases at less than the mandated cost increases, we in PASSHE have an unsustainable financial model. I applaud the effort to keep public higher education affordable and therefore accessible. Accessibility to higher education, however, is not achieved only by affordability. It is also determined by the capacity of institutions of higher education to accept students and provide them with a quality education. This is the argument that I and others, including our chancellor, have been making to help people understand that, here at WCU, we are denying more students a higher education because of the lack of seats than we are because of the cost of tuition.



While the financial picture is not encouraging, we will continue to move forward at WCU largely because of our new initiatives and our long history of responsiveness to needs. Each of you plays an important role in responding to our challenges and continuing to step up to offer your time and talents to ensure WCU's success. Those who preceded me—and our current administrators, faculty, and staff—have been good stewards of our resources, and we are all working together to use our resources very efficiently. We are a team in which every person matters. Unlike many other PASSHE universities, we do not plan to lay off people. We are working hard to increase the revenue streams to the University that already exist and to create new ones. In short, we are not going to sit by and watch our excellence be diminished and our jobs jeopardized. WCU has extraordinary energy, talent, and creativity that are being put to work solving our financial challenges and moving us ahead with excellence and vision.

To advance our excellence and to address the budget challenges I have just outlined, we are expanding and developing resources in support of our university mission.

We have alumni and friends who understand the importance of investing in the future of West Chester University and those we serve. In spite of the weak economy, we have now surpassed our \$35 million goal for the Campaign for Excellence by more than half a million dollars. Nearly 2,000 alumni, friends, corporations, and foundations made gifts to the campaign.

Funding for the Business and Public Affairs Center is progressing. I am pleased to announce: we have received confirmation from Governor Rendell that the Commonwealth is making available \$18 million in support for the project. This Commonwealth support, along with donor contributions, will enable us to begin the project shortly. Once completed, the new Undergraduate and Public Affairs building will relieve some of the campus pressure for classrooms and faculty office space. Combining several sources of funds to construct the center clearly represents the future structure of support for important initiatives on campus.

As we spend money, we do so efficiently and wisely. For example, for Phase I of the Housing Renewal Project, which concluded with the opening of Allegheny and Brandywine Halls last fall, careful management of the construction led to the project coming in more than \$4 million under budget. This savings allowed University Student Housing to repay the University approximately \$2 million in geothermal construction costs.

We will build on our successes and, in spite of the economy, continue to increase the opportunities for investment in our institution and our students. Most importantly, we are demonstrating through the quality of what we do that investment in WCU yields substantial outcomes and brings considerable pride to our donors.

Space continues to be at a premium for us. As you all know, WCU is a landlocked university with only about 400 acres to accommodate our campus. We were fortunate this year to make some highly strategic property purchases that are critical to the future of our institution. As properties become available, we consider their strategic significance to our mission, the impact of the purchase on our communities, and our ability to afford them. Our most significant purchase this year was the College Arms property. The property will continue to be used to house WCU students after it is brought up to our standards. Rental income from the property will make debt service on the bonding used for the purchase, so the acquisition will have no impact on our operating budget over the next several years.

Because of our reputation for excellence, WCU has become a top-of-mind, first-choice university with over 21,000 first-time applicants this year. With the help of numerous people, from the Admissions Office to the academic departments, we have turned some of this demand into added net revenues from modest enrollment increases. We have also kept our promise to return the bulk of the additional tuition to those areas experiencing growth. This is a model that works and will be continued.

Along with the distribution of new tuition dollars, we have, at your urging, established a task force to study the Academic Year Model. This task force has been meeting over the last academic year and has been encouraged by the provost and me to recommend the best resource-distribution models for WCU, as well as to fulfill their original charge of considering the Academic Year Model. I am encouraged by the depth and thoughtfulness of their work and look forward to the group's recommendations.

Sponsored programs are an area for growth that is directly linked to our scholarship and service mission. Our faculty are undertaking cutting-edge initiatives in research, teaching, and service that are advancing their disciplines, solving critical problems, improving professional practice, and having a positive influence on teaching. However, the level of extramural support generated annually at WCU does not reflect the quality of our work. Although the number of proposal submissions is increasing, it is clear from our conversations that we need to be providing more help in the form of time and assistance for our faculty and staff to be competitive in the highly competitive sponsored-programs environment.

Earlier, I announced the restructuring of our Office of Sponsored Research, which will now be overseen by Vice President for Advancement Mark Pavlovich. Through this restructuring, we hope to expand important pre- and post-award services that will better assist our faculty who wish to pursue extramural funding. I also want to announce a new internal mini-grant competition for buyouts that will provide faculty time for the successful pursuit of external funding in support of important initiatives. One hundred thousand dollars has been set aside to support this program over the current fiscal period. A request for proposals will be released in the next couple of weeks. We recognize that engagement in sponsored programs—that is, writing proposals and managing special projects—is not something that fits everyone. Our efforts are intended to enable those who are interested in sponsored programs to achieve success in this area.

ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES

To ensure the strong future we envision, we are pursuing a range of entrepreneurial opportunities while remaining true to our mission. We have committed ourselves to establishing new instructional programs and alternative delivery venues that are responsive to emerging workforce needs and reflect the interests of current and future WCU students. Let me tell you some of what our campus community has done in that regard.

Distance Education

Although our faculty are among the top users of technology in PASSHE, West Chester University does not have a history of providing distance-education delivery options for students who are place bound or otherwise unable to benefit from a traditional WCU education on campus. A task group was established early last fall to study the distance-education option for WCU. In brief, the Distance Education Task Group has recommended that the University establish economically viable distance-education programs. These would focus initially on

existing graduate degree programs, certificates, and professional-development offerings for which demand exists. We may also consider hybrid undergraduate programs in the future. The current online MBA program is a model for emerging programs across the campus. Congratulations to the MBA faculty for their pioneer work, which will lead the way for the rest of us.

The group has further suggested the support and financing structures necessary for WCU to penetrate distance-education markets successfully. Following the task group's recommendations, the President's Cabinet has approved a new position to assist in the development of distance programs. This position will report to Provost Linda Lamwers. I have also made significant resources available through the Provost's Office to support the development of courses or the transfer of traditional courses to distance delivery.



Winter Session

Another group, the Winter Session Task Group, explored the opportunity of using the time between the fall and spring semesters for credit-bearing coursework. For their research, the members examined intersession models from multiple institutions, including several PASSHE universities, and consulted the units on campus that would be affected by the implementation of an intersession. The recommendations the task group developed include beginning a two-year pilot intersession this January with up to ten class offerings for the first year. Cabinet has approved the recommendation, and preparations are underway. We then plan to offer 20-30 winter-session classes during the 2011-2012 academic year. Targeted course formats initially identified include travel studies—abroad or in the United States—distance education, hybrid courses, and workshops.

Doctoral Programs

Interest in doctoral-level education has come from our external as well as our internal constituencies. The pharmaceutical industry, for example, has requested advanced degrees in biostatistics, preferably the doctorate. Endo Pharmaceuticals is presently supporting a study at WCU of advanced degrees in this area and has indicated they would consider support for the degree if we chose to offer it. We are also being encouraged to offer the Doctor of Nursing Practice to address advanced-degree nursing needs and to add to the pool of candidates (including our own) for professorial positions in schools

and colleges of nursing. A third possible area of exploration is the Ed.D., which is of interest to many of our education faculty.

Such doctoral programs represent unique opportunities that may not always be available since there is a growing system practice of not duplicating programs among system universities. While Act 188, which created PASSHE, currently limits Ph.D. programs to IUP, considerable interest is being expressed by several system campuses in offering other selected doctoral programs. Consequently, a system-level task force has recently recommended to the chancellor that selected practitioner-focused doctoral degrees be offered at PASSHE institutions that have the capacity to offer such programs, and this includes WCU.

The addition of doctoral programs would expand but not change our basic mission of being a top undergraduate-degree-granting institution. We have a good deal of work ahead of us to determine whether doctoral programs are in our future. It is up to you faculty to determine whether you want to pursue doctoral programs in your respective colleges and departments. Some of you are in the midst of studying the idea and its impact on current programs of study, faculty workload, and other considerations. We will work to ensure proper support should you decide to pursue doctoral-level education at West Chester University. And this will be done without detracting from other existing programs.

International Students and Programs

We are actively working to increase the number of international students on campus and the opportunities for our students and faculty to be active internationally. The International Task Group has recommended creating an organizational structure that consolidates internationalization efforts in a staffed office under the leadership of a director. This director would have oversight of the Center for International Programs, the Global Development Collaborative, ESL, study-abroad programs, and formal international agreements. We have moved forward to implement the committee's recommendations by hiring an interim assistant vice president for international programs. Dr. Gopal Sankaran has agreed to serve the institution in this capacity. He will be working with many of you across campus to ramp up our international presence and create more international opportunities for students, faculty, and staff.



We have already experienced a good deal of success in developing international agreements and relationships to support our international initiatives. One such agreement with the American College of Norway will enable WCU professors to teach at the college on a regular basis, WCU students to study at the college, and Norwegian students to complete the last two years of

their undergraduate work at WCU. In another current program, 12 students from Guizhou University attended WCU this summer. An exchange trip to Guizhou University by WCU arts students and faculty is planned for 2011. Furthermore, Guizhou University music students expect to take WCU English classes through distance education in preparation for completing their Master of Music degree here at WCU.

In a third example, a number of faculty traveled to Costa Rica in March as part of WCU's partnership with the Universidad Nacional. WCU and UNA presented the first Knowledge Crossing Borders Conference. As a result of our success with this inaugural conference and the negotiations that subsequently occurred, the next Knowledge Crossing Borders Conference will be hosted here at WCU in May of 2012. Based on our agreement, the conference will return to West Chester every four years. Knowledge Crossing Borders is emerging as one of the premier opportunities worldwide to share research and best practices between and among countries. A WCU committee is presently being formed to work with our Costa Rican counterparts to plan the 2012 event.

These are just three examples of the accomplishments this past year by those of you who are helping WCU become an international academic destination. Given the demographic changes in our recruitment pool and the significant increase in Spanish-speaking populations in the region, the University has also made the decision to develop specific Web sites aimed at non-English-speaking parents and to translate selected university Web pages into Spanish and Chinese. We are well on our way to adding this unique feature to our WCU Web site.

Off-Campus Centers and Partnerships

Among the other entrepreneurial approaches we are exploring are off-campus WCU university centers that would be available to students who cannot attend our main campus. We already have a great model in the Graduate Business Center established by the College of Business and Public Affairs. Future centers may follow the Graduate Business Center model or be co-located with regional community colleges and other institutions. We presently have a team exploring the co-location concept with Delaware County Community College.

At the same time, a partnership is emerging with Cheyney University. Our academic leadership team met with their counterparts at Cheyney this spring to explore joint and complementary programming to better serve our respective students. This joint effort is being supported by an emerging relationship that is based on mutual trust and respect.

WCU: A WORLD-CLASS UNIVERSITY

With initiatives such as those that I've mentioned and, above all, with outstanding curricular and co-curricular programs, we have raised our visibility and image as a world-class regional comprehensive public university. I can quickly point to the fact that WCU is accredited by more than two-dozen national and regional associations. And for the third consecutive year, *Kiplinger's* magazine has rated West Chester University among the 100 best buys in American public higher education. This

ranking reflects a combination of our excellence and affordability. Behind the image is genuine and growing strength. The entering class of regular admits for fall 2010 had a mean combined SAT score of about 1,115, a grade-point average of 3.32, and a 64th percentile class rank.

While we continue our commitment to elevating retention and graduation rates still further for all WCU students, we can be proud that WCU's retention and graduation rates already exceed the national average for peer institutions by more than 15 percentage points. We are also closing the retention and graduation gap for students of color. While we should be proud of the trend, we still have a good deal of work to do and cannot be satisfied until our students of color attain the same rate of retention and graduation as for the campus as a whole.

WCU's student-athletes are examples of our effective commitment to student success. This past spring, 358—or almost two-thirds—of our student-athletes earned Athletic Director Honor Roll status with a grade-point average of 3.0 or above. We also congratulate Women's Soccer and the Men's and Women's Swimming teams on capturing PSAC championships, Women's Softball on winning the PSAC East title for the first time, and Women's Lacrosse, who had a perfect regular season, earned the PSAC East title, and advanced to the NCAA Division II National Championship game.

Leadership in Technology

Strong students are choosing West Chester University for our outstanding curricula and for the facilities and values that support them. For instance, as of July, the entire WCU North Campus outdoor area has Wi-Fi coverage. The South Campus outdoor area is the next Wi-Fi project in the queue. In the course of designing the two newest residence halls, Allegheny and Brandywine, the opportunity to establish wireless Internet service was also seized. Mobility is a priority for students, and they are using Wi-Fi devices more than ever before. We also know that "wireless only" is a more environmentally friendly system that significantly cuts costs by reducing electricity consumption and related expenses. We have received a good deal of international recognition for our technology innovations.

Environmental Leadership

Across the campus, we are also becoming an international leader in the implementation of green technologies, in sustainable energy, and in the reduction of our carbon footprint. We have, for example, completed achievement of LEED Silver certification for the Swope Music Building and the Performing Arts Center. In another example, the new data center in Allegheny Hall uses only half the energy consumption of our preexisting data center. On a larger scale, we have successfully implemented the first major geothermal well field on North Campus, which marks the beginning of the ten-year conversion process to geothermal heating and cooling for the majority of the campus.

As we develop our next strategic plan and further develop environmental sustainability at West Chester University, we will assess our efforts and establish priorities for the future. I have decided to become a signatory to the American College and

University Presidents' Climate Commitment that will place us among an elite group of institutions of higher education who are providing leadership to the sustainability movement globally. We will also draw heavily upon the sustainability assessment process developed by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. This process is known as the STARS program—the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System. Information about all segments of the University will give us a baseline in three component areas: education and research; operations; and planning, administration, and engagement. Collecting assessment information and using it fully will require a strongly coordinated effort across the University, and so we all will depend heavily on the guidance of our newly appointed sustainability coordinator, Timothy Lutz, and the Sustainability Advisory Committee.

Whether we are promoting environmental sustainability or working together to meet other needs, the University and the Borough of West Chester are proving to be highly effective partners. Our combined efforts are achieving results and being recognized. Mayor Carolyn Comitta has joined us this afternoon. Mayor Comitta, would you please stand? WCU has joined the mayor and the Borough of West Chester in a Joint Task Group on Sustainability. The Joint Task Group is a dedicated group of borough and university representatives who are committed to making life in our community even better through such means as reducing emissions and expanding recycling as we move toward a carbon-neutral status.

COLLABORATION WITH THE COMMUNITY

New levels of trust and respect have been achieved between WCU and its communities. The University cultivates a range of interactions with community leaders, local residents, and area businesses to improve relationships, expand positive student involvement in the community, and address existing issues and concerns. Activities this past year included Borough and University Officials Group projects, formation of the West Chester Partners in Safety community watch program, and the work of the Community Campus Coalition—or "CCC"—in reducing alcohol-related incidents. The CCC helped, for example, to plan last fall's safe and responsible World Series celebration on campus, which was a big success. Nearly 1,000 students—including a few Yankees fans—took part. A related initiative has been the growth of the Sykes after Dark program, which provides expanded Friday-evening programming running until 1 a.m. and is an alcohol-free alternative for students who had sought off-campus weekend activities.

Our students—and their professors—are doing their part to be excellent neighbors. This past year, more than 130 WCU faculty members included a service-learning component in their courses. For the year, the combined total of student volunteer hours from service learning and other volunteerism reached a record 233,513 hours. For the fourth year in a row, WCU was selected for the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction, an honor that fewer than 3% of U.S. colleges and universities are awarded.

MARKETING INITIATIVES

To ensure that WCU's great story is told and heard nationally, we are developing a strategic marketing plan that will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our marketing and continue to elevate the value of what we do. Our Department of Public Relations and Marketing collaborated with the University's Center for Social and Economic Policy Research to conduct the University's first comprehensive marketing research project. The results showed that WCU is recognized as a high-value institution by all constituencies studied (prospective parents and students, business leaders, and even current applicants who chose not to attend WCU). But we also found that work remains to ensure that audiences fully appreciate our institutional quality. These study findings are being used to develop specific branding and marketing strategies.

A committee under the leadership of Director of Public Relations and Marketing Pam Sheridan began working on our plan this last academic year. Our marketing efforts are also assisted by the internationally recognized marketing expert Eli Silberman, who serves on our Council of Trustees. A very solid plan is emerging. Already this past year, we saw a 15% increase in media appearances for WCU, which included four ads in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*; the ads highlighted the University's visual and performing arts, energy sustainability efforts, faculty research excellence, and our 50th Anniversary Celebration of Women in Intercollegiate Athletics.

As part of its work, the committee has provided oversight for two videos about WCU to use as recruitment and institutional-image tools. The first is the piece you saw as you were entering the concert hall this afternoon. That piece focuses on prospective students and will be used on the Web. The second is a 30-second spot suitable for use in a range of media including television. I'd like to show you that one now.



Our timing couldn't be better as we will use this short video on national television when our Golden Rams football team is televised on *CBS College Sports* on Thursday, October 7. We have also made sure that the network has heard our appeal to highlight the Golden Rams Marching Band at half time. Our band reflects the broad-based excellence in our music programs and was selected this last year along with the University of Michigan's marching band to perform for a national high-school marching-band competition. We think the University of Michigan was in very good company.

UNIVERSITY VALUES AND CAMPUS CLIMATE

We are working just as hard to improve communication and advance our values here on campus. We are dedicated to creating a campus where everyone can find success, be truly accepted, and enjoy his or her experience at WCU. We can take great pride in our strides to promote a climate of access, civility, trust, and respect that serves to promote the University's Values Statement. Your work to achieve this commitment is reflected in WCU's ranking by the Philadelphia *Inquirer* as one of the top places to work in Southeast Pennsylvania. Indeed, WCU is an excellent place to work, yet our values will continue to be tested by the challenges that we face now and into the future. We cannot allow these challenges to erode the trust that we have in one another or in our collective future. In fact, trust remains the key element to achieving our bright future, and communication and transparency are necessary ingredients for that trust.

While we have initiated several new methods and venues to promote both vertical and horizontal communication, work remains to be done. Therefore, I am announcing three additional actions:

1. Town meetings will be held each semester utilizing a question-and-answer format to share information. The first town meeting—which is for all faculty and staff—will be held October 6, from 10:30 to noon, in the Sykes Theatre.
2. I will also be conducting a lunch meeting in the Traditions Dining Room each month for informal discussions, or as Larry Dowdy calls them, “chat and chews.” Gail Haney will be posting the dates shortly.
3. We have expanded the notion of the very successful Idea Box by establishing a paper version that is more convenient for many of our staff to use. We value their ideas greatly.

When differences do occur between members of our university family, we need better ways to resolve them. Mediation offers those in conflict an opportunity to work out their differences. We are making plans to train a cadre of mediators across our campus—faculty and staff—who can help us overcome differences before they impact our quality of work life.

Annual Civility Award

Many of you contribute to our university climate through your efforts and example. University-wide, we show our strong commitment to civility—to valuing differences, inspiring trust, and working together with mutual respect and cooperation. For 11 years, an annual fall tradition has been presenting the WCU Civility Award to honor an individual who has made an especially outstanding contribution. In that tradition, I am pleased now to be able to announce the 2010-2011 Civility Award winner.

This year's recipient has consistently fostered civility and advanced West Chester University's values. She devotes exceptional energy, dedication, and talent for the entire university. As one nominating letter explains, “She is a role model for me and for others who work with her.” Another writer adds, “She believes in new ideas and will do what she can to help them come to fruition. She never seeks the limelight or the credit for her actions, but she is the first to give credit to others where she believes that credit is due.”



I can also tell you personally: the recipient is an outstanding university citizen, characterized by integrity, achievement, caring, and the spirit of collaboration. It is with great pleasure that I present the 2010-2011 West Chester University Civility Award to Associate Provost Darla Spence Coffey. Darla, please come forward to be recognized and accept your award.

Campus Climate Survey

Across the University, we are working to strengthen the quality of our campus climate. Last spring, all WCU faculty, staff, and students were encouraged to complete an online campus-climate survey. Susan Rankin, from Penn State University and Rankin Consulting, Inc., is the University's consultant for the campus-climate-survey project. Over the summer, the results from the strong survey response—30% across all constituent groups—were analyzed and compiled. Early this semester, Dr. Rankin will be on campus to present the results at a number of open forums. At that time, the entire report will be available for review by everyone in the campus community. The results will inform our work in continuing to make WCU an exceptional place for all of us to do our work.

CREATING A SHARED VISION

The campus climate survey is part of *Creating a Shared Vision*—a multifaceted and inclusive process for planning and developing our future. It reflects a commitment to our values of shared leadership and helps define what we must address in the next few years to ensure the very bright future we envision. As you know, our planning work on campus is rightfully affected by preparation for our Middle States reaccreditation visit in March 2011. The self-study, the visiting-team report, and an external SWAT analysis will empower the campus Strategic Planning Steering Committee and its subcommittees with the necessary objective information to begin renewing our ten-year-old *Plan for Excellence*.

We have asked campus constituency groups to select their representatives to serve on the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. A smaller number of committee members have also been selected by the President's Cabinet to complete the membership roster. The timeline for completing our new strategic plan will be defined by the steering committee, but in general, we expect to initiate actual planning for our future by the end of March 2011. Since we want to hear all of our campus voices in the planning of our future, we will most likely not complete the strategic plan until well into the 2011-2012 academic year.

WCU PRIORITIES FOR 2010-2011

In the interim, we are moving ahead with what we already know we need to do to ensure a very bright future for WCU. Our priorities for this year grow naturally out of our accomplishments, as well as our opportunities and challenges.

We have identified ten priorities for all of us working together as a University:

1. Our first priority is the successful completion of our Middle States review for re-accreditation. Our institutional self-study and related preparation for the March 2011 site visit reflect the contributions of many of you directly, and all of you indirectly through the work you do every day. Our preparation has been guided by Associate Provost Darla Coffey and English Department Chair Anne Herzog. Having reviewed the institutional self-study, I believe your work accurately captures the quality of our university, as well as objectively identifying areas for continued improvement. This work should be very favorably reviewed by the visiting Middle States team.
2. We will be continuing to implement the Shared Vision concept in positioning the campus community to be highly engaged in planning our future. As we prepare for the strategic-planning process, we will need to continue to complete the work that has already been started this last year and aggressively pursue the recommendations that have been provided through the thoughtful work of our task forces and committees.
3. We will look forward to the recommendations of the task force reviewing how we distribute our resources. Based on their recommendations, it will be important for us to agree upon and implement a performance-based resource-allocation model on campus that is consistent with our mission and encourages and rewards achievement of our goals.
4. The restructuring of our Office of Sponsored Programs will need to be completed soon so that faculty who are interested in pursuing sponsored programs can be successful in this endeavor. Restructuring will necessarily result in improved pre- and post-award services, providing greater assistance to faculty seeking extramural support for their initiatives.
5. Based on the recommendations of the International Task Group, we will be consolidating international-programs services in one office for easier administration of the programs. We will also be ramping up international student services in parallel with the growth in international student enrollment and international opportunities for faculty and our domestic students. We are now positioned to accomplish this and to recruit international students to our campus more aggressively so that WCU is truly an international destination for foreign students.
6. With the addition of a supporting structure for distance and off-campus education, as well as resources dedicated to this purpose, we can better assist faculty in building our distance-education programs. While we are late entering this market, we have a great product, a solid reputation for quality, and a very competitive price—all of which will enable us to be highly competitive. We also need to continue to explore other venues for serving students who want the benefits of a West Chester University education.

7. Our new ten-year facilities master plan will be completed this year to guide us as we continue to create an environment that supports our best work. We will continue to seek broad-based input from the campus community, as well as our neighbors, as we bring our new plan to conclusion. As to projects underway, the E.O. Bull renovations are progressing well; we will be starting construction of our new Student Recreation Center, as well as Phase II of the Housing Renewal Project, and we are now able to move forward in planning the new Undergraduate Business and Public Affairs Center.
8. Extramural support for our institution is becoming increasingly important as we look to these resources to backfill the continuing loss of Commonwealth support for higher education. A major part of this extramural support comes from the investments that our alumni and friends of WCU are making in our future. In spite of the economy's sluggish recovery, we will continue to invest considerable time and effort in cultivating prospective donors and provide opportunities for them to be an instrumental part of our future.
9. We have made great strides in improving the town-gown relations with our neighboring municipalities. While our relationships can be fragile and subject to some bumps in the road, we will continue to engage our communities in dialogue about the future of WCU, including listening closely to them as part of our strategic-planning process, and seek additional ways to collaborate on initiatives that are of mutual benefit. After all, most of us live in the Borough of West Chester or surrounding townships, and quality of life in these municipalities is not just a professional mission, but a personal one as well.
10. WCU is a great story. We have talked about the importance of telling this story more aggressively. The Marketing Committee has been working all year to develop a plan to elevate the image of West Chester University and its recognition nationally. In doing so, we increase the value of degrees, attract and retain topnotch faculty, create opportunities for faculty and staff, and instill even greater confidence in the investments in WCU. While we have already achieved successes this year in marketing WCU, we will be accelerating these efforts based on the recommendations of the Marketing Committee.

Throughout its history, West Chester University has given us inspiring role models. One of the most illustrious is the great Frederick Douglass, who gave his last public address on our campus more than a century ago. The power of Douglass' example is undimmed, and he continues to inspire us through his life and teachings. Our Frederick Douglass Institute is testimony to Douglass' work and perpetuates the lasting values reflected in that work. WCU Professor of Art Richard Blake is the artist for a new campus statue that will reinforce Frederick Douglass' influence as a mentor for us all, a mentor who will inspire many generations of WCU students to come. We are encouraging additional people to

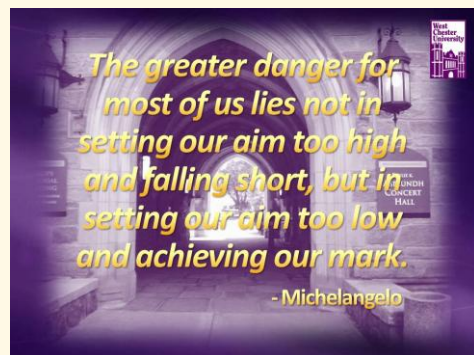
step forward with donations to make this very, very important project a reality within this next year.



Frederick Douglass Institute Director James Trotman
 Department of Undergraduate Social Work Chair Mildred Joyner
 Former West Chester Mayor Clifford DeBaptiste, who donated \$50,000
 for the statue
 President Greg Weisenstein
 Professor of Art Richard Blake, artist for the statue
 PASSHE Chancellor John Cavanaugh

Through your own character and your contributions to the University, each one of you here this afternoon can also be a role model and mentor to our current and future students. Your own excellence, encouragement, and example can continue down through the generations with unimagined benefit.

The great Renaissance artist Michelangelo is credited with saying, "The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short, but in setting our aim too low and achieving our mark." At West Chester University, we will not make the mistake of aiming too low. At the same time, we do not expect to fall short in our greatest aspirations for the University, our students, and the region and world in which we live. As individuals and as a group, you have helped mold the wonderful institution I have been describing. Together, we will overcome our challenges, seize our opportunities, and reach our highest goals. In turning our vision of the future into reality, we will honor our values, build upon our achievements, and succeed through our combined effort, wisdom, and talent.



Best wishes to each of you for the academic year ahead. Now please join Sandra and me in the Quad to enjoy conversation and refreshments.