

2006 STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY VIDEO

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President

The Pennsylvania State University

Transcript

GRAHAM SPANIER:

For eleven years I have annually come before the University community to provide an update on the advances and accomplishments of this extraordinary institution. In past addresses, I have outlined the themes that I think continue to be central to our mission at Penn State; such as being student centered; putting people first; and striving to lead the nation in the integration of teaching, research and service.

The scope of Penn State is so vast, it is simply impossible to describe in words alone the ways we are making life better across this state and around the world. This year I want to do something different. I want to show you the state of our University.

Penn State is one of the most comprehensive universities in America with 24 campuses, an academic health center, 82,000 students, 5,300 full-time faculty members, more than 38,000 employees, thousands of active research projects, and a presence in every Pennsylvania county.

We operate the largest outreach effort in American higher education, serving more than 5 million people a year. We are the source of unimagined scientific discovery, and the knowledge created at Penn State helps the University do more to power Pennsylvania's economy than any other single entity within the Commonwealth.

On a daily basis we are transforming lives. Perhaps most importantly by opening doors of opportunity for students who seek better futures and greater possibilities in their lives.

Although a university's national reputation is substantially based on the research productivity and stature of its faculty, we must never forget that our University exists first

and foremost to provide an advanced education to our students. I truly believe students must be our top priority, and this is why we work so hard to make Penn State a model of the student-centered university. As a learning community, we must put our students and their development at the heart of all we do.

This past year at Penn State our faculty did nearly \$700 million of research. That research led to medical breakthroughs; improvements in national defense; safer food; and a better understanding of our universe. In fact, the breadth of Penn State's research is unmatched.

I'm especially pleased with the opportunities this provides to our students. This year Penn State students built payloads and launched rockets into space. They worked with faculty to design and build award-winning experimental cars. They worked alongside faculty on projects under the oceans, on projects to improve our environment, increase crop yields, and enhance child development.

Sometimes students traveled to far corners of the world, but sometimes they traveled only as far as a community in Pennsylvania ... for example, Philadelphia...

DR. LAKSHMAN YAPA, professor of geography:

The Philadelphia Field Project is about rethinking urban poverty. We are looking at opportunities and spaces in which the quality of life can be improved even if you don't have access to funds. So... I tell my students to look for these opportunities and create (research) projects out of that.

VANESSA MASSARO, student:

I go out in the field and I talk to fire fighters at different fire stations mainly about the challenges that they're facing and I try to understand what closing certain engine companies and ladder companies are going to mean for their station and how it's going to affect their ability to do their job and how that in turn will affect the citizens and their community.

DR. LAKSHMAN YAPA:

Carlo Sica noticed that there are several urban gardens and he started a project on composting.

CARLO SICA, student:

I'm setting up compost piles in the community so that people can have access to good fertilizer for the urban gardens and it won't cost much.

VANESSA MASSARO:

There's such a place for anyone to make a change on a small level. And all of those small changes can really lead to big changes.

GRAHAM SPANIER:

The integration of teaching, research and service requires faculty with unique abilities. It requires faculty like Richard Alley...

DR. RICHARD ALLEY, Evan Pugh Professor of Geosciences:

I believe that what we do here matters. I believe that science is important. It's fascinating. It's fun. It is something that students should have and I would love to have them enjoy it in the way that I do.

As an educator I have a responsibility to tell what we know, to tell what we *don't* know, to tell where the knowledge came from and I do this particularly in the, in the course called the Geology in the National Parks. We take the most beautiful places world – we use them as examples to learn how the world works and why it matters to us. And we had this wonderful opportunity: We got a group of a dozen advanced undergraduates from Penn State. We gave them video cameras and we went to the bottom of the grand canyon, had the students film each other, and film the National Parks, make film items – bring 'em back. We fold them into a course so that all of these hundreds of Penn State

students can get some idea of what it really is like to be in the heart of the beast and see what they're seeing there.

GRAHAM SPANIER:

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Penn State is that we try to stay on the leading edge of society's needs. We do that through research that opens new frontiers, but also through the development of new programs that we offer to students.

Recently, we established several new initiatives to address changing national needs and evolving academic interests of our students. The new Forensic Science program is a perfect example. Launched this past year, it immediately established itself as the most comprehensive and rigorous scientific forensic program in the country, designed to create forensic leaders in both the public and private sectors.

ROBERT SHALER, head of Penn State's new Forensic Sciences program:

We show and teach students how to investigate crime scenes. We start off by – with the very basics to letting them be the first officer at the scene. And then moving on to letting them be the investigator in charge of the scene. And then they learn how to do fingerprints and how to sketch scenes and photograph scenes and interpret blood stain patterns and then finally learning how to reconstruct the events of the scene, which is the last thing that we try to do. These kids are going to be able to go out... they're heads and shoulders, right now, above any of their contemporaries who are sophomores in any forensic science program in this country.

GRAHAM SPANIER:

Another exciting new opportunity for Penn State students is the creation of a second campus of The Dickinson School of Law. Changes in the field of legal education made it necessary for Penn State to rethink the way we operated our law school. The result is an unprecedented commitment to legal education that will result in a new law school building *here* at the University Park campus and a major renovation at the original site of the Dickinson School of Law in Carlisle.

The dual campus approach will give our students greater exposure to interdisciplinary studies between the law school and other colleges. It will also open new opportunities for legal research and collaboration among our faculty.

The changes we have undertaken at the law school have already produced our strongest – and most diverse -- applicant pool ever.

Other new initiatives that have recently been developed to expand the opportunities for Penn State students include a new program in Security and Risk Analysis to help fill the growing void for specialists in business, industry, and government who are trained in national security issues, emergency planning, crime investigation, intelligence analysis, and intrusion detection, to name just a few areas.

We will this year begin the development of a School of International Affairs, to offer professional degrees and specialty study in such areas as diplomacy and conflict resolution, trade and commercial relations, civil and human rights, and international economic development.

This new interdisciplinary school will foster the serious study of some of the biggest transnational challenges around the globe. At Penn State we understand that the answers to the world's most pressing problems can only come from an educated citizenry whose knowledge spans international boundaries.

To keep faculty and students on the leading edge, we have been involved over the past several years in the largest capital construction program in the University's history.

I'm a firm believer that students are more productive, study better, socialize better, and feel better in an environment that is attractive, inviting, well maintained, and technologically advanced. I believe the same is true for the productivity and attitude of employees and the pride and satisfaction of alumni and other visitors. To focus on the

people who comprise this intellectual community, we must focus on their physical environment. Thus, I have placed a high priority on improving the condition of all of our campuses.

Over the last 10 years, we have added more than 7.7 million square feet of new space to our campuses. This is a necessary investment to not only sustain our teaching and research missions and support the work of faculty and staff, but also to provide the best opportunities for our students to study, explore, create, and prepare for their futures. A primary goal of Penn State's overall construction plan is to create a student-centered environment – an environment that facilitates learning at every turn. By establishing an atmosphere conducive to living and learning, we are putting our students at the heart of all we do.

That includes their living options. Penn State now has one of the largest residence hall systems in the nation. We operate 74 undergraduate residence halls accommodating nearly 18,500 students. Eastview Terrace is one of our latest commitments to providing our undergraduates with beautiful, state-of-the-art living facilities.

These new facilities have been in tremendous demand and help Penn State build a more intimate living environment, as well as a more productive learning atmosphere.

Other student-focused areas where we have improved our offerings are in recreational and fitness facilities. Today's active students require facilities that allow them to exercise their bodies, as well as their minds. On a student-centered campus, providing quality recreational facilities that will enhance the out-of-class experiences and promote student involvement and a healthy lifestyle is essential.

These projects represent a positive momentum that has characterized our University over the past decade. They also reflect a significant commitment to our student-centered approach.

This past year Penn State received about 94,000 applications for admission, an all-time record. Of the students to whom we offered admission, more chose to accept our offers than at any time in our history. The freshman class at University Park is our largest ever. And freshman enrollment at our campuses is also up significantly, despite challenging demographic trends in many parts of Pennsylvania.

These are all indications of how positively Penn State is seen by prospective students. The popularity of Penn State clearly demonstrates that our values, our core beliefs, our “Penn State Principles” resonate with students and their families.

Penn State offers majors in virtually all fields. More than three dozen of our academic programs are now ranked in the top ten nationally. We are one of the top U.S. universities whose bachelor-degree recipients go on to earn doctoral degrees, and since our founding, Penn State has conferred nearly 600,000 degrees.

Those are all big numbers. And Penn State can seem like a big place. But by focusing on people; by creating livable campus environments; by attracting faculty who aren't just great in the lab, but great in the classroom; this University's breadth is an enormous asset. There is no other university that can offer the range of experiences that one can get at Penn State, while at the same time offering students, faculty and staff an environment that is supportive and nurturing.

But to do that requires resources.

Private gifts have played a tremendous role in the history of Penn State, allowing us to build new facilities, attract scholars, initiate innovative programs, and help today's most promising students gain an education.

With our state government able to contribute only 10 percent of Penn State's budget, private donations have been critical to improving the educational experience of our students and to increasing scholarly opportunities for faculty. As students and families bear more of the burden for the cost of higher education, student debt is at an all-time

high. About 80 percent of our undergraduates received financial assistance last year, totaling \$538 million.

Through our last fundraising campaign, which ended in 2003, we were able to raise nearly \$1.4 billion, which has strengthened, advanced, and enriched Penn State in ways I have mentioned, and in ways unimagined. We not only were able to enhance the undergraduate experience and provide new opportunities, new facilities, and new programs, we also were able to provide broader access to a Penn State education. To date, we have created 3,141 endowed student scholarships or fellowships, 315 faculty endowments, and 893 endowed programs.

Penn State was founded on the promise of providing access to education to the citizens of Pennsylvania and we remain committed to that concept.

RACHEL EBERT, student and scholarship recipient:

I've always dreamed of coming to Penn State and that's been a dream of mine that I've looked forward to and growing up on a farm I learned the meaning of hard work and responsibility and dedication and I really knew that I still had to use those skills to get to Penn State because coming from a large family of six and coming from a farm the scholarships have really helped make my dream come true.

MARK HERTZOG, donor:

We decided to establish a Penn State Trustee Scholarship at Penn State Altoona because Edie came from Blair County and I came from Cambria County and we wanted to give something back to the students of the area where we had come from.

EDIE HERTZOG, donor and Penn State employee:

We're just ordinary people working through payroll deduction and fund raising to give something back.

JOSEPH McCANN, donor and alumnus:

I graduated from the School of Hospitality Management in 1978. Last year I felt it was time to give back to the university and to the school which had done so much for me in the form of a trustee endowed scholarship.

BERNICE INNOCENT, student and scholarship recipient:

I'm the first generation of my family here in the United States to attend college. The scholarship program has allowed for me to concentrate more on my studies and not have to worry about working to pay off my bills.

DOTTIE HUCK, donor and alumna:

Lloyd and I both feel that we received a wonderful education here and by having that wonderful education we want to help the university maintain that standard. And I know they're doing it.

LLOYD HUCK, donor and alumnus:

It gives us a great deal of pleasure to gift to Penn State and to the faculty and the students here. And we've had a chance to meet with those faculty and students and that's a very wonderful experience.

GRAHAM SPANIER:

Philanthropy is now an integral part of the Penn State culture. For eight consecutive years, our alumni have led the nation in the number of donors who support their alma mater. We are fortunate to have such loyal graduates and friends.

We are well into the planning for the next university-wide comprehensive campaign.

This next campaign will focus on raising funds for

- 1) Ensuring student opportunity
- 2) Expanding honors education
- 3) Enriching the student experience
- 4) Building faculty strength and capacity

5) Fostering discovery and creativity.

The need has never been greater, the case never stronger, and the opportunity never better.

Outside the classroom success with honor has always been the hallmark of Penn State athletics, and the University's name continues to be synonymous with a unique approach that celebrates success in the classroom just as much as success on the field. This past year our student athletes have succeeded admirably at both. For the second time in three years, Nittany and Lady Lion student-athletes posted the highest graduation rate among the nation's public institutions. In fact, Penn State has led all Big Ten institutions in academic honorees six times in the past nine years and has the highest total of Academic All Big Ten students of any conference school with 2,310 over the past 11 years.

Our student-athletes' success on the field was evidenced by the six Big Ten championships this past year.

Most people know about Penn State's success in athletics. But few know that Penn State was a pioneer in distance education, offering one of the first correspondence courses in the country. That tradition lives on at Penn State through a myriad of outreach efforts that truly highlight our focus on the integration of teaching, research and service.

Every year, Penn State delivers more than 2,000 programs, serving more than 207,000 youth through our summer camps, 4-H offerings, and after school programs. Our GO-60 Program offers senior citizens a unique opportunity to return to the classroom.

Penn State offers more than 50 online degrees and programs to learners from all 50 states, from more than 40 countries, and from all 7 continents through our World Campus. Our success has attracted some of the world's largest and most complex business and government organizations who have turned to Penn State to provide education. World Campus is extending Penn State's reach in extraordinary ways.

KELLEY McKEE, World Campus student:

Seven years ago I had an accident where I fell and I fell backwards onto my neck and I've been paralyzed ever since. It means so much for me to think about getting a bachelors degree and then even being able to go on beyond that – and to be able to do that through distance education - now I have a whole classroom right there and I can do it all from my home because it really is not convenient for me to get up and go out right now to classes.

Penn State has just been phenomenal. They've made it so easy to just set a good example for my children to be able to say, "You know, I went, I got a degree. You can do it too. Anybody can do it!"

GRAHAM SPANIER:

At Penn State we talk about making life better. We do it through teaching. We do it through research. We do it through service. We do it by putting people first. For more than 150 years, Penn State has made a difference. Every day we are transforming lives in the most positive ways.

This past year brought much to celebrate in the life of our University. To all who played a part in our progress, we thank you. And to those who will turn to us in the coming year, we welcome the chance to serve you.