

2008 STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY VIDEO

Graham B. Spanier

President

The Pennsylvania State University

Transcript

GRAHAM SPANIER:

I'm Graham Spanier, President of Penn State. This has been a pivotal year for Penn State. We've seen new levels of student engagement, expanded research, growing opportunities for outreach, and improvements to our campuses. 2008 has been a year like no other – let me show you why.

Penn State is one university, geographically dispersed across the Commonwealth. With 24 campuses, 139 research, extension and affiliate locations, and the largest outreach effort in higher education, Penn State touches nearly two million Pennsylvania households each year – that's one in every two households in the state. And Penn State's World Campus connects students to educational excellence across the globe and around the clock.

Among prospective students and families, Penn State is the most popular university in the country, receiving more than 100,000 applications for admission this year. Incoming students are uniformly enthusiastic about joining Penn State's student body, which now exceeds 90,000.

Meanwhile, Penn State remains strongly connected to our past. Our living alumni number almost 500,000 and our alumni association is the largest in the world.

Penn State also plays a vital role in the economic health of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In fact, the collective statewide impact of Penn State's activities is more than \$8 billion annually, with an induced impact of an additional \$9 billion. And last year alone, Penn State added almost 1,600 jobs, principally related to our success in funded research and the demand for services at the Penn State Hershey Medical Center.

Yet these numbers only tell part of the story. Our greatest strength is found in our common purpose...as one university committed to excellence in teaching, research, and service. This core mission has remained the same since our founding, even as our campuses have undergone an unprecedented physical transformation.

We have added seven million square feet to our campuses since 1995. Even more importantly, we have rewritten some of the fundamental notions about campus planning so that each new project not only improves the physical appearance of campus, it enhances the way students live, learn, and experience campus life.

GORDON TUROW, Director of Campus Planning & Design:

It's absolutely undeniable I believe, that any curriculum is in part judged by the quality of the facility in which the curriculum is being taught. At Penn State we are preserving, adapting, and reusing our historic buildings and landscapes. We are paying equal attention to creating state-of-the-art new facilities that will take us well into the 21st century. And we are putting them together in a campus landscape, that creates a single standard and symbol of Penn State's respect for the past, commitment to the future on a campus that is attractive and welcoming in bringing our alumni back decade after decade because it's such a truly wonderful place to be. Faculty, staff, visitors, alumni frequently comment on how attractive the campus is, and how impressed they are with the commitment to making the campus more attractive, to make it more student centered, to make it more recognizable, to make it more memorable. I mean there is so much value in doing the right thing and doing it well.

GRAHAM SPANIER:

When we began our master planning process a decade ago, our goal was to develop model student-centered campuses – with a pedestrian-oriented core, sustainable buildings, open green space, and an emphasis on efficient land use. We made a commitment to preserve the historic heritage of Penn State while embracing the uniqueness of each campus. We also urgently needed to bring our facilities up to a level that could support Penn State's \$700 million research enterprise, which ranks as one of the largest in the world.

Penn State is home to one of the largest concentrations of advanced materials scientists in the world, and we are the top University in the nation for research expenditures in materials science. But our scientists have been dispersed across campus in nearly 40 different locations.

A new facility to be called the Millennium Science Complex will bring together more of our faculty and students from chemistry, engineering, biology, medicine, physics, and other areas. The Millennium Science Complex is currently being designed by one of the foremost architects in the world – Rafael Viñoly.

RAFAEL VIÑOLY, FAIA, JIA, SCA, Int Friba, Principal/Lead Designer, Rafael Viñoly Architects PC:

The building is a project for two sciences, which are traditionally much more separated than the future indicates they would be. You can see that the building is both a gateway as well as a pint of connection between these two sciences, material sciences and life sciences, and a gateway into the large piece of public space to the corner. So in a way,

this intersection between physical objects and life is kind of creating yet another realm of the element of technology.

As I always say, most important thing in this is not really what the building does but what happens inside of it. And what will happen inside of this building is perhaps one of the most important transformations of intellectual pursuit in human history.

GRAHAM SPANIER:

You can see how technology meets education at Penn State Erie, The Behrend Campus.

The new Research and Economic Development Center brings together the campus's engineering and business schools. This state-of-the-art building has fueled Penn State Behrend's growing reputation as a center for excellence in science and engineering. In fact, while the number of engineering degrees granted decreased throughout the country, at Penn State Behrend enrollment in engineering and engineering technology programs has increased by almost 40 percent in the last decade. Our investment in facilities and programs has helped attract exceptional students like Allison Payne, a junior majoring in plastics engineering technology.

ALLISON PAYNE, Plastics Engineering Technology Major:

The hands-on aspect of everything is just amazing. I wake up in the morning and go to my 8am labs, and I'm excited. We have just different materials, we get to set things on fire, and break things in half, and have all kinds of fun. It's everything you could want as an engineer.

RALPH FORD, Ph.D., Director, School of Engineering Penn State Behrend:

The whole idea behind this building was to put together two schools that have natural synergies, have them work together so it's a very powerful combination.

We know our engineering students have to work in a business environment; it's very natural for us to want to do that. The other side of the coin is business students go out there and work in technically advanced environments. So it's not just one way or the other we're actually building bridges between.

ALLISON PAYNE, Plastics Engineering Technology Major:

Working on the machines, and with all the different materials that we learn about, you can't get any better. It's what we're going to take with us. It's amazing to go there, and be excited about what you're doing and get the experience that we need for our futures. You love it, and you learn and you do so much all at once, and it's worth every minute of being here. I love it.

GRAHAM SPANIER:

At Penn State Hershey, we're working to transform the medical care available to the region, while advancing the education of the next generation of medical professionals.

Construction is well underway on a five-story cancer center that will serve as the centerpiece of the Penn State Cancer Institute, a statewide network dedicated to providing the latest therapies and advanced care to cancer patients. The new facility will bring together leading-edge cancer treatment with ongoing cancer research.

Being a student-centered research university requires a substantial investment in both programs of study and places of consequence on campus.

At Penn State Wilkes-Barre, the new Abram Nesbitt, III Academic Commons provides space for academics, art, the performing arts, research, and relaxation. Recognized by the U.S. Green Building Council with The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating, this magnificent building embodies the sustainable design principles that inform all new campus projects.

KRISTEN DURSO, English Major:

Well I've been here for 4 years. So for me to come here and be so enthralled and excited to be in a new building is wonderful because I've been in all the other buildings which have been a great experience for me. But this one is really a landmark. It's definitely rejuvenation, a new life for Penn State Wilkes-Barre.

MARK CALORE, Business Administration Major:

The Nesbitt Academic Commons brings a new lifeblood to this campus. I think it's going to be a new focus for the students to study and to hang out and to do fun things and events. I feel it's important that the Academic Commons is a green building because it shows the university's commitment to the environment and I think that's necessary in today's global environment.

GRAHAM SPANIER:

Penn State's commitment to environmental stewardship has received national honors and Penn State ranks third on the Environmental Protection Agency's list of College and University Green Power Partners.

We also have devoted significant resources to enhancing the facilities that serve the physical and mental health needs of the Penn State community. At University Park, the new Student Health Center will improve the delivery of healthcare to thousands of students. Additional rooms for examinations, counseling, and emergency medical services will provide more privacy and more efficient use of the available resources.

Meanwhile, the new Rec Hall fitness center has helped meet the enormous demand for student fitness facilities. Last year, on the University Park campus alone, we had almost 400,000 visits to our new addition to Rec Hall.

Even I've been working out.

Here at Penn State's new Lorenzo Wrestling Complex, our student-athletes benefit from safer, superior training equipment and technology.

TROY SUNDERLAND, Head Wrestling Coach:

It's one of those things when you walk in and see this complex I think it sends a message to our kids that wrestling is important here at the university, and the administration has been supportive of it, and that sends a message to our kids that they want to represent the university and work as hard as they possibly can to continue the tradition of Penn State wrestling.

The John Fritz Strength and Conditioning Center has really enabled not only the wrestling team, but also other teams that use that facility to kind of get in, use the equipment that is really kind of state-of-the-art, and gives the trainers and strength coaches an opportunity to train their teams for their specific sport. It's really nice to see the effect of all the facilities and improvements we have, because it shows when the results are in that the teams are winning championships.

GRAHAM SPANIER:

Of course, athletic performance is only one measure of the student-athlete. Penn State consistently ranks at the top of the class for academic success. According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association, our student-athletes typically earn a Graduate Success Rate of 88 percent, which is well above nationwide averages.

Another area where Penn State is a leader is in our efforts to expand and improve the residence life experience. As enrollment on Commonwealth campuses grows and increasing numbers of students choose on-campus housing over other alternatives, we have built a number of suite-style residences and specialized living environments.

At Penn State Berks, students can choose to live in Interest Houses that focus on a particular theme such as technology or leadership.

MATTHEW MAYS, Finance Major:

I live in the Berks Leadership interest house. A student interest house is basically just a group of students that get together that have common interests, and they just want to be leaders, they want to show leadership qualities. It has benefitted me in several different ways, it has really allowed me to become closer with my fellow students, it has allowed me to travel to some new places. It has kind of opened my eyes a little bit to see what else is out there. So, I wouldn't trade it for the world, it's really helped me develop and make my college experience a whole lot better.

GRAHAM SPANIER:

The performing arts play an important role at Penn State campuses, and no new venue has received more acclaim than the Pullo Family Performing Arts Center at Penn State York. This magnificent facility has become the heart of campus and community, and it offers students the opportunity to experience premier productions and to act on a professional stage.

TONY LEACH, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Music & Music Education:

This place provides a great opportunity for Penn State ensembles from the School of Music and the School of Theater to perform in a professional environment. Therefore the local community realizes immediately that they have a quality facility that is a part of the university. And for some people, that probably gives them pause to consider, there must be something going on - as far as emphasis is concerned - in the arts at Penn State, and that's a good thing.

GRAHAM SPANIER:

Penn State also is working to showcase the talents of students and faculty in galleries, theatres, and other venues across the state. For example, the Penn State Downtown

Theatre Center in State College is home to Centre Stage, the professional arm of Penn State's School of Theatre.

On this very stage, Penn State students have the opportunity to perform with some of the most accomplished actors in the country, and to launch their careers on even bigger stages. Last year, nine Penn State musical theatre students and recent graduates all made their Broadway debuts in shows such as *Rent*, *Hairspray*, *Grease*, *Xanadu*, *Gypsy*, and *A Chorus Line*... Bravo!

Apart from our attention to buildings, a large part of our work has focused on the spaces between them. We have devoted resources to developing a landscape that is memorable, comfortable, and pedestrian-friendly. From brick-lined sidewalks to the 30,000 annuals planted each year to new lighting and seating areas to thousands of newly planted trees, Penn State has created a variety of outdoor gathering spaces and picturesque views.

LAURA MANEY, Lead Horticulturist:

The stuff that you see everyday on campus really is a huge team approach. We've got people in all sorts of job roles that do different parts of the maintenance. My crew has 4 people full-time, and we double in size over the summer months with part-time help, many of which are students. The work that we do is the details and basically the icing on the cake. In the years I've worked on this campus, I've seen a gradual shift from a more institutional type of landscaping to a more botanical approach. A perfect example of this shift is the arboretum. The arboretum will definitely be a landmark for the campus. I know that my crew is really excited about it.

GRAHAM SPANIER:

The Penn State Arboretum, with its connection to the network of green spaces on campus, embodies our mission of teaching, research and service, and will further Penn State's efforts in stewardship and conservation in the region. The Arboretum will be the centerpiece of Penn State's open space plan. Its pastoral views, research and teaching opportunities, and outreach potential will add a new level of richness to our campus environment.

The Arboretum and many of our new buildings are due in large part to private philanthropy. During the past 13 years, we have raised more in private funds than in the entire previous history of Penn State. And everywhere you turn you can see the results of this generosity.

We are again turning to donors and friends to meet our most pressing needs: access and affordability. During my tenure as president of Penn State, we have trimmed nearly \$150

million out of our budget, and we are making every effort to maximize the impact of our tuition and state appropriations. Yet, the fact remains that tuition is still a hardship for many families. Last year alone, 74 percent of undergraduates received some form of assistance and about 60 percent of our students have loans.

To address this challenge, we are pursuing the most ambitious fundraising campaign in Penn State history -- For the Future: The Campaign for Penn State Students. At the heart of this campaign is the priority to realize the full potential of the institution on behalf of our students.

RYAN PATTERSON, Energy, Business, and Finance Major:

The scholarships, they do help pay your bills, but it's a symbol that someone cares. Someone has invested an interest in you getting your education, and finishing.

To do that means, opening the doors for populations of people who don't normally have a way to get here. And so, my college education just means opportunity. Open doors.

GRAHAM SPANIER:

Today, our campuses are a wonderful assembly of historic and iconic new buildings – united by green space. And our work continues.

As I reflect on the last year, I am awed by the incredible accomplishments, the determination, the intelligence and the vital importance of the work that is underway at Penn State.

I am inspired by the enthusiasm of our students.

I am motivated by the dedication of our faculty.

And I am proud of the great Penn State tradition.

We are one university. We are Penn State.