

WVU official: Service fee will improve county's infrastructure, quality of life

BY NARVEL WEESE, VICE PRESIDENT,
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As residents of Monongalia County, we enjoy many advantages — a stable economy with good paying jobs, diverse cultural opportunities, festivals galore, wonderful secondary and higher education systems, stellar high school and college sports teams, boundless recreational opportunities, unlimited civic engagement projects, excellent health care facilities. But traffic tie-ups and congestion will prevent us from reaching our full potential.

State and federal funding for road projects is always limited. It is clear that if we are going to make meaningful improvements to our roads, some resources will have to come from our local area.

The University, the WVU Hospital

system and others, including the citizens of Monongalia County, have benefited from the county's growing economy. Clearly, a prosperous community is not without its problems — traffic issues affect all of us who live and work here. Investment in our road system has not kept pace with the expanding community.

WVU has a responsibility to give back to the community. We have a proud record of doing just that, both as an institution and as individuals. The University's economic impact is significant, more than a billion dollars annually. More specifically, WVU has donated land to help construct a new fire station for the Morgantown Fire Department, constructed water retention ponds to reduce flooding in the Suncrest Neighborhood and numerous other

public service initiatives.

Several years ago, a group of local visionaries decided to do something about our South University Avenue entrance and Morgantown's undeveloped riverfront. WVU participated in developing the anchor building. Today, that area is producing jobs and business that benefit the entire region.

On the transportation front, WVU provides \$650,000 annually to support the public transportation system, taking hundreds of cars off the roads.

If the proposed service fee is passed, WVU employees and students who work in the county will pay a \$2 per week service fee for each week they are employed in the county. This will result in another estimated \$1 million annually in service fees to support the county commission's

road improvement proposal. (The estimate excludes employees at WVU Hospitals and other affiliated organization.)

In addition, WVU is willing to explore opportunities with the Department of Highways to mitigate right-of-way costs that are attributable to the University.

This transportation proposal is an opportunity to bring about needed change and improve our quality of life. We all complain about traffic woes and the lack of infrastructure improvements. Let's do something about it. Get involved. Listen. Learn.

I would encourage voters to learn more about the plan by visiting <http://www.monservicefee.com>, and in the end, consider supporting the enhancements a service fee could bring to Monongalia County.

Meet the media



'BUCKS FOR BRAINS' — WVU President Mike Garrison (right) and researchers are praising Gov. Joe Manchin for his \$50 million "Bucks for Brains" research endowment aimed at slowing the state's "brain drain." Garrison, along with Marshall University President Stephen Kopp, discussed the benefits of the program at a news conference Wednesday (Jan. 23) in Charleston. "With this proposal, we will work together to keep and attract West Virginia's best and brightest to the state," Garrison said. If approved, the endowment would be the single largest, research-based initiative in West Virginia's history, he said. The \$50 million one-time appropriation would come from the state's surplus and could only be used to match private donations to the universities.

Photo by Brian Persinger

Technology-based learning, academic programs report online

SUBMITTED BY WVU 2010 PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

The WVU 2010 Plan Implementation Team charged the Task Force on Technology-Based Learning and Academic Programs in January 2007.

Over the spring and summer of 2007, the group worked to fulfill its charge to:

- understand the competitive context for technology-based learning and academic programs,
- analyze institutional resources required to support technology-based learning and
- recommend best practices for increasing the availability and effectiveness of online offerings and other technology-based learning tools and approaches.

The task force submitted its report to the 2010 Plan Implementation Team in October; it is available at <http://www.wvu.edu/~2010plan/>.

The report emphasizes that technology-based learning has moved from the periphery of the academic mission at WVU to its core. Given WVU's position as a land-grant university and as the educational leader in the state, the University must work

proactively to integrate pedagogically-sound, technology-based instructional tools and approaches into its academic programs.

Instructional technologies can enhance the learning experience by supplementing traditional, face-to-face classes with innovative technology-based learning activities.

In addition, WVU should continue to develop online courses and programs to meet the educational needs of state residents and to recruit high-quality students into niche distance learning programs linked to campus-based programs with national recognition. To increase the accessibility, integration and value of technology-based learning tools, the University must begin to align related expectations, resources and support.

The task force makes recommendations for actions by the central administration, colleges and academic units, the Office of Information Technology and Extended Learning in the areas of pedagogy, organization and communication. A coordinated effort among these various academic units is crucial to facilitate the effective use of technology-based learning tools and approaches at WVU.