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John Weete

WVU's research and development office grows under VP Weete

BY J. MILES LAYTON

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John Weete's impact on West Virginia can be felt near and far. As vice president for research and economic development, Weete is responsible for policy, strategic planning and implementation for the university's comprehensive research programs, including university-wide centers and institutes that report to the Research Office.

"John Weete has been responsible for the maturation of this enterprise — it has come a long, long way," said Dave Satterfield, director of asset development at WVU for research and economic development, who works closely with Weete.

Under Weete's leadership, WVU's

funding for sponsored projects and research from external sources reached its highest levels, from \$89 million in 2001 to more than \$150 million today, according to WVU News and Information Services.



Weete

"He's very forward thinking in looking down the road to where the university is going to be relative to research and external funding coming in," said Jennifer Racut, communications and operations coordinator for research and economic development.

In addition, technology transfer activity has flourished and devel-

opment of interdisciplinary programs and strategic partnerships have increased. Weete said technology transfer is where ideas are translated into practical reality.

Weete said the university also is developing a research park off W.Va. 705 that will pave the way for companies interested in locating near a major research university. Construction will begin on a three-story, 60,000-square-foot building later this spring at the research park.

"When I came here about eight or nine years ago, there was no Office of Technology Transfer, business incubator, and only aspirations for a research park," Weete said. "Today, all those things are in place except for a research park, which is under way."

Satterfield said Weete's work ben-

efits the economy of West Virginia.

"John has come in and he has stayed long enough now that we have seen some immense progress," he said. "As a result, John has been one of the significant contributors to the economy of this new century. And as time goes on, and our start-up businesses grow, it will be ever easier to see his outstanding contributions."

Weete's primary research interest is in the biochemistry and biotechnology of lipids in microbes. Weete has written two books, "Lipid Biochemistry of Fungi and Other Organisms" and "Fungal Lipid Biochemistry." He holds four U.S. and several international patents.

Following graduate studies, Weete was a visiting scientist at the Lunar Science Institute and did post-doctoral

work at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, before joining the faculty of the department of botany and microbiology at Auburn University in 1973. He was professor, associate dean for research and director of the Leach Science Center in the College of Sciences & Mathematics before coming to WVU.

"I've enjoyed my time at WVU because of the people I have worked with and the work we've done together," he said.

Weete was pleased to be listed among *The Dominion Post's* Top 100 Most Influential. "Any time you get acknowledged publicly for good things, you always feel good about that," he said. "I want to believe that what we are doing on these projects has meaning and a positive impact."

John Weete

AGE: 64.

POSITION: Vice president for research and economic development at WVU.

EDUCATION: B.S. and M.S. degrees in biology, Stephen F. Austin State College, in Texas; Ph.D. in biology, University of Houston, 1970.

FAMILY: Wife, Jennifer; daughter, Anna.

HOBBIES: Fishing and golf.