



**Testimony to the
House Education Budget committee
Jerry B. Farley, President
February 8, 2012**

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss how Washburn University has fared this past year. I believe we have been successful in managing our resources in difficult economic times. In fact, Washburn has experienced many successes this year, as I will now share with you.

Washburn continues to be ranked as a top public 4-year university in the U.S. News and World Report College Ranking Survey. While some may consider the rankings a bit arbitrary, almost all of the components upon which the rankings are based reflect very positively on Washburn University. We rank very highly in academic reputation, small class sizes, and the limited number of classes with over 50 students. We are quite proud this independent organization has such strong positive regard for Washburn.

This fall we experienced continued enrollment growth. Our overall enrollment increase was 1.0%, with student credit hours of 79,567 up by 751 from the Fall 2010 semester. Most significant was the 6.2% increase in direct from high school freshmen students. This is impressive in light of the overall declining rate of total high school graduates in Kansas. Our overall headcount of 7,303 students is the highest number of students in our history.

Our initiative to grow the number of high school students enrolling in the concurrent enrollment program has been successful. Last fall 488 students participated. This year we grew to 574, an increase of 17.6%. This program is designed to provide college-bound students with the opportunity to take college general education courses while still in high school. This program is just one way Washburn University is providing high value education to our local community. Washburn Institute of Technology is experiencing success as well. Enrollment increased to 865 students for an increase of 3.1% since Fall 2010.

Both Washburn and Washburn Tech are developing new collaborations that meet the needs of businesses in Shawnee County and the greater Northeast Kansas region. Washburn is uniquely positioned to provide a seamless educational experience from high school vocational training through Juris Doctor degree. We are working with community partners to envision how we can better meet the workforce needs of the future.

In October we were notified that Washburn Tech and six community and technical college partners were awarded \$19.6 million by the U.S. Department of Labor for the Trade Adjustment

Assistance Community College and Career Training (TRAC-7) grant. As lead partner in this initiative, Washburn Tech will receive \$9.5 million in direct and indirect funds. These seven public institutions will form a consortium to develop new and better methods of providing workers with academic and industry-recognized credentials to meet the need for a skilled workforce. Each school is committed to expanding the provision of training opportunities to a large geographical pool of eligible applicants. At Washburn Tech, the signature program will be the expansion of the Advanced Systems Technology program.

In addition, Washburn Tech will provide education for 135 to 150 new employees of the Mars Chocolates/North America factory, projected to begin operations in 2013. One-third of these positions will be Advanced Systems Technicians, with the other two-thirds being employed in other line positions. We must be aggressive to meet the deadlines required to provide this skilled workforce, but recognize our current challenge is to recruit enough qualified students to enter the training program. We have partnered with the Topeka Chamber of Commerce to produce a public service announcement to recruit these individuals. I hope you have seen it.

Since the approval of the Washburn University and the Washburn Institute of Technology strategic plans in 2010, each institution has made progress in achieving desired goals. Washburn University's plan has five key themes, including:

- Provide superior academic programs,
- Recruit, retain and graduate a diverse student body,
- Enhance student life,
- Leverage intellectual and physical resources to strengthen services to the region, and
- Expand and diversify financial resources.

Progress this year includes:

We have hired an architect to begin preliminary planning for the new student/Welcome Center in Morgan Hall and to evaluate options for either a new building or for an addition and renovation of the School of Law. We are developing proposals for new graduate programs in nursing, human services, health sciences, and accounting; and plan to expand programming for the Law School's Center for Law and Government. Our Occupational Therapy Assistant program started last year just received national accreditation. We continue to provide strong undergraduate programs in sciences and math, arts, political science and history.

We have had a very successful year of accomplishments. The School of Business was again ranked in the top 300 business schools by the Princeton Review. Business major seniors ranked in the 90th percentile on the major national assessment test. The School of Law was rated a Best Value by *National Jurist* magazine. Their writing and legal research ranked 17th in the *Juris Prudence* journal and Washburn Law was among the top 20 law schools in the country for the percent of graduates employed as prosecutors and public defenders. Our athletics teams continue to be successful. Women's volleyball competed in regionals, and the men's football team was 10 and 3 and competed in the regional playoffs to complete a very successful season. This was a "rebuilding" year for our women's soccer team.

As we reflect on our successes, we acknowledge the interdependency of the university within the larger community of Shawnee County and Kansas citizens. Recently we were asked to consider the economic value of Washburn University within this greater community. We contribute the high quality of life we all enjoy. Over 120 home athletic events were held last year for football, basketball, volleyball, soccer, baseball, softball and tennis. We hosted four high school championship events and provided multiple venues and staffing for Sunflower State Games. Major cultural events include Sunflower Music Festival, Mountain-Plains Art Fair, Topeka Symphony Orchestra, and numerous art exhibits, musical, literature, and theatrical performances. Our community outreach programs serve pre-college students through activities such as QUEST, Math Day, History Day, Women of Science Day, and Mulvane Childrens' Art Programs.

Looking to our educational peers for comparison, Washburn University continues to demonstrate high educational value. Our tuition remains below the national levels and our cumulative percentage increase falls well below the other four-year state schools (with the exception of Fort Hays State University). The fall tuition was increased approximately four percent, which remained lower than increases approved in most of the other state universities and institutions in other states (see attached). Washburn's annual tuition totals approximately \$6,500 plus \$6,059 for room and board.

Looking at other metrics, however, Washburn has had mixed performance again this year. Faculty salary comparisons this year have fallen further behind salaries paid at comparable institutions. Over the previous ten years we had made progress in reducing this deficit and improving our comparative position. Unfortunately for the past three years we have lost ground in that comparison. We hope as we position ourselves to exit this recession we will be able to make progress in faculty salaries. Attracting and retaining the best possible qualified faculty is the basis upon which our reputation and student success will be built in the future. We must be competitive.

In FY 2010 and FY 2011 we lost almost \$1.5 million in state funds, almost \$900,000 in interest income, and \$400,000 in sales tax revenue. We incurred \$1.6 million of mandatory cost increases. Total lost revenues and cost increases were over \$7.4 million, which was 9% of the overall budget.

Our FY 2012 budget was also austere. We lost an additional \$100,000 in state funding (1%). We also assumed "cost to continue" increases of almost \$345,000 for utilities, scholarships, library, etc. Increased costs for employee health insurance were over \$1.65 million. We lost another \$60,000 of interest income and replaced the balance of the federal stimulus funding (\$300,000). Thus we reduced expenditures or increased revenues by over \$2.5 million. This is in addition to the \$7.4 million reduced over the previous two years.

Washburn provides educational value to the citizens of Kansas. We are reaching out to business and industry to provide a qualified workforce to help Kansas meet its economic objectives. Thank you for your ongoing support. We appreciate the opportunity to present before you today and are grateful for your support.

Thank you. Dr. Jerry Farley