PROVOST JONES REMARKS

College of Information Sciences and Technology Celebration of Philanthropy

Thursday, March 25, 2021

*In welcome remarks, Penn State Executive Vice President and Provost Nick Jones thanked donors to the University’s College of Information Sciences and Technology and shared the positive impacts of their philanthropy.*

Good evening. On behalf of the University, I welcome you to this special celebration and thank you for your continued philanthropic support of Penn State.

I also want to thank Dean Andrew Sears for his leadership and College of IST Director of Development Mike Weyandt and his team for their work to raise funds for new scholarships and opportunities for our students.

Thanks to the generosity of donors like you, there are countless examples of what makes Penn State an extraordinary place to pursue a college education. And that’s long been the case.

In 1863, when Penn State was designated as Pennsylvania’s only land-grant institution, we received funds from the sale of federal lands with the understanding that we would pursue education, research, and service for the common good.

And philanthropy — the support Penn State receives from private individuals, families, and leaders who believe in our mission — has always been integral to fulfilling those land-grant values.

Penn State was founded on land donated by a Centre County businessman, and gifts throughout our history have helped to move us forward. The University launched its first
campaign – a $2 million initiative to raise construction funds – in the 1920s. That effort was called “A Greater Penn State.”

Now, a century later, our campaign is driven by an even more ambitious vision: “A Greater Penn State for 21st Century Excellence.” With an overall goal of $2.1 billion, this campaign invites Penn State’s alumni and friends to become our partners in fulfilling three core imperatives of a public university.

First, Penn State must keep the doors to higher education open to hard-working students regardless of their financial well-being. Private support brings talented students from all backgrounds to Penn State and helps them to graduate on time and on track to successful careers and lives.

Second, Penn State must create transformative experiences that go beyond the classroom. Philanthropic support helps to provide those opportunities, which enable students to discover their full potential and make a difference.

Finally, Penn State must impact the world by fueling discovery and innovation. Thanks to gifts from alumni and friends, we can tackle the world’s most pressing problems and solve them, which drives economic development, job creation, and student career success.

This year, Penn State is ranked among the top 1% of universities worldwide and the top five universities where corporations recruit.

Penn State is also recognized for its stability and responsible stewardship of financial resources, even amid uncertainty across higher education due to the pandemic.

Meanwhile, Penn State has received a record-breaking number of applications, with high enrollment demand across our campuses.
None of these successes would be possible without the continued support of our donors.

As Andrew mentioned, the College of IST is growing in myriad ways. That’s because the need for experts in information sciences and technology continues to increase, especially in light of the pandemic.

Last month, the New York Times listed the 10 professions with the highest expected growth rates as we emerge from the pandemic. As you might expect, epidemiologists and medical scientists will be in high demand.

But you might be surprised to learn that five of the 10 professions that made the list are in IST fields:

- Web developers and digital interface designers,
- Network and computer systems administrators,
- Computer network architects,
- Information security analysts, and
- Database administrators and architects.

I don’t see this professional trend slowing down anytime soon, which makes donor support even more vital. So, thank you for your investment in Penn State and the College of IST.

With the support of our alumni and friends, we will continue to fulfill our mission to serve the public good and create a better future for our students, the Commonwealth, and the world.