

# New Initiatives Enhance Undergraduate Experience and Benefit Region

**W**hen I was an undergraduate at the University of Delaware, a fellow student named Joe Biden and I both were candidates for president of our respective classes. We both lost the election. I went on to a career in higher education that brought me to Wilkes. But, as we know, Mr. Biden never lost his taste for elected office.

Joe Biden – now vice president of the United States – and I met again recently. As this issue of *Wilkes* magazine went to press, I had accompanied U.S. Rep. Paul Kanjorski to Washington to visit with Vice President Biden and Secretary of Energy Steven Chu on April 19. Our meeting took place in the Roosevelt Room, from which I could peer into the Oval Office. It was an honor to represent Wilkes in a place that has been the stage for much of our nation's history.

We were meeting with the vice president and secretary of energy to discuss the funding of a research center to assist northeastern Pennsylvania in addressing the opportunities and challenges associated with the Marcellus shale formation and accompanying environmental issues. Although there is much to be done, we are hopeful Wilkes will play a central role in this center and that this participation will greatly benefit our academic programs.

Other new initiatives have the potential to positively impact the academic experience of our undergraduate students and enhance the quality of our science, health and engineering facilities. For example, we are talking with The Commonwealth Medical College about a partnership that capitalizes on our strengths in the sciences, engineering and health professions.

Projects like these bring with them both excitement and concern. The pace of change at Wilkes in the last few years has been swift, with an explosion of growth in our graduate programs and a proposed new law school. Striking a balance between new initiatives and remaining true to our mission of a highly personal education for undergraduates is challenging. Many new projects, like the ones I've described in this message, will positively impact undergraduates by providing new opportunities for faculty/student research, new facilities and new faculty.

It is important for our alumni to know that our commitment to undergraduate education remains a strong focus. Indeed, over the past decade, we have made strengthening our traditional undergraduate programs a priority through an investment in mentoring initiatives, reduced student/faculty ratios and improved facilities. We'll continue to do that, even as we develop new programs.

The essence of education at Wilkes will continue to be one that focuses on mentoring students as they prepare to take their place in the world as tomorrow's teachers, scientists, communicators and business people.



Partnerships focusing on energy and health initiatives expand undergraduate research opportunities.

**Dr. Tim Gilmour**  
*Wilkes University President*

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Wilkes University is an independent institution of higher education dedicated to academic and intellectual excellence in the liberal arts, sciences and professional programs. The university provides its students with the experience and education necessary for career and intellectual development as well as for personal growth, engenders a sense of values and civic responsibility, and encourages its students to welcome the opportunities and challenges of a diverse and continually changing world. The university enhances the tradition of strong student-faculty interactions in all its programs, attracts and retains outstanding people in every segment of the university, and fosters a spirit of cooperation, community involvement, and individual respect within the entire university.

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Gary Fabiano '89 hydrates a child he helped rescue in Haiti, where he was on assignment taking photographs.

PHOTO BY DAVID ALBERS.



Have a story idea to share?

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