



Patrick F. Leahy

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1. Our greatest contribution to quality here at Wilkes is the quality of our people. Nowhere, anywhere across American higher education are you going to find a faculty and staff more committed to student success. Let me state if I may, as you probably know, value is a function of two things: quality and price. Value is a function of those two together. So let me just say a word about quality of price here at Wilkes. I think Wilkes University, and I've said this quite publicly in my first year, I think it's one of the most unique universities not only in this region but in the country. Ok. One of the most unique institutions in the country. We offer a broad array of programs through six different schools: pharmacy, nursing, science and engineering, business, education, and our arts and humanities college. Six different schools offering a wide variety of programs. Yet, this broad program mix is offered to fewer than 2500 full-time undergraduates. Fewer than 2500 undergraduates. So it's a combination of that program mix and our small size that's really unique. If you look at most institutions that offer a program mix like that, they're typically institutions that are three, four, sometimes five times the size of Wilkes. As you look at other institutions that have 2500 or fewer students you're going to have trouble finding the array of programs that we offer. So I think it's, again, a combination of that that's really unique and adds a ton of quality. It's so unique that I asked our researcher to do a little research for me. I said, I want you to look around American higher education for all the institutions around the country that offer all the programs we offer with a student population of 3000 or fewer students. Across American higher education he discovered two institutions, one of which is Wilkes University. So it's, again, a combination that I think is really unique

But you might be asking, "Ok, that's fine, but why does that matter?" Well, Wilkes is a place where engineering students can play football; where nursing students can play the lead in a theatrical production; where a student can major in two or three or, in the case of a student a few years ago, four different majors to create and design the education that he wanted to set himself up for success in his life. Four different majors. It's a place where undergraduate students work hand-in-hand with faculty. So we like to think of it as we offer the activities of a major research university - over fifty academic programs, sixteen NCAA sports and more coming, opportunities for undergraduate research, the activities of a big, major research university - but in the culture of a small liberal arts college, the personalized attention that the bigger schools cannot offer, small class sizes, the kind of personal mentoring that happens between faculty and students that you cannot find at bigger institutions. We take real pride in saying that Wilkes University is a small university with emphasis both on small, and all the value that that brings, and university, with all the value that that brings. I think that that's really unique and adds a lot of quality to our offer. But there are other ways that we're building quality here at Wilkes and that's through investments in our campus. I would encourage you to look around during your visit today. If you're interested in nursing, visit our brand-new, state-of-the-art simulation lab. If you are a budding

artist, visit our newly renovated Bedford Hall. If you're an aspiring NCAA athlete, visit our expanding field house at the Ralston Athletic Complex which is just on the other side of the river. And, of course, if you're at all interested in the sciences, I hope you'll pay a visit to the Cohen Science Center, which is the largest, most sophisticated, most expensive building that we've ever built on this campus and will be ready this summer to serve our students. And if you're interested in business, engineering, or communications, there will be investments in those programs in the next year or two, well within your time here at Wilkes if you elect to come join us here next fall.

3. Then we flood the system with as much financial aid as we can afford, as much as possible. First, we reward you students with merit aid, then we try to support your parents with need-based aid, and all together that results in about ninety percent of our students receiving some form of financial aid. Ninety percent. That translates into about twenty-five million dollars in financial aid every year. Twenty-five million dollars in financial aid that we distribute out to try to make what we think is our first class educational opportunity as affordable as possible. So I would encourage you as you look across any university or college, not just Wilkes, to focus on the net price, not just the list price, but the net price. So, quality and price, those are the two components of value. Let me share with you that I believe that we are a high-value institution when you take a close look at what we offer here at Wilkes. I would present it another way. Ask yourself, "What do I get for the money?" And I would suggest here at Wilkes you get a lot for the money. We will not be the low-cost provider in our recruiting market; nor will we be the premium price option. But what we are striving to do here at Wilkes is to be the highest value option to all of you in our general recruiting market.

So I hope you'll have a full day today. I hope that you will get all the questions that you had answered. And, in particular, I hope that you spend some time with our students as you did a little bit earlier today. Nobody tells the Wilkes story better than our current students. No one will be more candid with you than our Wilkes students. No one will share with you the passion for the place more than our Wilkes students. So I hope you'll find them today and spend some time with them asking them your questions.

I will be available both at eleven o'clock and at noon to answer any questions from you directly if there are questions you have specifically for me about where we are and where we are heading as an institution. So I look forward to visiting with you at that time.

But again, thank you for being here. We know that it's a sacrifice to spend some time in the summer starting your college search. We want you to know how much we appreciate you adding Wilkes to that list and I hope that you'll get everything that you want out of your visit today. Thanks very much.