



# Patrick F. Leahy

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VIP Day | March 22, 2014

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Good morning and welcome to Wilkes for our annual VIP Day. At this point in the process we have made it clear, I hope, of our interest in you. And you have shown at least some interest in us. I hope today can lead to an intersection of those interests. Thank you for being here. More importantly, thank you for considering Wilkes so carefully.

Let me try to answer a few questions for you on this VIP Day.

The first question you are, no doubt, asking yourself is: “Why should I choose Wilkes?” I’ll tell you why I think you should. Wilkes is a small university, with the emphasis both on “small” and on “university.” We are a university in all of its glory. We offer all of the programs, activities and opportunities that are typically found at a large research university. We support a broad program mix across six schools, offering over 50 different programs, including two new ones just this year in sports and event management and public administration. We offer high-impact activities, including some 80 different clubs and 19 NCAA athletic teams. This coming year alone we will offer new programs in men’s and women’s swimming and women’s golf. And we’ll be the only college or university in northeastern Pennsylvania – and one of only a few Division III programs statewide – to sponsor a marching band. Yet we offer all of these opportunities in the caring, mentoring, supportive environment of a small, liberal arts college. Because of our relatively small size, everyone gets to know everyone else. We have each other’s backs here. It is a place where lifelong relationships are developed with faculty members, coaches, staff and each other. In fact, this small university is one of the most unique institutions of higher learning anywhere. Our research suggests that we are the only university in the country to offer all of these programs and activities to fewer than 2,500 full-time undergraduates. That is unique. We like to think of it as special.

This begs the next question: “How does this uniqueness apply to me?” Our small university allows you to design your own education across this wide variety of programs. Students here major in one, two, three, even four subjects. Can you imagine majoring in four different subjects? And you just might have the opportunity to take a business strategy course with the president. I hear that it is a “don’t miss” class, mostly because I am an easy grader. Our small university offers opportunities to conduct research with full faculty members. The research done here as undergraduates is more similar to master’s level work at other, larger universities. These relationships with your educators are very important. I have four kids of my own. What I want more than anything else in choosing schools for them is an engaged, passionate, dedicated faculty and staff. We have them here at Wilkes. You will get a chance to experience their passion today. When you meet them throughout the day, ask them why they have chosen to dedicate their lives to Wilkes. All academic programs at our small university have “clinical” experiences

as part of their degrees. Clinical experiences are co-curricular, real-world experiences, which give you a better understanding of the fields themselves and also prepare you to succeed in them. Pharmacy and nursing programs, of course, have traditional clinical rotations, where you will serve real patients. Engineering programs here at Wilkes actually require you to build things for industrial partners. Business programs actually make you run businesses. In our English programs, you will actually write. In each of these cases, you will gain real-world experience to complement your academic experience.

And at this small university you do not need to limit your education to our campus here in Wilkes-Barre. In addition to numerous study abroad opportunities and international courses, you will have an opportunity to study away at our new location just outside of Phoenix, Ariz. Why Phoenix? Studying at our Mesa location offers you opportunities to tap resources at Arizona State University, the largest university in the nation, and to participate in internship opportunities with companies that are unavailable back here. Some of the technology companies that have major operations in greater Phoenix include: Intel, Apple, Boeing and Google, just to name a few. This small university is really one big learning laboratory.

So Wilkes is a small university that offers many cool opportunities, but the biggest question is: “Will all of this lead to a job?” In short, the answer is yes. Each year more than 90 percent of our graduates are working in their chosen field or studying in graduate school within six months. But we don’t just prepare you for any job; we prepare you for your dream job. We will first help you identify your dream job. Then we will do our best to help you land it, whatever it may be. A recent accounting major landed her dream job to work at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, where this year’s Super Bowl was held. A computer science major now works at Google headquarters in California. A communications major is now an Emmy-nominated journalist, covering Washington, D.C., for Cox Media Group. An earlier business major just took his new company public in the past year, ringing the opening bell at the NASDAQ exchange on the day his stock started trading. And one of our engineering majors is now the chief innovation officer at SiriusXM Satellite Radio. It was he who was responsible for solving the technological challenges related to satellite radio, and he has 35 patents to prove it. At Wilkes University we prepare you not just for job placement, not even for career promise, but for life fulfillment. Wilkes is a small university, offering lots of opportunities that ultimately lead to you finding your dream job.

So this just leaves one question for you: “Will you accept this challenge?” If you accept the challenge to study at our small university, you will be challenged to grow in ways that you cannot now imagine. You will be challenged to change and to stretch. You will be challenged to find your passion and to find your purpose. You will be challenged to go beyond anything you now think is possible. As the saying goes, “We take good students and make them great.” The choice is yours. Will you accept the challenge to study at a small university called Wilkes University? All of us hope you will Thank you very much.