



Happy New Year 2020

Dear Friends and Colleagues: Happy new year from everyone at the Lewis College of Business and its Brad D. Smith Schools of Business. As a new decade dawns, we mark the start of the second semicentennial for the Lewis College of Business at Marshall University. The new year is a time when people naturally think about some aspects of their personal and professional lives that they might want to change. But with a new decade now upon us, and the world of higher education in perhaps greater flux than ever before, there may be a greater emphasis this year on resolutions in academia.

Our Lewis College of Business has achieved its excellence over the past five decades primarily because of our highly successful alumni, our exceptionally committed faculty and staff, our applied approach to business education, our impactful research, our dedicated community outreach, and our deep commitment and ingenuity to help students realize their needs, goals, and dreams. Our business school has grown in its mission of education, research and community outreach, while simultaneously boosting the region with economic development through the creation of an enviable talent pool, generation of practical business knowledge, expansion of internship programs, and supporting a thriving community of businesses and entrepreneurs.

In Nov 2018, alumnus and Intuit Chairman and CEO Brad D. Smith and his wife, Alys Smith made a \$25 million gift to our Business programs, leading to the creation of the Brad D. Smith Undergraduate School of Business and the Brad D. Smith Graduate School of Business. President Gilbert described the gift – one of the largest in Marshall’s history – as “transformational” and one that will provide new and dynamic opportunities for current and future business students. And so, as we start 2020, I want to express my gratitude to Brad and Alys Smith, and to all those who have helped and inspired us to maintain our excellence in business education.

In their last scheduled meeting of 2019, the Marshall University Board of Governors approved another step toward construction of a new Lewis College of Business facility to be located at 4th Avenue and 15th Street. Board members gave approval for the university to proceed one step closer to creating a public-private partnership to develop a mixed-use facility that will house the College of Business, as well as retail space on land previously known as the Shobe property. Bids are expected to be opened in mid-January with possible construction starting as early as 2021. The MU Board of Governors also approved the launch of two major new academic programs from the Brad D. Smith Schools of Business – our first AACSB-accredited doctoral program, the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), and our first undergraduate online program, the Online Bachelor of Arts in General Business. The board had initially endorsed the degree program concepts (intent to plan) for both programs in April 2019.



Provost and Senior Vice President Dr. Jaime R. Taylor said the newly approved academic programs will help students with diverse backgrounds and will address a changing economy. "I'm very excited about these new additions to our educational offerings," Provost Taylor said. "The bachelor's degree in general business is a fully online degree completion program and will meet the needs of a variety of students, particularly nontraditional students in the state and region. Also, the Doctor of Business Administration will be the first such degree in the state and is tailored for students who want to advance their careers in business or academia."

The new year will also see a spectacular Distinguished Speaker event hosted by us that will feature four most influential business leaders of our times – the chief executive officers of Nike (John Donahoe), PayPal (Dan Schulman), and Adobe (Shantanu Narayen) in a panel discussion with Brad D. Smith. The event, set for Feb. 19 at the downtown Huntington Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center, is the brainchild of Brad Smith, who reached out to the top executives to help arrange their participation.

For 2020, our resolution is to be recognized as a top-tier national business school brand by better anticipating and satisfying the needs of all our stakeholders, enhancing our image and reputation in our service region, rebuilding on our AACSB dual accreditation, reimagining our undergraduate and graduate program curricula, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, and engaging our outreach centers with measurable successes and impact in exciting and innovative ways. We will be strengthening our new and existing academic programs, diversifying our modes of instruction, internationalizing our presence and reach, innovating on student advising and career support, branding ourselves through improved marketing collaterals, and connecting with the world of business through long-term mutually beneficial partnerships. With the support of our campus leadership team, we would look for even more effective ways to garner resources, collaborate with other colleges and units on campus, and position ourselves as the benchmark for new ideas and best practices.

For 2020, we would look for even more effective ways to achieve and celebrate our student successes and faculty/staff accomplishments. Let's engage more closely with the community that we are a part of. Let's bring our alumni, corporate leaders and board members into our classes and in other forums as mentors, coaches, judges, and guest speakers. Let's work with chambers, organizations and institutions locally and globally, and share our expertise and knowledge to make our local economy stronger and the global economy more connected. And, let's work towards making the Brad D. Smith Schools of Business the first choice for our target group of students and positioning ourselves as a well-differentiated focused innovative business school in West Virginia and the entire United States.

Again, best to you all, and may 2020 be a year of extraordinary achievement and excellence for each of us individually, as well as for Marshall University and our Lewis College of Business and the Brad D. Smith Schools of Business.

Avinandan Mukherjee