STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESS
P. BARRY BUTLER
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Dr. P. Barry Butler:

Welcome. Good morning and welcome. This is a wonderful opportunity to share the kick-off of the academic year. In a few days, we’re going to see thousands of students coming on campus. Start taking our classes. Continue to work in our labs. It’s an exciting time for all of us.

I also want to take this opportunity to welcome the new members of our community. We hosted an event to formally welcome you to Embry-Riddle and one of the messages I heard last night from several of you was what a welcoming community this is. I said I feel the same way. You immediately feel a part of the Embry-Riddle community and that will be with you forever. That’s an important part of what I want to say today.

I’m here to talk about the State of the University, both present and future. As you’ll see in a moment, we are currently in good shape. As we talk about the future, an overriding statement is that everybody has a role to play in achieving our future. I mean that seriously. It’s difficult to reach such lofty goals without everybody playing a role. And I’m going to show you there are parts of the plan where you can make a difference.
Our Student Union Is Transformational. This image of our new Student Union on the Daytona Beach Campus may be an obvious choice because it's beautiful. From visitors, you hear superlatives about its architecture and aesthetics. You hear descriptions such as “stunning” or “beautiful” or “futuristic.” That's all true.

A few days ago, someone told me: the building is transformational. It represents the future of this institution. What it symbolizes is important, as we move forward. The transformational aspects of this addition inspired a lot of what I want to talk about today because it relates to who we are as a community.

So what does it speak to? It speaks to bold spirit. Think about Embry-Riddle in 1926. Think about what's happened since then. Think of all the discovery and reinvention. Think about what goes on in our laboratories. Think about what goes on in our student organizations. Think about the students working in that building, in those conference rooms, working on projects for the future, trying to understand: How do I take this set of constraints and come up with a solution, working as part of a team?

It speaks to a sense of community. A lot of thought went into making it a place where people can meet and interact. Graduates will leave knowing they are part of a community. They will know people they might never have met anywhere else. People outside of their discipline. That is an invaluable part of the Embry-Riddle experience.
No Second Place for Embry-Riddle. As we talk about the future, we have to start with a vision. I think it comes down to three statements. First, in the future, we will be the unquestioned global leader in aviation and aerospace higher education. We are far along that path but we can’t afford to stop improving. We ought to be No. 1, unquestioned. There’s no second place for Embry-Riddle. Second, we have to earn a reputation for personal attention to student success. I want to devote a significant part of today’s talk to this goal. I want it to be important to everyone in this audience. In a minute, we’ll talk about how each of you can contribute. Third, we need to be recognized as the definitive source for innovation in aerospace education and research. We deserve to be at the top of the list when people talk about aviation research, aviation education and any aviation-related activities.

Those are the three paths to our future. Where are we now? What is the present State of the University? To appreciate our position, we must look beyond the landscape we operate in. We have to take a broader view of the industries we serve. Three factors will have a powerful influence on us and we need to understand them.

The Aerospace Industry Is Strong. The first factor that influences us is the strength of the aerospace industry. Financially, it is strong. If you look at the aerospace industry as measured by the S&P Index on aerospace and defense, you will see sustained growth. If you go back 12 years, it’s grown 400 percent. If you look at the S&P Index overall, it’s grown about 150 percent. So you can see that the aerospace industry is healthy. This valuation suggests an equally strong future.
I had just finished reading a *Wall Street Journal* article about trade issues. As I was looking out at the ramp, I saw an airplane from Malaysia. I saw an airplane from East China Airlines. I saw an airplane from South America. I saw the U.S. tanker of the future ready to be sent off to the U.S. Air Force. And as I’m standing there, I see a plane on final approach. It’s Aeroflot. In 10 or 15 seconds, I saw that airlines from around the world were purchasing aircraft from this one location. You cannot deny the global impact.

This global perspective has to be part of how we educate our students. Those of you in the flight programs know that global connectivity is beyond belief.

**The Demand for STEM Talent Is High.** This morning, I changed my PowerPoint slide to read: high demand for STEM talent. I witness this need when I visit companies around the world. The demand is significant and so is the competition.

I want to encourage all of you to visit the career expos that we host in this building. Talk to the recruiters. It’s impossible not to be impressed by who is here and by our students, looking so professional. They are in high demand with great opportunities to earn good positions with leading industries.

**Industries Are Investing in Technology.** The companies we serve are investing in technology. Transportation overall is a big driver. Two major airframe manufacturers are both investing heavily in urban mobility. Think about that – it wasn’t going on just 10 years ago.

Another big investment area is commercial space. We see the launches just south of here. It seems like they happen once a week. So there is significant investment in commercial space and we will see that continue.

Hypersonic and supersonic flight also show a lot of promise. At least two companies are taking a serious look at supersonic flight and hypersonic flight as well. I don’t know if that interest will lead to new possibilities, but companies are committed to R&D in those areas.

An industry trend particularly important to us is the growth of aviation data analytics. It has a huge potential impact. Airlines can safely fly older equipment thanks to maintenance analytics. They have new and reliable insight into risk factors and can predict performance. Data analytics also improves efficiencies in manufacturing. So you now see entire divisions created within businesses to focus on collecting and understanding data and putting it to work.
The Military Has a Pilot Shortage. The military also has a big influence on our future. We have a significant partnership with the military through our ROTC programs and we also have a lot of students go on to work in the defense industry. Publications such as Military Times have reported on the shortage of pilots as well as reduced aircraft readiness. This is a significant dynamic for us.

Higher Education Faces Enrollment Challenges. We are part of the higher education landscape and we face some of the same challenges as other universities. However, we are in a better position that many. A recent article in The Chronicle of Higher Education addressed enrollment issues.

Recently, 30 percent of all private colleges revised their enrollment goals downward. They are falling short on tuition revenue and raising the discount. All of these factors are interrelated. We are all going after a limited prospect pool, with expense growth predicted to outpace enrollment and revenue growth. I'm happy to tell you that Embry-Riddle is in a better position.

Our financial team is forward-looking. We also have the advantage that students are attracted to what we have to offer. Our admissions are up. We deliver outcomes that students want. So I wanted you to understand the general landscape, but understand that we are doing quite well, comparatively.
We Are Strengthening Industry Partnerships. If you go back to the 1940s or 1950s, you will come across the term “endless frontier.” That might resonate with technology historians. In the World War II era, Vannevar Bush looked at how we as a country could mobilize resources for the war effort. The key was a partnership between government, industry, and education. That model still works today.

I would tell you that at Embry-Riddle as a university, we do quite well in this area. We seem to have a knack for understanding the partnership. I'll give a couple of examples later. But our partnerships with government agencies, with industry, have created a model that I think can help us as we move into the future.

We Are Implementing Our Strategic Plan. As the Chairman mentioned earlier, that leads us to a plan. When we think about the future, we have a master plan for buildings. We know how this campus is going to look in the future. What you’re seeing going up today was planned years ago. So you have this planning process for infrastructure and facilities. You also have to have a plan for where you’re going as an institution. What I want to share with you today is a little bit about that plan. I'm not going to go into great detail but I want to highlight one particular area of it.
So we have different parts of the strategic plan. I’ll mention five. We have a focus on enrollment management. We have a focus on the student experience and success. We have a team that’s working on research and innovation. We have a team that’s working on our global strategy. And we have a team that’s looking at philanthropy and alumni engagement.

As part of that plan we’ve developed strategies, action items and we have teams that are working and reporting back on a day-to-day basis what we’re doing in those areas. We have metrics that we’ve defined, and as I said at the beginning of this talk, this is not something for a small team to work on and deliver. This is something to which everybody has to contribute as we move forward.

I want to focus on that lower right corner: Student Experience and Success. I want to spend a little more time on that because I think that’s one we can focus on. Everybody in this room can help.

The plan developed as a team effort. We had dozens of people involved in writing and iterating on it. Thanks to our Board of Trustees, we had significant investments approved at our spring meeting. We’ll be investing $2 million in advancing some of the FY19 objectives and there will be additional investments down the road.

But it requires a team effort to achieve the goals that we’ve established. The Board of Trustees has demonstrated their support with their unanimous endorsement but also with their statement of financial support.
Enrollment Management Has Precise Targets.
We have developed a plan for recruiting across all campuses and different programs. The two words I want to highlight are vision and plan. Our vision and plan will be at the unit level. In fact, Dr. Howard is working on that with a team right now, looking program by program to determine the plan for each particular program. There are some programs where we may be at capacity. There are other programs where we may want to grow. So we’re going to be doing it at the programmatic level.

When we look at our Worldwide programs, we count registrations, not student headcount. So these are the actual registrations for courses. You can see since about 2015, enrollment has been on the upswing thanks to innovative new programs. These programs reflect what students want so we see positive trends over the past couple of years. We predict they will continue.

When we look at our residential campuses, at both Prescott and Daytona Beach combined, we see growth in the quality of the incoming students. Both their GPAs and standardized test scores are increasing. Keep that in mind as you welcome our new students.

The last factor I want to mention is enrollment on the residential campuses: Prescott and Daytona Beach. There are positive trends in both locations. Since FY 2011-2012, we’ve seen that increase over time and we’ll see it again this fall. I would call these increases a reflection of smart growth.
We Support Student Success. Our second big goal is student success. We describe that objective in the Strategic Plan as: "Provide a transformative educational experience that prepares them for leadership in the aerospace community."

And again, there’s individual action plans and strategies as well as metrics on what we want to do.

I want to highlight these three words – educational experience – we’re all part of that – and graduates. I mentioned this last year. We bring a lot of students in who don’t graduate. Last year I made a plea to everyone in the room to put their personal effort into retention. I challenged you. I said go out every day and try to initiate five interactions with students that go beyond your classroom environment. Many of you let me know that you were doing it. You were stopping and asking people how they were doing. If you saw a student in the hallway, you were asking them about their experience and encouraging them. I appreciated that. The official numbers will be out later, but we are seeing improvement thanks to your efforts.

Use this as a springboard as we move forward to continue that effort. And thank you for what you’ve done.

Earlier I mentioned the importance of partnership between government, industry and Embry-Riddle. As I said, our partnerships are a model for how things should be done. And I mean that from the bottom of my heart. We are uniquely successful and our relationships with the State of Florida and the amount of support we get from the government is amazing. And it’s done for all the right reasons. That support is based on the value that we bring to the state.
But I want to share with you another example of how this works from the perspective of student success. Embry-Riddle Worldwide pulled together the Department of Defense on the government side and Microsoft Corporation on the industry side to create a program that addressed a specific audience of students that needed a specific program to be successful. Out of this effort came the Microsoft Software & Systems Academy – MSSA for short.

We’ve had about 1,200 students complete this program. These are individuals who are leaving the military and moving into the civilian workforce, earning on average $70,000 a year in the IT industry. This is a partnership that serves everyone by bringing creative people in the room and pushing the boundaries of traditional education to develop real solutions.
Diversity Is Part of Success. An area I want to address and ask for your help with relates to the demographics of our students. When you look at Embry-Riddle campuses, we’re at about 21 percent female enrollment. If you look nationwide, women are at about 56 percent enrollment. People say to me, “Well, Barry, you’re comparing Embry-Riddle with the rest of the country.” And I say, that’s fine, I don’t care. I’m still comparing it. In other words, folks, we have a long way to go. Change requires a shift in culture, in programs, departments and the hallways of our buildings. I’m using female enrollment as one diversity target, but there are other examples beyond that.

Look at the enrollments in the professions of pharmacy, medicine and law. Go back to the 1960s and look at the graduating classes of those programs. I can guarantee you that they were all 80-90 percent male. Look at the graduating classes and you’ll see that. Go to any program across the country now that offers those degrees and look at the class enrollments. They’re 50-50 roughly, give or take. And I know in the 1960s when faculty saw 5 percent enrollment in pharmacy programs, they said, that’s never going to change. So why are you giving me a hard time about this? Think about that as we move forward. Think about our profession and what we do. We’re not any different and I think there’s great potential if we put our heads to it.

ERNIE Central Delivers One-Stop Solutions. To advance student success, we created ERNIE Central. It opened over the summer and it’s moving into the Student Union. This is the one-stop shop where students will find solutions to most of their problems. Before they used to bounce around from office to office. I won’t use the term that I’ve heard for this on campus. I think you all know what it is. I have put out a mandate in my office that that term will not be used because we’ve got a new future and it helps to get rid of these things.

ERNIE Central has been a great success. I think they’ve averaged on the order of 400 visits this summer. When students leave, they are surveyed on service, whether they came in to ask a question or drop a class or ask about a financial aid issue. Student response has been positive. It is service-oriented. It’s like the Disney experience. Everybody there wants to help you. They want to make it work. And that’s the kind of climate we want to have.

We want to have the type of environment where people reach out to students who are puzzled. We have to remember, we’ve been around the university environment for a long time and we know the routines. We know if you’ve got a financial issue, you go here. Even terms we use for different offices may not make sense to a young student. We talk about a bursar’s office. We have to put ourselves in their position. ERNIE Central is there to address that, to help out, and so far it’s been great.
Integration Is a Goal. Leveraging our competitive advantages by integrating the campuses is a goal. We have a unique opportunity between Prescott, Daytona Beach and Worldwide to be able to leverage our strengths. There are efforts underway in some curricula areas examining the possibilities. That’s the kind of movement I want to see.

Retention. Retention. Retention. I’ll say it a dozen more times. Retention is improving and I thank all of you for what you’re doing to help. Retention relates to a lot of different factors. Sometimes it’s academics. Sometimes it’s related to how people are feeling in their new environment, as a freshman adjusting to a new campus. So please pay attention to that. We are moving the academic advising program along quite nicely. We’re looking at surveying students to gauge how satisfied they are and how we can improve.

Mentors Matter. Let me share a story. I had a great opportunity to meet with one of the top 10 aerospace executives in the world. I had the chance to sit down with this individual and spend a little time. And by the way, the first thing he said was: “You come from a great institution. Embry-Riddle is just off the charts.” And I wanted to share that with you – that’s an honest statement. We got talking about other things. We got to know one another and I heard a story from him about his experience in college. A person helped him along and kept him from leaving the program he was in. Now he is one of the industry’s leaders, and hearing a story like that, I almost wanted to interrupt him. I said, you know I speak to our faculty and staff about how important it is to the young people you’re working with to have someone to talk to them about their future, someone who understands what their goals are. His comment was: “Do it again this year:” So please keep that in mind when you move forward.

Strive to be Someone Students Remember. I said it last year and I’ll say it here again: Strive to be someone students remember. This is something you’ll hear me saying all the time. And I hear it. I’ve been visiting alumni during the last year and you start hearing about certain professors and certain staff members who helped them, who they remember. And I asked them, when did you graduate? Well it was in 1985 or 1990. I think, that’s a long time ago, and you still remember this professor? And that makes an incredible statement when you think about that. So I ask you all, strive to be someone like that. Be one of those individuals that students will remember in the future.

We share responsibility for student success. It’s not only up to an Office of Retention or an Office of Advising. I ask the department chairs here in the room today and others who are in leadership positions to have this on your agenda periodically when you meet with our people. Talk about it. What are we doing in the unit about retention? What are we doing about mentoring our students? And keep the conversation going throughout the year and we will see continuing improvements.
What Do I Hear from Industry? I talk with industry a lot and they like working with us. They are positive about us. What else can we do to be even better? They list the following things: Teamwork. They talk about business for non-business majors. My colleagues in engineering who are out here, take a walk across campus to the College of Business and College of Aviation. Business for non-business majors gives people a solid foundation for their career path. Project management skills and communication skills are valued.

A term that has gained a lot of popularity is grit. It’s the latest buzzword out there but it’s an important one. We need to teach our students to step forward and be proactive in what they do and not sit back and wait for things to happen. Again, this is feedback from industry. They want to see innovation and entrepreneurship. Even the biggest of companies is driven by innovation and entrepreneurship. The ability to think about new products is critical.

We Are Thinking Globally. Our next goal relates to our global strategy and reputation. We do quite well around the planet. We have great success thanks in part to our Worldwide program. The words that we highlight here are strategic global engagement with industry and academia. Strategic means we don’t try to be all things to all people. We identify programs we want to be a part of.

I want to congratulate our Worldwide program. We’re celebrating an anniversary of 25 years in online education. We have diverse and relevant programs to offer. We have programs with the Department of Defense and different commands. We have an incredible presence in the Pacific Rim. We have programs in Germany that have been successful for a long time. We have a presence in Brazil and, of course, our campus in Singapore. We have more than 500 students there and an incredible reputation with the government in Singapore. When the civil aviation authorities step up and compliment Embry-Riddle as part of that community, it makes a solid statement.
Research and Innovation Are Critical. As we move forward, I want to highlight our recent research and innovation. The MicaPlex opened in April of 2017. We are almost full. That is quite an achievement.

A successful research park doesn’t “just happen.” It can take a decade to establish a respected incubator. People work hard at this. But we’ve been able to bring in incredible talent and we’ve also been able to bring in high-paying jobs for the area. And the energy – the buzz – if I can use that term, is so positive it reflects well on us. We bring individuals to campus now who have the opportunity to be a part of the MicaPlex, and when they go over and see it, they’re amazed at what’s going on.

We Have Targeted Research Priorities. We have opportunities in aero-focused research. One area that resonates with industry is aviation data analytics; whether it’s in the airlines collecting data constantly on flights, on maintenance issues, pricing, marketing issues, whether it’s on the manufacturing side of the house. Aviation analytics can lower the cost to produce an airplane going out the door. We need to be a part of that capability.

Aviation cybersecurity is an issue we wish we didn’t have to worry about. Unfortunately, that’s not the case. Companies are investing a lot in this because they have to. We’ve made some pretty good inroads now and we want to continue to grow those relationships.

Autonomous systems represent another growth area for us. We have a good foothold in this area and we seem to get the attention from the outside. This expertise crosses all of our colleges and campuses.

Simulation-based training will continue to expand. I’m learning a lot about this area since we use simulators so extensively.
We Will Continue Basic Research. We have some excellent basic research programs. We want to see those continue to grow and get the recognition and reputation that they deserve. We will make investments as part of that $2 million that I mentioned earlier. We have a part of that allocated for research investments as well.

We also have to demonstrate that there is a return on investment — in other words, what are we doing with those funds and what are we getting out of it? By outcomes I don’t just mean dollars. We also consider reputation, programs and the students graduating from those programs.

Development Is Built on Engagement. Finally, our fifth goal is development. As the Chairman mentioned, we need to develop a culture of philanthropy and lifelong relationships. The key words in that statement are the last ones: **aligns with the goals of the strategic plan.**

We have hired a new vice president, Marc Archambault. I think most of you have met him. We’re off to a good start. We’ve done some reorganization and added unit-specific hires working within the colleges. It is important for philanthropy to align with the strategic plan.
Thank You for Being Donors. We’ve had a record number of employee donors: 823 last year alone. All I can say is thank you. That sends an amazing message back to others as well. We spent $1.8 million in non-tuition money in scholarships last year. That’s an amazing number when you look at it. I’d like to see it 10-times higher, but it is an amazing number because it is effectively money going into the students’ pockets, helping them get through school. It helps them consider giving back to this institution when they’re out of school and doing well. So these gifts support students now and encourage them to become supporters in the future.

You Play a Part. As people visit us and think about supporting us, they look at everyone. They’re investing their money. Yes, they’re giving it to us as a gift, but they are investing in our future and when they think about our future they’re thinking about all of you — the people they meet. Keep that in mind. Even though you may not be in the development office, you are a critical influencer.

STRATEGIC PLAN – PERFORMANCE METRICS

- Enrollment
- Demographics
- Financial Aid
- Retention
- Graduation Rate
- Placement
- International Experience
- International Revenue
- Campus Abroad
- Research $$
- Faculty Fellows
- PhD Productivity
- Business Partnerships
- Fund Raising $$

You Can Improve Two Critical Metrics. When we look at the strategic plan, you notice detailed metrics that I’m not going into in detail. You may think, I’m not involved in Campus Abroad or International Revenue or PhD. Productivity. You see the list from your own perspective. I would argue there are two areas on this list where everybody in this room — myself included — can play a role: retention and graduation rates.

We have metrics for both retention and graduation rates. Everybody in this room can impact those two metrics, as well as perhaps some of the others. I want you to leave today thinking about those two. What can you do to help us achieve the metrics that we’ve defined in the plan in those two areas? And I would argue there’s not a person in this room that can’t contribute.
Our Values Are the Foundation for Our Future.

So as we look at the future, we have to talk about our values. We had a keynote speaker a couple of days ago from one of the major airlines who said, when you have 15,000 people working for you, reporting up to you, you can’t micromanage. Nobody wants to, but you can’t. It’s impossible. And I talked to him about how he saw it from the airline perspective. He said, you start by making sure everybody in the room understands your values. Then as actionable items come into play, they are always thinking about those values. And I said, that’s exactly what we do here at Embry-Riddle. We’re not as big as you are, but it’s important.

Understand our values. What do we value? No matter what your position is at this university, what do we value collectively as an organization?

We Value Collaboration and Teamwork. This can be in the classroom. It can be out in the yards. It can be anywhere on this campus. Collaboration and teamwork is something that we value. In other words, it’s not about me. I’m working with other groups of people as well.

We value ethical and responsible behavior. That’s an important part of who we are as an institution. It reflects the profession that we’re in. We value professionalism. I can’t help but look up here at my group of flight instructors — every one of them working in such a professional way. I’m proud of how they represent this institution when they’re out there working and interacting with prospective students. And it’s that kind of message of who we are and how we carry ourselves as a professional organization that is something we all value, regardless of what we do at this institution. We maintain high standards of achievement. We need to contribute to a community that supports the needs of individuals throughout. I believe we do this. I mentioned that to the folks last night at the new faculty orientation. It’s all about this caring about one another that makes it work. And lastly, putting the institution above yourself. A value that I have on every search that we do in administration is that they put the institution above themselves. It’s something that I think all of us in the organization think about as we go about our daily work.
Thank You for Being Part of a Great Institution.
I want to conclude by saying thank you. To tie things together, we have a plan, we have goals, we have metrics, we have actionable items. It takes all of us to achieve that. We have to all work together to do it — everybody can play a role. And by the way, I’ve seen it over the last year, for those of you that step up to the plate I want to say thank you for everything you’ve done. Let’s have another great year for Embry-Riddle. Thank you for coming out today and thanks for listening.