Gov. Markell Announces His Proposed $10m Investment for DSU Optics

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(L-r) DSU Board of Trustees members Jose Echeverri, James Stewart, David Turner; Amir Mohammadi, vice president of Finance & Administration; Gov. Jack Markell; Carolyn Curry, vice president of Institutional Advancement; Provost Alton Thompson; and DSU President Harry L. Williams come together after the governor's announcement.

Delaware Gov. Jack Markell used DSU as the site May 6 from which he announced his proposal to make significant investments in the three state institutions of higher education – Delaware State University, University of Delaware and Delaware Technical & Community College.

In the media event at DSU's Mishoe Science Center, Gov. Markell made the announcement as part of the unveiling of his "Building Delaware's Future Now" job plan which recommends investments in early childhood and higher education to get people to work now and improve economic opportunity in the future. His plan proposes to make a $30 million one-time investment to build and expand research and training facilities at DSU, UD and Delaware Tech.

"Education can't begin the first day a child shows up for kindergarten and, whether it's job training or college, education can't end the minute someone receives their high school diploma," Gov. Markell said. "When deciding where to expand or where to locate, many businesses take a hard look at a state's institutions of higher education, including the research those schools produce and the quality of their graduates to see if they could get right to work helping those companies grow."

After being introduced by DSU President Harry L. Williams, Gov. Markell announced his proposal **to invest $10m for an Optics Research Facility at Delaware State University.**

Gov. Markell said these one-time state funds will be utilized to leverage additional federal dollars to establish a state-of-the-art, world-class Optics Research Facility. The facility will position DSU to be a national leader in establishing an Optics Institute.

DSU's optics pursuits has developed into the most prolific research area at the University. Under the leadership of the

program's founder Dr. Noureddine Melikechi, since its beginning in 1998, DSU optics research has attracted outstanding scientists whose work along with Dr. Melikechi has inspired significant confidence from the federal government.

DSU's Optics pursuits have developed into the most prolific research program at the University under the leadership of Dr. Noureddine Melikechi, vice president of research (left, being interviewed by WMDT-TV's Alyana Gomez after the governor's announcement).

That confidence has translated into federal financial support for DSU optics research endeavors. Within the last five year, DSU's optics researchers have attracted a $5 million grant from the National Science Foundation (2006) and another $5 million grant from National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

Earlier this year, the University celebrated its first-ever transfer of a DSU-research-created intellectual technology -- a optics Laser-Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy-Tag method that has been licensed to Photon Machines, Inc., to be developed into a diagnostic device to be used in hospitals and labs.

The DSU's diverse optics research projects continue to be overseen by Dr. Melikechi, who is currently the dean of the College of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology as well as the University's vice president of research.

Dr. Williams said Delaware State University is extremely appreciative of the importance Gov. Jack Markell places on higher education in Delaware and today's announcement is further evidence of that.

"We, like the Governor, know that higher education can be a competitive advantage, fueling a knowledge-based economy," the DSU president said. "DSU is proud of its unique breakthroughs in optics and the STEM areas and this infrastructure funding will allow the University to further secure a niche for Delaware in research, job creation and professional workforce development."

With representatives of UD and Delaware Tech present, Gov. Markell also announced that his proposal would provide:

- **$10m for expanded research lab capacity at the University of Delaware** – This one-time additional investment of state funds will be allocated between Allison Hall, the Animal Research Facility and Brown Lab. Allison Hall is the centerpiece of UD's Department of Education, the Animal Research Lab provides critical technology for the state's leading industries and Brown Lab will be equipped with important Nuclear Magnetic Resonance equipment.

- **$10m for Delaware Technical and Community College to connect Delawareans with good-paying jobs in the sciences**– $10 million of one-time state resources will be utilized by Delaware Technical & Community College for several projects. This funding will support the expansion of facilities in the following program areas: (1) the Aviation Power Plant Program, by helping to fund a new 10,000-square foot facility in Sussex County; (2) the Dental Hygiene program, by helping to fund renovations that will allow 500 additional patients to be served per year on the Wilmington Campus; (3) the Nursing and Science programs on both the Terry and Stanton campuses, creating additional lab space and interactive classrooms in the areas of Physics, Biology and Chemistry.

"We're going to make investments that put people to work building new research and training facilities at our colleges so they can graduate more students with the strong science backgrounds the fastest growing industries demand," Markell said.

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