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**Dr. Jerome Gilbert**  
Marshall University

Dr. Jerome A. Gilbert became the 37th President of Marshall University in January 2016. He previously served as Provost and Executive Vice President of Mississippi State University. Gilbert was recognized by the West Virginia Martin Luther King, Jr. State Holiday Commission with its "Living the Dream Award" for his significant contributions in the area of education.

# We Are...Vigorously Acting

**To look with a hopeful eye to the future is not only visionary, it is vital to the growth of any serious endeavor, including higher education. In the words of the talented Pablo Picasso, who understood the importance of planning, "Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success."**

And so it is at Marshall University, where we are forward focused with plans for a dynamic future that will most certainly impact multiple sectors in our great state and beyond. With an eye to the ever-changing marketplace, Marshall is adapting its curriculum, programming and outreach to meet the 21st century needs of a state that is also evolving. Our team, which includes outstanding faculty and engaged alumni, is creating a roadmap that leads to success, not just for Marshall University, but the entire Mountain State.

How will we execute the details? One needs to look no further than the development of new programs in aerospace/aviation, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and health care. I am especially enthusiastic about the creation of our cybersecurity programs. These new courses of study will educate students to tackle the burgeoning fields of cybercrime and cyber privacy, byproducts of our technological growth.

Students will be ready for employment in industries that deliver high pay and high economic returns.

Additionally, we are keenly aware that the future of higher education should include innovative and entrepreneurial components. As a university, we have taken immediate steps to integrate these concepts institution wide by partnering with industry for co-op opportunities, leading the Alliance for the Economic Development of Southern West Virginia and redesigning our business curriculum. Additionally, every Marshall University freshman will be introduced to the concept of Design for Delight, a process that drives innovation at Intuit, the Silicon Valley success story most recently led by Marshall alumnus Brad Smith.

Marshall's newly formed business incubator, named after Brad Smith and created with his financial help and expertise, will offer



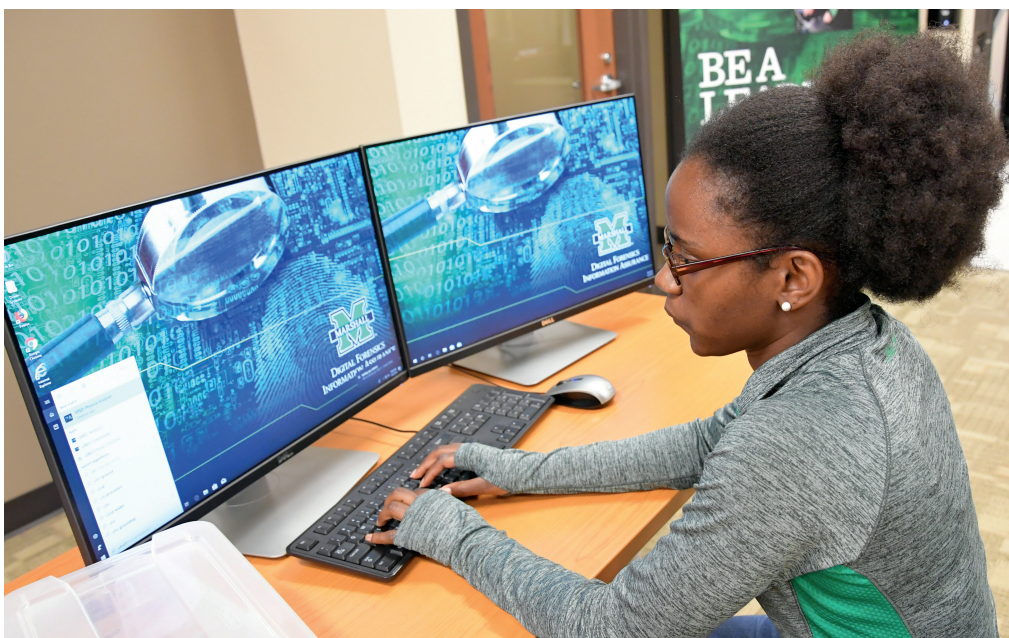


mentorship and support to early-stage startups, helping them launch their business, achieve critical milestones and grow into sustainable companies. Our students will benefit from internships and other opportunities to network with professionals.


This article would not be complete without a brief snapshot of our research endeavors, which have expanded tremendously over the past several years and is the cornerstone of our future. When I arrived at Marshall in 2016, one of my initial goals was to build our research enterprise. I am proud to report we have grown our external research funding from \$23 million in 2015 to nearly \$40 million in 2019.

One does not have to look far to see the growth and success we are experiencing as a university. From our designation as an R2 research institution by the prestigious Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education to being ranked for the first time in the top tier “National Universities” category by *U.S. News and World Report*, our national reputation is seeing an upsurge.

Finally, Marshall University is an institution that is responsive and adaptive; we are flexible and open



to change. I am proud of our university's efforts to evolve as the climate of higher education changes. Some of those changes include offering more online degrees, reaching out to attract more international students and creating programs to help our students on a variety of levels – from academics to emotional health to physical wellness.

In short, our plan to deliver higher education in an ever-changing world requires strategy and adaptability. And, with a nod to Mr. Picasso, our plan is in place, we believe in it and we are... vigorously acting. 

**Photo Caption 1** A student reviews research material at the Robert C. Byrd Biotechnology Science Center.

**Photo Caption 2** Marshall University forensics students work in one of the university's computer laboratories.

**Photo Caption 3** A Marshall University forensic science student prepares to begin her work.