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An Intentional Focus on Service



Torie Jackson

West Virginia University
at Parkersburg

A WVU Parkersburg alumna, Dr. Torie Jackson currently serves as President of the institution. Dr. Jackson earned her Ed.D. in Higher Education Administration with an emphasis in Information Design Technology from West Virginia University. She served as a faculty member and a dean before taking on the role of the Vice President of Institutional Advancement, the Chief Marketing Officer, and the President/CEO of the WVU at Parkersburg Foundation. In 2021, Dr. Jackson was selected for West Virginia Executive's 2021 Young Guns class.

The theme for the Mid-Ohio Valley is that it is a great place to live, work and play. As an institution of higher education with employees who live and work here, how does that theme correlate for us?

At West Virginia University at Parkersburg (WVUP), we intentionally focus on service to our institution, service to our community, and service to our students. It's the opinion of the WVUP executive leadership team that we truly excel in our mission objectives.

We are an institution that provides accessible, life-changing educational opportunities in a safe and supportive environment. It reminds me of the oft-quoted phrase on the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." It's not really a stretch. We ask our community to



vital, and it comes in many forms. We are an institution that is 64% traditional age (meaning 23 and under) and 36% nontraditional (meaning 24 and above). We are unique and uniquely positioned to help varied groups of students.

We focus on partnerships with companies like WVU Medicine Camden Clark, Chemours, Constellium, and so many more. Our local companies find value in the education we provide their current employees and their future employees and they champion and continue the local theme of the Mid-Ohio Valley being a great place to work and live.

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send us those who need a change or are ready to begin a new path. It can be high school to college. It can be those who have already been in the workforce and are looking for another opportunity. They can be emotionally or physically tired. They all join us for a hope to enhance their financial stability. Renewal of purpose, financial enhancements – it helps all breathe easier. So, this task we have before us is one of purpose. As we meet students, parents, and the community, we are reminded that what they do changes lives.

The experience of college for students is

Signing ceremonies in the last year for WVU Medicine Camden Clark, Constellium, and Marietta Memorial Health Systems shows a strong commitment to helping students find their path to employment through programs at WVUP. What makes this so special is that local companies are guiding students on that path to education.

And the students are appreciative. Carsen Hesson, one of the nursing students who participated in a signing ceremony, says this will go a long way in getting her through



nursing school and to follow in her mom's footsteps. "She's the best nurse I know," Hesson said. "I look up to her and I really admire what she does. And I've seen a lot of people she's touched, and it makes me want to do the same thing."

"They may be one flat tire away from dropping out of nursing school," said Carol Grove, Chief Nursing Officer at WVU Medicine at Camden Clark Medical Center. "And with our support and WVUP's support to make sure that they are successful, I believe that this will make a big difference for them."

And what's next for us is equally as exciting. We are planning to purchase the buildings formerly occupied by another institution. Inside those academic walls, we will renovate and construct a technology center to focus on educating a new workforce for West Virginia. We will offer business incubator sites, co-working spaces, and student business incubator locations. Technology will be encompassed by computer information technology, computer science, engineering, and more. The site could become a training location for telecom and fiber optics. The options are only limited by our pursuit of the opportunities they present. Already, this project has the largest gift ever provided to a community college in West Virginia – \$10 million gifted to the WVU at Parkersburg Foundation by The Ross Foundation. This project will improve the value of living and working in the Mid-Ohio Valley.

We will be working with the Wood County Development Authority to attract companies to our region to begin incubating in our facility and bringing technology jobs with them. The well-



being of the Mid-Ohio Valley is part of our mission. The ability for our students to attain technology jobs in their backyard is our concern. This project is about an ecosystem change in Wood County. It's about a higher education institution having an opportunity to bring transformative change to the economy of the Mid-Ohio Valley by partnering to bring new technology businesses here. This project is about giving students a safe place to begin tech businesses alongside prospering companies in an incubator facility.

That makes us a beacon of hope for the huddled masses and our entire community. WVUP supports students and acts as a community anchor. Send us your students yearning for something more. Trust us to educate them, keep them safe, and support them. That is our mission and our privilege in a community where we do live, work, and play. It is why I am WVU Parkersburg Proud. ▽