During his annual state-of-the university address today, West Chester University President Greg Weisenstein announced his plan to retire from WCU, effective March 31, 2016.

In making his announcement to the campus community, Weisenstein admitted that it was “…a very difficult decision. West Chester University is an energizing and creative place to be, and I have been proud to lead this community.

“I leave with very fond memories of the people with whom I’ve worked and our many accomplishments,” he added. “I am confident that even greater achievements lay ahead.”

Speaking on behalf of the University community, Council of Trustees Chair Thomas Fillippo noted Weisenstein’s outstanding service to the University. “As chair of the Council and an alumnus of this great institution, I appreciate his far-reaching impact on West Chester University. Under his leadership, the University achieved new heights as one of America’s great comprehensive public universities.”
Fillippo will work with the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Chancellor Frank Brogan and his staff to organize a process for identifying Weisenstein’s successor. No timeline for the search has yet been established.

An expert in special education and international engagement, Weisenstein assumed West Chester University’s presidency in 2009. Upon his arrival, he instituted a comprehensive planning process resulting in the “Building on Excellence” strategic plan.

During his seven-year tenure, he also oversaw a period of record growth in enrollment, the campus-wide installation of a geothermal heating and cooling system, expansion of academic programs, and an array of construction projects designed to meet growing student demand.

As a result, University enrollment jumped by 20 percent from 13,621 to 16,609 students, making West Chester the largest university in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education and the fourth largest in southeastern Pennsylvania. The addition of programs in Center City Philadelphia and the expansion of graduate and distance education offerings contributed significantly to the growth. This fall, more than 14,000 students applied for a freshman class of 2,300.

Financially, the University has diversified its funding base as state support has fallen from 32 percent of its operating budget to 17 percent. And the University’s annual economic impact on the region as jumped from $220 million in 2006 to more than $500 million in 2015.

In addition, more than a dozen new academic programs were launched during Weisenstein’s presidency, including the University’s first doctoral degrees in nursing, public administration and education. STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) initiatives were also expanded with enrollment in the sciences and health sciences exceeding 4,000 students. And during the past five years, the number of full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty increased from 503 to 618, a 23 percent increase.

Weisenstein’s leadership also resulted in record philanthropic support. Annual gift income now exceeds $4 million, among the highest of public
institutions of West Chester University’s type. In addition, he is presiding over the $50 million “Becoming More” Campaign, the largest capital fundraising drive in the University’s history. Already, two-thirds of the goal has been achieved.

Facilities improvements have also marked Dr. Weisenstein’s presidency with major renovations to a dozen campus buildings and the addition of new residence halls, athletic fields and facilities, a parking garage and the University’s newest and largest academic building, the Business and Public Affairs Center, which will open in the summer of 2016. The University also completed its campus-wide geo-thermal energy initiative which dramatically reduced annual energy costs and polluting emissions.

During his tenure, President Weisenstein encouraged partnerships with community groups, businesses, and universities from across the region and world. All told, the University has cooperative agreements with more than a dozen foreign universities, and has had collaborations more than 100 corporations, including Endo Pharmaceuticals, Campbell Soup, and State Farm Insurance.

Weisenstein also has expanded the University’s outreach and commitment to the region’s quality of life through its program of cultural arts and its students’ volunteerism. Last year, more than 105,000 people attended the campus’s cultural events, while student volunteerism doubled in just five years exceeding 900,000 hours annually.

Transcript from President Weisenstein’s State of the University
Inquirer Article