can he balance the NUMBERS & the LETTERS?

AS HE WORKS TO RESTORE NSU’S FISCAL STABILITY, EDDIE MOORE LEADS THE SCHOOL INTO NEW ACADEMIC TERRITORY

BY Derek Page
PHOTOGRAPHY BY Harry Gerwien

Eddie Moore learned the value of hard work at a young age growing up in inner-city Philadelphia. At 10 years old, he was already working in his father’s fish and produce store, having to stand on an orange crate to reach the cash register. When he got a little older and bigger, he moved up to Friday fish-cleaning detail, cleaning, gutting and quick-washing hundreds of pounds of fish – a service that provided a bulk of the store’s revenue.

Now, after an illustrious career spanning four decades, retirement is knocking at the door, but Moore won’t answer. He tried retiring in 2012 after a stint as president of St. Paul’s College in Lawrenceville, but said he won’t stop because he likes to work.

“I like it, my wife likes it,” he said, laughing. “She says I’m a different person when I’m working. I was adjusting but I was bored all day.”

After earning a bachelor’s in accounting from Pennsylvania State University in 1968, he began his career with an organization that valued hard work, discipline and perseverance as much as he – the U.S. Army.

“I wanted to be the first one in the family to be an officer,” Moore said.
He had many uncles who served in World War II and the Korean War, and his father was deferred “because he was building warships at the time in the naval yard and they thought it was more important to have a crane operator than a cook or rifleman or whatever he might’ve been.”

Initially stationed in Maryland, Moore served 11 months and 26 days in Vietnam as a first lieutenant in the Army’s Transportation Corps. During his military career, he received a Bronze Star and the Army Commendation Medal for meritorious achievement.

After two years of active-duty service, Moore was honorably discharged, joined the reserves and began his career at Gulf Oil Corp. and Subsidiaries, serving in various director and management positions in an accounting capacity. While at Gulf Oil, he earned his master’s in business administration from the University of Pittsburgh in 1975.

In 1985, he was selected for the position of assistant comptroller for the commonwealth of Virginia and in 1988 he went on to be the comptroller for the College of William and Mary. By 1990, Moore had worked his way to Virginia’s Treasury Department, where he served as state treasurer.

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After three years in Richmond, Moore was tapped to be president of Virginia State University for his financial expertise.

“Accountants only get to be presidents when everyone else has had a chance, and everyone else has failed,” Moore joked.

Having dealt with similar issues at Virginia State University, his longest held position, from 1999 to 2010, he was approached by Norfolk State University to rectify the school’s failure to meet financial requirements. He was appointed interim president of NSU on Sept. 13, 2013.

Failure to submit financial audits on time, and discord among the board of visitors, had resulted in a warning, the least severe of three possible sanctions, by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools’ Commission on Colleges, an entity with which Moore had six years of experience. The previous NSU administration failed to submit reports for 2011 through 2014, and Moore and his team were left playing catch-up.

His experience at SACSCOC and VSU would translate well in tackling the issues at NSU.

“He was successful in getting Virginia State out of financial distress, built up their physical plant, and effectively motivated faculty

Moore, shown here with students, said NSU is strengthening its academic programs by redirecting funds into the programs students are most interested in. A point of pride for Moore and the university is its cyber security program.
to better assist students in reaching their academic goals,” SACSCOC President Belle Wheelan said.

“Like all presidents, his determination to move an institution forward does not always set well with folks internally, but he has proven he is more than up to the task,” Wheelan continued.

“No one wants NSU to lose its membership with us. They are vital to the students enrolled, the economy of the region and the future of our nation. Everyone wants them to succeed, though there might be differences of opinion in how to do what needs to be done.”

After 14 months, and with the help of accounting firm Cherry Bekaert, NSU completed its audits for 2011, 2012 and 2013. Moore felt the university was making enough progress to be optimistic about avoiding a probation status by SACSCOC.

Moore shared his optimism in a campus-wide letter on Nov. 6, 2014. “With regard to ensuring the fiscal stability of the institution, we have produced a balanced budget, instituted a financial monitoring system, and significantly increased our fundraising efforts,” Moore wrote. “In the past 14 months, a comprehensive budgeting process was implemented with the necessary staff training and opportunities for providing input by all of our stakeholders.”

That optimism led to disappointment a month later when SACSCOC placed NSU on probation for compliance issues related to board governance, institutional effectiveness, faculty qualifications and financial reporting.

Since then, swift progress has been made. NSU re-evaluated its academic affairs division, placing more emphasis on technical programs, hiring 15 full-time faculty and deciding not to renew contracts on more than 20 adjuncts.

“The programs are increasing in quality,” Moore said. “We are reducing because we expect a lower freshman class and we’re increasing the number of professors where we have growth and where we have the interest.”

One factor contributing to lower enrollment was the loss of the associate of nursing degree program, once a signature offering of the university. In March 2013, the Virginia Board of Nursing barred NSU from accepting new students into the program because of graduates’ low passing rates on a national licensing exam. Eventually, the university dropped the program.

While Moore admitted it was quite a loss, he believes this offers the university an opportunity to showcase the bachelor of science in nursing program, which he hopes will continue to attract students interested in pursuing the profession. Moore said his intention is to get representatives from area hospitals to come check out all the university has to offer.

“I would say we’re strengthening our academic programs by redirecting funds into the programs that our students are telling us they’re most interested in,” Moore said. “It’s a wonderful time to be at NSU. You’re going to have the experience of a medium institution in terms of being more flexible and getting the innovation that a small institution can bring. We’re going to have 5,000 to 6,000, so I think it’s a great time to come and be a part of the Norfolk State.”

A point of pride for the university its cyber security program, an industry growing nearly 15 times faster than others and one that Virginia has been quick to cash in to.

“We were working in cyber security before it was called cyber se-
In 2010, the General Assembly issued a joint resolution from the House of Delegates and Senate commending Moore on his many achievements and years of service to the commonwealth.

Moore said this positions the school well and sets up a “nice debate” on campus around the implication that STEM degrees are vocational degrees.

“Computer science, engineering, cyber security are not vocational degrees,” he said. “They are academic degrees and I disagree with my faculty leadership that imply they are vocational degrees.”

“We’ve been working on this for years and we’re pretty excited that the program has been recognized by the federal government, and it will be one of our points of emphasis in this year’s budget request to the governor.”

Earlier this year, NSU was designated a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education by the National Security Agency and the Department of Homeland Security.

Bottom line, NSU needs to be more responsive to what the funding agencies want it to do, Moore said.

As the year ends, SACSCOC will begin its review process to determine if NSU has satisfied all the compliance issues that led to the institution’s probation.

“At this point, I normally say cautiously optimistic, but I’m probably not cautious anymore,” Moore said. “I think we’ve nailed it.”

With retirement pushed to the back burner, Moore continues his service to higher education and the commonwealth with the same dedication that guided him in his father’s produce store in Philadelphia.

His 45-year career has garnered him a multitude of honors including a doctorate of humane letters from both Virginia State University and Saint Paul’s College; the keys to the cities of Philadelphia and Richmond; the Martin Luther King Jr. Achievement Award from William and Mary; the U.S. Army Outstanding Civilian Award; the General William E. DeWitt and General Brehon Somervell awards, among many others.

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Moore notes that he may have served on more public boards than anyone in Virginia. To name just a few, he has been on the Virginia Board of Agriculture, the boards of Universal Corp., Owens & Minor Corp., the Virginia Center for Innovative Technology, the Virginia National Defense Industrial Authority and the Virginia Historical Society.

Great personal pride comes from his service on the board for the Virginia Historical Society.

“I thought it was just a complete honor to be raised in the inner city of Philadelphia,” Moore said.

“When we went to North Carolina to visit grandparents, that was where segregation started for me. To be responsible for maintaining Virginia’s history is an honor, something that the little guy in the back seat who couldn’t understand why he couldn’t ride in the same place maybe you could buy food, I thought that was really cool that we’ve basically come that far, that things have changed that much.” – TL