

## HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 145

*Commending Jennifer L. Braaten.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 26, 2016

WHEREAS, in 2016, Jennifer L. Braaten, a respected and visionary leader in higher education, retires as president of Ferrum College, a renowned private college in Franklin County, after nearly 14 years of distinguished service; and

WHEREAS, prior to joining Ferrum College in 2002, Jennifer Braaten worked as an educator in Minnesota and Florida, held several leadership positions at Lynn University in Florida, and was the first woman president of Midland Lutheran College in Nebraska; and

WHEREAS, Jennifer Braaten was the 10th president and the first woman president of Ferrum College; she reaffirmed the college's mission "to serve the underserved" and oversaw significant growth in academics and enrollment, as well as new construction to enhance campus life; and

WHEREAS, under Jennifer Braaten's leadership, Ferrum College strengthened its core liberal arts curriculum and career-oriented majors, such as business, criminal justice, health sciences, and pre-professional sciences; the college implemented an experimental term in May and an online criminal justice program and focused national attention on its environmental science program, which is one of the oldest in the country; and

WHEREAS, Jennifer Braaten was committed to ensuring that Ferrum College remained affordable and accessible to all students by increasing career, co-curricular, and academic support services; during her tenure, the diversity of the college expanded and enrollment increased by 76 percent; and

WHEREAS, Jennifer Braaten helped Ferrum College successfully complete two capital campaigns, both of which exceeded their original goals to earn \$45 million in total, and the college's endowment has grown to \$50 million; and

WHEREAS, Jennifer Braaten oversaw \$30 million in new construction and renovations to campus facilities, including the FerrumPLUS! addition, an expansion to the Blue Ridge Institute and Museum, new classrooms, new residence halls, the Hank Norton Center, and Ferrum Mercantile; and

WHEREAS, Jennifer Braaten helped build strong partnerships between Ferrum College and the Ferrum community, including support for the Franklin County Free Clinic and the establishment of the Tri-Area Community Health Center and a YMCA on campus; and

WHEREAS, deeply respected in the field of higher education, Jennifer Braaten has held leadership roles in the state and national Council of Independent Colleges, Appalachian College Association, National Association of Schools and Colleges of the United Methodist Church, National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges; and

WHEREAS, Jennifer Braaten has earned numerous awards and accolades for her leadership and commitment to students; she is widely sought as a speaker and lecturer and was named the top female leader in Southwest Virginia by the *Roanoker* magazine; and

WHEREAS, a native of Fergus Falls, Minnesota, Jennifer Braaten holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota and master's and doctoral degrees from Florida Atlantic University; and

WHEREAS, after her well-earned retirement, Jennifer Braaten plans to seek new opportunities to serve the community and spend more time with her husband, Conrad, and their grown children, Kirsten and Conrad, and their families; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Jennifer L. Braaten hereby be commended on the occasion of her retirement as president of Ferrum College; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Jennifer L. Braaten as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for her exceptional leadership and service to the students of Ferrum College.

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