

Faculty Convocation Remarks

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Welcome faculty colleagues, it is my pleasure to be with you today for the 11th Annual Faculty Convocation. This ceremony serves to celebrate you – our faculty – who are the heart and mind of this university. You daily do the work that is central to this university and for that we are grateful.

I am especially excited today because this is the first time in a number of years that we have had one shared University-wide faculty convocation. It is so nice to see everyone in one room celebrating the start of the academic year together. I know that our university is comprised of many different departments, institutes, centers, and schools, and I believe that we are only as strong as each of our individual parts. All of our units must work collectively to move forward in the ever-changing higher education landscape. For our health sciences work, that also includes furthering our relationship with our clinical partners at Trinity Health and the Loyola University Health System. This crucial partnership brings our education and research to the point of care. It gives meaning and impact to the work we do.

This academic year is about efficiency, growth and investing in our faculty and students. We intend to develop innovative new programs that will meet our student's needs. I continue to ask our faculty to come forward with ideas that will move our institution ahead and help us reach new frontiers. I challenged our faculty to do just that in the past year and I was overwhelmed by their response and their innovative creativity and commitment to growing the impact on health sciences education, practice and research. Some of you have begun envisioning 10 new programs, most at the graduate level. For example, over the last year we developed a new 2nd degree, Online-Hybrid Accelerated Baccalaureate of Science in Nursing that will reach the far southwest suburbs, a Masters in Psychiatric–Mental Health Nursing, a Masters in Clinical Lab Sciences, and early work on a Masters in Cellular and Molecular Oncology that the school of medicine will continue to evaluate. A wonderful collaborative relationship is developing between our biomedical engineering program and clinical departments at the Loyola University Health System. We are now starting to see the success of these programs come to fruition and I am truly looking forward to partnering with all of you on even more new ideas in the year ahead.

Service is a key part of a Loyola education and many faculty continue to do important work within our Maywood community such as our student based health center at Proviso East high school and our partnership with the Loyola health system's access to care clinic. The Women in Science program is also a heartwarming new initiative that is led by our graduate biomedical science students and has been embraced by our faculty. The group is focusing on young women in the Maywood community and bringing science to life for them.

At our Health Sciences Campus, research is at the center of our innovation. We have spent many hours and worked tirelessly creating a strong research infrastructure for both our basic science and clinical researchers. Other research initiatives such as the new Trinity Clinical Research Database, which gives us access to data at 42 Trinity Health institutions, which includes 8-10 million patients, and more than 40 million encounters, will bring our research projects to new levels. This is one of the largest clinical databases in the country. You are welcome to partner in this new research with us.

This academic year also marks the opening of our Center for Health Outcomes and Informatics Research that will educate and engage clinical faculty, health care professionals, resident physicians, and medical and nursing students ---- and your Lakeside students ---- in the fundamentals of health outcomes research and data-driven health care delivery in order to improve outcomes and health equity. With all of these important research initiatives in place, it sets us up with an excellent foundation to grow in the years ahead and become a leading research University.

A research related collaboration with Lakeshore that has made a remarkable impact has been our Oncology Research Institute internship program that occurred for the 2nd summer. If you could have heard the research presentation by our undergraduate students, one a sophomore, you would not only have been amazed at their understanding of their science but also their ability to present their work in a public forum was remarkable. These types of outcomes do not happen without the incredibly committed faculty and administrators who have supported this program. Over time, we would like to expand opportunities for our students at the Health Sciences campus.

In that regard, for those of you have never visited our campus, I invite you to do so. Contact me and we would love to host you and your colleagues. This is your campus too.

I will leave you with a reminder for the academic year that we are a University guided by the centuries old Jesuit traditions that call us to be men and women for and with others. Over the course of the academic year we will face challenges. But there will be countless opportunities for you to change the course of a student's life, enrich the lives of your colleagues, and live out our mission of expanding knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice, and faith. Thank you.