

Welcome Remarks for 10th Annual Faculty Convocation
September 18, 2016
John P. Pelissero, PhD, Provost

Welcome to the Faculty Convocation--now a 10-year tradition of gathering to celebrate the faculty who are the heart of our academic mission. Thank you for taking time out on your Sunday to come to campus and spend this time with your colleagues and to help us welcome many of the new full-time faculty who joined us this year.

I want to begin by telling you how happy I am to be here today to welcome you in my "re-newed" role as Provost. I had the most incredible experience last year of leading and representing the university in a capacity that I never dreamed about doing when I began as a faculty member in Political Science back in 1985. I'm very grateful for having that opportunity and to be back in the job that I love --leading the university's academic affairs enterprise with a great team of academic leaders and a superb faculty.

A special welcome today to Dr. Jo Ann Rooney, the 24th president of Loyola, and a faculty member in the School of _____...Well, I don't have that information yet, but several schools are vying to have her on their faculty. I know Dr. Rooney wants her appointment handled in the most objective fashion. I, on the other hand, am open to possible incentives from schools that want to ensure their full consideration for this appointment.

I'd like to share some important milestones with you that we can celebrate this year.

- Our Enrollment is 16,421, and includes:
 - a record number of new freshmen: 2,622
 - the most full-time undergraduates in our history: 10,043
 - an Arrupe College enrollment of 319 in year two
 - and a record undergraduate enrollment of 11,128
- Our graduation rate continues to set new highs:
 - The official 6 year rate: 75% (10 years ago that was 65%, which is less than today's 4 year rate of 67%).

- Although there is still some softness in our Masters enrollments, we did welcome nearly 1,500 new graduate students this fall.
- And our Law School saw its first significant increase in enrollments in recent years with growth in both the FT JD program and the launch of a new PT Weekend JD program.
- As you have heard, we continue as a top 100 National University according to US News & World Report rankings of ‘best colleges.’ Our overall scores in that ranking have benefited from our growing reputation among our peers and high school counselors and the improvement in graduation rates.

This year, I am focusing more on our strategic goals. Plan 2020, *Building a More Just, Humane and Sustainable World*, provides the grounding of our work to fulfill Loyola’s mission. It must be at the center of our work and have a vibrancy that resonates across our campuses.

We begin the second year of Plan 2020 with the ability to take some pride in the progress made last year. We launched Arrupe College as the centerpiece of Priority 1—Ensuring student access and success. 130 students or 82% of our freshman are back for their sophomore year, with most on track to graduate in August. Arrupe College welcomed new faculty this year to support the students and guide them in applying for transfer for their baccalaureate degrees.

The enrollment of many of these students at Loyola will also advance our enrollment goals to continue to enhance access and student diversity. A Loyola and Arrupe team is working on a scholarship strategy to facilitate degree completion for these students at Loyola. In this year’s freshman class, 40% are students of color. We welcomed 137 African American freshmen, an 87% increase in 2 years. And we have our largest entering cohort of International Students—121 from 42 different countries.

We are advancing the strategy of recruiting and developing a faculty to support our mission as an institution in which our faculty are, not only exceptional in their fields, but also committed to the pursuit of knowledge that bridges faith, reason, and justice. Under the direction of Fr. Mark Bosco, faculty director of the Hank Center, a new faculty seminar on

Ignatian pedagogy and justice has begun and the Faculty Center for Ignatian Pedagogy is offering faculty a certificate program and research grant in Ignatian Pedagogy.

If we are to be successful with the recruitment and progression of students of color, we must enhance faculty diversity. Our efforts to diversify our faculty demonstrate success. Last year, diversity among full-time faculty represented about 16 percent. I'm very pleased that among the nearly 90 new full time faculty this year, 25 percent are faculty of color and international scholars.

I know our academic leaders are committed to continue to create a diverse and inclusive faculty. And I've brought Chris Manning, associate professor of History, into my office to serve as the first assistant provost focused on academic diversity.

I'm not going to take you through the entire strategic plan. But want to leave you with an understanding that progress has been made in each of the eight strategic areas and a significant element of this has been achieved due to the initiative and exceptional commitment of the faculty from virtually every school and program.

In this academic year, we will have the vision and human and financial resources to accelerate our progress with Plan 2020, which is linked so fundamentally to our mission. Last year, each of the deans and directors initiated new and innovative academic program ideas to enrich the offerings of their schools and centers of excellence and to solidify their enrollment base. This year, in order to support those initiatives, I'll be establishing an Academic Innovation Team to coordinate market research, resource needs, and outcomes analysis. This team will be headed by Joan Phillips, who you know is a professor of Marketing and a recent A.C.E. Fellow. With the support of Dr. Rooney, an academic innovation fund will be created to provide start-up resources to advance these new program ideas.

As we do so, we must be good stewards of our human and fiscal resources and ensure that we have inclusive and accountable processes for resource allocation. Our focus should be on how we use our current resources or

propose to use new resources to support: mission, Plan 2020, and our students' financial well-being and academic success, something I know everyone in this room cares about deeply. I look forward to working with all of you in support of our strategy.

Again, I'm very happy to see you here today and look forward to our conversations later in the courtyard. And, thank you for all that you do for our students.