

Remarks by Father Michael J. Garanzini, S.J.
Faculty Convocation
September 22, 2013

On September 22, 2013, Loyola President and CEO Michael J. Garanzini, S.J., addressed Faculty Convocation, highlighting recent accomplishments as well as looking ahead to a new strategic plan for the University. Here are his remarks:

We are already a few weeks into the new Academic Year, but welcome back nonetheless. Thank you for coming to campus today for this convocation and the fellowship we will share immediately following. Congratulations to those who were promoted and received tenure this past spring. Your honors are deserved. And to our new faculty who join us this year, a special welcome and wishes for your success and happiness here at Loyola. You join the University at a good time in its history, and we sincerely hope and expect that you will help us build on the successes of the past and expand the reputation of this distinguished faculty. I'd like to expand on those two themes—our present situation and our future, which depends a great deal on our new colleagues who will help shape that future.

Each year at this time, at least for the past decade, I have had the good fortune—that is, WE have had the good fortune—to review the gains of the institution in its academic pursuits—teaching and research, in our enrollments, improvements in our facilities, our financial status and outlook, and the generosity of friends and alumni. Thanks to the hard work of many individuals who labor with us, the men and women who do their jobs with exceptional dedication and skill—from those who assist the faculty, to our part-time faculty, our program directors, and deans and vice presidents, and all the rest of us who make up the Loyola family—again, thanks to this collaborative effort, we have had a decade of solid growth and achievement. This past year has seen another string of accomplishments.

There are new academic programs. For example, we will launch several new BA-BS/MA degree programs; a new MPH in the Institute of Public Health recently approved by the Board of Trustees. There are several environmental science majors as part of our new Institute of Environmental Sustainability, which we opened just two weeks ago. These are just a few of the new programs.

Enrollments are healthy. We admitted our largest freshman class ever. The class is more diverse than ever, almost 40 percent are students of color. They are one of our smartest classes ever, as well. In total, we are just a few dozen students shy of 16,000, which is what we can handle. Enrollments in master's programs and

the JD are down slightly, but that is part of the trend in several fields. We plan to use this time to reassess what we are offering and how we offer these programs. I'll come back to enrollments in a moment.

Our facilities are improving, as is probably evident to all of you. Several new residence halls (including one for international students) opened this fall. The new Damen Student Center has been extremely popular. The Institute of Environmental Sustainability, which was built adjacent to the former convent of the BVM Sisters, which I mentioned a moment ago, is getting a considerable amount of notice for its innovative features. In August, we broke ground on a new Translational Research Center in Maywood, which will give us 223,000 square feet for new labs and research offices, replacing space sold to Trinity and greatly expanding our own research programs on the campus. And, those of you who work at Water Tower Campus know we have prepared the ground for a new building for the Quinlan School of Business. We'll announce a donor naming gift shortly.

Our finances remain strong. We finished this year with a surplus, slightly smaller than the previous year, most of which has been put into the endowment. Our program to pay down debt is in very good shape and on track. Our endowment has reached nearly a half-billion, with an 11.9 percent investment earnings in fiscal 2013. Sometime last year, we passed the point where we had gained back everything lost in 2008–9, and we are building the endowment steadily. Our salary increment will certainly kick in this January and, if all remains strong as it looks thus far, we will be in good shape for a salary increment next year. Just this Friday, several of us reviewed the budget planning that begins each fall, with the University Senate. I assure you they grilled us for two hours about many of our assumptions.

The campaign for scholarship endowment, in which the institution provides matching money for endowment gifts over \$25,000, has been very successful. Over the past two years, we raised almost \$6M that will be matched. That amounts to \$12M in new endowments for scholarships.

Alumni giving is up. This past year was one of our better years, gaining about \$23M in total. I can tell you that the Translational Research Center is paid for and that fund-raising for Quinlan School of Business building is looking very good—we are not there yet—but we should add both new facilities to our two campuses without assuming new debt when these two structures open in 2015.

Among the things that we should watch carefully as we move into the future are the changing demographics and the debt of our students. For some time now, we have known that the number of college-age students from families that traditionally pursue a college degree will begin to diminish. So far, we have not been impacted. As I mentioned, we have our largest class ever. Still, competition for college-bound students will continue to heat up in the years to come. Whether you know it or not, you have been a part of our strategy to meet this challenge. There are four key elements to the strategy to move Loyola to being a first-choice school, to attracting students from a larger number of states and countries, and to attracting a larger share of students of color.

First, with your help—or, I should say, the help of the department chairs—our best faculty teach freshmen and sophomores. We are adding full-time, non-tenure track faculty, positions designed for those who want to teach and who do not see themselves as doing research at the same level as our tenure-track faculty.

Second, we have concentrated on improving the student experience, building our academic support services in such areas as advising and tutoring. We have made serious inroads into making our courses more engaging, stressing things like learning communities, research seminars, and service-learning opportunities. The interest shown by faculty in attending programs designed to improve our pedagogy is truly remarkable.

Third, we have improved facilities like residence halls and classrooms and labs, making all of our campuses attractive and inviting.

Fourth, we have refined our recruitment and financial aid strategies. Paul Roberts and his enrollment professionals work hard to recruit students who “fit” our urban campus and mission, who want to be challenged, and they are doing a better job packaging them with financial aid. Better packages and on-time graduating have helped us bring down student debt. For all these accomplishments, I have to thank in a special way the Office of the Provost, John Pelissero, and his staff, especially the Academic Student Services division, led by Fr. Justin Daffron.

When it comes to higher education, the American public is concerned with access, affordability, accountability, and relevance. On realistic and appropriate measures of these criteria, I believe we do well. A student body composed of 40 percent

students of color, with 33 percent of its students Pell eligible, with a retention rate at 86 percent, a graduation rate at 70 percent, and new degree programs in a variety of fields tied to growing needs of society—is something we can be proud of.

So, this brings me to the second topic, our future. Where do we go from here? Do we remain satisfied, making sure that nothing on the horizon disturbs our collective accomplishments? As I was thinking about where we might go from here, I found myself impressed by several passages from the Psalms we have had at Mass this past week. One theme in those Jewish prayers is our inheritance, specifically, that the Lord is our inheritance, and the other theme that struck me was the gravity of our calling, “We are called out of darkness, from slavery to freedom.” To say that “the Lord is our inheritance” is first of all to say that our faith—the faith that grounds a Jesuit university like this, an open and all-encompassing faith—is our most precious gift and, that with any inheritance comes responsibilities. This faith requires us to act justly and care for the poor and the victims of unjust structures. It is to recognize that an inheritance of such a great mission requires that we hold it carefully, expand it and pass it on to a new generation.

Our new colleagues joining us today in this enterprise are invited to share our mission to build the kind of university that is attentive to the plight of those less fortunate, a university that sees knowledge as a key, as an indispensable element in the service of justice. Because of this, we hope to bring our students to see, even transform them, into men and women who possess a passion for building a more just community and world around them. In other words, as academics who are given the gift of teaching and discovery, we are a privileged group who recognize each day that this vocation, this calling, comes with a great responsibility to develop our own talents and use them for the good of our students and this community that desperately needs and can benefit by what we do, each and every one of us.

Clearly, we have inherited several things we ought never to take for granted: An engaged faculty, available to students and engaged in their learning; Capable and persistent students, who keep us young and fresh by their enthusiasm and their occasional need for extra time and attention; A good measure of financial security, after a period of uncertainty and dwindling resources; A diversity of colleagues and students whose faith traditions, cultural, ethnic, and racial

backgrounds enrich our own. And, we are given a city teeming with beauty and yet very much in need of our involvement and commitment. If this is our inheritance and if an inheritance must be enriched as it is passed on, how do we do that?

The next strategic plan—we are about to complete the 2009–14 plan—ought not to focus on specifics such as enrollment and financial goals. Nor should we simply list academic attainments that will have their pay off in advancing our status in publications like *U. S. News & World Report* and other ratings. These are the standards set by others. Rather, I hope you agree with me that it is time for Loyola set its own standards for academic excellence, that is, to transform itself into a unique and focused institution with a clear sense of its mission. Can we set for ourselves a goal that every program will be imbued with this social justice mission, that each of our disciplines will find its way to contribute to a university-wide commitment to be THE university in this region, at least, that is committed to advancing the causes of peace and justice by the kind of education we offer our students, an education that challenges them to move beyond their privileged and comfortable place in this world? And, by the type and quality of the research we undertake, as well as the direct services we provide.

This challenge for us educators was never more eloquently stated than when Fr. Kolvenbach, the Jesuit Superior General, spoke to faculty and administrators at a gathering at Santa Clara a decade ago. Speaking about the purpose of a Jesuit education and its goal to fashion the kind of student who will be a transformative agent in society, he said:

“Tomorrow’s ‘whole person’ cannot be whole without an educated awareness of society and culture with which to contribute socially, generously, in the real world. Tomorrow’s whole person must have, in brief, a well-educated solidarity...Students in the course of their formation must let the gritty reality of this world into their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering and engage it constructively. They should learn to perceive, think, judge and act for the rights of others, especially the disadvantaged and the oppressed.”

In order to produce such “whole persons” at Loyola, we ourselves would need to be transformed. We would need to be the scholars and educators who are committed in our own way to this common project.

As a faith-based institution, in a city with plenty of excellent institutions who share a commitment to excellence, I believe we can offer something unique and extremely important. Our faith anchors and inspires us. It lends hope to difficult and seemingly impossible tasks. And, charity keeps us genuine and honest and forgiving. More discussion and deliberation are certainly needed, but we are in a good place to do so. Thank you.