

University Fall Convocation
Friday, August 30 @ 3:30 PM
Father Niehoff's remarks
cd/jac

Good Afternoon.

Thank you for joining me today. Welcome back and welcome, everyone, to a new academic year.

We have a tradition to start our fall University Convocation, let me take a moment to ask anyone who has joined John Carroll in the last year—since our 2012 Convocation—to please stand so that we can welcome you. [Lead applause]

Convocation is one of our many traditions that make us who we are. It's an opportunity to reflect, to share with you where John Carroll stands today, and to talk about how we support our students, our alumni and friends, and each other for an even brighter future.

The 2012-2013 academic year ended with great energy and

enthusiasm—we had much to celebrate those last months.

*We launched the \$100 million Forever Carroll Campaign.

*We began renovating Murphy Hall.

*We announced the largest freshman class size in nearly a decade. Our enrollment numbers are excellent; we have some of the best retention and improving graduation rates in history. This reinforces our student satisfaction reports.

Great retention, this is good, but we need to add a large freshman class every year.

At the same time we face challenges, our students are paying John Carroll less tuition after aid than they were a decade ago. The national economic challenges, which were even more disastrous in job losses and income declines for our region, make paying for college and thus, our recruiting, a larger challenge than ten years ago.

As a Jesuit University in this modern day world we have our

work cut out for us. But I am confident that John Carroll's cornerstone is rooted in solid ground. We have obstacles to overcome, but we continue to build on our successes.

I would like to share a story with you to use as inspiration for our journey onward:

The Master was an advocate both of learning and of wisdom.

"Learning" he said when asked, "is gotten by reading books and listening to lectures."

"And Wisdom?"

"By reading the book that is you."

He added an afterthought: "Not an easy task at all, for every minute of the day brings a new edition of the book." Anthony de Mello

As students return and bring life back to campus, remember de Mello's words. Yes, we are here to direct students through important textbooks, and impart knowledge with engaging lectures. But most importantly we are called to guide students inward, to dig deep inside their souls while they are learning who they are and who God may want them to become.

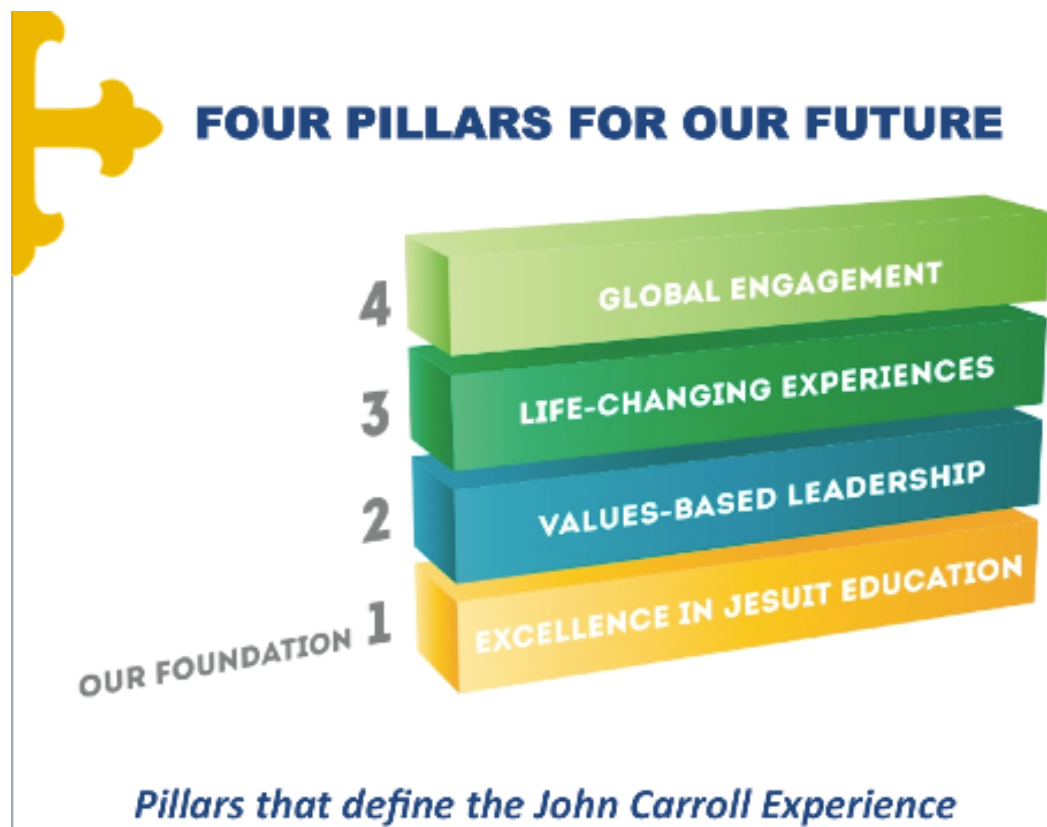
As I reflected on what we have accomplished together and what we still need to do, I realized there are 4 fundamental pillars that make our University strong:

- 1) Excellence in Jesuit Education
- 2) Values-Based Leadership
- 3) Life-Changing Experiences
- 4) Global Engagement

If every one of us is driving one or more of these pillars, then our students are succeeding, we are succeeding, and we are

making our alumni proud by increasing the value of their degree.

Let me talk about these four pillars of the John Carroll Experience as I see them in a little more detail:



1. Excellence in Jesuit Education

Academic excellence at John Carroll is informed by an Ignatian spirituality that has proven to be a successful

educational model for more than 450 years. It is a powerful and effective way to educate the whole person—mind, body, and spirit—and it just as relevant today as ever. We meet our students where they are in their learning, faith, and life choices, and empower them to think critically, reflect, discern, and take responsible action.

Our faculty members are passionate about teaching that is driven by active scholarship. This is a recipe for attracting the best students and it ensures that we will continue to attract top-notch faculty who are highly respected in their fields.

We must be willing to ask any question, pursue truth, and act upon our answers. It goes beyond the classroom. Athletic teamwork and competition is about learning. Internships and immersion experiences are about learning. These types of compelling student experiences draw bright and talented students to Carroll.

We must work together in an *integrated* learning environment to provide an outstanding, 21st century student experience—ensuring excellence in Jesuit education at Carroll.

I am excited about our new partnerships – like the healthcare early acceptance programs to medical school Dean Jeanne Colleran has led with LECOM and OU. With the development of the 9 Academic Learning Outcomes, like integrative learning and applied learning, we hope our students apply creative and innovative thinking as they venture onto medical school.

I am even more pleased that we are now committed to developing a new core. I expect the new core would help support integrated learning on our campus—interdisciplinary course work, with service and experiential learning options to extend and enrich what is learned in the classroom.

2. Values- Based Leadership

Leadership is a way of living, learning, and working— it is not a title or a position.

Leadership at Carroll should emphasize the three C's— Competence, Community, and Character. Through the three C's, students become empowered to make lasting contributions at work, in the community, and for society. All leaders need to know how their decisions, great and small, will affect others in the world.

Our faculty and staff must care deeply about developing people who want to live their lives with heroic ambitions—no matter what their career choice or level within the organization. We want to develop graduates who are driven to make a positive difference in their organizations, communities, and society. Our best student is one that wants to be a problem solver and a part of something bigger—and they must act ethically and with wisdom.

I recently saw the job posting announcement for our new business ethics chair, a gift to us from Ray and Eleanor Smiley, that will help us ensure that our graduates will become leaders that solve problems, not create them.

3. Life Changing Experiences

To attract, retain, and develop talented people we must nurture the kinds of transformative opportunities that define the John Carroll experience.

Every Carroll student should have at least one significant service learning experience to develop critical thinking, creativity, leadership and communication skills, and at the same time be committed to a more just world.

Our tradition of educating men and women for others has been vital to the well-being of the community. Our city and

region serve as an extended classroom for our students.

More internships and service learning experiences, as well as expanded undergraduate research and study-abroad opportunities will build on Carroll's existing strengths and advance our mission. We must grow in these areas in carefully identified and strategic ways—such as the health programs and partnerships I mentioned before—and we must apply them by connecting Carroll to the region through learning and service. Carroll students are absolutely critical to the region's non-profit and business organizations in their day-to-day success.

To underscore that point, our Center for Service and Social Action was a 2013 Presidential Award Finalist, placing us among the top 20 institutions in the country recognized by the White House for our commitment to community service.

Life-changing experiences and student leadership also come from athletics. We are launching men's and women's

lacrosse and we are welcoming new coaches across several sports this year. Our football team crushed Saint Norbert's in Ireland last year, and **they will** do it again when we play them in Chicago on September 7th, under the direction of alum coach Tom Arth.

4. *Global Engagement*

Educating the whole person happens best in a diverse, inclusive, and globally engaged community. Our graduates cannot be truly effective leaders unless they have a deep understanding of the world in which they live and possess a genuine respect for people from different backgrounds.

Our progress with enrollment continues to attract more top-quality and highly motivated students from beyond Ohio and the United States. So our student body is more diverse than it used to be, but it's not enough. We've made progress with

our Diversity Initiative, but our nation, especially higher education, struggles to engage diversity and has not achieved inclusion. Our challenges are no different. These challenges need more focus and energy at Carroll if we are going to have meaningful culture change. This is why we will move forward to hire a Chief Diversity Officer, if I have confidence that the finalist can be successful; in moving us forward. This is one more of our challenges; which requires every one of us to change to make Carroll more inclusive.

Late last spring, I visited our Alum and Board member, Dr. Evelyn Jenkins Gunn who lives in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Evelyn wanted to show me the area where she grew up. Her father was a poor sharecropper; Birmingham was as segregated as any city in the South. I have seen the history, knew much of the story that is the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, and spoke with people who had been on the Selma march 50 years ago this spring.

As a high school student, I knew Jesuits who had quit school to go on the march. Not a strategy that I recommend...quitting school.

But to see the Institute and experience a bit of what African Americans experienced in the Deep South was shocking. Evelyn will sometimes tell of having crosses burned on her lawn when she lived in Cleveland. Evelyn found her way to John Carroll while she was raising her young children, her husband was a minister. Carroll was not easy, she did not know how she could do it, the faculty here encouraged her, and she went on to be a national award-winning teacher in the New York Public Schools.

I asked a few of those who had been on the Selma March, those who risked their lives, their jobs, and the safety of their families if they had anticipated then the progress that has

been made. No one did. Each one talked about doing what they could do. One man could not march, so he spent the night before guarding a few homes of those who did. He drove those who had been beaten up on the march to the doctors and hospitals that would treat them (many would not help).

These brave souls did what they knew to be right, and what they knew they could.

This is what we do. We can't comprehend that what we do will change everything, so we do what we know is right and what we can do.

We need to continue to strengthen and enhance our global education opportunities by extending our ties with others around our nation and the world. John Carroll students need a deep understanding of the increasingly global context of

their lives.

We have a new Jesuit pope asking us to fight the globalization of indifference to our brothers and sisters around the world. Our curriculum must be strong in global and area studies, and we need to encourage more international programs, partnerships, and faculty development that tie to our strengths as an institution. We must continue to pursue additional opportunities for internships, service, and immersion experiences throughout the world – but also here in the US.

Campus Updates

The four pillars of the John Carroll Experience work as a perfect segue into our HLC process. Kathleen, Matt and “the chairs of the five Criterion working groups” have worked diligently on the self-study preparation. Every ten years each University goes through re-accreditation process. There will be visits from the Higher Learning Commission

team of peer reviewers (faculty and admin from schools that do what we do) we have the opportunity to articulate how we have improved on our past and have positioned ourselves to build on 127 years of excellence in Jesuit education for our future.

These past few days we welcomed **793** freshmen to John Carroll. Such a large class size does not happen by accident, but rather it is a tribute to your hard work and dedication of the Admissions and Financial Aid offices--(and our coaches) When prospective students visit campus they experience what their future can look like when they receive an excellent JCU education. Their parents see the value of a John Carroll degree and our commitment to help their children graduate in four years.

I want to thank the campus community for working together with Student Affairs and Facilities to maximize the current housing alterations for our students and making the Murphy

renovation as seamless as possible. Next fall, a renovated Murphy Hall will help the John Carroll Experience, support student learning and help us attract students to the campus. The investment we are making is worth it. John Carroll is excellent in all we do – student housing too. 100 triples this year will be a challenge, but schools do this all the time and we will be better off when a new Murphy returns.

The Forever Carroll Campaign is in full swing and picking up momentum. We are committed to inspiring minds and transforming lives. We have to date raised 60 million of our 100 million dollar goal. Advancement is reaching out to alumni near and far in an effort to raise money to reach our goal. We are determined to reach anyone touched by Carroll in any way, and asking to help preserve the rich Jesuit heritage that this University is founded upon. This is a very grassroots effort that requires a “hands on” approach by all to be successful. I will be very intricately involved in the

fundraising process this year to help raise the funds we need to support our priorities. With the success of the Forever Carroll campaign, we are poised for an excellent future.

I would like to show a video that captures the essence of the Forever Carroll campaign and its importance to the future of John Carroll University. ([CUE Video](#))

In closing, I am so excited to welcome each and every one of you into the new academic year. There is so much good that each one of us can do, so much learning to take place and wisdom to impart.

Let us honor those that have come before us; by being bold, yet humble. May God be with us as we work together to welcome our new and returning students and shape their lives through our Carroll mission of Jesuit educational excellence.

Please join me and your colleagues in the Atrium for some

refreshments and to catch up with each other as we start our semester together.

Thank you.