

Celebrating our Faculty Accomplishments

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9th Annual Faculty Convocation Address

September 20, 2015

Good Afternoon everyone, and welcome to the 9th Annual Faculty Convocation aimed at welcoming new faculty, celebrating the accomplishments of our distinguished faculty, and acknowledging the contributions of our retiring faculty. I'd like to thank the members of my staff who plan this wonderful event each year, and also thank the Office of Special Events for its support, as well.

Loyola University Chicago continues to be an attractive destination for both our students and our faculty. As President Pelissero has already indicated, this year we welcomed the third largest class of incoming freshmen, hailing from diverse communities. We also welcomed 83 new tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty, many of whom I hope are here today. In meeting with our new faculty last month at our annual faculty orientation, I was struck by their level of enthusiasm. Several of them were impressed not only with the beauty of the Campus, but also with the resources available to enhance teaching and boost research activity. Indeed, many of our faculty have thrived

in a very competitive research environment, in securing significant grant awards. Specifically, in FY2015, Lakeside faculty secured a record number of grant awards ^(182 compared to 162 in FY2014) totaling \$19.2 million, the ~~second-highest amount ever~~. Lakeside faculty also submitted 246 research proposals (second-highest ever) totaling \$78.3 million. *to such agencies as NSF, NIH, DOE*

*NSF
NIH
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DOE*

Also, a growing number of our faculty received national and international acclaim for their scholarly accomplishments. In the last two years, the number of faculty receiving such awards increased from 34 to 55, that is a 62% increase.

Aside from these accomplishments, what I have found most impressive is the extent to which Loyola faculty have been more than willing to serve as mentors to our students. Just last year alone, we had 68 faculty mentoring undergraduate students affiliated with such programs as the provost's fellowship program, the Mulcahy Scholars program, the McNair Scholars program, the WISER program, and several summer research programs sponsored by various departments and institutes. We even had instances where faculty were mentoring two or more students. This is a real tribute to the commitment and dedication of you—our faculty—to supporting the holistic development of our students.

There are two more items that I'd like to address before I conclude my remarks today – the 2020 strategic plan and enhanced communications between the provost's office and the faculty at large.

Leadership transition years can be viewed in some universities with some degree of anxiety. However, I strongly believe that the 2020 strategic plan lays out a set of institutional priorities, strategies, and initiatives that serve as a framework for building a solid, optimistic future at Loyola. It provides faculty with opportunities to engage in multidisciplinary, collaborative ventures; develop partnerships in surrounding communities; expand global networks; and explore meaningful and effective ways to contribute to student success. You can find more information on the 2020 plan when you visit the president's web page or by searching on the term Plan 2020.

One of the more challenging and unique aspects of the 2020 plan is institutional priority #2, which invites us to advance our social justice mission through faculty development. There is already much work underway in this area through the Center for Catholic Intellectual Heritage and the Faculty Center for Ignatian Pedagogy. Our goal here is to extend the debate beyond just social justice and to encourage faculty to explore the interrelationship between reason, faith, and justice. We certainly have the intellectual capacity

at Loyola to investigate this and are in the process of forming a small planning group to explore this further. We plan on featuring in our next Research Magazine some ideas and perspective³ from a select number of faculty who have been asked to reflect on the interrelationship between reason, faith, and justice and demonstrate how they apply it to their teaching and research. We believe that Loyola should be at the forefront of such debates. As such, we are even exploring the idea of offering a pilot MOOC on the topic.

Lastly, let me assure you that the Office of the Provost is committed to improving its level of communications with faculty. Yes, there are already mechanisms in place to do that, such as the University Senate, the Faculty Council, and the Council of Deans, but we can do better. So, I am inviting you to provide me with some suggestions on how we go about improving the communication channels. One idea I have is to host luncheon meetings with a few faculty at a time just to listen and have informal conversations on any number of issues. I am also interested in opportunities to attend departmental and college or school wide meetings. Bottom line is that I'm interested in hearing from you and learning more about your needs and concerns.

Let me conclude by thanking ~~interim~~ president John Pelissero, the vice presidents, and deans and directors for their support throughout this

academic year. To all the faculty of this great institution, thank you, and have a great academic year. I'm looking forward to working with you *in the coming months*