



JOHN JAY COLLEGE  
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

# **State of the College 2009: Toward *John Jay @ 50***

**Delivered by**

**President Jeremy Travis**

**October 21, 2009**

Dear Colleagues, Members of the John Jay College Community:

I am delighted to welcome our faculty, professional staff, student leaders and representatives of our Foundation and our Alumni Board this afternoon. I am pleased to stand before you today to share my views on the State of our College.

We come together at a critical moment in the history of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. A few short years ago, we made a commitment to undertake a fundamental transformation of the College – by changing our student profile, expanding the number of full-time tenure-track faculty and adding new liberal arts majors. In last year’s State of the College address, I challenged the College to embrace a related goal – to focus laser-like on student success, and specifically to increase retention and graduation rates of our students.

Today, we can look back with tremendous pride on the progress we have made toward these goals. Yet, as we look forward, we must recognize that we face an uncertain future, as the nation’s economy remains weak, tax revenues drop, and government budgets face unprecedented shortfalls. We should speak frankly about the implications of this reality for the trajectory of the transformation of John Jay.

This is a pivotal year for another reason. This is the last year of the five-year strategic plan adopted by the College in 2005. We are now poised to create a vision for the College for the next five years, as we approach our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014. Creating a new Master Plan coincides nicely with the launch of our Middle States accreditation process this year, as well as the implementation of our plan to increase retention and graduation rates. Today I will provide a framework for these related planning initiatives.

We should be very proud of the distance we have travelled over the past five years. The changes at John Jay are simply breathtaking, and everyone here should feel a great sense of accomplishment in creating a revitalized College. Five years ago, our entering freshman class consisted of 1,182 baccalaureate students; this fall we enrolled 1,657 baccalaureate freshmen, a 40% increase. This is a stunning achievement, and we owe special thanks to Vice President Saulnier, Sandra Palleja and the enrollment management team for an unparalleled recruitment effort. Based on this success, we have officially closed our associate degree programs, and next fall we will formally seek designation as a senior college.

At the same time, working with the six CUNY community colleges, we created joint degree programs in criminal justice, forensic science, and forensic financial analysis. Next month, the University will launch an advertising campaign to promote these educational partnerships – collectively called the CUNY Justice Academy. I am pleased to report that the community colleges have already registered close to two thousand students in these programs – without a recruitment campaign. We set a goal of expanding access to criminal justice programs across the university and we have done just that. I would like to acknowledge Professors Todd Clear and Jeff Mellow for their work on the criminal justice curriculum, Anthony Carpi for the forensic science curriculum, Randall LaSalle for the forensic financial analysis curriculum, and David Barnet, our Director of Educational Partnerships, for his outstanding leadership in creating these vibrant relationships with the community colleges.

This fundamental shift in our admissions policies has been accompanied by two complementary and historic initiatives. We have significantly expanded our cadre of full-time faculty. As of this fall, we have 449 full time faculty, compared to 338 five years ago, a 33% increase. Quite remarkably, fully 50% of our full-time faculty have been hired over the past five years. These new colleagues have brought a welcome sense of energy and a strong commitment to John Jay’s mission of “educating for justice.” I

wish to thank the chairs of our academic departments, and their personnel committees, for their successful efforts to recruit and select the very best candidates for these appointments.

At the same time, we have encouraged our faculty to develop new liberal arts majors. To date, we have added majors in English, Economics, Global History and Gender Studies. This year, we expect to secure approval for majors in Philosophy and Law and Society. In the pipeline are majors in American Studies, Anthropology, Latin American and Latina/o Studies, and Sociology, with more under discussion. At the graduate level, we have added masters programs in Forensic Mental Health Counseling and International Crime and Justice, and certificates in Forensic Psychology and Forensic Accounting, with more programs under development. And this fall, we launched the College's first online degree program – the MPA, Inspector General Program.

The net effect of these accomplishments is stunning. In a few short years, we have brought new faculty to John Jay who represent the future of the College, created new academic departments better aligned with the curricular priorities of the College, and fundamentally transformed the academic programs available to our students. Simply put, we have created the academic framework for the John Jay College of the future.

We should also celebrate our progress in strengthening learning by revitalizing our core academic programs. Over the past three years, under the leadership of our Provost, Jane Bowers, the faculty of the College have been engaged in an impressive array of initiatives designed to improve the quality of student learning. We are midway through a complete overhaul of General Education to create a program of study suited to the college we have become rather than the college we were thirty years ago when our General Education program was developed. We must be sure that general education courses provide our students with the best possible foundation for productive lives in the twenty-first century.

We have redesigned our Honors Program and will accept the first students in Fall 2010. Over the past three years, we have revised our science curriculum and launched Math 2012, an initiative to strengthen our math curriculum. Our forensic psychology major has been totally redesigned and will come to the Undergraduate Curriculum and Standards Committee for review this year, as will our BA and BS in Criminal Justice. We have created a vibrant First Year Experience program, and have taken the first steps toward providing academic advisement for all students from the time they enter the College until they graduate.

As we look back on the past five years, we should all take pride in these accomplishments. In so many ways, we have built a strong foundation for John Jay as we approach the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the College. Our technological infrastructure has advanced significantly. Our communications systems – internally and externally – are sophisticated and cutting edge. We have had substantial success in fund-raising, both from government sources and private donors. The John Jay College Foundation, chaired so ably by Jules Kroll, is poised to launch a multi-year, multi-million dollar campaign for John Jay. We have totally revamped our governance procedures so that the voices of faculty are better represented – special thanks go to Karen Kaplowitz for her leadership as president of the Faculty Senate – and students and higher education officers have a seat at the table in budget and planning discussions. Our alumni board – represented here by Michael McCann—is fully energized and is convening alumni meetings all across the country.

Most importantly, student life at John Jay is vibrant and engaged thanks to the leadership of Vice President Berenecea Eanes and her team in the Office of Student Development. Our students turned out in record numbers at the last election, posted a record number of candidates for elective office,

launched J Stop, an online Student communications channel, and last week produced the first issue of the *John Jay Sentinel*, a high quality student newspaper. Student Council, under the leadership of Shaheen Wallace and other contributing members, has become a serious governance body. We see evidence of stronger bonds between our students and the College, and this sense of engagement will, in turn, translate into higher rates of retention and graduation.

Yes, we are poised to take on the next series of challenges. We have proven – to ourselves and others— that big change is possible. I recognize the hard work that has brought us to this day. I thank everyone for your extraordinary efforts. I know firsthand that there are times when it all seems a bit overwhelming. But look where we are ... as we celebrate our role in the last chapter of John Jay, we are ready to write the next chapter.

What lies ahead for John Jay? We must forthrightly acknowledge the budget clouds on the horizon. The news accounts of the day remind us that our state government is struggling to close a significant budget gap. This will undoubtedly have negative effects on the budget of the City University of New York. Although any detailed forecast is impossible, we can say with certainty that the next few years will be tight budget years. We have already reduced the budget of John Jay by over a million dollars this year, and may face further reductions in the future. At the next meeting of the Budget and Planning Committee, we will begin to develop strategies for absorbing additional cutbacks, should they be necessary. As we consider these contingencies, please rest assured that my top priority will be to sustain our forward momentum, particularly in our core academic programs. We may need to tighten our belts and slow the pace of change, but I am confident that we will continue moving forward toward a shared vision of the John Jay of the future.

What will John Jay look like when the College turns 50 in 2014? Today, we begin the process of sketching out that vision. Certain things we know already. We will have a fabulous new building with new faculty offices, student service offices, science labs, a moot court, a black box theater, a conference center and a spectacular campus between Haaren Hall and the new tower. We will continue to occupy a distinctive place in the world as a liberal arts college with a justice mission, “educating for justice.” Our worldwide reputation for excellence will be even stronger than it is today. We will have an even stronger alumni base, as students graduate from John Jay better prepared to pursue a wide variety of careers and graduate studies. Our faculty will continue to be engaged in innovative pedagogy. Their research projects will continue to define the leading edge of scholarship.

But what will be different about John Jay in 2014? How will the core academic experience continue to evolve? How will the College support excellence in teaching and learning? How will the College support excellence in scholarship? How will John Jay develop a strong sense of community among its students? How will we support student success, both inside and outside the classroom? How will John Jay engage the world around us so that students have choices in terms of internships and careers? How will we garner support among the City’s philanthropic community? How will we remain true to our mission of “educating for justice”?

Today we are launching a new master planning process that will answer these questions. This process will be open, inclusive and transparent. We will engage our students, professional staff, faculty, alumni and external stakeholders. Our discussions about the future of the College will be informed by data and objective analysis. They will be animated by the deep values that define this community. And they will be respectful. Working together, we will produce a new five-year Master Plan by the end of the academic year. Let’s call this Master Plan *John Jay @ 50*.

The development of a new Master Plan for John Jay comes at an opportune time, for two reasons. First, we will soon begin the multi-year process leading to reaccreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. This process begins with an intensive institutional self-study, which we will inaugurate in Fall 2010. Second, this year we inaugurate our plan to increase retention and graduation rates, with a special focus on improving teaching and learning outcomes. Both of these efforts will inform – and be informed by – the community conversations leading up to the adoption of our new Master Plan.

As we develop our new Master Plan, we should strive for one goal – excellence. We aspire to excellence in each of the five domains that define our College: Student Success, Teaching, Scholarship, Strategic Partnerships, and Institutional Effectiveness. Allow me to describe these domains and suggest that they provide the guideposts for our master planning discussions.

### **I. Student Success.**

We aspire to excellence as measured by the success of our students. This year, over 15,000 students decided to come to John Jay to pursue their dreams. They placed their confidence in the faculty, staff and administration of the College to help them succeed. Their trust in us should engender a tremendous sense of responsibility. In all that we do, we should place their success at the center of our deliberations and plans.

We have made substantial progress in this regard over the past five years, but to be candid we have a significant distance still to travel. For example, we are now completing an overhaul of our course scheduling process so it is student-centered, rather than faculty-centered. We need to add more courses in the summer and winter terms so students can complete their programs of study in a timely manner. We should expand our online offerings so students can study at times convenient to them. We need to strengthen the processes of academic advisement so students can find the right pathway to meeting their goals. We should further expand our student research initiative so that students can learn under the tutelage of our research-active faculty.

Last year, we began to focus more closely on one key measure of student success, their graduation rate. We recognized that the six-year graduation rate for our baccalaureate freshmen is lower than we'd like it to be – only 43%. Last year, I challenged our community to increase the graduation rate to at least 50% for the freshmen entering in 2014. With the assistance of Keeling & Associates, our consultant, we have now produced a report on student retention and a strategic retention plan that will help us meet that goal. This retention initiative provides the foundation for our efforts to help our students succeed academically.

Student success extends beyond the classroom. If we expect John Jay alumni to become citizens of the world, then we have an obligation to help them learn the attributes of citizenship. This educational experience can occur on the playing field, in a club, working in a neighborhood soup kitchen, volunteering on a political campaign, acting in a play, singing in a band, or interning in a law firm. The path to adulthood should also include more opportunities for pure fun and social interactions. We have an obligation to help our students make this transition to full citizenship – and we can do much more.

### **II. Teaching.**

We aspire to excellence in teaching. We recognize the magic that happens in the classroom. We know the power of lives transformed through the interactions between teacher and student. We value our colleagues who are scholars of teaching, who experiment with different pedagogical strategies, always

looking for better ways to achieve the learning outcomes they have established. We particularly appreciate the strong commitment to teaching that is evident in the new faculty who have joined the College. They are eager to learn from our master teachers, and to hone their skills as they experiment with different teaching styles and strategies.

Yet we must also recognize that the College has not always provided support for good teaching. John Jay has not embraced policies that recognize teaching excellence in our decisions to reappoint, promote and tenure our faculty. Nor have we provided support for our colleagues who are having difficulty in the classroom, helping them figure out how to be the good teachers they wish to be. We have recently begun to change this reality. Provost Bowers has launched a series of initiatives to promote and recognize excellence in teaching. She has created a task force that will ensure that excellence in teaching is properly considered in the promotion and tenure process, just as scholarly productivity is recognized. These amendments to our personnel guidelines will also encourage research on teaching, so that our innovative faculty who publish articles on pedagogy will be recognized for those contributions to the literature. Two years ago she launched the Center for the Advancement of Teaching which, under the leadership of Meghan Duffy, is offering a spectacular array of courses, workshops, salons and tutorials on teaching. In these and other ways, the College is providing tangible expression of our commitment to teaching excellence.

A critical component of our commitment to excellence in teaching is a parallel commitment to assessment. "Assessment" is too often viewed as a set of externally imposed standards. We should, rather, think of assessment as central to the process of teaching and learning. For individual courses, we need to establish objectives for our teaching, and then determine whether we have met those objectives. At an institutional level, we should aspire to meeting the goals of a liberal education. We should engage our students in critical thinking, help them appreciate cultural differences, support excellence in written and oral communications, and provide opportunities for teamwork and peer learning. We should never sacrifice our commitment to standards, as we support our students' efforts to achieve those standards.

Last year, we celebrated the accomplishments of our outstanding teachers, and publicly recognized Dara Byrne, Jill Grose-Fifer, and Nathan Lents. These awards marked a milestone in the history of the College. But we all recognize we have miles yet to travel. We need to embrace an institutional commitment to excellence in teaching. Our students deserve nothing less. As important, our faculty deserve nothing less.

### **III. Scholarship.**

Closely related – indeed, in my view, inextricably related – to our aspiration to excellence in teaching is our aspiration to excellence in scholarship. We should be very proud of the progress we have made over the past five years in promoting strong scholarship at John Jay. We were all thrilled when John Matteson, a member of the English faculty, a department long relegated to "service" status, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his biography of Louisa May Alcott and her father, Bronson Alcott. Other John Jay faculty have been similarly recognized, receiving Fulbright, Harry Frank Guggenheim, Robert Wood Johnson, American Association of University Women and National Endowment for the Humanities fellowships, among others. For the past three years, John Jay faculty have published on average two dozen books a year, not counting edited volumes and the hundreds of articles in scholarly publications. Our faculty dominate their professional associations, including the American Society of Criminology, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, the American Psychology-Law Society, the American Academy for Forensic Science, and the Association of Inspectors General, to name a few.

The College has also established an excellent record of securing research funding, more than doubling receipts in the last four years. Last year, we submitted 230 proposals requesting \$45 million in funding, and we were awarded \$16.2 million in grants. These accomplishments have continued in the current academic year: four faculty members recently received grants from the National Institute of Justice; five received grants from the National Science Foundation; one received a large National Institute of Health award; and our outstanding success in garnering funds from the Department of Homeland Security continues. There is no question we are witnessing the emergence of the John Jay research juggernaut – a scholarly community of enormous influence beyond the walls of the College.

The years ahead will pose many challenges to our research preeminence. We must keep our doctoral programs strong so we are producing the next generation of scholar-teachers in our fields. We must continue to strengthen the Institutional Review Board, which has seen enormous progress under the direction of Tom Kucharski. We should expand our opportunities for research projects that engage our students. We need to build new research labs for our forensic scientists and forensic psychologists so we can continue to attract the best in these fields. We need to streamline the administrative processes of applying for, and administering grants, so that our time and energy is not wasted on bureaucratic hurdles. Finally, we need to find ways to keep research-active faculty at John Jay because, as their reputations are secured, other institutions with lower teaching loads will come to recruit them.

#### **IV. Strategic Partnerships.**

We should aspire to build bridges – a network of strategic partnerships -- between John Jay College and the institutions of the world that can help us achieve student success, and promote excellence in teaching and scholarship. John Jay College occupies a unique place in the world. We are a public institution, with public obligations. We have a distinctive mission – “educating for justice” – that connects us with a larger world of individuals and institutions trying to make the world more just.

We give meaning to our mission when we engage the world. As we move toward *John Jay @ 50* we should consciously create strategic partnerships that will benefit our students, our faculty, and our alumni. We are justifiably proud of our students who come to John Jay motivated by a desire to change the world. We should build bridges with institutions that provide them with opportunities for public service. We are proud of the John Jay faculty who devote their intellect and energy to reducing violence in America, promoting human rights around the globe, or securing the release of men and women unjustly convicted. We are proud of those faculty who work closely with the fire, police and corrections agencies to help them carry out their responsibilities with a greater sense of fairness and efficiency. We should create partnerships with institutions that can facilitate these interactions between research and practice.

In many ways, our centers and institutes serve as bridges between the College and a larger community. The centers of research, policy and practice at John Jay cover an impressive variety of timely topics – human rights; race, crime and justice; terrorism; crime prevention and control; cybercrime; criminal justice ethics; and prisoner reentry, to name a few. They have brought invaluable visibility – and funding – to the College. Yet we should recognize that, as we create our Master Plan, we need to articulate closer linkages between these activities, the College’s goals to achieve excellence in teaching and scholarship, and our goal to build linkages outside the College.

No other institution in the world can claim that its faculty are so deeply involved in so many pressing issues of justice and injustice. As we move forward to *John Jay @ 50*, we should ensure that the College remains an “institution of consequence” – that we partner with agencies and individuals who would

benefit from the expertise of our faculty, the passion of our students, and the independence of an academic institution.

#### **V. Institutional Effectiveness.**

To achieve these ambitious goals, we need to build a College that supports a culture of continuous improvement. We should aspire to excellence in the core functioning of the institution. We must embrace a commitment to assessment, a willingness to subject every course and every program to close scrutiny. We must develop policies with clear expectations, based on objective data. The College has made significant progress in this regard over the past five years. Now, most of our policy discussions are informed by relevant data. But the Master Plan should accelerate the pace of change in this regard. We should identify quantifiable goals for new initiatives, and conduct rigorous assessments of core programs. The Master Plan should also embrace the concept of a “report card” that publishes key indicators each year so that we hold ourselves publicly accountable.

The College should also aspire to excellence in its administrative operations. Over the past five years, we have made significant progress along this dimension of college life. Every aspect of the infrastructure of the College – from the cleanliness of the buildings to the transparency of our governance process – has been improved. The College has made substantial financial investments in new science labs, new office space, educational technology, a new website and other communications platforms. The administrative support system has been strengthened considerably with the hiring of new staff in virtually every domain of the College. The budgeting process of the College has been brought up to date, with all-funds budgeting, unit-level budgets and a budget approval process that is collaborative and transparent. Most importantly, in partnership with Prof. Kaplowitz and the Faculty Senate, and Harold Sullivan and the Council of Chairs, we have reformed the College Charter, our basic charter of governance.

Yet much remains to be done to bring John Jay to peak effectiveness. A particularly critical need is for more space. Even with the opening of the new building in fall 2011, the College will still experience a significant shortfall in office and laboratory space, as well as common space for students to meet. Since the new building was planned, the College has expanded student enrollment, hired many new faculty, created new student services such as One Stop and academic advisement, and expanded administrative support in a number of key areas. The College is still far behind comparable institutions in supporting distance learning. We need to adapt social networking technologies such as Facebook and Twitter to our efforts to recruit, educate and retain our students.

These strategic priorities are daunting, yet they define the challenges that lie ahead. When you leave the theater today, you will receive a document – called the “roadmap” – that more fully describes the milestones for our Master Plan, Middle States, and retention initiatives. I encourage every member of the John Jay College community to become engaged in these conversations. You will see that we intend to hold a series of forums, focus groups and town hall meetings. We will conduct surveys to learn your views and create idea walls to solicit your ideas. The result of these robust discussions will be a Master Plan that reflects our best thinking, our high hopes, and our commitment to excellence. It will paint a picture of *John Jay @ 50* – where we want to be, and how we will get there. I hope that you will all play an active role in defining this roadmap for our future.

Many years ago, in ancient Greece, a promising scientist named Archimedes was conducting research on a particular aspect of physics. He was a pretty smart guy – in fact, I would like to think that if he were alive today we would recruit him to be a member of the John Jay faculty. He articulated a scientific

principle that defines a critical concept in physics, but also serves as a metaphor for the future of John Jay. “Give me a lever long enough,” he wrote, “and a fulcrum on which to place it, and I shall move the world.” Here at John Jay we are building a strong fulcrum – an institution that excels in its core academic mission. And we know that our lever – our unique mission of educating for justice – is long enough to reach the critical issues in our society. So, we should feel confident that working together, inspired by Archimedes, with a lever long enough and a fulcrum strong enough, we can move the world. Let’s get started.

Thank you.