



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

State of the College Address

December 1, 2010

By

President Jeremy Travis

Members of the John Jay College faculty, students, professional staff, alumni and distinguished guests:

We have come together, once again, to take a step back from the daily interactions of our vibrant community, to take a deep breath in a time of rapid change, so we can take stock of the state of our college. Thank you for coming, and thank you for your many contributions to the well-being of John Jay College.

A clear-eyed assessment of John Jay College of Criminal Justice at the end of 2010 reveals the sobering truth that our college faces two divergent realities. If one looks at the quality of our core academic programs, the caliber of our faculty, the vitality of student life, the integrity of our governance procedures, and the capabilities of our professional staff, John Jay has never been stronger. Yet at the same time, because of the financial crisis facing our country and our state, the College's budget has been significantly reduced. We have found it necessary to reduce our staffing levels significantly, to cut needed services and to defer our plans for the expansion of the faculty, the implementation of critical academic programs, and the development of important student activities. This afternoon I would like to reflect on these two realities, and then share my assessment of the challenges that lie ahead.

Let's begin with the College's budget situation. Over the past two years, the level of state support for the City University of New York has been reduced by \$209 million. When our new governor, Andrew Cuomo, delivers his first budget message in January, we expect he will recommend another \$100 million cut to CUNY. These budget reductions, coupled with the revenue loss associated with a slight shortfall in our enrollment, translated into a \$4 million gap in this year's budget for the college. One way to begin to close this gap is to increase revenue to the College, specifically revenue from tuition. Therefore, we have taken steps to increase

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enrollment in the winter, spring and summer sessions. We have also taken a number of aggressive steps to reduce our expenses. We have non-reappointed substitute faculty and college assistants; we have implemented severe reductions in college assistant expenditures and non-personnel expenditures; we have imposed a hiring freeze for new faculty and non-instructional staff, making exceptions only for critical positions; and we have drawn upon external and other non-tax levy funding sources to support core activities. These reductions are drastic, but I am confident that these steps will result in a balanced budget for this year.

But what about next year, particularly in light of Governor-elect Cuomo's pledge to reduce state expenditures? To be perfectly frank, we can anticipate another tough year. We will have to cut our spending further. We will need to raise enrollment revenues even more. Last month, the CUNY Board of Trustees approved a 5% tuition increase to take effect in January, and another 2% increase this fall, that will partially offset the reductions in the state budget. Closer to home, we will continue our examination of all programs and expenditures to identify additional areas for budget cuts. These are stringent measures. We will experience additional service reductions. For our students who are struggling to make ends meet, the tuition increase will place a new burden on family budgets. But we should keep these new realities in perspective. Under the leadership of Chancellor Goldstein, the University has been a creative and effective steward of our financial resources. Thanks to the leadership team at 80th Street, our university has been spared the wrenching cuts, furloughs and closings that have hobbled many public institutions of higher education around the country.

I am confident that we will come through these challenging times with a balanced budget. We will make every effort to protect core academic programs, student services and college operations. As we face these new realities, I would like to pay a special tribute to the members of the Budget and Planning Committee of the College Council, particularly the Financial Planning Subcommittee, who have been conscientious and critical partners as we have implemented the necessary budget reductions over the past two years. I am committed to continuing this open and collaborative budget process as we face our uncertain financial future.

Yet even in these tight budget times, we have many reasons to be optimistic about our future. Our progress over the past half dozen years has been extraordinary. We have dramatically raised the standards for admission to John Jay. We have doubled the number of baccalaureate freshmen from approximately 1,000 to 2,000 and this fall welcomed our first all-baccalaureate class. In partnership with CUNY's six community colleges, we have created the CUNY Justice Academy, which now includes over 4,300 associate degree students. This fall, we welcomed 20 new faculty, including two new department chairs. We are on our way to becoming a full liberal arts college, adding majors in English, Economics, Gender Studies and Global History, with a half dozen more liberal arts majors in the pipeline. Well over 600 students have already

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registered in our new majors. And next fall, we will begin to move into our fabulous new building, giving us, for the first time in the College's history, a true campus.

This past year marked important milestones in the transformation of the College. We celebrated the first classes of our inaugural on-line master's program, the National Online MPA Inspectors General Program, which now serves 40 students, from California to Puerto Rico. I wish to thank Professors Benton, Hamilton and Wandt for their leadership in bringing this idea to reality. We launched the new Office of Undergraduate Research, under the direction of Professor Nathan Lents. We admitted the first class of 25 students into our new Honors Program. With funds raised at our annual gala, we provided them with tuition assistance and laptops. I would like to thank the faculty who worked on the development of the new Honors Program and Professor John Matteson who is serving with distinction as the faculty director of the program.

Perhaps the most significant curricular reform this year has been the re-imagination of our General Education program, guided by a Steering Committee under the skillful leadership of Professor Amy Green. Organized around key learning outcomes, and freed from the constraints of traditional academic disciplines, the building blocks of our new Gen Ed will include a Justice Core and five course-clusters in Reasoning & Communication; The Creative Dimension; Learning from the Past; The Natural and Physical World; and Self, Culture and Society. Our new Gen Ed has already attracted favorable reviews from national experts and academic leaders within CUNY. After approval by the College Council in the spring, the next step is for our faculty to design new courses within the Justice Core and the five course-clusters, courses that will be offered as early as fall 2012. With our new majors in place, and our redesigned General Education curriculum, the academic programs at John Jay College will take their place among the most innovative academic offerings in the nation. I congratulate the faculty, and pay special tribute to our Provost, Jane Bowers, for this remarkable accomplishment.

All around us we see signs of a newly energized campus life. We now have 44 certified student clubs – up from 30 clubs four years ago – a sure sign of an engaged student body. Our debate society, only three years old, is already winning major competitions. Two of my favorite new clubs are Bleeding Hearts for Animals, which is advocating for animal rights, and the Buddhism for Justice club, a group of students who wish to apply Buddhist principles to questions of justice. We have record high attendance and sign-up rates for activities and events, ranging from the New York Philharmonic to Circle Line tours of the City. And the Cheerleader Bloodhounds infuse our athletic events with renewed spirit and pride. We should applaud our students for bringing their passions to campus life and challenging conventional wisdom.

These signs of vibrant student life can also be seen in our athletics program. This fall, all six of our sports teams made it to the playoffs, for the first time in College history, including the

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women's soccer team, which was just formed this year. We should applaud the leadership of our new Director of Athletics, Dan Palumbo, who has worked miracles with our baseball team and now extends his philosophy of the athlete-scholar-citizen to all sports. We have also witnessed the energy of our new Office of Community Outreach and Service Learning, led by Declan Walsh, which supports our students as they raise awareness about hunger in New York, collect money and goods for our troops overseas, and serve as Americorps volunteers. This year we have also witnessed the rebirth of our Office of Career Development, under new leadership provided by Will Simpkins, which has contacted a record 2,500 employers to help our students find meaningful internships and rewarding work after graduation.

As we embark on the next chapter in our history, and begin the self-study that will lead to our Middle States reaccreditation, we will be guided by our new Master Plan, *John Jay @ 50*, which was adopted unanimously by our College Council on October 14. Through our Master Plan, we commit ourselves to achieving excellence in five domains – Student Success, Teaching, Research and Scholarship, Strategic Partnerships and Institutional Effectiveness. The Master Plan is our blueprint for the coming five years. Every undertaking of the College – every budget decision, every programmatic innovation, every academic choice – should reflect the objectives set forth in our Master Plan. After several years of rapid change, we must now consolidate the gains we have made, strengthen our academic core, link our activities to promote student success, and lay the foundation for the next fifty years of this unique institution.

As we face our future, and prepare for our self-study, I see five challenges ahead. We must embrace these challenges to ensure that, when we emerge from the current financial crisis, John Jay is poised for greatness.

First, we must continue to recruit and retain the very best students. Our success at increasing baccalaureate enrollment has been nothing short of astounding, and is a great tribute to the work of Sandra Palleja and the recruitment team. Judging by our recent Open House – we had 1200 prospective students this year, compared to 800 last year – there is a palpable sense of excitement about John Jay. As we move forward, we need to meet our ambitious enrollment targets, while continuing to raise standards. We will remain committed to the principle of access, as the CUNY Justice Academy provides a pipeline for hundreds of students to complete their degrees at John Jay. But we must make more progress on improving overall graduation rates of our students. Our first year retention rate has increased over the past two years, but our six year graduation rate has remained stubbornly flat, notwithstanding the increase in full time faculty and revitalization of our academic programs. To become a first rate institution, we must create a full-fledged academic advisement program, involving faculty and professional advisors, so our students can successfully navigate their academic careers. I wish to applaud

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Dean Anne Lopes for developing a comprehensive plan for academic advisement that will be launched later this year.

Second, we must continue to build upon the strength of our faculty. For the next two years, at least, we will be adding few if any new faculty. Fortunately, over the last four years, with welcome financial investments from the University, we have hired a spectacular new generation of scholar-teachers. It is now incumbent on us to support them, to help them develop as teachers in our classrooms, and to guide them as they emerge as scholars in their fields. To do this, we will continue to support the Center for the Advancement of Teaching, which has become an invaluable resource to our faculty. This year, we will promulgate new personnel guidelines that make teaching visible and valued and that further elaborate the scholarly expectations for promotion and tenure. We owe it to our untenured faculty to help them succeed. As we support our new faculty, we must continue to support the professional aspirations of our veteran faculty, through initiatives such as Faculty Development Day, and pay particular attention to our part-time faculty, who represent an untapped resource for progress in student learning outcomes.

Our third challenge is to strengthen our academic core. We must accelerate the process of assessing all of our courses, majors and programs. We must ensure that each course has specified learning outcomes, and that, in the words of our Master Plan, we “foster integrative learning and link individual course learning goals and syllabi to overall curricula and learning goals.” Meeting this challenge will require the full engagement of all faculty, full time and part time, and continued leadership from the chairs of our academic departments. Once our new General Education program is approved, and the courses designed, we will face the next challenge of integrating the learning goals of the majors with those of general education and of developing capstone experiences in all our undergraduate majors. At the graduate level, we will continue the reforms now underway that combine more stringent admissions standards with more demanding academic requirements. We must ensure that a John Jay degree is synonymous with excellence.

Our fourth challenge will be to educate the whole student. The most progressive educational institutions around the country are working to bridge the gap between activities inside and outside the classroom. Our Master Plan articulates the aspiration that a John Jay education will facilitate a “personal transformation” in our students. Meeting this goal will require us to link learning in the classroom to learning in the field, to bring our literature classes to shows on Broadway, to establish learning outcomes for student activities, to design internships as integral components of our advanced courses, to expose our students to the workings of the world. We have faculty and student development professionals who are eager to accept this challenge; we have partners outside the College who are eager to engage with our students and

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faculty; and, most important, we have students who are hungry for this enriched educational experience. They deserve nothing less.

Our fifth challenge is to expand our revenue base. We have made great progress in this direction. Over the past four years, we have more than tripled the amount of research funding secured by our faculty, from \$6 million to \$21 million. We have now held four successful annual gala dinners. At our dinner on October 21, we raised over a half million dollars which will support student scholarships. We recently launched the Jay Walk Campaign, encouraging students, faculty, alumni and other friends of the college to purchase a paver, a bench, or a tree in our new campus, called the Jay Walk. In the first several weeks, we have already raised \$35,000 toward student scholarships. Two-thirds of that has come from alumni, most of whom have never given to the college before. This is an important sign of alumni engagement, and we need to nurture this emerging culture of philanthropy among our alumni so that they will be here for the college during these difficult economic times. I was particularly pleased to learn that the husband of Lotte Feinberg, a beloved member of our faculty who passed away four and half years ago, has bought a bench in her memory. We encourage others – students, faculty, alumni, friends – to become involved in the Jay Walk Campaign.

We are also working closely with the Trustees of the John Jay College Foundation to redouble our fundraising efforts to realize significant increases in the amount of private giving to the College. We are very fortunate that Jules Kroll, a highly successful business entrepreneur, has agreed to serve as Chair of our Board and has recruited a stellar set of Trustees who have accepted the challenge of tapping into the private philanthropic resources of the City.

Two other initiatives hold great promise in terms of expanding our revenue base. The Task Force on John Jay Online will soon recommend a multi-year plan to significantly expand the e-learning capacity of the College. Within the next five years, we should offer most of our graduate programs online, and provide more options for our undergraduate students to take courses online. The potential for global reach, enhanced learning outcomes, and substantial revenue is enormous. Finally, the Task Force on the Year-Round College will recommend ways to use our physical plant during the winter and summer months so that John Jay students can accelerate the completion of their degrees, and students from other universities can come to John Jay to study with our world class faculty. It is clear that we must adopt new business models to expand our revenue base, and these initiatives hold great promise.

When we meet next year to reflect on the state of the College, we will be celebrating the opening of our spectacular new campus. We will be riding the wave of excitement that will come when our students first experience their new classrooms, our faculty set up their new offices and labs, our staff explore new professional spaces, our drama students first use the black box theater, and we hold formal and informal meetings outside on the Jay Walk during

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our new community hour. Amidst all this excitement, we must remember that the transformation of John Jay reflects more than a magnificent new building. We have been working hard over the past six years to transform the core of this college. We have remained true to the mission of “educating for justice,” but we have brought that mission up-to-date, with new standards, expanded faculty, and new and revitalized academic programs.

We have been working hard, and the results are very gratifying. But the ultimate sense of satisfaction comes from our students. There is a buzz about John Jay these days. We see it in the high school students– and their families – at Open House who are so excited about the new academic rigor at John Jay. We sense it from the hundreds of students who made presentations during Research and Creativity Week last year. We hear it from graduating seniors who wish they could stay at John Jay long enough to see these academic reforms take hold. We feel the excitement when the student journalists from The Sentinel cover college events with evident professionalism and pride. We can sense the school pride on the playing field when every team shows up to cheer on their fellow athletes. We understand the vitality and value of our College when hundreds of representatives of graduate and professional schools, and public and private sector employers from all over the country come to recruit our students.

Our students themselves are aware of our efforts on their behalf and appreciate how the changes we have made will contribute to their success. Here is the most recent illustration of their appreciation: when Amy Green and members of her Steering Committee presented the new vision for General Education to the Student Council two weeks ago, the proposal was greeted by a round of applause. The students recognized that the new plan provides for more student choice, and values student learning.

Our success is indeed measured by student success, and our students are ready for the new world we have designed together. Yes, we are facing difficult budget challenges ahead. But the work we have done – the work YOU have done – and the work we have yet to do, will prepare John Jay College for a fabulous 50th birthday in four more years. I thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for all you have done to make this possible.