

State of the College Address

President Jeremy Travis

November 22, 2011



To the faculty, students, staff and friends of John Jay College:

Welcome to the 2011 State of the College address. Each year, we take this occasion to come together as a community, to take stock of our progress, to review our report card on the ongoing transformation of John Jay, to identify some of the critical challenges ahead and to reaffirm our core mission of educating for justice. In the spirit of recommitment and renewal, I welcome you to this important gathering of the John Jay family.

This academic year got off to a great – if busy -- start. In late August, we welcomed the incoming freshman, graduate and transfer students with our most successful Orientation program ever. At that time, we launched a sharp, bold new brand for the College that has transformed our public image. A few weeks later, we held a solemn ceremony commemorating the events of September 11, 2001, and honoring the sacrifices of our alumni who lost their lives that day. The very next day we hosted a major policy address by Secretary of State Clinton. A few weeks later, we moved into the podium of our new building. Early in November we celebrated the opening of the building in a ceremony that featured Chancellor Goldstein, several elected officials, student and faculty leaders, and four descendants of John Jay. Classes started in the new building the next Monday. Then, ten days ago, we held a wildly successful Open House. Our community showed its best face – with 139 staff, 38 students and 79 faculty welcoming 1380 prospective students, a 40% increase over last year. To top off a great semester, all six of our sports teams made the playoffs! No wonder we are simultaneously exhausted and exhilarated – in three short months we have heralded a new chapter in the history of John Jay College. I thank everyone for their tireless efforts over these three months to launch this semester in such grand style.

We begin this new chapter with three important assets. The first is our spectacular new campus. In critical ways, our new building will change the future trajectory of our college. Consider these examples. We aspire to create a truly top notch science program – one that prepares students for study in graduate and medical schools, and provides serious research opportunities for our faculty. Those aspirations are now within reach because of the impressive new teaching and research labs in the new building. Our dream of creating an exciting undergraduate program in the performing arts is now closer to reality because of the new black box theater. Our prelaw program is enhanced by the new moot court room. In innumerable ways, our goal of creating a vibrant student life at John Jay has been significantly advanced. Our new building provides a professional suite of offices for student clubs and student government. Our new campus provides places where John Jay students can socialize with their friends, meet with their professors, read a book, or do research on their laptops.

Similarly, our efforts to recruit the very best faculty are more likely to succeed as we take candidates on tours of the new building. The elegant new conference room overlooking the Hudson River advances our vision of John Jay as a forum for important scholarly and policy discussions. When we launch our fund-raising campaign in the spring, we will showcase the new building and propose naming opportunities. For prospective students, staff and faculty, donors and colleagues alike, our breathtaking new building is simply a game-changer. We have come of age.

I recognize that we still face some challenges as we move into the new building. The October move went quite smoothly, thanks to Senior Vice President Pignatello and his staff, and I thank everyone involved for their patience and support. The next phase of the move – the opening of the tower -- will involve three times as many people and is inherently more complicated. I am aware that, over the past few weeks, a number of issues have surfaced related to the move. In most cases, they have been resolved through timely communication and consultation. I am particularly aware of the need to support the faculty and staff now working in North Hall, and have asked for a plan to ensure this environment is safe and conducive to good work. Let's continue to work together as a community to make the opening of the tower an occasion for celebration.

Our second new asset is our ability to plan for modest growth in our budget. As you know, this past June, the New York State Legislature authorized the City University of New York to enact modest tuition increases for the next five years, up to \$300 a year for a full-time undergraduate student. The enactment of a “rational tuition plan” by New York State represents a major accomplishment for Chancellor Goldstein and the University. This breakthrough means that our university can now begin the process of rebuilding from the budget cuts we experienced over the past three years.

Before describing how this new reality affects the future of John Jay, I would like to call your attention to three important provisions of the legislation. First, the state has agreed not to cut the University’s budget further, except in extraordinary financial circumstances. True to its word, the state budget office recently exempted CUNY from the latest round of budget reductions. Second, the state agreed that all revenue from the tuition increase will be directed to the University, not used to close the state’s budget gap, as has happened in the past. Finally, the legislation provides that students who are eligible for full tuition assistance under the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) will not pay the tuition increase. A little known fact is that 43% of our undergraduate students have their tuition fully covered by TAP and Pell. These students pay no tuition, and therefore they will pay no tuition increase. While we recognize that the tuition increase will impose a burden on many families, we should be proud to be associated with a University that has reaffirmed its historic commitment to providing the City’s poorest families with access to a high quality educational experience.

As we start our new chapter, the state’s five-year tuition policy allows us, for the first time, to develop multi-year plans for hiring of faculty and staff, recruitment of students, and strengthening our infrastructure. I cannot overemphasize the importance of this shift – we are pivoting from three years of budget cutbacks to five years of modest growth. Although the tuition increases will not fully make up for the cuts to our budget, we are now able to plan a future based on predictable budget increases. Accordingly, I have asked Provost Bowers to develop a multi-year faculty hiring plan, Senior Vice President Pignatello to develop a multi-year budget projection, and Vice President Saulnier to develop a multi-year enrollment plan. These plans, which will follow the priorities of our Master Plan, will be presented to our Budget and Planning Committee in the spring. I look forward to extensive discussions on these topics with the members of this important governance body.

As these plans are developed, our top priority will be the restoration of our faculty strength. I am pleased to announce that, if our current budget projections hold, we expect to hire more than forty additional faculty over the next three years. By fall 2014 our full

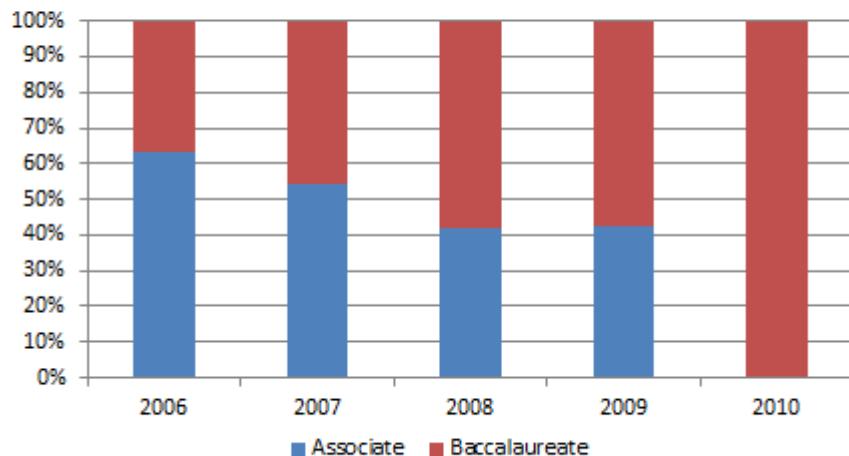
time faculty should number at least 435, close to the peak of our faculty strength three years ago. This is a critical measure of a revitalized academic institution.

We have a third important asset: By revising our admissions policies and re-imagining our academic programs, we have revitalized our core educational mission. This afternoon I would like to provide you a report card on these dimensions of the transformation of John Jay College.

Five years ago, we made a number of brave and ambitious decisions. We decided to phase out associate degree admissions and to introduce – or, more accurately re-introduce – liberal arts majors. At the same time, in order to maintain enrollment, we decided to expand baccalaureate and transfer admissions. Finally, we decided to create an alternative pathway for the associate degree students we would no longer admit. With support from the entire community, particularly from the Faculty Senate, headed by Professor Karen Kaplowitz, and the Council of Chairs, headed by Professor Harold Sullivan, leading to a historic vote at our College Council, we decided to simultaneously reform our student profile and our academic profile.

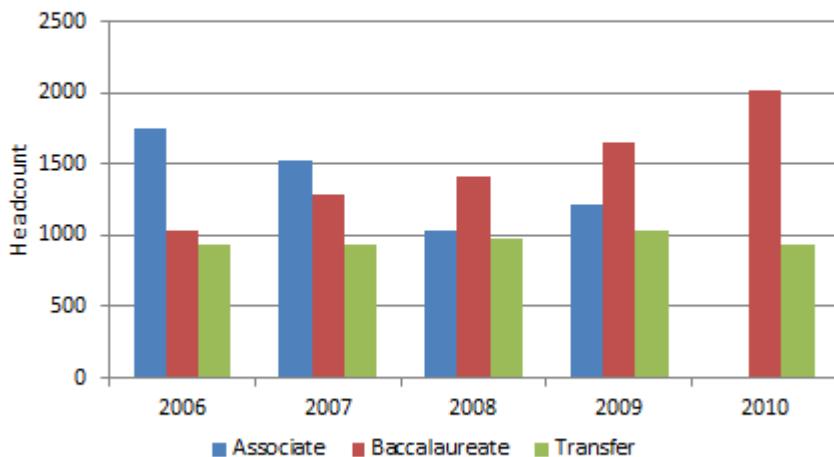
We can now report very good news on all fronts. As the first slide illustrates (Figure 1), we have accomplished our first goal. In fall 2006, over sixty percent of our incoming freshmen were accepted as associate degree students. In fall 2010, that percentage had dropped to zero and we welcomed our first ever all-baccalaureate class. At the same time, our enrollment has remained relatively steady.

Figure 1: Associate vs. Baccalaureate Admissions
Fall Semesters, 2006-2010



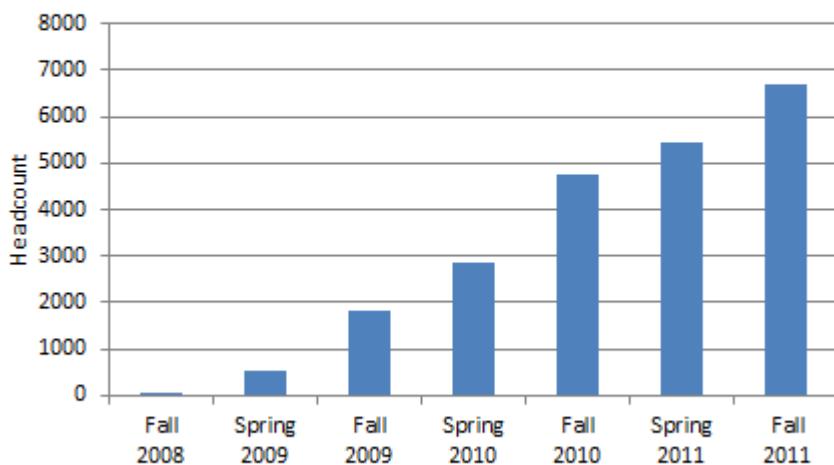
As the second slide shows (Figure 2), our baccalaureate admissions have increased by 96%. These are remarkable achievements.

Figure 2: Fall Undergraduate Admissions by Category, 2006-2010



As the third slide shows (Figure 3), our decision to create an alternative pathway for associate degree students – called the CUNY Justice Academy -- has also been enormously successful, in fact successful beyond our wildest dreams. This fall, there were nearly 6,700 students in the CUNY Justice Academy, majoring in criminal justice, forensic science, or forensic financial analysis in one of the six CUNY community colleges.

Figure 3: Justice Academy Enrollment, 2008-2011



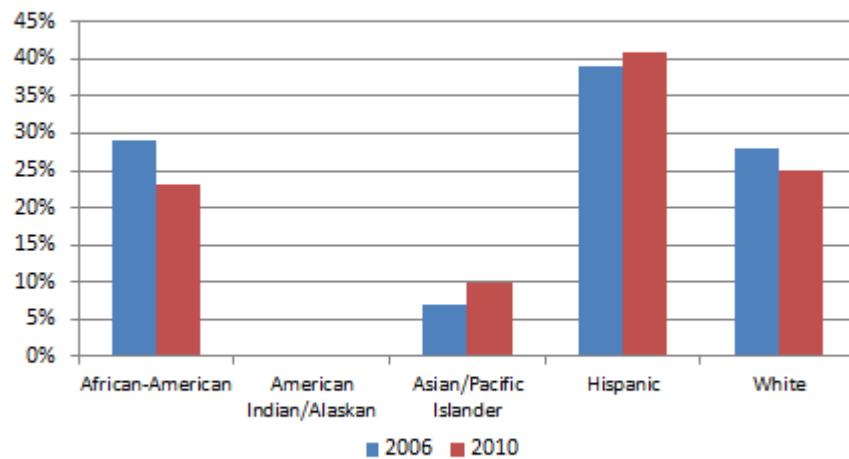
As you know, the Justice Academy is a joint degree program. If a Justice Academy student completes his or her associate degree, that student moves seamlessly to John Jay to

complete a baccalaureate program. We consider these students to be “John Jay students in waiting.” We welcomed our first cohort of more than 150 Justice Academy students this fall – I am pleased to report that, by all accounts, they are doing very well -- and expect an increasing flow of these students to our campus in years to come.

We should take great pride in these accomplishments. The fact that we have increased the incoming baccalaureate class by nearly 100 percent over four short years -- while raising admission standards -- is nothing short of astounding. Add to this our success in significantly expanding access to a criminal justice education to thousands of associate degree students and we can safely say what we have accomplished is a minor miracle. I wish to give credit to Richard Saulnier, our Vice President for Enrollment Management, Sandra Palleja, our Director of Undergraduate Admissions, and their staff for their creative and successful efforts to carry out this transition. With this success under our belts, we are now ready for the next phase of our strategic enrollment plan, which I will discuss in a moment.

You may recall that our Critical Choices discussions also reflected a concern about the demographic makeup of John Jay after we implemented our new enrollment policies. As you can see from the fourth slide (Figure 4), we have kept our promise to maintain the diversity of our student body, which I regard as one of our greatest strengths. Our undergraduate student body is just as diverse today as it was four years ago although, reflecting the city’s demographic changes, the mix has changed somewhat. Our percentage of Hispanic students has increased from 39% to 41% percent. The percentage of African-American students has declined from 29% to 23%. The Asian-American representation has increased from 7% to 10% in the same period. The white population has decreased from 28% to 25%.

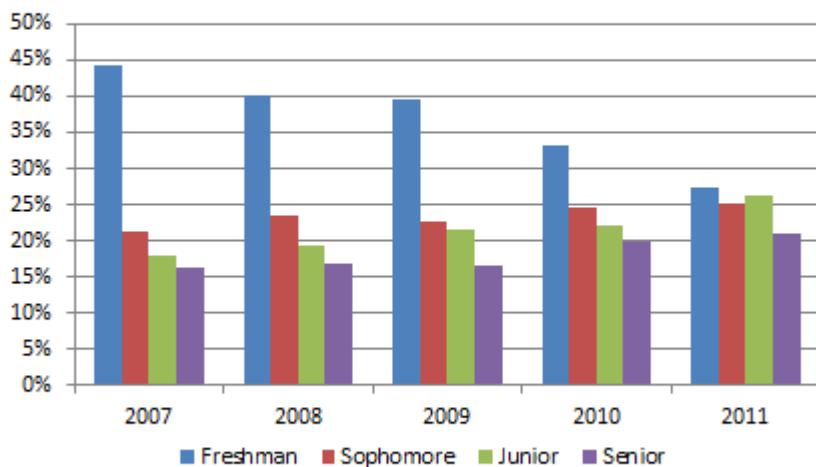
Figure 4: Ethnicity for Undergraduate Degree-Seeking Students, Fall 2006 & 2010



Then, and now, three-quarters of the undergraduate students at John Jay are students of color. We are the most racially diverse senior college within CUNY. We should be proud that we have kept our commitment to diversity.

I am pleased to share one more slide that shows a college transformed (Figure 5). Five years ago, 44% of our undergraduate students were freshmen. This reflected an unhealthy imbalance, with many students stuck in the first year, unable to move forward. Today 28% percent are freshmen, 25% sophomores, 26% juniors, and 21% seniors. This balanced distribution of students – more evenly spread across the years of undergraduate study – is a testament to our enrollment strategy, and to our efforts to retain students and to help them complete their degrees.

Figure 5: Percent Enrollment by Year in School, Fall 2007 through Fall 2011



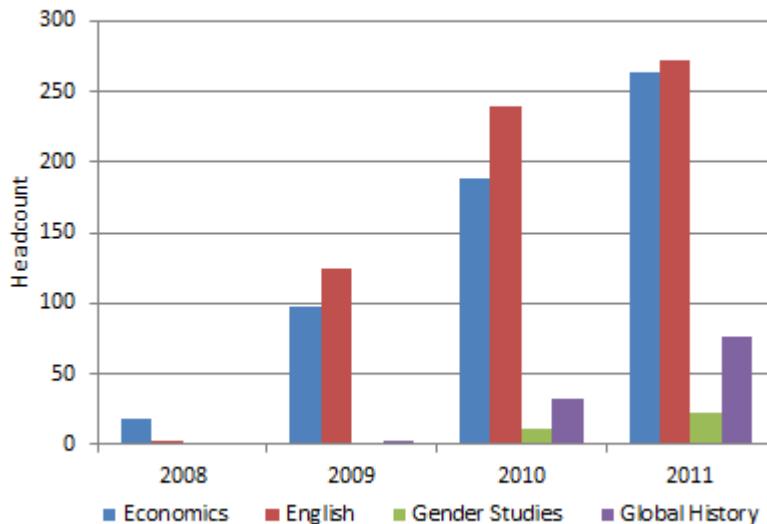
As we face the next chapter of our history, we must give serious thought to the implications of this new balance for our course offerings, our program of academic advisement, and our development of upper level courses. This is where we hoped to be, and we have arrived.

The second dimension of our Critical Choices decision was to offer liberal arts majors. This was a decision that resonated with the history of John Jay College. In the fiscal crisis of the 1970s, when John Jay was almost closed, the University decided to keep the college open on one condition, that we would no longer offer liberal arts majors. Overnight, thirteen majors were shut down – including English, history, sociology, chemistry and American Studies. For those of you who lived through that experience, it must have been traumatic. Five years ago, with critical support from Chancellor Goldstein and a significant financial investment from the University, we decided to return to the original vision of John Jay as a fully realized liberal arts college. The results have been exhilarating. We now offer exciting new majors in English, Economics, Global History, Gender Studies, Philosophy and Law and Society, and will offer more new majors in the future. As a result, our students have more options. Our liberal arts faculty are teaching and mentoring students majoring in their disciplines. This is a new day.

This afternoon I would like to present some data on the success of these new majors. As the next slide (Figure 6) shows, we have seen impressive growth. We now have over 250

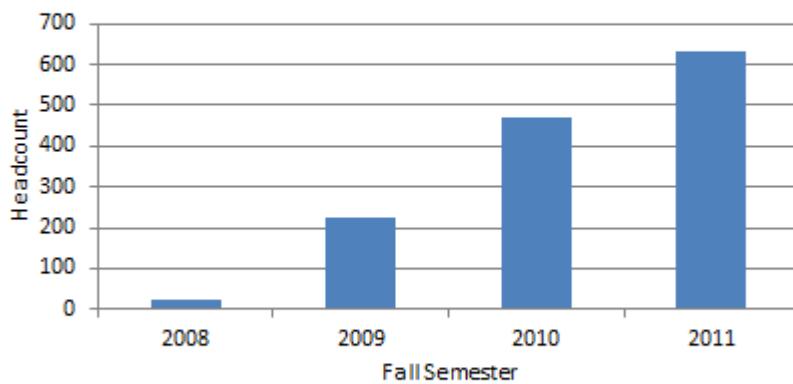
students majoring in English, slightly fewer in Economics, the first two majors to be offered. Gender Studies has 22 majors; Global History has 76.

Figure 6: New Major Growth 2008-2011



As the next slide (Figure 7) shows, after four years, we have over 600 students registered in these new majors, a number larger than our majors in Public Administration, International Criminal Justice, Fire Science, or Police Studies. When Law and Society and Philosophy pick up steam -- and other exciting majors such as Sociology, Anthropology, Latin American and Latino/a Studies, and Africana Studies take their rightful place in our academic program -- we will be able to say that we are a fully realized liberal arts college. This is a historic achievement.

Figure 7: Total New Major Growth
2008-2011

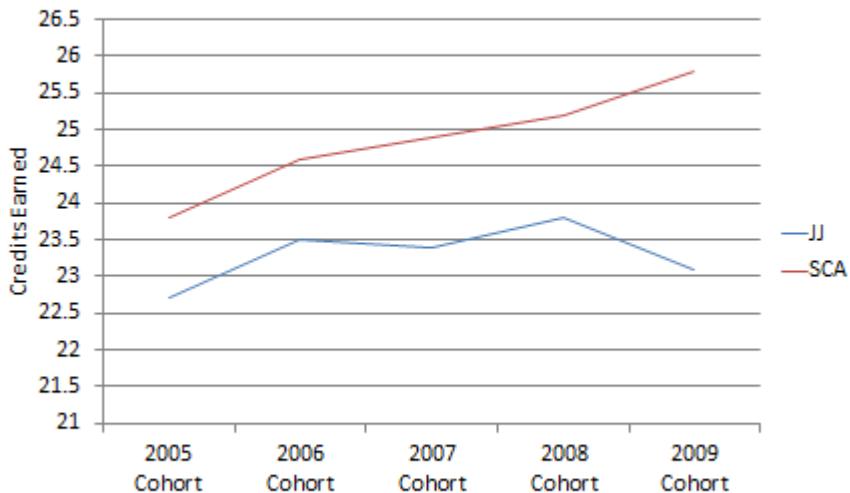


I wish to thank Provost Jane Bowers, Undergraduate Dean Anne Lopes, and Academic Director Kathy Killoran for guiding this process. Most importantly, I wish to commend the faculty who have poured their hearts and souls into the design of these majors. These distinctive and cutting edge majors have quickly gained national recognition. As important, our students are clearly responding enthusiastically to these exciting new opportunities.

I would like to shift gears now and ask you to consider some data on the success of our students. John Jay College is now a senior college within CUNY. We now measure ourselves – and measure the success of our students – against the experiences of other senior colleges. As you will see, when we make these comparisons, we see clearly the challenges that lie ahead. When we adopted our Master Plan a year ago, we designated “student success” as our top priority. So improving on these measures is a challenge we embraced.

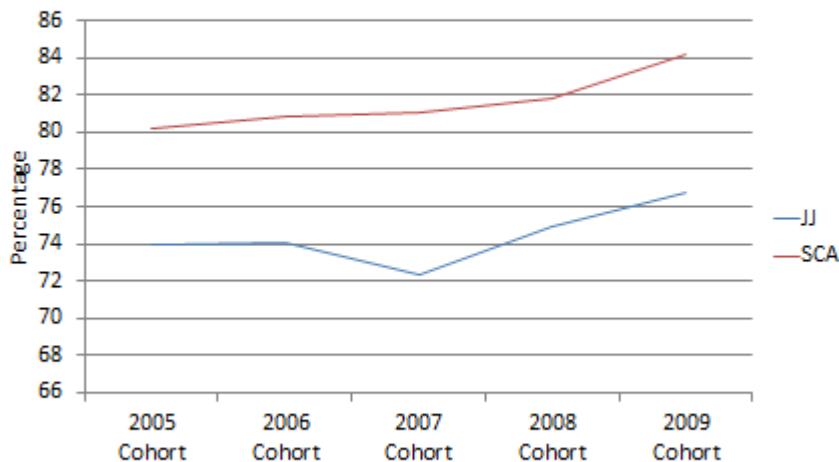
Let's begin by looking at the experience of our students in their first year. The first slide in this series (Figure 8) shows an important and early indicator of student success – credit accumulation in the first year. As you can see, John Jay students have been losing ground in this critical measure and they are falling far behind their counterparts in other senior colleges. In order for our students to succeed, they must have successful academic experiences in their freshman year.

Figure 8
Momentum: Credit Accumulation in First Year



The first year retention rate is another measure of early student success. As you can see from the next slide (Figure 9), we have seen improvement in the retention rate for full-time, first time students – from 72% in 2007 to 77% last year. Yet, compared to the senior college averages, we still have room for improvement. Their first year retention rate is about 84%. The literature on student success makes clear that the first year is a critically important year in determining overall graduation rates, and we have much work to do to increase success in the first year.

Figure 9: One-Year Retention



We have taken a number of steps to address these challenges. We have created the Office of the First Year Experience. We have invested in freshman year learning communities to get our students off to a good start studying with some of our best teachers. We have created a department of academic advisement to help our students plan their programs of study.

This year's budget reflects further investments in the first year experience. We will increase the number of academic advisers. We will hire more full time English faculty to concentrate on freshman composition. We will expand the number of full time mathematics faculty to concentrate on math foundations and quantitative reasoning. We need to strengthen the preparation of our students in these two critical areas. In the coming years, we will be tracking student success in the gateway courses of these disciplines to see improvement.

When we look at our graduation rates, we see some interesting, and illuminating, comparisons with our senior college colleagues. As the next slide shows (Figure 10), our four year graduation rate is quite comparable to the rates in other CUNY senior colleges – we all hover around 20%. Yet when we look at six-year rates (Figure 11), we see that John Jay students do considerably less well. For the cohort of full-time, first year baccalaureate students entering John Jay in 2004, the six-year graduation rate was about 40%, yet the senior college average was about 46%. This divergence is even more interesting because for the 2000 cohort, the John Jay rate and the Senior College average were nearly identical.

Figure 10: Four-Year Graduation Rate
Percentage of full-time first-time freshmen in baccalaureate programs graduating within four years

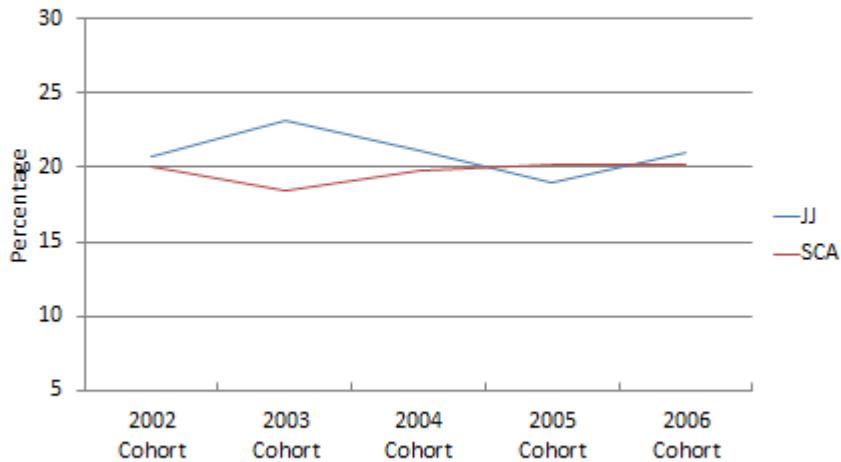
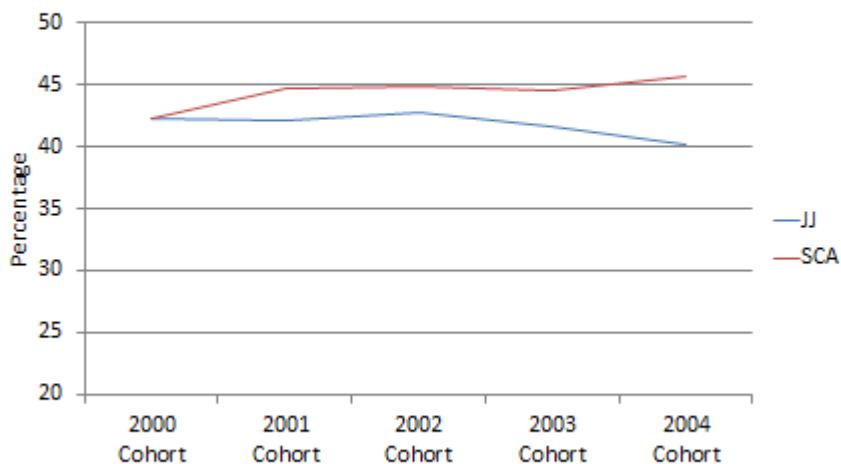


Figure 11: Six-Year Graduation Rate
Percentage of full-time first-time freshmen in baccalaureate programs graduating within six years



Two years ago in the State of the College address I challenged us to increase our six year graduation rate to 50% for the class graduating in 2014, our fiftieth anniversary. Although the data I just presented would suggest we have a long way to go, we have reasons to be optimistic. Last year, we graduated 2,175 students with BA or BS degrees, a record number, representing an increase of 23% percent over 2010. Yet we must continue to concentrate, laser-like, on the agenda of student success. This underscores the importance of our academic advisement initiative, particularly advisement in the majors. I commend the psychology and science departments for being the first two departments to participate

in the advisement initiative designed by Dean Anne Lopes. I look forward to a time when all academic departments with majors will implement comprehensive programs to provide academic advisement. It will take a while for these reforms to take hold, but I am confident we will achieve our goal.

As we look forward to the next chapter of the John Jay story, we are poised to build upon the successful implementation of our Critical Choices decisions. As a next step, we need to rethink our strategies for attracting, recruiting and enrolling our students. Our first challenge will be to expand the size of our student body. We simply cannot hire the faculty we need, provide our students the resources they deserve, and develop a first rate administrative and technological infrastructure for the college unless we increase our enrollment. Our second challenge will be to strengthen our efforts to recruit students who are prepared for the rigors of a college education. We need to match the preparedness of our students with the expectations of academic performance commensurate with our new status as a senior college and the rigorous standards of our academic programs.

How will we accomplish both goals – more students, and students who are better prepared for college? Two months ago, a team of senior John Jay administrators, led by Provost Bowers, spent three days working on a strategic enrollment plan with Michael Dolence, a nationally recognized expert who knows John Jay well. This team is now putting finishing touches on a new approach to enrollment that will engage prospective students early in the application process -- and engage them often -- as they are considering their options. This new strategy will systematically promote our academic programs, our new building, our vibrant student life, and our unique expertise on matters of justice. It will involve a broad cross section of our community in new ways, recognizing that recruiting the best students is everyone's business. Our goal is to persuade more prospective students, from New York City, the region and the country, who are prepared for a demanding college or graduate education, that John Jay is the best place for them to pursue their dreams. Next month, the team will provide a briefing to the budget and planning subcommittees on this work in progress, leading up to a full committee presentation, and a campus discussion in the spring. This is one of the most important – and exciting – initiatives underway at the College. In many ways, this represents the next step following our Critical Choices discussions five years ago. I look forward to a robust and constructive campus discussion about our future.

All of the ingredients for the next chapter of the John Jay story are in place. We have become a senior college, created exciting new academic programs, and opened a grand new building. With impressive leadership from Mayra Nieves, we have launched a cutting edge new brand. We are the beneficiaries of the State's decision to enact a rational tuition plan. We have nearly tripled our research funding. We will soon launch our own capital campaign. Our faculty are recognized as leaders in their disciplines. We are poised to begin development of new online programs and to launch our year-round college initiative. We have created new governance structures that have stood the test of time. Our Middle States self-study will show us areas needing additional improvement. Under the leadership of Vice President Eanes, we have created a vibrant student life, with more student clubs, a more engaged student body, and more activities than we can accommodate in our new Community Hour. Everything is in place.

As we start to rebuild our faculty, strengthen our administrative infrastructure, and restore services, we will continue to be guided by our Master Plan. We will keep our eye on the prize – promoting student success. We now have it within our power to create a world class college. Because we have worked so hard together to develop an elevating vision for our future -- and have worked so hard to implement that vision -- the John Jay story will someday take its place among the stories of academic institutions transformed.

I thank you for your contributions to that vision, and for your hard work. Because of you, we can safely say the future for John Jay College is bright.

I wish you all a wonderful Thanksgiving.

Thank you.