



State of the College Address

President Jeremy Travis

December 4, 2012

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

I welcome you to the 2012 State of the College address. This gathering of our college community was originally scheduled for October 30, a time when our region was reeling with the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy. Today, our College is open again, and we have completed our service as an evacuation center housing hundreds of refugees, but the scars caused by Sandy are still visible all around us. Students are struggling to stay abreast of their course work. Many faculty, students and staff cannot return to their homes; some are living in homeless shelters. Many have lost valuable possessions and have suffered deep financial setbacks. We meet today still mindful of our obligations to help those in need. I thank everyone who has contributed to the John Jay Cares program. I commend the members of our community who have reached out to others, in particular the faculty and professional staff helping our students to find their way through this crisis. We owe a special thanks to our public safety officers and facilities staff who managed the emergency shelter that provided a safe haven from this storm for so many vulnerable New Yorkers. In ways large and small, you have demonstrated the best qualities of the John Jay community.

The annual State of the College address provides an occasion for us to reflect on our progress in the transformation of John Jay, and look forward to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. It is also a time when we reaffirm our commitment to the elevating mission of our College –educating for justice – and celebrate the power of the idea that has animated John Jay College of Criminal Justice since our founding nearly fifty years ago.

One of the signature events of the past year was the Founding Generation Symposium. On March 27, 2012, we brought together some of the faculty, students and friends of John Jay from our Founding Generation. These are the visionary individuals who helped launch this educational experiment in 1964 and then, little more than a decade later, bonded together in a remarkable act of solidarity to save John Jay from the chopping block during the City's fiscal crisis. Many of those heroes and heroines of the John Jay story are still active in College affairs – Mike Wallace, Karen Kaplowitz, Blanche Wiesen Cook, Jerry Markowitz and Peter Dodenhoff lead the list. They and many others, including prominent alumni, remember those heady times and remain passionate advocates for the John Jay idea. As we look forward to the next fifty years, and realize that the College came close to extinction, we should pause to celebrate the members of that Founding Generation who created -- and then saved -- John Jay.

Last year, we witnessed many other milestone events. With appropriate fanfare, we opened our spectacular new building and experienced the power of a beautiful new campus to strengthen our sense of community. Our new building elevates us. With its airiness and openness, our new home is simply inspirational, conveying the central identity of John Jay as an institution committed to justice, transparency, and the public good. We celebrated our new building by hosting our biennial international conference on justice, security and human rights here at John Jay, bringing scholars and experts from more than three dozen countries to join our faculty in robust discussions on the challenges that face our world. Last year, we graduated our largest class in the history of John Jay and watched with deep satisfaction as nearly two thousand students – visibly proud of their personal and intellectual accomplishments -- walked across the stage at the Javits Center. In May, we launched a \$50 million dollar Campaign for the Future of

Justice, the first capital campaign in our history, and celebrated the news that we had already raised \$35 million. In many ways, the signature event was the ribbon cutting ceremony opening the doors to the Jay Walk. At long last, we finally have a campus. We are now more powerfully than we have always been – a community.

Last year was historic for another reason. The City University of New York completed the first year of a five-year plan, approved by the New York State Legislature on the recommendation of our Chancellor, Matthew Goldstein, to create a new era of financial stability for the colleges of CUNY. With this legislation, everything has changed. This five-year plan for modest annual tuition increases – a plan that holds our poorest students harmless and includes a state commitment not to cut CUNY's budget – allows us to envision a period of growth, following three years of budget cuts. This turn-around in our financial picture is perhaps the best news of a year with lots of good news. Now we can start to rebuild our faculty, strengthen our student services, make needed infrastructure investments, and build the John Jay of the second fifty years.

This afternoon I would like to provide a progress report on our vision for the John Jay of the future. Our vision is guided by our Master Plan, called *John Jay @ 50*. Our Master Plan commits us to achieving excellence in five domains -- student success, teaching, scholarship and creative work, strategic partnerships and institutional effectiveness. Today's progress report -- at the halfway mark in the Master Plan – borrows the framework of those aspirations. I hope to show how our investments have advanced our progress toward excellence, and to share my assessment of the areas needing improvement.

Student Success. Our Master Plan commits us to creating an “institutional culture that fosters intellectual and personal transformation in order that students achieve their academic and professional goals.” This goal is our first goal, our highest priority, our bottom line. We can be very proud of the progress we have made toward this lofty aspiration. The John Jay faculty have demonstrated heroic intellectual leadership and dedication in meeting this goal. Most importantly, our faculty have fundamentally re-imagined our General Education program – the core academic experience for our undergraduates. Every academic department and a vast majority of our faculty have been engaged in this historic effort. Today, as we celebrate the success of this five-year journey, I would like to commend Prof. Amy Green and other members of the General Education Task Force for guiding this effort; all members of the Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum and Academic Standards, with special thanks to the UCASC Chair Dean Anne Lopes and Executive Academic Director of Undergraduate Studies Kathy Killoran, Prof. Lisandro Pérez and other members of the General Education Subcommittee for their extraordinary service to the College; and all the faculty who have invested their intellectual energy in the design of new courses. Because of your hard work, our College Council is on track to review nearly 150 exciting General Education courses – new and old – that will constitute the foundational learning experience for our students. Over half of these were approved at the last two meetings of the Council. Because of this heroic work, our new General Education program will take effect in fall 2013.

I should also acknowledge that we have maintained this momentum in our General Education reform efforts at a time when the University was pursuing the Pathways initiative to reform

General Education across the university. I recognize that the Pathways initiative caused deep distress among our faculty, and I wish to express my appreciation for the extensive, sometimes sharp, yet ultimately constructive discussions we had on this topic last year. In this context, the near-unanimous decision by the College Council to approve the first set of new courses, after hearing an eloquent statement from faculty in opposition to Pathways, represented the best tradition of our College to come together to pursue what is best for our students.

The historic reform of our General Education program complements other important academic initiatives. We have added innovative new liberal arts majors in English, Economics, Global History, Gender Studies, Philosophy, and Law and Society. As we hoped, these majors are very attractive to our students –nearly one thousand students have declared those majors, representing almost 8% of all undergraduate students. As we developed these new majors, we have redesigned most of our existing majors – including our biggest ones, psychology, science, and the BA and BS in criminal justice. Again, let me commend the faculty for these significant reforms to our academic programs.

We have also strengthened our program of academic advisement – with the creation four years ago of an Academic Advisement Center, and the launch of a program of faculty advisement in the majors last year, piloted by Forensic Science, Forensic Psychology, English, Humanities and Justice, and Global History. For those who wish to pursue graduate study, we have opened new horizons. John Jay students have long pursued graduate degrees, but we now have students accepted into medical school, graduate schools of international affairs, and doctoral programs in English and biology. Last year John Jay students were accepted at more than 50 law schools, and awarded over \$3 million in financial assistance.

Taken together, these are the building blocks of the John Jay College of the future. No other senior college in the University has engaged in such a fundamental revitalization of the core undergraduate academic experience. I salute the faculty for this accomplishment. I also offer a special thanks to our Provost Jane Bowers who guided these efforts with a clear-eyed vision, commendable fortitude, and a deep devotion to the John Jay mission.

Our Master Plan also commits us to promoting a “more vibrant, engaged campus life that strengthens the sense of community, civility, social and environmental consciousness, and mutual respect in the College.” As anyone who sets foot on our campus can attest, our campus is alive with student energy. We now boast 43 student clubs, a third more than four years ago. Students working with our Office of Community Outreach and Service Learning organized campus-wide initiative to collect over 3,000 books for prison libraries, hosted a seminar with service providers on women offenders, and in a particularly fitting project, created a fruit and vegetable garden on the Jay Walk sharing the harvest with the college community. The student calendar now includes high energy events such as the Freshman Bash, a talent show called “John Jay’s Got Talent,” a Homecoming to celebrate our athletes, and the Treats for Troops campaign to support our troops overseas and veterans at home. Today, John Jay students are actively engaged in college governance bodies, vocal at Town Hall on a wide range of issues, and willing to question and challenge the faculty and administration on matters of student concern. We should be proud of our students’ commitment to John Jay, to their education, and to the cause of justice.

The Master Plan also embraces some specific goals regarding student success – year-to-year retention and graduation rates. Here we have some good news, and some remaining challenges. The very good news is the steady increase in retention rates. For the entering class of fall 2007, the one-year rate was 72.3%; four years later we had improved by more than six points and cut the gap between John Jay and the Senior College Average nearly in half. We have also seen impressive improvement in four-year graduation rates. A quarter (25.3%) of the students who started at John Jay as freshmen in 2007 graduated within four years, well above the senior college average and second among senior colleges. Furthermore, more than half (52.1%) of the students who transfer to John Jay graduate in four years, a rate higher than the Senior College Average. We still fall short in terms of the six-year graduation rate –39.4%, nearly seven percentage points below the Senior College Average – but our progress on the other metrics should give us confidence that we will soon reach our goal of a 50% six-year graduation rate¹. The results at the graduate level, however, are less encouraging. For those students, the four-year graduation rate is 58.9%, a drop of 6.6 percentage points over the past four years, and far below the CUNY average. Reversing this trend will be one of the major priorities for the College in the coming years.

We should be proud of the progress we have made toward building an “institutional culture” that promotes student success. To achieve this goal, we have made significant financial investments in faculty hiring, academic advisement, first year experience, and student affairs – and those investments are bearing fruit. It is because of these successes that Chancellor Goldstein decided to admit John Jay College to the prestigious Macaulay Honors College effective next fall. Yet we clearly have much work ahead. In the coming year, we will take a closer look at the data on student experiences to determine how to improve retention outcomes. Our retention plan, developed three years ago, will continue to provide the roadmap for our investments as we drill deeper to develop systems of support for students who are facing difficulties on their academic journey.

Teaching. Our Master Plan commits us to “making lifelong learning possible through effective pedagogy.” This is an elevating aspiration, one that calls on all members of our faculty to focus laser-like on the connection between their teaching and student learning. To determine “effectiveness” of our pedagogy, we must embrace a process of ongoing assessment. In my opinion, this is one of the areas at the College that has shown greatest improvement. Several years ago, we took the first steps to introduce a systematic approach to assessment. At that time, assessment was broadly misunderstood and, in some quarters, frankly resisted. In the intervening years, under the masterful leadership of Associate Provost Jim Llana, we have made tremendous progress. Now, each undergraduate major and graduate program has an assessment plan and has begun to gather data on student learning. Many are using results of assessment to improve student learning. At least 800 syllabi now have learning goals on them. Finally, a College-Wide Assessment Committee, chaired by a faculty member and with membership drawn from the faculty and professional staff, is in its second year reviewing assessment reports, developing best practices and guidelines, and in general promoting assessment across the campus, including among administrative units.

¹ This measure of graduation rates reflects the graduation of full-time, first time John Jay students who complete their degree programs at John Jay. It does not include those who begin part-time, or transfer to another college.

We still have a distance to travel before we can say we created a culture of assessment. But the building blocks are in place and we are taking other steps to improve teaching at John Jay. Last year, the Center for the Advancement of Teaching provided workshops on 30 topics with participation by nearly 200 of our faculty. Provost Bowers has created a Committee on Adjunct Affairs that will recommend measures to support the work of these critically important members of our faculty. Later this year, we will finalize a plan to modernize our system of student evaluations of faculty so individual faculty members can better track their progress. And next semester the Faculty Personnel Committee will complete its guidelines for evaluating teaching performance so that we can give appropriate recognition to excellence in teaching in the personnel decisions of the College.

Perhaps the most important initiative in this domain is the faculty hiring initiative. Earlier this semester, we introduced thirteen new faculty to the college community, four of whom were hired as lecturers in English and Mathematics. They represent this year's installment of a four-year plan to create a cadre of lecturers in English Composition and in Math Foundations and Quantitative Reasoning who are dedicated solely to achieving excellence in student learning at the introductory level. We expect that our students will be more likely to succeed in their majors and upper division courses – and in life after graduation – if they have mastered these skills in their first years at John Jay.

Last year, I announced a faculty hiring plan that would result in a net gain of 40 new faculty over the next three years, bringing us close to the peak of our faculty strength before the recession. Today I am pleased to modify that pledge – upwards. Because we have managed our financial resources well, and because of the University's commitment to returning tuition revenue to the College, we are now able to hire an additional 15 new faculty, for a net gain of fifty-five. When we include replacements of faculty who have left the College, we will likely be hiring at least 70 new faculty. This is a remarkable reality, one made possible by Chancellor Goldstein, Governor Cuomo and the state legislature, and our students who are paying modest tuition increases. Beyond the numbers, these new faculty will infuse energy, ideas and commitment into our classrooms and thereby enhance the learning experiences of our students.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge that some of our faculty have recently expressed their dissatisfaction with their experiences at John Jay, particularly regarding their teaching load. A recent survey of tenured faculty – called the COACHE survey ²-- provided a useful focus to these sentiments. Provost Bowers and I are concerned about these survey results and have committed to a course of action that seeks to better understand, and where possible, address these concerns. At the beginning of the semester, we met with the Faculty Senate to discuss the survey. Last month, Provost Bowers met with groups of tenured faculty for discussions led by Doug Katz, a facilitator we retained to help us get behind the numbers in the survey and to hear the thoughts and feelings that prompted the responses. We will continue this collaborative and open process of dialogue and problem solving, because we recognize the

²This survey is sponsored by the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE). The purpose of the survey is to gauge the perception of various factors that bear on the professional and personal lives of faculty and in so doing to get a sense of their job satisfaction, globally considered.

importance of the issues that have been so clearly brought to the surface through the COACHE survey.

Research, Scholarship and Creative Work. Eight years ago, I expressed a simple hope for John Jay College – that within the world-wide community of scholars, John Jay faculty would be recognized as intellectual leaders engaged in cutting edge research. John Jay faculty have long been acknowledged as preeminent scholars, yet we are now positioned to add depth and breadth to our scholarly profile. With the advent of 235 new faculty hired since 2004 – scholars credentialed by some of the best doctoral programs in the world -- the addition of new liberal arts majors, an emerging portfolio of interdisciplinary studies and global perspectives, and a new administrative infrastructure supporting faculty research, we are witnessing an explosion of faculty research and creative work. John Jay faculty now dominate the scholarly conferences of the American Society of Criminology, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, the American Psychology-Law Society and the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. John Jay’s annual Law and Literature conference has become THE gathering place for scholars in that field. John Jay faculty currently serve as editors or co-editors of five scholarly journals.

Last year, our faculty published 27 books. Individual faculty members gained recognition as well –Karen Terry for the release of her study of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church; Angelique Corthals, for her groundbreaking work using shotgun proteomics to diagnose disease in ancient mummies; John Matteson, for his biography of Margaret Fuller, which received the Ann M. Sperber award; Jana Arsovska, recipient of the W.E.B DuBois Fellowship from the National Institute of Justice; and Jock Young, honored with the British Society of Criminology Outstanding Achievement Award. And, using a more tangible yardstick, our faculty last year secured \$14.6 million in research grants from public and private sources. With our ambitious faculty hiring plan, our support for faculty research, and our cadre of senior scholars mentoring junior faculty, the future is very bright.

On the John Jay campus, research is not only the province of the faculty. There has been an explosion of interest in undergraduate research at John Jay since the inception of the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) two years ago. Through the work of OUR and the John Jay faculty, our students are learning how to make academic presentations, participate in panels and poster sessions, and conduct readings and exhibitions. The best illustration of this new approach is Research and Creativity Week, where our students proudly present their research findings, exhibit their creative work, and show the benefits of faculty mentoring. This is the best evidence of a new culture supporting research on our campus.

Strategic Partnerships. In our Master Plan we pledged we would build local, national and international partnerships that would provide opportunities for our faculty and students and support the mission of the College. In a wonderfully eloquent phrase from the Master Plan, we said we would “leverage the unique mission, capacity, and stature of the College to provide leadership and experience that advance justice and the public good.”

We should be proud to be affiliated with an institution that is committed to advancing justice. Unlike other goals of our Master Plan, this one is outward-looking, recognizing our potential to develop external relationships that promote just communities. Over the past year there has

been an explosion of activities on our campus, including: a forum on bullying with the Manhattan DA's Office and the United Federation of Teachers; a symposium on human trafficking; working with Norwegian officials, victims and journalists, a workshop on the mass murders in Oslo; with funding from the Tow Foundation, a two-day national conference on juvenile justice reform that included 31 journalists; with the Brennan Center for Justice, a forum on police oversight; with the Open Society Foundation, a US-UK conference on race and policing. In addition to these forums, we have inaugurated a symposium series which featured many John Jay faculty – including Cathy Spatz Widom on child abuse, Mike Wallace on political protest, David Kennedy on gang violence, and Monica Varsanyi on immigration. This year's line-up is similarly spectacular.

These strategic partnerships also provide invaluable opportunities for our students and faculty. Working with KPMG, Randy LaSalle is running an internship program in forensic financial analysis. Working with a network of justice reform organizations affiliated with the Vera Institute, Abby Stein, Caroline Reitz and Alisse Waterston have created exciting internship opportunities for our students. With funding from the Pinkerton Foundation, Ann Jacobs, Jeff Butts, and Michael Maxfield this year launched a new program with internship and research opportunities for students interested in juvenile justice.

The future in this domain of excellence is very exciting. As we continue our outreach to corporate and nonprofit partners, we will open up unexpected avenues for our students and faculty. The potential on the international front is particularly ripe. In this semester alone, the College has been engaged in serious discussions with universities and government agencies in China, Uruguay, Scotland, Georgia, Ukraine, Brazil, India, Korea, Ireland, South Africa, the Ivory Coast, Russia, Senegal, Turkey, Qatar, Greece and Mexico. I am certain this represents only a partial list. As we develop the international profile of John Jay we need to be thoughtful about how to assess these opportunities, and must cultivate only those partnerships that align with our mission. I look forward to the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Task Force on International Programs, chaired by Lisandro Pérez, and to the community conversation that will follow the release of that report early in the spring semester.

Institutional Effectiveness. In this final domain of excellence, we committed our College to a continuous process of self-study that fosters “reflection, improvement, and accountability.” A key dimension of this goal is to “align our resource allocation with our strategic priorities.” We have made significant progress in this direction. Our investments reflect our priorities, particularly our goal to promote student success and build our faculty strength. In an important turning point, we decided last year to invest in a new approach to recruiting our students. The strategic positioning initiative that I announced in last year's State of the College has paid handsome dividends. We set a goal of increasing our enrollment by 204 FTE's (full-time equivalents) and exceeded that goal by more than 100 FTE's. We also set a goal of attracting better prepared students, and we have met that goal – both SAT scores and high school averages are up compared to last year. We will continue on this path, now with the invaluable lift provided by our admission to the Macaulay Honors College. I am grateful for the support of our Budget and Planning Committee regarding these investments.

The goal of institutional effectiveness also embraces our essential services. John Jay has long been given high marks for the way the College is run. Last year, we were ranked first among CUNY Senior Colleges in three of four categories of student satisfaction and third in a fourth category. And we were able to accomplish this with one of the lowest ratios of funding-per-student in the University. This remarkable result – high quality services, with fewer resources than our peer institutions – reflects the hard work of the professional staff of the College, led by vice presidents Rob Pignatello, Richard Saulnier, our former colleague Berenecea Johnson Eanes, and our undergraduate dean, Anne Lopes. They would be the first to acknowledge the hard work of their staff and we are all indebted to them for providing excellent services to our students.

Achieving the goal of institutional effectiveness also requires careful attention to dimensions of College life that are not working well. Last year we faced a number of challenges. The Council of Chairs raised concerns about the quality of consultation between the Council and the administration; the Faculty Senate initiated a discussion on the status of the faculty that continues now with the response to the COACHE survey; students expressed concern about the hours that Club Row was open; the inauguration of the hybrid public safety system with peace officers and student officers, working in a new environment, raised concerns in a variety of quarters; faced with tuition hikes, students and others demanded answers to their questions, and some took to the streets to protest; many on our faculty actively opposed the University's Pathways initiative, and engaged me, the Provost and others on the difficult issues raised by that policy. We should be proud of the fact that our vision of shared governance, and our tradition of respectful airing of differing views, served us well again last year. Granted we have hard work ahead of us, but today we should recognize that we emerged from these discussions and debates as a stronger community.

As we approach our Fiftieth Anniversary, we can safely say that the state of our College is strong. Our transformation to a senior college is complete, our new campus has immeasurably enhanced the quality of community life, our momentum toward preeminence is palpable, our investment strategies are getting results, and our governance structures are tested and strong. It is fitting, therefore, that we are now completing our self-study and will soon welcome the team of visitors from the Middle States Commission as part of the re-accreditation process. We are ready to demonstrate our progress, ready to acknowledge our shortcomings, and ready to learn from the Commission areas that still need improvement. In short, we have prepared a strong foundation for the John Jay of the future. Our Founding Generation, some of whom are in this room today, can rest assured that this proud and important institution, with its unique mission of educating for justice, is prepared for the challenges of the next fifty years.

Thank you.