



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

**STATE OF THE COLLEGE  
ADDRESS**

Jeremy Travis  
President

November 5, 2008

I am honored to have this opportunity to address the John Jay College community about the state of our College.

On this important occasion, we welcome all sectors of our community -- our faculty, who provide the intellectual energy and strategic direction of our College; our students, represented today by their leaders, who come to John Jay with high hopes and inspirational motivation; our executive leadership, administrators, Higher Education Officers and staff who are making invaluable contributions to the transformation of John Jay. We are also joined today by the Board of Trustees of the John Jay College Foundation and the Board of Directors of the John Jay Alumni Association. Thank you all for being here.

We come together at an important moment, in the history of the nation, and in the history of John Jay College. With yesterday's election results, our country has turned the page and is embarking on an exciting new chapter in our experiment in democracy. As Americans, we sense the magnitude of the challenges we face. We recognize that the path ahead will be rocky. But we face the future with optimism.

We should also be optimistic about the future of our college. We know that the recent crisis in the financial markets has reduced tax revenues and created budget pressures for all public agencies. At John Jay, we have already taken steps to reduce our budget, and I expect more to follow. Yet today we should celebrate the fact that the College has never been stronger. We are better prepared than ever before to navigate the uncertain waters that lie ahead. I wish to reassure you that we will protect our academic programs and maintain our forward momentum. Now is not the time for us to trim our sails.

As we look forward, we reaffirm the power of our core mission -- "educating for justice." We take pride in John Jay's contributions to our City's quality of life and to our society's pursuit of justice. We celebrate our commitment to providing high caliber educational opportunities to the children of New York, drawn from our City's diverse communities, often the first in their families to attend college. They are full of ambition, eager to leave their mark. Hundreds of thousands of students have been touched by the John Jay experience. Many have reached leadership positions in their fields. All have made contributions to the health of our communities.

John Jay College enjoys priceless assets -- an elevating public mission, dedicated faculty, highly motivated students, loyal alumni, and a storied history. Building on these strengths, we decided four years ago to chart a new course for John Jay. We share an exciting new vision of our College as a global leader -- as an institution distinguished by the scholarship of our faculty, the rigor of our core educational experience, the innovative nature of our interdisciplinary programs, and our contributions to justice.

The past four years have been a time of enormous change at John Jay. We have all been working hard, in so many ways, to improve this institution that we love. We can take pride in the significant progress we have made toward becoming a preeminent academic institution. We should also be honest about the substantial distance we have yet to travel.

The transformation of the College consists of three interlocking initiatives – a fundamental change in our student profile, a historic faculty hiring program, and the revitalization of our academic programs.

### **Changing Our Student Profile.**

I am pleased to report that our plan to implement these reforms is on track. Let's look first at our decision to raise admissions standards by phasing out our associate degree admissions. By 2004, we had reached a critical tipping point – over sixty percent of our freshmen were admitted as associate degree students because they could not meet our baccalaureate standards. Yet baccalaureate and associate degree students were assigned to the same classes, and neither group was well served.

In May 2006, at a historic meeting of the College Council, we decided to reverse course – to raise our baccalaureate admission standards, and partner with the community colleges to educate associate degree students. This was a bold decision. In essence, we made a commitment to increase our baccalaureate freshman class from 1,027 in fall 2006, to 1,950 in fall 2011, a daunting challenge.

Here's the good news: Over the past two years, the incoming baccalaureate class has increased from 1,027 to 1,414, a 38% increase. We thank Vice President Saulnier and the recruitment and admissions team for this stunning success. Granted, we still face the challenge of enrolling 1,690 baccalaureate degree freshmen next year, 1900 in 2010, and 1950 the year after that. But, based on our success to date, I am confident we can make these targets, while maintaining our commitment to recruiting a diverse student body. Our experience is validating a powerful lesson learned at other universities: raising admissions standards attracts more students.

Our enrollment data reveal other important trends. This year, the number of sophomores increased by 9%, juniors by 7%, and seniors by 5%, demonstrating that we are making headway in increasing retention rates. The number of transfer students increased by 6%. These students, who started college elsewhere, recognized that John Jay is the place to be. The number of graduate students also rose slightly, by 1%. Finally, we should be proud of the fact that our doctoral programs have become the most sought-after in the country – our criminal justice program accepted only 22% of applicants, and our forensic psychology program accepted only 15%. Through these programs, we are preparing the next generation of scholars and teachers in these critical fields.

As we are changing the student profile at John Jay, we are also creating a network of new associate degree programs in CUNY's six community colleges. Under the leadership of Professors Todd Clear and Jeff Mellow in criminal justice and Professor Anthony Carpi in forensic science, John Jay faculty worked closely with their counterparts at our sister institutions to design curriculum in criminal justice and forensic science that allows for a seamless transition from the community colleges to John Jay. The first of these joint degree programs was approved by the state last spring; the rest should be approved this year. As these programs gain traction, we expect they will enroll hundreds of students, many of whom will come to John Jay to complete their studies.

We should be particularly proud of this accomplishment. At a time when student demand is high, we have responded with an unprecedented expansion of high quality criminal justice programs in our City. I am so pleased that we have reaffirmed our commitment to access and excellence.

Our work in reshaping the student profile at John Jay is far from done. We must reach our high targets for increasing freshman baccalaureate students. We must expand our graduate programs and raise standards for admission to those programs as well. We must expand the reach of the College by increasing the percent of students who come to John Jay from around the country and around the world and by developing online degree and certificate programs. Most importantly, as I shall discuss in a moment, we must increase the percent of our students who graduate. But we should take enormous pride in our progress to date – we are fundamentally changing the student profile at John Jay College.

### **Building a Strong Faculty.**

Let's turn our attention next to the faculty hiring dimension of the transformation of the College. Three years ago, we conducted an analysis showing that the number of full-time faculty at John Jay had not kept pace with the rapid growth of the student population, causing us to rely increasingly on part-time faculty. No academic institution can achieve greatness if more than half the instruction at the undergraduate level is provided by adjuncts. A strong complement of full time faculty can give John Jay students the kind of sustained attention they need to succeed academically. These faculty will provide the college with the scholarly recognition, the collegial creativity, the curricular integrity, the governance accountability and the national profile that we envision.

To achieve these goals, we have embarked on a historic faculty hiring initiative. We now have 419 full time faculty, 25% more than four years ago. Fully 35% of our faculty have been hired in the last four years. With 32 searches underway as we speak, we could well reach a new milestone of 422 full time faculty in fall 2009. We are indebted to our Chancellor, Matthew Goldstein, for rectifying decades of neglect and investing scarce CUNY resources in the revitalization of our faculty. I thank the John Jay faculty leadership for helping us shape the winning arguments that supported this investment. And I salute our faculty for rising to the challenge of recruiting, interviewing, and hiring new colleagues at this unprecedented pace.

But the story is far more impressive than the numbers. Many of you were sitting in this theater a month ago as we welcomed our newest incoming faculty class. Credentialed by the leading doctoral programs in the world, they are committed to scholarship that crosses disciplinary boundaries, and are energized by the opportunity to teach our students. They reflect an inspirational diversity of race, ethnicity, religion and nationality and are committed to our vision for the future of John Jay. We are so pleased they decided to join our community.

When I came to John Jay four years ago, I committed the College to the goal of becoming the preeminent research institution in our field. I believe strongly that John Jay will achieve prominence only if we succeed in building a strong research identity. What does success look like? John Jay faculty should be recognized as the leading scholars in their disciplines.

They should be editing the most prestigious journals, leading national professional associations, publishing cutting edge books and articles, conducting important scientific studies and winning national prizes. They should be competing for, and securing, the most competitive research grants from federal institutes and national foundations. Our undergraduate and graduate programs should be infused with research activities. Our campus should be abuzz with forums and conferences bringing prominent scholars together with practitioners, policy makers, journalists and elected officials. Our faculty should be quoted often in the national and local media, providing scholarly commentary on the issues of the day.

We have made stunning progress. Nearly four years ago, we created the Office for the Advancement of Research, headed up by a Dean of Research, Dr. James Levine, to support our faculty as they seek funding for their research. The results are now in. In 2004-2005, we raised \$1.2 million in research funding; in 2007-2008, we raised \$6.1 million, a breathtaking 500% increase. Here's another way to understand this accomplishment: in the 2004-2005 academic year, we raised \$19,000 per faculty member; by last year (2007-2008), that had doubled, and we raised \$41,000 per faculty member. A final metric: John Jay now ranks fourth among CUNY's senior and comprehensive colleges in terms of research funding, behind City College, Hunter and Queens, but ahead of Lehman, Brooklyn, Staten Island, Medgar Evers, York, New York City Tech, and Baruch.

We can track our progress toward research prominence in metrics other than money. Our faculty hold leadership positions in the American Society of Criminology, the American Law-Psychology Society, and the American Anthropological Association. Last year, our faculty published thirty-one books, including one by John Matteson that won the Pulitzer Prize for Biography. The Chronicle of Higher Education, which measures scholarly output to determine the strength of doctoral programs, ranks the John Jay doctoral program in criminal justice as eighth in the nation.

Our centers and institutes have played an important role in raising funds and improving the research profile of the College. They are tackling some of the most pressing issues facing the country, including terrorism, human rights, race and policing, criminal justice ethics, cybercrime, emergency response, gang violence, and juvenile justice. More importantly, these centers and institutes provide unparalleled opportunities for our students and faculty to engage with some of the best minds in the country. Much of the increasing influence and reputation of John Jay around the country can be attributed to the outstanding work of our colleagues who are leading these centers and institutes.

Our aspirations to be known as a world-class research institution will be realized only if we infuse a research dimension into our graduate and undergraduate curriculum. We have made substantial progress on this agenda at the undergraduate level. One of the joys of the spring season is attending the presentations of our McNair Scholars and our Honors Program students, and viewing the poster sessions of our undergraduate students studying forensic psychology, forensic science, or international criminal justice. Another highlight is the annual reading of student writing, collected in John Jay's Finest. We recently initiated annual presentations of the research of our master's degree students in forensic psychology. Yet we can do much better, both on the undergraduate and master's level, to ensure that all

students are engaged in problem-solving through academic inquiry and are provided with multiple opportunities to communicate their findings to their peers and to others in the college community and beyond.

As we promote the research accomplishments of our faculty, inside and outside the classroom, we must also increase the interactions between our stellar full-time faculty and our students. One metric that we look to in this regard is the number of classroom hours taught by a college's "veteran" – or tenured – faculty. On this metric, John Jay ranks last in the University. On average, our veteran faculty teach only 6.9 credit hours a semester. Other CUNY institutions with much larger research programs rank higher – 9.3 for City College, 7.4 for Queens College, and 7.1 for Hunter College. The CUNY average for senior colleges is 8.6 credit hours a semester. I am confident that in the next few years, under the leadership of Provost Bowers, we will make significant improvements in this area. I also know this is hard work and appreciate the contributions that everyone is making to reach this goal.

### **Revitalizing Our Academic Programs.**

The third dimension of the transformation of John Jay is the revitalization of our academic programs. I speak for many when I say that John Jay's academic programs needed an overhaul. Our majors had been artificially constrained, by a thirty-year old CUNY Board resolution, to programs directly tied to criminal justice. Some of our core programs were overdue for curricular revisions. Others had not been accredited by national bodies. For still others, the recommendations of external review committees had not been heeded. As a result, the College was hampered in the pursuit of academic excellence. We had difficulty attracting first rate faculty. Intellectually curious students who might have come to John Jay pursued their college careers elsewhere. Some John Jay students left for other colleges that offered a wider array of majors.

Today, we are witnessing a remarkable burst of creative energy as our faculty and academic leaders rise to the challenge of expanding our academic programs. We now offer two exciting new majors – in Economics and English – with majors in Global History, Gender Studies, Philosophy and Latin American Studies likely to be approved this year. Not far behind are majors in Sociology, Anthropology, Law and Society, Chemistry, Community Justice, and Urban Studies. We are creating new minors in journalism, creative writing, counseling, art, and music. At the graduate level, we now offer a new degree in Forensic Mental Health Counseling, are seeking approval for a degree in International Crime and Justice, and are developing other graduate degrees and certificates. We will soon offer a robust and distinctive set of academic programs that challenge our students and draw upon the best in our faculty.

The revitalization of our existing undergraduate curriculum is proceeding at a brisk pace. This year, we will finalize the design of our new Honors Program. We will consider the recommendations of a faculty task force to reform our General Education curriculum. We will design a First Year Experience, building on the innovative learning communities piloted over the past three years, and the exciting (un)common reading program called the Subway Series inaugurated this fall. Following a fundamental redesign two years ago, our forensic

science program is now undergoing a long overdue national accreditation. Our mathematics faculty, working with Interim Dean Jose Luis Morin, are completing a similar redesign of our math offerings. The psychology department has revamped its prestigious Forensic Psychology major to give students the strongest possible foundation in psychology. Finally, we are providing overdue support for teaching and learning at John Jay. The new Center for the Advancement of Teaching is engaged in an exciting program of faculty development. We have revitalized the Math/Science Resource Center and created new standards for writing intensive courses.

We still face significant challenges in strengthening our academic programs. This year we take a close look at our master's degrees, following the work of the President's Advisory Committee on Graduate Studies. In my view, we need to raise standards for some of those programs, strengthen the research and writing requirements, and focus on graduation rates. We also need to strengthen our criminal justice major. This major serves the largest number of students, and has not been revised for nearly a decade, despite a 2001 external review that recommended changes. As a result, it has fallen behind similar programs offered by our competitors. It is critically important that we breathe life into that major and establish our national leadership in criminal justice education. Provost Bowers will undertake a review of the relationship between this major and our other criminal justice offerings. John Jay should be setting the pace for criminal justice education around the country and we have our work cut out for us to reach that goal.

### **Supporting Student Success.**

As we redefine our student profile, strengthen our full-time faculty, and revitalize our academic programs, we stand ready to meet our most important challenge -- to improve the rate of student success for those students who entrust us with their dreams for a quality education. Too many of the students who come through our front doors never graduate, never walk across the stage at Madison Square Garden to get their diploma. The data paint a very disturbing picture: for those baccalaureate students who start at John Jay, only 42% graduate from John Jay within six years, compared to 45% for all CUNY senior colleges. For those students who are enrolled in masters programs, only 55% graduate within four years, compared to 69% for all CUNY senior colleges.

I believe we can -- and should -- do much better by our students. Other institutions, many of them urban commuter campuses like John Jay, have significantly increased their retention and graduation rates. The evaluation literature reveals one overarching lesson: increasing retention and graduation rates requires a college-wide effort.

We should actively and explicitly embrace this commitment to student success. We should challenge ourselves to meet a specific, measurable goal: by the time John Jay celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014, we will raise our six-year graduation rate for baccalaureate students above 50%, and the four-year rate for graduate students above 66%. And once we meet these goals, we should set our sights even higher.

I am certain we can reach these milestones. To help us focus our efforts, we have retained the services of a consulting firm, Keeling Associates, which played a key role in the nationally recognized retention initiative at Georgia State University. Georgia State found

that by strengthening student life programs, implementing effective learning assessment strategies, and improving the quality of its academic programs, the overall rates of academic persistence and student retention increased. If they could achieve these results in the Peach Tree State, we can achieve them in the Big Apple. This will be our top priority in the coming years.

We have already taken some important steps in the right direction. One of the critical shortcomings at John Jay has been the absence of an academic advisement program. This year, we start to rectify this situation. We have hired a Director of Academic Advisement, Dr. Sumaya Villanueva, and will shortly hire the College's first three academic advisers. Last year, we instituted a declaration of major requirement for upper sophomores. This year, we are developing an initiative to bring faculty and students together at this important moment in our students' academic careers, the moment they decide their academic future. We have appointed Dr. Ma'at Lewis Coles to revamp our counseling program to focus on supporting our students, and Ms. Kate Szur to design a First Year Experience that sets our students on a successful journey. These initiatives will undoubtedly help improve retention and graduation rates, but we know that much more will be required. Over the coming year, the entire community will be engaged in designing and implementing a robust program to support student success.

### **Revamping the Infrastructure of the College.**

Before closing, I would like to comment on three other dimensions of the transformation of the College, each of them critical to our institutional success. First, we have made significant progress in redesigning our student development program. Under the leadership of Vice President Eanes, and working closely with our students, we have modernized the charter of student governance, streamlined the process for certifying student clubs, strengthened and clarified the role of our counseling department, crafted a comprehensive strategy to respond to students in crisis, and created a first-rate student leadership program. The next few years will see continuing improvement, as we upgrade the career services office, overhaul the athletics program, and, after a long absence, publish a high quality student newspaper.

Second, we have made progress in improving the administrative infrastructure of the College. Under the leadership of Senior Vice President Pignatello and our Chief Information Officer Praveen Panchal, we have brought our technology services into the modern era. The College's new web site, still several months from completion, is classy, engaging, and informative. Our communications program – including the @ *John Jay* newsletter, the *John Jay Magazine*, the online *Alumni News*, *Inside John Jay*, and other publications – has received high marks for design and content. I recognize that we still have room for improvement in many of our basic administrative services, where resources have not kept pace with demand, but we are on the path to becoming a high-functioning institution.

We have created a first rate Board of Directors of the John Jay College Foundation, led by Jules Kroll, and many Directors of our Board are here with us today. Already, the Foundation has held two successful fund-raising dinners, and two prominent members of our Board – Jack Rudin and Patricia Cornwell – have each made one million dollar gifts to

the College. The Board has set the goal of raising \$5 million by the end of this academic year, and has already secured \$3.7 million toward that goal. We will only achieve our dreams for this college if we have a serious fund-raising capacity, and I am so grateful to our Board, and to Vice President Friedler, for their contributions to this effort.

Finally, we should celebrate the progress we have made in the most critical infrastructure area – our systems of governance. For an academic institution to thrive, it must make decisions in ways that reflect the values of transparency, collegiality and accountability. With lots of hard work, we have now created modern systems of accountability and governance. Just this past year we created an online Compendium of Policies and Procedures, wrote Promotion Guidelines for our faculty, and empowered our faculty to create four new academic departments. Underlying all of these reforms is our new Charter of Governance, approved last spring after two years of work. This new Charter creates a Budget and Planning Committee with faculty, staff and students represented; expands the College Council so that a majority of its members are faculty; strengthens the governance structure for our graduate programs and our undergraduate majors; combines our curriculum and standards committees; and strengthens our Faculty Personnel Committee. We are already seeing the benefits of these new governance structures; they provide an essential foundation for the work that lies ahead. I wish to thank Prof. Kaplowitz, President of the Faculty Senate, Prof. Sullivan, Chair of the Council of Chairs, and Rosemarie Maldonado, Counsel to the President, for their leadership in charting the course toward a new system of governance for John Jay.

Forty-four years ago, in 1964, a small group of educators and police reformers came together to share their dream of a liberal arts college for police officers. These conversations gave birth to an educational experiment that would be called the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Their idea was, simply put, a stroke of genius. They shared the radical belief that a college education – a liberal arts education -- would prepare students to be better police officers and better citizens. That, in essence, is the John Jay idea, captured in the phrase “educating for justice.”

We come together today as the custodians of the John Jay idea. I hope you agree that the founders of this College, some of whom are in this room, would be pleased with the trajectory of their revolutionary idea. Today, the state of John Jay College is strong. This strength prepares us for the uncertain times that lie ahead. And the future of our College is bright.

In 2014, we will gather again to celebrate the first half century of this College. Perhaps we will meet under the trees on our new Commons, the urban campus that lies between Haaren Hall and our new building rising over Eleventh Avenue. We will look up at the Moot Court room, point out the new science labs, enjoy the view of the Hudson River, celebrate the record high graduation rates of our students, and marvel at the international reputation and influence of this remarkable institution.

The students entering John Jay in 2014 will share an exciting first year experience. Some will join the honors program; many will study abroad with John Jay faculty. They will all have academic advisers and will choose from a rich array of major and minors. They will be

mentored by the best faculty, work in their labs, and assist with their research grants. After these students graduate from John Jay, they will become police officers, lawyers, professors, human rights activists, forensic scientists, novelists, social workers, doctors, politicians, clinical psychologists, firefighters and, yes, even community organizers. They will leave John Jay prepared to be citizens of the world.

On behalf of those students, I thank you for the hard work you are doing today. Because of you, this vision of John Jay is within reach. This is the enduring vision of those dreamers of 1964 who aspired to create an institution of consequence, who hoped that this College, John Jay College, would prepare future generations to meet the challenges of justice.

Thank you. Please join me for a reception in the Theatre Lobby.