



Karol V. Mason
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To: The John Jay College Community
Re: Welcome Back

As the Spring 2024 semester begins, I'd like to offer a warm welcome to our returning students, faculty, and staff, and extend a special welcome to all of our new students. It's going to be an exciting semester, one in which we can all learn from each other and build on our achievements. I'd like to take this opportunity to share with you some updates from our community.

Christopher Shults, Ph.D., joined the College as Vice President for [Institutional Effectiveness and Strategy](#). Dr. Shults earned his doctorate of philosophy in higher education from the University of Michigan, his higher education master's degree also from the University of Michigan, and his bachelor's degree in psychology from Morgan State University. He comes to John Jay after serving as the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning at Borough of Manhattan Community College. "It's my hope to guide the College's efforts to operationalize and expand what it means to educate for justice. I look forward to collaborating with students, faculty, administrators, staff, and external partners to strengthen the College's powerful impact in New York City and beyond," says Shults. "In leading this new division, one of my top priorities is to partner with the entire Bloodhound community to deepen John Jay's reputation as a national model for student success."

Andre Ward was appointed the Executive Director of the [Institute for Justice and Opportunity](#) (I.J.O.). He obtained his master's degree in social work from Lehman College and his bachelor's degree in social work from Medgar Evers College. He anticipates earning his doctorate of social work from the University of Southern California this May. Ward comes to us with exceptional leadership, management, and programmatic expertise, along with a deep understanding of the criminal legal system. His work at the Fortune Society, as the Associate Vice President of Policy at the David Rothenberg Center for Public Policy, was nationally recognized as being innovative and transformative. "I'm excited to empower and help students achieve academic success—regardless of their past interactions with the criminal legal system," says Ward. "In my work with I.J.O., I want to give students the resources they need to become co-creators of public safety while positively contributing to their families and communities."

After four years at John Jay College, **Tony Balkissoon**, Vice President and Executive Counsel, is moving on to join the civil rights litigation firm of Neufeld Scheck Brustin Hoffmann & Freudenberger. He looks forward to representing wrongfully convicted individuals seeking damages for spending significant amounts of time imprisoned for crimes they did not commit. "I'm proud of being a part of a community who pulled together, pivoted, and navigated the extraordinary challenges of the pandemic. I witnessed the resilience of the students and unwavering dedication of the faculty and staff," says Balkissoon. "I continue to believe in the mission of the institution and plan to stay closely connected to John Jay College."

Please join me in welcoming Vice President Shults and Executive Director Ward, and in wishing Vice President Balkissoon much success in his continued justice-focused work.

We have a rich and rewarding semester ahead of us. Please engage in all the opportunities our vibrant community offers, check out our [Weeks of Welcome](#) events, and keep inspiring each other to be fierce advocates for justice. Best wishes for a safe and successful spring semester.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karol V. Mason". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karol V. Mason
President
John Jay College of Criminal Justice

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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