



ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

April 9, 2024

Dear Academic Affairs Colleagues,

“It’s so good to be together!” – I have heard that phrase a lot lately at receptions and events as faculty and students get together. It’s true. But it shouldn’t take a once-in-every-twenty-years eclipse to bring us together. I would argue that a college degree IS a once in a lifetime experience for our students, as it was for us, that brings people together intentionally to develop relationships that change their lives.

The single factor that makes for an excellent college education is human relationships (Felton & Lambert 2020). Campus life and classroom experiences are central to fostering quality relationships. Students learn not just from professors but from staff and administrators and importantly, from one another. These interactions enable growth, self-understanding, and a deeper appreciation for humanity.

In today’s update I will share my plans for how we will try to create more relationship-rich learning experiences, relationship-rich faculty lunches, and some of the wonderful reflections from the 50-year anniversary of the Interdisciplinary Studies Program and the Grants Reception.

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Limiting Online Courses for Undergraduates

John Jay is not an online college. We have excellent fully online graduate programs, and we offer some courses online for undergraduates. When done well – courses designed with an Instructional Designer from DOES – online courses can be outstanding educational experiences.

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However, the bachelor's degrees our students are earning are more than their online courses. Students should be meeting other students in person and forming friendships, collaborating with students in person, speaking in front of their classes, meeting with their professors in office hours, and being confronted with experiences and opinions that make them uncomfortable and in turn, think. Those experiences are a fundamental part of the undergraduate experience we offer.

It has been hard to scale back online offerings from the pandemic, but we need to make a concerted effort to steer back to in-person learning for our students' sake. As such, I have asked that undergraduate course schedules for the fall aim for 80% of courses in person and 20% online.



Food for Thought – Faculty Lunches

John Jay faculty are a dynamic and rich community of experts. Come learn from them and discuss big ideas in a multitude of fields. Every month we invite one Academic Department to host a lunch for all faculty in which they share a few “big ideas” from their field. All faculty are welcome to attend, enjoy a free lunch, and talk through big ideas with other faculty.

Our inaugural FOOD FOR THOUGHT will be hosted by the Psychology Department on April 17 during CH. Watch for Dean Angela Crossman's announcement to RSVP

Please join us and enjoy the pleasures of being a professor in intellectual community.

Interdisciplinary Studies Program Celebrates 50 Years

Retirees, alumni, and current faculty and students came together to celebrate 50 years of interdisciplinary teaching and learning in a program designed to model and teach critical thinking and dialogue across difference.

Now a department and a general education program, the ISP program has taught generations of John Jay students who attest to its power to



convince students that their own thoughts are important.

ISP uses a team-teaching model and is a wonderful way to improve your teaching and be in community. If you are looking for ways to retool or think deeply about your teaching, I urge you to try a semester or two of team teaching with the outstanding educators in the ISP department.



Faculty and Staff Celebrate \$30M in Grants

In 2023-2023 dozens of faculty and staff brought in almost \$30 million in federal, state, city, and private grants. Last week we celebrated these innovative and hard-working PIs at a reception hosted by President Mason, Dean of Research Anthony Carpi, and me.

It was good to be together.