

AA Update: Winter Solstice



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Action Items



ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UPDATE December 20, 2022

Dear Academic Affairs Colleagues,

Tomorrow marks the winter solstice, a day I think of as an end and a beginning, much like our winter break. While ends are times for looking back and accounting, beginnings are times to dream and plan. Over January Academic Affairs leadership will be doing both: looking at successes and areas for improvement from the fall semester as well as planning to keep advancing academic excellence, student success, faculty success and administrative excellence.

Sometimes change is so incremental you can't see it.

That's why I had to laugh when Professor Jennifer Rutledge of Political Science commented in the margins of our Middle States Executive Summary draft, "We sound so awesome!! Why does every meeting I attend seem so full of doom and gloom?" Jennifer's comment is funny because it is so familiar. We have all been in meetings where the dark overshadows the light, or in moments of teaching or research where progress slumps down in a corner and refuses to show its head.

But those moments are only half-truths and frequently ephemeral. Because our Middle States Self Study had to be based on documented evidence, what Professor Rutledge observed is not a falsely sunny narrative; it is a hard-won series of changes and improvements in which many of us took part.

As we head into the darkest day of the year, an end of sorts, I want to share the two paragraphs from the self-study that summarize what we have achieved in the last ten years and who we are now.

John Jay has an impressive record as a transformational force for historically under-represented students. Our four-year graduation rates for both Hispanic and Black students exceed the national averages. Transfer students make up two-thirds of our student population, and we deliver for them: with 68% of transfer students graduating in four years, John Jay has the highest four-year transfer student graduation rate in the City University of New York (CUNY) and in New York State. Further, John Jay ranks in the top 10 among American universities in student social mobility according to the pioneering research led by Professor of Economics Raj Chetty of Harvard University, ranks fifth in the nation on the Brookings Institute's Bottom-to-Top Mobility Ranking 2020, and ranks in the top 20 on the 2021 Social Mobility Index.

In the past ten years, John Jay has developed into a research force within CUNY and an important voice in national debates about criminal justice and policing reform. At the same time and with intentional focus, the College has transformed into an innovative leader in student support and retention, with enviably growing graduation rates. While there is still more to do to increase our overall funding, stability and staffing, this self-study demonstrates that John Jay is meeting the standards of accreditation supported by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

There is always more to do, but for now, let us reflect on what we have accomplished.

I wish each of you a restful time away from the college, however long or short that may be. Academic Affairs Updates will resume on January 24.

Best,

Allison

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Interim Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs



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