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To: The John Jay College Community
Re: Welcome Back

The first week of the Fall 2021 semester is well underway. I've enjoyed welcoming back returning students, faculty, and staff, and I'm thrilled to have a new group of talented students join our vibrant community. We might be starting off the academic year in different ways—with some people coming onto campus and others attending online—but no matter the modality, we're all vital members of the John Jay community.



I'd like to take this opportunity to share some exciting news concerning our leadership, accreditation, and legacy.

I'm pleased to announce that **Erica Bond**, who formerly worked as the Policy Director at the Data Collaborative for Justice, is joining us in a grant-funded position as our first-ever Vice President of Social Justice Initiatives to focus on leading our future of public safety work across the College. Erica is a graduate of Wesleyan University and Fordham University School of Law. Like so many of us, Erica is passionate about improving community safety and she's a staunch proponent of research and initiatives that ensure fairness within our criminal legal system. Erica has served in the Mayor's Office, on the Civilian Complaint Review Board (providing oversight of NYPD), and as a philanthropic advisor, and brings expertise on a range of issues such as the closure of Rikers Island, raising the age of criminal responsibility, improvements on eyewitness identification procedures, and disparate enforcement rates. We're fortunate to have Erica in this new role and we anticipate a bright future ahead for her. Please help me welcome Erica to our team in this newly created position.

We continue to make progress in our Middle States Commission on Higher Education, MSCHE or "Middle States," accreditation process. Any post-secondary educational institution receiving federal student aid programs must take part in an accreditation process every 10 years. As our [new](#)

[accreditation webpage](#) explains, the continued success of our institution greatly depends on a successful accreditation—which includes an extensive self-study, peer review, and MSCHE site visit. Since October 2020, our community—including administrative leadership, faculty, students, and staff—has been contributing to our Middle States accreditation process. Working Groups across the College have been hard at work designing the required [self-study](#) for John Jay, which involves identifying achievements, programs, and evidence that support MSCHE’s standards. This month we kicked off the full year of self-study, with our eye firmly on the 2023 MSCHE site visit and final report.

Our country is nearing the [20th anniversary of September 11th](#). This is an important milestone for our community because of the steep price our institution paid on that tragic day. Sadly, John Jay lost 67 heroes on September 11th. Firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical professionals saw thousands of lives in peril, and without hesitation, made the ultimate sacrifice to save them. Two decades later, our community is still feeling the emotional, psychological, and physical reverberations of that horrendous attack. For many of our students, 9/11 is a horrible day in history, but not a lived experience. What I want everyone to remember is that we are inextricably linked to those 67 fallen heroes. Every day, we honor their legacy in the continued work to keep our communities safe. Please join me in events scheduled for our [“20th Anniversary of 9/11 Recall. Reflect. Reaffirm”](#) series, as we pay tribute to the community members we lost.

Yes, we’ve faced a lot of challenges this past year, but we’re all ready for a bright new beginning. This is an exciting time at John Jay and I’m looking forward to connecting with folks on campus and online. I’m confident that this will be a successful semester because of the unwavering support I’ve witnessed throughout the past year. Please take this time to explore new opportunities and meet new people, but along the way, remember to take care of yourself and ask for help if you need it.

Best wishes for a safe and successful Fall 2021 semester.

Thank you,



Karol V. Mason
President
John Jay College of Criminal Justice