

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

December 12, 2023

Dear Academic Affairs Colleagues,

We are ending a strong fall and I am optimistic about our plans for the future, but I am a truth-teller, so here's the good, the bad, the ugly, and the inspiring, all in one end-of-semester note.

The Good – We Have Record Student Success and Institutional Strengths

2023 is ending and we have a lot to be proud of this year. Thousands of students earned degrees with us, the college was reaccredited by Middle States and we received 11 commendations for our many outstanding programs and practices, initial counts of this year's 6-year graduation rate is 55% which is a college high, first-year retention increased to 81% last year after dropping significantly during the pandemic, faculty published more books than ever, we welcomed 43 new faculty this fall and 68% of them identify as minority, we inaugurated the Faculty Opportunity Fund and gave out \$34,000 to 19 professors to support their professional development, faculty satisfaction as measured by COACHE scores improved in all but 3 areas, more students had internships than ever, faculty used EAB Navigate to issue ~ 3500 early alerts per semester giving timely feedback to help students make positive changes (further contributing to our rising retention rates), and while I could keep going I will end this paragraph by noting that our reorganization in Strategy and Operations led by Associate Provost Chandler benefitted all who hire part timers as S&O took on their EHRAFs. If you don't know what that means you can count yourself lucky and thank Tamari and Kim. Oh, and we raised close to \$7 million in philanthropy to support student and faculty success.

The Bad – We Need to Increase Enrollment and Reduce Spending

Decreased enrollment coupled with our funding model mean that we are projecting deficits in upcoming years unless we change our behavior. We need to raise our revenue and reduce costs starting next year. As a first and important step I ask all academic departments and programs to help by reducing unnecessary and lowly-enrolled courses. We will present further options to the college community in February and I hope you will join me and the other Vice Presidents in assuming a team spirit in this effort. Our capacity to continue to do the great work listed above – work that changes lives and benefits our communities – depends on our willingness to work together to find sensible solutions.

The Ugly – We Must Practice Civil Discussions across Differences

Colleges are where individuals come to learn the habits of good citizenship, but are we at John Jay explicit about what it takes to uphold our democracy? We have seen fierce and painful emotions

expressed about the war in Israel and Gaza across campus. These expressions are a stress test of the health of our liberal democracy. We have an obligation to uphold the principles of free speech while also protecting every student's right to learn in a safe environment free from unlawful discrimination. Our Jewish and Palestinian students, faculty, and staff are hurting. How are we helping? Discomfort is not the same as safety. Tolerating abhorrent ideas expressed freely by others is the price of freedom in a pluralistic society. But, do we teach the difference? Do we make room for and model civil discussion across differences?

The Inspiring – John Jay Alumni Are Models of Excellence and Public Service

Finally, I want to end by sharing the story of one of our inspiring alumni who is a model public servant who lifts her community as she works with integrity and skill. A graduate of Hunter College High School, which admits the top one-quarter of 1% of students in New York City based on test scores, this young woman found herself pregnant at age 17. Needing a flexible and inexpensive school where she could live off campus to raise her son while attending school and working, she chose John Jay and majored in Psychology. After graduating she continued working while pursuing her MPA at John Jay. She continued to climb up the ranks at her job and decided to pursue a Doctorate of Education, completing it in 4 years, all while serving her place of work with distinction. A model alumnus, please join me in congratulating Dr. Kinya Chandler, Associate Provost for Strategy and Operations, on the successful defense of her dissertation last week!

Education is about believing in the human capacity to grow and develop. Thank you all for supporting that noble purpose. May you have a restful break.

Sincerely,

Allison

Allison Pease Interim Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs



524 West 59th Street New York, NY 10019 (212) 237-8101