Family Weekend - what a wonderful opportunity to welcome you back to campus!

For many of you, this will be the first time you have seen your son or daughter since sending them off to college. For others, this may be the "last" Family Weekend before your child graduates from Regis University and uses their Jesuit education to improve this world in which we live. Please know that the community of faculty, staff, family and friends are all grateful that you have joined us.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has a great connection to young people. Recently, his Holiness shared seven tips for those beginning the college journey that I think are very helpful:

1. He encourages "be open to new people".

2. He says to "Consider new ideas." The Holy Father is a Jesuit as you know and considering new ideas is the very foundation of a Jesuit education critical thinking and discernment. While your student may struggle with some of the new material they are learning and they may not be thrilled with their grades (thus far), I believe that we can all agree that expanding our views, asking the difficult questions and challenging each other's thinking is not only the "Jesuit way" but an incredible tool that we are helping to forge for our students' futures in our global community.

3. For our Bio. and Chem. families, Pope Francis shares "Science is good. So is faith. They are not mutually exclusive."

4. Ironically, even though many of us are puzzled by all of the new "emoticons" and "apps", our Pope shares "the Internet is a gift." It allows us to be connected and learn in ways prior generations could not.

5. Francis also says, "If you withdraw into yourself, you run the risk of becoming egocentric. And stagnant water becomes putrid."

6. He reminds us to "take care of others." We are an institution focused on service to others and, as you know, service is built in to many of our courses. Some of your children may already be coming to you to ask if they can go
We are also renewing our commitment to an inclusive campus for all students. Dr. Barbara Wilcots has joined Regis as Vice President for Student Affairs and Dr. Nicki Gonzales has just taken the helm of our Diversity office as Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity and Inclusive Excellence. We are committed to continuing the community conversation about diversity, equity and inclusion at Regis.

As a sign of the rising stature of this university, we are hosting the distinguished Opus Prize in just over a week. The Opus Prize is an annual faith-based humanitarian award, recognizing leaders and organizations that develop creative solutions to some of the world’s most pressing problems. The Prize is awarded in partnership with Catholic universities, providing new opportunities to inspire the next generation of servant leaders.

This is just one of many examples of how Regis leads the way in Jesuit education, teaching our students ethics, moral-based decision making and lifelong learning. Regis University speaks to a wider world. Regis is a social projection into our neighborhood, the Denver Metro area, the State of Colorado, and into the world.

As individuals and as an institution, we must have the mindset that looks forward with hope and optimism; eager to seize opportunities to make a real difference; to help address major societal challenges; to be truly consequential and valued in Denver and the world. As your college experience continues, I encourage you to have the right mindset and seize every opportunity to learn and grow.

In closing, like our Holy Father intimates, college is tough; I think we can all agree on that. However, families like you—families who are engaged, connected and caring allow our students, your children, to be successful young men and women who will fulfill the mission of this great university: men and women in service of others—not only while they are students at our institution but when they graduate and go out into the global community.

I hope that you all have a wonderful weekend of activities and connecting with one another. I thank you for taking the time to attend our Family Weekend events.

Your students and your families remain in my prayers and I hope I will remain in yours.

Enjoy and God bless.