



*From the Office of the President*

**John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J.**  
REGIS UNIVERSITY | DENVER, COLORADO

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**State of the University Address**  
**August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018**

Good morning and welcome! It is a privilege to be here with you today to report on the state of our university. Thank you, Fr. Kevin Burke, for a wonderful reflection after your first year at Regis.

When I look around this chapel.....when I visit with new faculty, new and returning students, or say hello to the outstanding staff we have on this campus, I am proud to be your president.

I am pleased to say that Regis University is strong and growing stronger every year because of the good work accomplished by you – our faculty and staff.

Thank you for the important contributions you make to this institution. You are the reason and the inspiration for our success. We have established momentum in recent years because of your hard work and commitment to our strategic priorities.

We have so many great programs, exceptional faculty, dedicated staff and accomplished students. We need to celebrate that! We need to tell each other and everyone we meet that this is a fantastic place where students can earn an excellent education in a safe and supportive environment.

As a Jesuit institution, we find in Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus, a touchstone and a lodestar for all our activities and projects. A dreamer, a pilgrim, a spiritual master and a loyal friend, Ignatius sensed the interconnectedness of everything. Much like the interconnectedness of our work here at Regis.....the way our Colleges are connected to our operations units and the way our staff are connected to our students. And of course the way we are all connected to God.

Four foundational spiritual insights of St. Ignatius continue to animate our work:

- Seeking and finding God in all things – which leads us to engage all of reality with reverence, awe and excitement.
- Care for the whole person (cura personalis) AND cura apostolica, care for the work. These two concepts give us a focused attentiveness to all that we do, what Ignatius calls “contemplation in action.”



- The art of discernment is another foundational insight by St. Ignatius by which we habitually listen to our hearts.....where the Holy Spirit whispers to us and guides us toward what is good and true, just and beautiful.
- And in that quest, we seek to find and follow “the most excellent way of proceeding” (the *Magis*), where our greatest gifts and talents meet the world’s most pressing needs.

We are all from diverse religious and philosophical backgrounds and we may indeed use diverse vocabularies to describe our shared mission. And yet we all contribute essentially to a project that engages our students, leading them to broaden their horizons, advance their intellectual abilities and strengthen their confidence and capacity as creative, ethical and compassionate leaders of a global tomorrow.

The Regis experience fosters a mature commitment to the dignity of the human person, social justice, diversity and inclusive excellence, intercultural competence, global engagement, solidarity with the poor and vulnerable, and care for the planet. Grateful to God, the Regis community carries out this mission with responsible stewardship of our physical, financial, and human resources.

### Review of Last Year

I am proud of what we accomplished last year in advancing our mission and stewarding our resources. Let me highlight a few accomplishments:

- We received the largest single outright gift in our university’s history, \$10 million, naming the Anderson College of Business.
- We welcomed three new Trustees:
  - a former CO governor and a wonderful human being – Bill Ritter
  - a successful businessman and proud grandfather who has more enthusiasm about Regis University than I’ve seen from a new
    - Trustee Jamie Gronowski; and An NBA all-star who has been a friend of Regis for some time – Chauncey Billups of Regis for some time – Chauncey Billups



2018 Porter Billups Leadership Academy Graduates



- We completed a faculty-led academic program sustainability project to optimize our programs offered and inform resource allocation for short-term and long-term decision-making;
- We again celebrate more Fulbright scholars and a wealth of outstanding scholarship by our faculty;
- We continued our focus on student success which has led to improved retention and graduation!
- The Regis Rangers completed one of the most successful athletic years in history!
- We created a diversity in hiring task force and a bias incident response team.
- We welcomed 30 new faculty and staff members last year.
- And, we began several projects to reinvest in our physical campus:
  - Student Center renovation
  - Main Hall 3rd floor partial renovation
  - Field house and residence hall updates
  - Boryla apartments. These apartments are named for a cherished benefactor, Vincent J. Boryla. Let me tell you a bit about “Vinny”
  - Vinny was a 1948 Olympics gold medalist
  - Vinny was a star forward for the New York Knicks
  - Vinny coached the New York Knicks
  - Vinny was part owner of the Denver Nuggets



We are nearing the end of our 20-year Master Plan update and will be bringing to you the final plans this fall. Thank you if you participated in the many focus groups and input sessions we have held over the past year! I must share with you that at our June 2018 Board meeting we took nearly 30 Trustees on a tour to show them the “lights and shadows” of our campus – many are alumni and attended classes here in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. It



was a beautiful day, near 80 degrees and they were “ooing” and “aahing” over the beauty of our arboretum. So imagine their surprise when we held our most substantive session in Loyola Hall, room 15. It was quite an experience for them to see the cinder block and wood panel walls; to see how difficult it was to get around in that classroom; to feel the lack of cool air; and so on.....It was eye-opening for them to experience this campus not as a Trustee but as a student taking courses in Loyola or a faculty member teaching in our outdated facilities.

And yes, it led several of them to think harder about their role in helping us with our Master Plan priorities. We have many, many exciting priorities for learning, living and gathering space.....now we bring a laser-like focus to raising funds for these priorities. The Anderson gift and the overall advancement of our Campaign are evidence of our positive trajectory!

Financially, we performed well last year. We balanced our budget (the \$10M gift helped!) and we have a sound strategy for growth in our three-year financial plan. If you have not reviewed this plan, I encourage you to do so. In addition, the Regis endowment grew to nearly \$65 million. And, we are welcoming another large freshman class to Regis College - 526 new students! I want to thank admissions for their hard work on this class and admitting all of our students.

Student credit hours have stabilized and we are projecting growth at the end of this year. At the same time, we are focused more than ever on retention through student success.

Of course, there are challenges ahead. Increasingly, students and their families are finding college affordability a growing concern. Our obligation to these families remains difficult.....to provide a quality education that is accessible through affordability. Paying attention to this obligation is ongoing, every year.

The University's primary expenditure is its investment in its faculty and staff. For the institution to attract and retain the best people, steady growth in resources is needed to pay for necessary increases in compensation and benefits.

In order to deepen and sustain the investment in our people and our place that is absolutely necessary and that you have been asking for, we need to build capacity through a reserve of funds. We need to build more financial capacity - to grow our savings account - rather than only balancing our budget. That will be a primary focus this year.

Yet, this year, we are fortunate to be in a position to focus our attention on deepening our commitment to salary increases. We have been planning for this over the last few years and I am happy - no thrilled! - to be able to implement raises this year. I know we have much work until our wages are adequate with the cost of living in the Denver metro area. But this year, we have budgeted \$1.7M for FY19 base salary increases, the largest investment in salaries in the last five years. Following the 1% base salary increase to employees earning less than \$50K that was already implemented, the disbursement of this \$1.7M will be effective September 1, 2018. We have allocated \$539,369 to “Faculty Tenure, Promotion, Rank, and Sabbaticals,” approximately 1/3 of the total compensation pool, and the Vice Presidents submitted their plans for this increase last week.



Salary increases will continue to be one of my top operational priorities next year as well. And there are a number of other critical priorities as well.....

- Raising funds for key priorities through our Comprehensive Campaign is paramount
- Continuing to grow our Academic Stature
- Increase diversity among faculty and staff as well as strengthening our mission formation for faculty, staff and Trustees
- And recruit and onboard five new Trustees

While we concentrate most days on the impact Regis University is having – as a social projection – in our neighborhood, the city of Denver, our region and even at the national level.....while we focus on the interconnectedness of our university and surrounding community.....I want you to know the impact we are having in places much farther away and in places where the need for education is greater than I can convey in a short time.

In July, I participated in my fifth graduation ceremony for refugee students in Jesuit Worldwide Learning in two African refugee camps. JWL is an example of the immense good that can result from serving one of the most marginalized populations around the globe. Although seeing the plight of these refugees is a painful reminder of the continued suffering in that community, it is also a reminder of the importance of education.

And particularly a Jesuit, Catholic education – where we teach students to work against what the Holy Father calls the “globalization of indifference.” A Regis education – including in JWL camps – is about transforming our students and in turn, transforming entire communities.

Students come to Regis either here in Northwest Denver or in Kakuma not realizing how much their education will force them to think broadly about what is going on in the world.....how people live differently and how a vocation and the search to find God in all things can transform one’s life.

In Amman, Jordan, a Muslim woman with two children – a girl about 12 and a boy about 10 – came running up to me after graduation with a diploma in liberal studies.

This woman shouted, “Father, Father, I must have my picture taken with you. So, a little red-faced, I agreed. Nearly her whole family, about 40 people, gathered around. After lots of pictures and hand shaking she said, “Do you know what you’ve done for me?” I said haltingly, well, yes, I think so. She smiled as big a smile as I have ever seen and said, “No, Father, you do not. You see, I am a Muslim woman, a refugee with my children from Syria. I am





now a single parent. You have given my children a life because you have given me a life and a hope.” After holding back my tears, an overwhelming sense of pride came over me. I could not be more proud Regis University – what we do here in Denver and what we do half way across the world.

Allow me to acknowledge and foreground a terrible injustice and profound sin by bishops and priests of the Catholic Church. I speak of course of the sexual abuse crisis.

- The hierarchy and priests are servants and as servants must put survivors first.
- We bishops, priests, and consecrated persons must, with all of the People of God, find a solution to ensure sexual abuse ends now.
- We must grow away from arrogant clericalism.

We come together in the spirit of community to celebrate our great university. With no hesitancy, I say that Regis University has a brighter future than we ever have. I ask you to continue to use your unique talents, determination, faith, and passion to advance Regis and society. Advance knowledge, compassion, and justice with all your voice and talent. Take full advantage of opportunities to be challenged and changed, to study and reflect, and discuss and debate, to serve your community and fellow human beings. Take time to listen and to take care of each other, and reflect upon what we as individuals and as a community can do for the world.

The numbers are important now and in the future, and you have likely heard the saying, no margin, no mission. For us, it is about continuing excellent stewardship of resources while enhancing our decision-making through the implementation of strategic planning and careful analysis. But that is just a part of the equation. Our most creative ideas, best devised plans, and most detailed analyses – our best work – are nothing without the people to lead these efforts. And we know that God is already there ahead of us; we just need to pay attention and respond to that presence.

I am sincerely grateful to all of you for your efforts to improve and strengthen our University. Let us continue working together so we can build a much stronger foundation for future Regis students, employees, alumni, and friends in our community.

Thank you!

**I believe we are heading out to lunch on Fortune Plaza...the Cabinet and I will be available for conversation and questions.**