From the Office of the President
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REGIS UNIVERSITY | DENVER, COLORADO

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State of the University Address
St. John Francis Regis Chapel
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Introduction

I'd like to first thank our University Mission team for this morning's reflection and break out groups. I am sure you can see why Fr. Burke is such an asset to have at our university, along with the talented scholars and individuals he has added to his team.

On a day when we gather to celebrate our Ignatian heritage, I'd like to highlight one of my goals for this coming academic year and for this university's future - enhancing our Jesuit, Catholic values by ensuring they are infused into all our curricular and co-curricular learning. After completing our Institutional Examen last year, we are focused on the emerging priorities identified from that process including:

- To strengthen mission leadership and staffing;
- Formation for our mission commitments;
- Better resource University Ministry; and
- New curricular offerings from faculty work demonstrating contributions to mission.

General Climate

This university's mission has never been more important. A year ago, we began our academic year following a summer of violence. One year later, we have watched in disbelief the horror of Charlottesville, Virginia. Like all of you, I am deeply saddened by the hate-inspired violence and the tragic death of Heather Heyer, the injuries of numerous others, and the deaths of two police officers. My heart goes out to the victims' families.

This is another example of what concerns so many of us here at Regis - that we are witnessing an erosion of civil rights that so many generations have fought for. Our community has:

- mourned the killings of unarmed African Americans;
- resonated with heightened fear and victimization and alienation that African Americans feel; they fear for their lives and safety as well as human dignity;
- ached for the fears of DACA students, immigrants and refugees; and
- denounced violence against women and the mistreatment of good people based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.
Yet, our fears and disbelief multiply as hate speech is increasingly normalized in order to divide, maim and kill.

As a Jesuit, it is my calling to pray and to act. I invite you to do the same. I believe in prayer that gives us courage, purifies our egos, sustains our commitment and recognizes that God is at work with us. I believe in action that stands up to injustice.

As your president, I denounce white supremacists, the Ku Klux Klan and Nazi ideology. Anyone who knows history knows that these movements are a cancer to free society and have brought untold human suffering. Undoubtedly, the struggles of our times will and should surface in our classrooms. We can't expect everyone to agree. But our cultural, racial, socioeconomic, religious and identity differences are the very things which the enemies of truth want to divide us. But they will fail. We will not fall victim to their deceit; lies and hate never win in the end. Regis is bigger than its differences. From Martin Luther King, to Gandi, to Jesus of Nazareth ..... we have living proof that love overcomes hate. Regis need not settle for anything less. Regis will not settle for anything less.

Climate at Regis
We all know that these societal tensions also found their way into Regis. After all, we are but a microcosm of the world. I'll be honest, last year left me exhausted, as it did many of you. I took to heart the pain felt by students, faculty, and staff about the course of our nation and world. I took to heart that too many of our members have experienced injustices here. This is not the Regis we want. It is not the Regis we will be.

But how to move forward ...

It has been my privilege to meet with students throughout last year and over this summer. We have shared each other's stories, admitted our disappointments, voiced anger, hope and fear. We have talked about a better Regis. I have listened. More importantly, I have heard. I know this university has much more to do to be a welcoming place. We have opened our doors, but we must open our hearts. This is not an easy path, even as we desire deeply to walk this path. But we will seek to do the right thing, even if on some days we fail. We will fail when we let our biases define us. We will fail when we judge another's story. We will fail when we fall back upon the words "mine" rather than "ours."

But we will succeed. We will succeed because others have gone before us with challenges as big as ours ..... giants of justice, like Martin Luther King, who tell us that our only choice - our ONLY choice - is to live together as sisters and brothers or perish together as fools.

So, in the coming year at Regis, we will continue to implement our diversity plan. For the 2017 - 2018 academic year, we are committed to:

- Develop a multi-year plan to grow diversity and inclusivity training throughout Regis University including students, faculty, staff, and trustees;
- Develop a multi-year recruitment and retention plan to hire and retain diverse faculty and staff;
• Hire a Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusive Excellence within the month;
• Continue to listen and hear each other; and
• Speaking out clearly and assertively against moral wrongs. Not mere offenses or insensitivities, but words or actions that run contrary to our mission and beliefs, such as economic or political injustices.

And with our mission and values to ground us, we will excel in our daily work, running this university. I would like to recognize the superb leadership of my Cabinet, along with the hard work and creativity of our Deans, the President's Advisory Council, the University Budget Committee, and the Regis University Academic Council... and especially, all faculty and staff. We have much to be proud of. Let me highlight a few accomplishments in each area:

**Operations**

**Academics:**
In the words of our Provost, "We are taking back the Academy" and we are growing the stature of Regis University. We have achieved much, including:

• Seven Fulbright scholars in five years.
• College of Business and Economics Centers of Excellence continue to advance, including a $1 million gift to build a business incubator that is now up and running.
• Regis College made us proud with over 1,000 students providing 20,000 hours of service learning engagement.
• The College of Contemporary Liberal Studies was asked by the Colorado Department of Education to build the ONLY Special Education Endorsement Program in the state.
• In the Rueckert Hartman, Licensure Exam Rates exceeded national averages in Nursing, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy and Counseling.
• The College of Computer and Information Systems continues to receive national recognition for its excellence in cyber security and hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants to support their work.
• The Dayton Memorial Library became the University's first safe zone and all of its staff participated in bystander training to be prepared if members of our community experience hate or harassment.

• For the first time in Regis' history, the University-wide academic council no longer is chaired by the Provost, but is faculty-driven and faculty-led.
• And RUAC has shifted its focus to program sustainability.
• We have hired more qualified and diverse faculty in several of our Colleges.
• More faculty research and scholarship is being pursued.
• The University's first-ever bibliography of faculty scholarship across five colleges and library was published - and filled 42 pages.
• The Provost continues to move forward her top priority of student success so that Regis can better fulfill its promise to all of our students.

• Jesuit Worldwide Learning - where Regis offers a diploma online to refugees across the globe - is receiving international recognition for its service to over 350 students in sites from Sri Lanka to Africa. Fr. Kevin Burke, our new VP for Mission, represented Regis at graduations last month in Kenya and Malawi.

• And remember this date - save this date - pray for this date - light candles for this date - the University's 10-year re-accreditation visit from the Higher Learning Commission will be November 5th and 6th 2018. Many bright, wise and able Regis faculty and staff are keeping us on schedule towards a successful goal. To borrow a phrase - or at least to paraphrase - St. Ignatius, "Pray as if everything depends on God, but work as if everything depends upon you." We are in very good shape and we believe the visitation will go well.

Enrollment Management:
Of crucial importance is staying on track with our enrollment projections and goals. I am happy to report that:

• Summer enrollment revenue met our ambitious target of over $20M in gross tuition revenue.
• We will be welcoming over 2,100 new students to Regis this fall - in all of our academic programs. Please make sure you roll out the Regis red carpet to all of these new community members. Included in this number is over 500 new Traditional Freshmen that will be here next week!
• And a key goal for this year is to continue our three-year enrollment planning effort toward revenue growth, by identifying goals for the number of students.

Facilities/Master Plan:
Another key goal for this year is to make significant strides in housing and dining facilities. This is a collaboration between Enrollment Management, Student Affairs, Finance, and our Master Plan initiative.

• I am pleased to share our commitment to lease for 10 years, a 94-bed apartment building at 50th and King for Regis students. This property is expected to be available for the Fall 2018 start and will expand our housing options for upperclassman.
• For our faculty to stand out, our administrative systems and our facilities should strongly facilitate and enable our academic mission. As mentioned in our three-year financial plan, we have initiated $14.5M in physical and technology investments, including:
  o A Main Hall classroom prototype to inform the future of our classroom initiative.
  o We will transition over the next few years to a new payroll and HR system.
And the renovation of our Student Center will begin this fall. It will transform into a modern, state of the art facility that serves all students with more space to interact, more seating, round the clock services, more food options.

- The update of our master plan is also continuing in earnest. Our task force is developing a plan for our physical campus as we grow and change over the next 15 years. Each of you, our students and the surrounding community will be asked to weigh in over the coming semester. Look for surveys and focus groups - and please tell us what you think.

**Student Affairs:**
- We have a new Vice President for Student Affairs - Dr. Barbara Wilcots - who comes to Regis after many years with the University of Denver and a strong, mission-centered focus for reimagining our Student Affairs unit.
- We've realigned our Student Affairs division by transferring Auxiliary Services and Campus Safety to this unit; and
- We are assessing our campus climate. Determining where we can improve the student experience and make all students feel welcome inside and outside the classroom.

**Finance:**
I continue to be amazed at the work done by our Office of Financial Affairs, with a much improved but still difficult financial picture. FYI 7 brought us almost $141.7M in gross tuition and fee revenue. Although this was short of our projection to begin the year, we made up for this with positive endowment returns and a sale of the Pomponio apartments. We are poised for growth this year and in the years to come, in enrollment and other activities as well:

- We continue to look for alternative revenue streams such as increasing usage of our products and services from our higher learning partners;
- We continue our commitment to be fiscally disciplined and responsible with our spending and habits;
- We are more intentional with our investments; and
- We continue to work toward having a 5% revenue residual that can be used to invest internally on our priorities.

These are just a few of many strategies to maintain this university's fiscal health. I look forward to the results of our budget reset to help us address our total rewards initiative.

Total Rewards has and will continue to be a priority. This year we've increased professional development opportunities for faculty and staff and will continue to offer more. We have also made strides with our goal of expanding benefits and giving you more choice in your benefits, as you saw during our open enrollment last spring.
As for compensation, we will know more when fall enrollment numbers are final. Increasing faculty and staff compensation is a top goal of mine and I pledge that it will remain a top goal. I remain aware of the soaring cost of living in the Denver metro area. I would have loved nothing more than to announce raises today. Even though I can’t yet do that, you will hear from my office in the next few months about compensation for this year.

I am happy to announce today that I have decided to make the gift of time – when we close the University between the Christmas and New Year’s holidays – a permanent holiday period. You work hard for this University and you deserve time over the holidays be with family and loved ones during our holy season.

PAUSE FOR CLAPPING.

**Advancement:**
Fundraising and our Comprehensive Campaign is critical to the financial health of this university. As I just mentioned, we cannot rely so heavily on tuition and fees. A key goal for this year is to further advance the silent phase of the Comprehensive Campaign with the goal of announcing the public phase within two years. As you heard in our town halls last year, we are focusing on a major, lead transformative gift to this university.

Last year, we raised just over $10 million in total gift commitments. Commitments were made from nearly 5,000 donors, or friends who believe in you and this great university. Since I began as president, we have raised $35.6 million from over 10,000 alumni, friends, foundations and corporations toward the $150 million goal as part of the silent phase of the IGNITE campaign.

This annual progress in fundraising represents an investment in a much larger vision, where gifts IGNITE our Strategic Planning and position Regis for success far into the future.

We are also hosting the Opus Prize this October and I encourage you to attend. 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.

**Community**
Not only are we focused on our internal Regis community, we are also looking to grow the impact we have on our surrounding communities. Another key goal for this year is to further engage the surrounding North Denver community as an Anchor Institution. We have learned much about how we can help those near our campus, but we also need to better understand what these communities need. We don't want to exert our influence and reach, but rather use our resources, to the extent possible, to meet the needs of our community.

**Closing**
We lead the way in Jesuit education, teaching our students ethics, morality-based decision making and lifelong learning. Regis University must speak to a wider world. Regis must be a social projection into the neighborhood, the Denver Metro area, the State of Colorado, and into the world.

As individuals and as an institution, we must have the right mindset, one 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.

We need for our whole community to be on the same page about our vision for Regis. We need you, our human treasure, to model and carry our vision.

Audacious Ideas
I leave you with some of my "big, hairy, audacious ideas" for this University, not just for this year but for the next 25 years, a vision I have been crafting over the course of 2017. I see a Regis that has impact in our community, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Some ideas to reflect on:

- How soon could Regis University generate $200M in operating revenue and yield a 5% surplus?
- Can we grow traditional undergraduate enrollment by 20% by 2025?
- Along with new facilities for CBE and CC&IS, and two, 300 bed student residence halls ... what if we build and staff a community health center - utilizing Regis faculty and serving students, faculty, staff and neighbors – in the Federal Corridor?
- What if we create 100 new, full tuition scholarships for low income (need based) students from all age groups, and 100 full tuition scholarships for high ability (merit based) students from all age groups?

We can achieve these ideas. They are not as audacious as they may seem. If we stay on our current path of:

  - never compromising our Jesuit values,
  - being fiscally disciplined and responsible,
  - making data-informed decisions,
  - thinking innovatively,
  - working hard and with earnestness,
  - being fair and forgiving to each there, and
  - staying committed to the goals of this wonderful and I dare say holy place.

As with anything new, when you push the boundaries of possibility, when you travel to the periphery, there is risk, and we will experience both wild success and some failure. But as every biological scientist will tell you, the periphery is where more life emerges. We who live the Ignatian traditions and methodologies move easily between the center and the periphery. Everything we do provides us with an opportunity to increase our knowledge and grow, so we cannot be afraid of embracing the unknown, daring to dream, taking on some risk, and engaging our creative energies.
Believe it or not, this is my 6th State of the University address! What I have learned in my six years as president is that we are, at the core, a collection of individuals sharing a common bond and journey. Through our coming together as one, we create that something special and unique that symbolizes Regis University.

Thank you for attending today and for all the wonderful work you contribute to this university. I invite you to join us for lunch on the Plaza - just outside the Chapel - to talk and connect with each other.