

2019 Convocation Address: A Commendation and a Challenge

Good afternoon, and welcome to a new academic year on The Bluff! I hope that your summer break included time for rest and relaxation, and I hope that you're now energized and excited to begin a new semester.

For most of us at UP, this is a busy time. Faculty are making final preparations for their courses and mapping out research and scholarship priorities. Students are settling into new dorms and houses, reconnecting with friends they haven't seen since May, and readying themselves for a fresh slate of classes. Staff are taking care of schedule change requests, onboarding new employees, and making sure the academic and residential spaces are ready for the year ahead.

If my experience is anything like yours, it seems that this busyness never truly lets up. Instead, it subtly transforms into the usual hustle-and-bustle of the semester and, before you know it, it's time for exams and Christmas Break.

That's precisely why this event – this Convocation – is important. It's a time-honored UP tradition. It provides a respite. It gives us a chance to pause and to reflect.

It also allows me to do something I relish: provide some observations, establish some collective goals, and set the stage for the year ahead.

Today's address has two objectives: first, to commend, and second, to challenge. In order for me to do both, though, I first have to provide some context.

These are challenging times for institutions of higher education. Open up *Inside Higher Ed* or *The Chronicle* and you can't avoid the stories: institutional closures, budget cuts, faculty and staff layoffs. You also can't avoid the stories of scandal, dishonesty, and misconduct that have rocked colleges and universities over the past few years.

You don't need to look beyond Oregon's borders to see this turmoil first-hand. It's been about a year since Marylhurst University closed its doors. Both the Oregon College of Art and Craft and the Art Institute of Portland shut down in the last year. As was reported in *The*

Oregonian, Linfield College eliminated many non-academic staff positions and is considering cutting its faculty by about twenty positions, all in light of a \$3 million budget shortfall.

Concordia University here in Portland ended its English, history, chemistry, global studies, and community psychology programs. Willamette has endured two years of budget cuts and reduced its faculty headcount by about two-dozen.

The budget picture for our state-supported institutions remains tenuous. Although they're due to receive a funding increase under a bill passed by Oregon legislators and signed by the Governor earlier this month, our public universities are still facing significant headwinds.

We see that the reputation and perceived value of higher education is in question. A 2018 Pew Research Center study found that 61% of Americans think that higher ed in the U.S. is generally going in the wrong direction. A study completed by Pew just this past July found that only 50% of Americans think that colleges have a positive effect on our country. People with a negative view of higher ed say that tuition is too high; students aren't getting the skills they need to succeed in the workplace; faculty are too partisan.

The belief that higher ed acts as the "great equalizer and the great accelerator" is also showing cracks. When it comes to how higher education drives social mobility and breaks down obstacles to success among people from underrepresented backgrounds, we see a mixed bag. It's true that from 2010 to 2016, the number of college students who identify as being part of a racial or ethnic minority increased by more than six percentage points to 43%. This is attributable, in part, to nearly 850,000 more Hispanic students enrolled in colleges and universities. In fact, according to Pew, from 2006 to 2016, Hispanic students more than doubled their share of enrollment at four-year colleges and universities, from 6% to 16%.

Notwithstanding this welcome increase, the Chronicle reports that the number of college students who identify as Black, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and American Indian fell significantly.

And the diversity and inclusion challenges don't just stop with students. According to the National Center for Education Statistics and the Institute of Education Sciences, as of a few years ago, only about twenty-one percent of the nation's college faculty are persons of color.

According to the Brookings Institution, in some of the STEM fields, members of certain underrepresented groups account for as little as 0.7 percent of the faculty.

In some ways, this lack of faculty diversity is a pipeline issue. Leaks in the educational system, from K-12 all the way to the graduate level, mean that the number of women and members of underrepresented groups on the pathway to faculty jobs is lower. However, the data suggest that this is not solely a pipeline problem, and that faculty hiring of underrepresented minorities hasn't kept pace with Ph.D. attainment.

Graduates today are stepping into the world and facing lots of uncertainty. Will we see another recession? Will wages grow or stagnate? Will housing be affordable when I begin my career? These challenges are made all the more severe in light of the student loan debt that many graduates face. Right now, in the U.S., total student-loan debt stands at about \$1.4 trillion. This is tough on everyone, but women owe a disproportionate two-thirds share of that debt and face challenges in the workforce and in repayment that are not shared by their male counterparts.

Catholic colleges and universities nationwide are facing their own, unique set of headwinds. First, many Catholic institutions are experiencing a decrease in the number of applications they receive for first-year admission at a rate that's higher than their secular peers. For the first-year class that entered in 2018, 48% of Catholic colleges and universities experienced a decrease in the number of submitted applications.

The clergy sex abuse crisis and other controversies have contributed to this downturn. But the larger threat to enrollment health at Catholic institutions is the preexisting decline in affiliation with the Catholic Church. Over the course of the past decade, the number of Catholic baptisms in the United States has decreased by 34%. Enrollment in Catholic schools is down by

6%. Fewer and fewer people rank religious identity as an important factor in selecting a college. In fact, according to one study, a mere 8% of students and 7% of parents say that “religious affiliation” plays a major part in identifying an institution as their “first choice.” And, religious institutions continue to be perceived as unaffordable.

Set aside the numbers for just a moment, and look at the headlines that have grabbed attention, nationally and locally. Think about the admissions scandal in which wealthy parents and rogue coaches were gaming the system to get students admitted into college. Think of the leadership issues currently being addressed by our friends and colleagues at Portland State. Tune into SportsCenter and see the NCAA infractions and compliance controversies that many athletic departments are facing.

I get it. All of this seems dire. The economic, demographic, cultural, and legal challenges facing higher ed today may be more complex and formidable than they have ever been. Mergers, scale-backs, and closures will continue, and likely accelerate. Competition for students will intensify. The value of a college education will continue to be questioned.

But there is cause for hope and optimism. And this is where it comes time for me to offer a commendation. Despite the obstacles we face, despite the challenges that go along with being a smaller, Catholic, tuition-dependent, liberal arts institution, I am convinced that the University of Portland is as strong today as it has ever been in its proud, 118-year history. That’s a bold statement. But when one studies the data, and when one looks across the University at the quality of our students, our faculty, our staff, our alumni, and our community, I’m convinced that it’s an accurate statement.

We have the highest total undergrad graduation rate among all four-year colleges and universities in the State of Oregon, public and private. We are two full percentage points ahead of the next institution on the list.

Our six-year graduation rate for Pell Grant recipients is second only to Reed among all Oregon public and private institutions.

The percentage of our graduates who identify as persons of color has risen from 17% in 2009, to 28% in 2014, to 38% in the 2019 graduating class. Looking at the entire undergraduate student population, in fall of 2010, 26% of our undergrads identified as students of color. As of fall 2018, that number had risen to 40%. Compare that to the City of Portland and the State of Oregon and you see that UP is more diverse than its hometown and its home state.

At a time when many other institutions are struggling to meet enrollment targets, we have continued to attract and retain students. In 2014, our undergraduate full-time enrollment stood at 3,786. At the end of this past academic year in May, that number stood at 3,965.

This January, the Chronicle looked at retention rates among four-year institutions that are similar to UP in terms of selectivity. Of the 417 schools they evaluated, UP ranked fifteenth.

We continue to recruit some of the largest classes in University history. This August, we welcome approximately 1,000 First-Year students to The Bluff.

Our enrollment management team is already recruiting our next group of Pilots, and they are increasingly focusing their efforts on new and exciting markets, like the Mountain West, Illinois, and Wisconsin. In fact, from a geographic standpoint, our classes of First-Year students are becoming more and more diverse with each passing year. Just ten years ago, about 40% of our students were from the State of Oregon. This year, 22% of the class is from Oregon.

We continue to be the top producer of Fulbright recipients in the state. And, we're ranked ninth in the country among schools our size for the number of Peace Corps volunteers we produce.

As many of you know, we'll undergo reaccreditation this fall. Led by Provost Tom Greene, Michael Johnson and the Office of Institutional Research, our Reaccreditation Working Committee, and so many others on campus, I am thrilled to report that we are making progress or meeting about 98% of our accreditation indicators. I'm not one to count chickens, but I anticipate that we'll swiftly and smoothly navigate the reaccreditation process this fall.

Much of this success can be attributed to our outstanding and dedicated faculty. We recognize the value of investing in and supporting our front-line instructional colleagues. Per

capita spending on faculty professional development now exceeds \$2,000 per full-time faculty member, a 26% increase since 2012. 96% of our faculty continue working at UP after their first year, and 89% of faculty who have applied for tenure since 2012 have earned it. We enjoy a 12:1 student:faculty ratio today, compared to 14:1 five years ago. The number of faculty has increased from 255 in 2014 to 311 in 2018.

Our Faculty Compensation Task Force recently completed fifteen months of work to arrive at a consensus-based and competitive compensation philosophy and structure. On many other campuses, discussions regarding faculty pay are rancorous and unproductive. I am proud, however, that our faculty compensation process at UP is marked by collegiality, professionalism, and a spirit of collaboration.

The University also enjoys exciting momentum with respect to philanthropy. Thanks to the hard work of Bryce Strang and our Development team, since 2015, we have enjoyed some of the most successful fundraising years in the University's history. Our annual donor base has increased from 7,000 people in 2015 to over 8,000 today. The team has launched innovative and engaging benefaction events, like #PilotsGive and Giving Tuesday.

As you know, we're a tuition-driven institution. So, the successes of our Development colleagues enable us to provide students with financial aid, support faculty teaching and research, enhance the student experience, and fund capital projects like Dundon-Berchtold Hall, the Franz Campus on the Willamette, and the Simulated Health Center in Buckley.

We are embarking on significant curricular changes to ensure that we offer students an education that prepares them well for today's workforce. Under the leadership of Tom Greene and Associate Provost Elise Moentmann, a group of faculty colleagues are developing a reimagined Core Curriculum, and they are nearly ready to bring their work before the Academic Senate. Their labors address the feeling that many students have, which is that the core is simply a "list of requirements;" that it's really a checklist to be completed.

The revitalized core will bring coherence to the curriculum and help students recognize the value of the core. How? First, we'll conduct a fifteen-week introduction to the core focusing on the meaning of the liberal arts, establishing learning expectations, and providing a preview of the road ahead. The core will feature a progression of courses designed to be taken over the span of four years, with the focus shifting from foundation, to exploration, to integration.

Additionally, we're investing in new ways of infusing our curriculum with a sense of innovation and entrepreneurship. Take, for example, the new campus-wide Minor in Innovation led by Salvador Orara. This program will allow students from all disciplines to sharpen their skill set in the areas of design, creativity, problem-solving, persuasive communication, and innovation. These are skills that employers today demand.

As an institution, we sit on solid financial footing thanks to the leadership of Alan Timmins and the discipline and restraint we exercise in our stewardship of University resources. Our staged and collaborative budgeting process helps us to maintain transparency, accountability, and shared responsibility. We benefit from exceptional management of our endowment. In fact, our endowment consistently outperforms the market, and our endowment-to-student ratio places us above peer institutions like Gonzaga and Seattle University.

Last September, the Chronicle published a report entitled "Which Colleges Have the Highest Number of Managers per 1,000 Students?" The authors examined the ratio of students to "managers," another way of describing "non-academic administrators." In sum, they were trying to identify schools with – to put it frankly – "administrative bloat." Of the 932 private institutions they studied, UP came in 668th in terms of the manager:student ratio. To me, this signals our ability to run a lean organization with a right-sized workforce.

At a time when many other college athletics programs are facing challenges, Pilot athletics continue to be a source of pride. The players who wear Portland Purple are student-athletes, in that order. This past spring, the average student-athlete GPA stood at 3.28, and 77%

of student-athletes had a GPA of 3.0 or better. Our latest NCAA Graduation Success Rate stood at 97%, well above the national average, and several of our teams posted perfect scores. The number of students who were named to conference and academic honor lists is astonishing.

And consider some of the on-the-field successes we've had: the men's soccer team beating UCLA at home in the first-round of the NCAA tournament; Pilot runner Taryn Rawlings earning All-American status by placing fourth in the indoor mile at the NCAA Championships and breaking all-time program records in both the 800- and 1500-meter events; and, runner Nick Hauger becoming an All-American at last year's NCAA Cross Country Championships, pushing the team to a third-place finish.

Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't also mention Christine Sinclair, Sophie Schmidt, and Megan Rapinoe, three former Portland soccer players who made Pilot Nation proud at the Women's World Cup in France over the summer.

These accomplishments barely scratch the surface of all that our student-athletes did. At the end of this past academic year, UP ranked third nationally among Division I institutions that do not sponsor football in terms of program success. This is truly a remarkable achievement, and our student-athletes, our Vice President for Athletics Scott Leykam, and our coaches and administrators deserve our admiration.

We continue to find ways to effectively live out our Roman Catholic and Holy Cross identities. We do this by, first, acknowledging that our religious identity is a privilege to be celebrated, not a hindrance to be endured. And second, by practicing radical hospitality and being open and welcoming to people of all faith traditions or no faith tradition at all.

We do this, as I noted before, in a time of turmoil within the Church. But this time of challenge should not prompt us to retreat from our religious identity. Rather, it is a call for us to embrace those things that are so important and so essential to our faith: the dignity of the human person; the call to family, community, and participation; the protection of human rights and the most vulnerable, including the poor, the dispossessed, the elderly, and the unborn; care for God's

creation; and, solidarity with others regardless of their differences. These things are quintessentially Catholic. We must lean into these aspects of our faith identity, which we have celebrated since our founding.

Our religious identity is our animating principle. Indeed, that's what makes us unique and distinctive. People are drawn to our Catholic and Holy Cross identities, even if they themselves do not share our beliefs.

Under the leadership of Father Jim Gallagher, our Campus Ministry office develops spaces and experiences that allow our students to connect with the faith dimensions of their lives. This endeavor is difficult to capture with statistics. Nevertheless, the numbers do provide just a glimpse of the impact that we are having on the faith lives of our students. Twenty-five incoming students and ten student leaders participate annually in our Leaven immersion program. Sixty students, and an additional twenty student leaders, take part in the Connect Retreat on the third Sunday of the semester. Our Hall Retreats attract over 350 student participants. Over 100 students take part in our Encounter Retreat. We offer students opportunities to become leaders in our Faith and Formation Ambassadors program and our Servant Leadership Team.

At UP, we recognize that each of our students has a transcendent dimension that exists alongside, and in harmony with, their intellectual and emotional dimensions. Through these programs, our dedicated Campus Ministers nurture this dimension for students who are Roman Catholic, for students of other faiths, and for students who are of no faith at all.

Now, that was a lot of stats. I hope I haven't lost you. I'll get you back by telling you that behind each and every one of the statistics is a person or a group of people. None of the accomplishments happen as the result of luck or happenstance. Instead, they happen because of the collective efforts of all who are a part of this community, enabled by God's grace. We are not

a perfect institution – far from it, in fact. But when we pause, collect our breaths, and look at the beauty and goodness and grace that is present here, we have much to be proud of.

Everyone in this room is to be commended for their efforts in support of UP's mission.

But, there are a few, specific individuals I would like to lift up today and celebrate. These are colleagues who - regardless of where they work, what they do, whether they interact with students or not, whether they are in the spotlight or behind the scenes – insist on excellence, contribute to our community, get the job done, and make UP the wonderful place that it is.

First, I'd like to commend Doctors Liz Lee and Michael Johnson from the Office of Institutional Research. These individuals help us to better understand UP. They help us share data-driven information about the institution we love. They are working tirelessly to help us prepare for reaccreditation this fall. Using our strategic plan, "Vision 2020," as a guide, they developed an innovative, interactive platform that enables us to monitor our progress on the initiatives that are at the core of our strategic goals. This platform tells us where we are succeeding, and where extra attention is needed. It will allow us to demonstrate to our accreditors that we not only made a plan for ourselves, but that it's a good plan, that we stuck to it, and that we've made progress in achieving our goals. (You really should stop by their office to see this platform in action – it's remarkable.) Liz, Michael, and their Research Assistants are a tremendous asset to UP. I ask, now, that they please stand, and I ask you to join me in thanking them for their remarkable efforts.

Second, when a student comes to UP, we not only consider that student a cherished member of the University community, but their parents and families, as well. And when that student graduates, The Bluff doesn't cease to be their home. Instead, they remain woven into the fabric of this place as one of our treasured alumni.

Craig Swinyard and his team in the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations work creatively and passionately to keep alumni and families connected to all that is happening on The

Bluff. Since 2015, they've established ten successful regional alumni chapters, from New York City to Hawai'i. They plan events on- and off-campus to keep our alumni engaged, including Reunion Weekend which is always a smash-hit. They've just completed a series of eight Pilot Welcome Receptions from Seattle to Pasadena, offering a warm UP welcome to over 1,200 incoming students and family members.

They partner with the Office of Student Activities to host our wildly-successful Junior Parents and Families Weekend which, this year, will undergo exciting changes. As many of you know, we see high attendance at this event by the parents and families of our Juniors. In order to capitalize on this success and bring even more families to campus, we'll transition to a broader family weekend model this academic year. From November 1st through the 3rd, Junior and Senior families will be invited to campus, and from February 14th through 16th, First Year and Sophomore families will visit The Bluff. This two-weekend model will allow us to comfortably host families and tailor their experience.

It's this kind of creativity and enthusiasm and drive that the staff of the Office of Alumni & Parent Relations brings to their work on campus. Craig is attending an out-of-town conference, but I'd like for the members of the Alumni & Parent Relations team to stand now and be recognized.

Next, I am going to break the rules a bit and acknowledge someone who, while not technically a UP employee, is overseen by our Financial Affairs Division and is a cherished member of our community. Kirk Mustain is General Manager of Bon Appétit at UP. He has worked on The Bluff for twenty-eight years, and in that time he has served countless students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

When you ask Kirk about his work and why he does what he does, you see how much he values the connections that are created when people sit down and share a meal. You see that he views his work as an integral part of the UP and Holy Cross mission. You see a real dedication

to the people who pass through the doors of the Commons and the Pilot House, day-in and day-out. His devotion to this place extends beyond The Bluff. He served Christmas Eve Dinner one year at the University's Salzburg Center, making baked ham for almost ninety students and their families.

Kirk oversees a complex food services operation and does it with grace. Now, I bet you thought that my lengthy discussion of statistics was over. But, I actually have just a few more, and I think you'll like these. During an average, mid-semester week at UP, Bon Appétit:

- Cracks 8,400 eggs for breakfast, and an additional 3,000 eggs for cooking purposes.
- Uses 6,800 pounds of chicken and prepares 2,700 pounds of salad.
- Brews 5,800 cups of coffee and makes 12,100 slices of pizza.
- And finally, they bake 3,000 chocolate chip cookies.

As I said, they are very busy indeed.

In a 2012 profile which appeared in Portland Magazine, Kirk said that food has been his “professional life, [his] social life, [and his] family life.” He is truly committed to both his craft and to UP. For his efforts to make sure that members of the UP community are well-fed, I'd like to ask Kirk to please stand, and would you now join me in acknowledging him?

Next, I want to recognize a team on campus that works 24/7/365 to make The Bluff a safe place to live, work, and study. The dedicated members of our Department of Public Safety support our mission by maintaining a secure and enjoyable campus environment. From caring for a student in a time of need, to educating community members on ways to keep safe, to helping those of us who, occasionally, lock ourselves out of buildings, Public Safety does its work often without fanfare or recognition. When we need them most, they're there for us.

I want to acknowledge the entire Public Safety Department for their efforts. I want to especially acknowledge Sergeant Michael Kranyak. Michael has been with the University since 2002 and, in that time, he's modeled the style of community policing that we promote at UP. He's visible at University events, takes time to get to know community members, and is a

consummate citizen of UP. I asked one of his colleagues to describe Michael, and the first word that came to his mind was “empathy.” The colleague continued that Michael is a “gentle and compassionate listener who provides a calming presence to people” in need.

I also want to acknowledge our new Director of Public Safety, Sara Westbrook. Sara joined UP in July with over thirty-three years of law enforcement experience. Twenty-five of those years were spent with our Portland Police Bureau. In conversations with Sara, I am struck by her passion for serving people. She is the right person to lead our skilled Public Safety professionals.

So now, I invite Sara, Michael, and all members of our Public Safety Department who are present to stand, and I ask that you all join me in commending their efforts on behalf of our University community.

And finally, I mentioned some of the accolades of our student-athletes earlier in my remarks, but there’s one member of Pilot athletics that I didn’t mention who has earned an accolade or two of his own. Those who play, coach, and watch soccer will tell you that the playing surface is of vital importance to safety and performance. Here at UP, we’re blessed with Merlo Field, which has been named “Field of the Year” in college soccer twice in the past three years. The pitch at Merlo is the envy of the college soccer world.

The person responsible for keeping the field in peak condition is Kevin White. Kevin has been in the industry for over seventeen years, and is known far and wide as one of the top turf managers in the nation. He holds advanced certifications and represents UP within the sports turf management industry. He and his crew ensure that our Pilots have the best field in all of college soccer. I know that Coach French, Coach Carlin-Voigt, and all of our players appreciate his efforts. So I invite you now to join me in thanking Kevin White.

As you can see, there is a lot for us to be proud of. And it’s not just the few individuals that I have named. So many on this campus, day-in and day-out, work collaboratively to do great work.

But we cannot be satisfied with where we are. And this leads me to the final aspect of my remarks today: a challenge.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux once commented that, “[o]n the way of life, not to progress is to regress.”

We have achieved successes, but we cannot rest. The challenges facing higher ed are too complex, too immense for us to stand still. We must, in all that we do, whether we work in Campus Ministry or the Athletic Department, in Physical Plant or Financial Affairs, whether we are a faculty member or an administrator, we must all look at our daily work and ask: “How am I advancing UP’s religious and academic missions? How am I improving the experience of our students? How can I, personally, make UP a more diverse and inclusive and collegial place to live, work, and study?”

In his new book, *The Second Mountain*, David Brooks explores the difference between what he calls “first-mountain people” and “second-mountain people.” First-mountainers are concerned with success, personal happiness, and achievement. Second-mountainers, on the other hand, are not self-centered, but other-centered; not independent, but interdependent. They are focused on the things that really matter.

This distinction exists among institutions, too. Brooks writes, “Sometimes you work at a company or go to a college, and it doesn’t really leave a mark on you. You get out of it what you came for, and you leave. [Those are first-mountain organizations.] Second-mountain organizations touch people at their depths and leave a permanent mark. You always know when you meet a Marine, a Morehouse man, a Juilliard pianist, a NASA scientist. These institutions have a collective purpose, a shared set of rituals, a common origin story. They nurture thick relationships and demand full commitment. They don’t merely educate, they transform.”

I’m convinced that UP is a second-mountain organization. But I am equally convinced that all of us, me included, can make it more so. We need to focus our efforts on making this

place more than just where you get a degree or draw a salary. We need to be firmly committed to making this place something altogether more than that.

There is so much goodness here, and we must find new and innovative ways to tell the story of UP in engaging ways. As many of you know, we've brought on the University's first-ever Vice President for Marketing and Communications, Michael Lewellen. Michael is a visionary communicator with over thirty-five years of experience in marketing, branding, and public relations. I am excited for the creativity and vision that Michael will bring to this role, and the innovative plans he has articulated to share the beauty and aspirations of this place. I ask that Michael please stand to be welcomed to UP.

This challenge that I offer today – to lean in, to be innovative, to strive for excellence, to nurture thick relationships, to truly care for one another and this institution – is well-timed. As many of you know, our strategic plan, "Vision 2020," is serving us well. It has created a shared set of goals, provided us with a common vocabulary, led to measurable outcomes, and helped us to maintain focus and stay organized. Fortunately, it's not a strategic plan that was completed and then resigned to the "circular file." It has guided our efforts, and it will continue to serve UP through the end of the 2020 calendar year.

Nevertheless, this year, we will begin early discussions on the University of Portland's next strategic plan. Given the challenges that I described earlier in these remarks, this strategic plan may just be one of the most important planning documents generated in the University's history. Like "Vision 2020," our next strategic plan will guide the University's development for a period of four to five years and, like "Vision 2020," drafting this strategic plan will be a collective effort. You are the subject matter experts. You are the individuals on the frontlines who are teaching courses, supporting our students, providing religious and professional and personal formation. You are the ones who observe how other institutions get from A to B. And you are the ones who have the insights that will be required to generate our next plan.

So I challenge you, and I challenge myself, to spend some time contemplating questions like: “Where should UP go next? What should the coming chapter look like? What kind of UP should we leave for those who come after us? How can we ensure that UP not only survives in the years and decades to come, but truly thrives?”

All of our answers to these questions will be heard and valued. While the formal research process has yet to begin, it isn’t too early to formulate big goals, challenge standard operating procedures, and think boldly about what this institution that we love could become.

In many ways, I think that Second Mountain provides a good distillation of what our focus will be. We sit on solid footing, we serve our students and our community well, we are doing great work to fulfill our mission. But how can we strengthen UP’s position as a place that touches people at their depths and makes a permanent mark.

Today, I offer a commendation on a job performed magnificently, and a challenge that we all do more. When we work together to harness and channel the creativity, the intellectual resources, and the drive that exist at the University of Portland, amazing things can, and will, happen.

Once again, welcome back to The Bluff. Please know how much I treasure the opportunity to serve you as president. My prayers and best wishes are with you for another successful academic year. God bless you and God bless our University of Portland community. Thank you very much.