
12-5-2022

President's Corner: Time to Be Bold

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Recommended Citation

(2022) "President's Corner: Time to Be Bold," *DePaul Magazine*: Vol. 1: Iss. 412035, Article 4.
Available at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/depaul-magazine/vol1/iss412035/4>

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Time to Be Bold

My first few months at DePaul have been among the most energizing I have ever experienced. I'm beyond inspired by the many alumni, faculty, staff, students and family members I have met so far. You make DePaul a unique place, and I'm truly honored to be part of this outstanding university.

In my inauguration speech, which I delivered on Nov. 11, I challenged our university community to be bold. I challenged us to believe we can transform DePaul into THE national model for higher education – not the model for Vincentian or Catholic universities, not the model for Chicago, but THE university that creates THE national model.

Because of the extreme talent and capabilities within our university community, we have an opportunity to design a future that connects our mission and our uniqueness to address the most pressing questions facing our society today. In my opinion, true interdisciplinary education is the solution.

College students today want to feel connected to causes and meaning. They get frustrated when they can't see a direct connection between an academic discipline and how it will help solve health equity, poverty, environmental sustainability or the new frontier of human-computer interaction.

Many faculty at DePaul are actively studying and researching these critical societal topics. My goal is to knit these individual efforts together, unify them at the university level and connect them to Chicago. Let's move from a place where we study issues to one where we truly

partner with corporate and nonprofit entities to make real change happen.

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To get us started, I'm happy to announce the Board of Trustees has agreed to dedicate \$20 million from our endowment to fund interdisciplinary learning and research centers at DePaul. These funds will be used to create new endowed chairs, develop new programs that meet student and societal needs, and reinforce the university's research infrastructure.

Interdisciplinary learning and research centers will increase the value and distinction of a DePaul degree. They will extend our Catholic, Vincentian mission by improving the quality of life for the communities in which we live. Ultimately, interdisciplinary education will launch DePaul into a new era of academic excellence.

Transforming DePaul will take every single member of our university community. In the coming months, I will travel coast to coast to meet our alumni in Arizona, California, Florida, New York and Washington, D.C., as well as right here in the Chicago area. I look forward to engaging in conversations, hearing your ideas and learning how we can work together to design DePaul's future.

It's time to be bold. Let's go.

Robert L. Manuel
President