

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

A message from John McGreevy

August 30, 2024

Fall semester update

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome back. I hope you had a restful and productive summer and I look forward to seeing you on campus this fall.

The most important news from last year was the election of one of our colleagues, Rev. Robert A. Dowd, C.S.C., as Notre Dame's 18th president. I encourage all of you to join the University's [Inauguration celebration](#), scheduled for September 11 to 13. As a reminder, we have canceled classes on the afternoon of Friday, September 13, to allow for student and faculty participation.

Leadership transitions

Two important leadership transitions occurred after the spring semester update: the first is [the selection of Mary Gallagher as the Marilyn Keough Dean of the Keough School of Global Affairs](#). Mary is a distinguished political scientist with a focus on Chinese politics who comes to us from the University of Michigan. She brings to the school a varied and impressive set of intellectual and administrative accomplishments, including recent service as director of Michigan's International Institute. She replaces the school's founding dean, R. Scott Appleby, Keough-Hesburgh Professor of Global Affairs, who will now return to full-time faculty service. We are all grateful to Scott for his extraordinary work on behalf of Notre Dame over three decades, including leadership roles at the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism, the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies and the Keough School.

I'm also pleased to welcome [Margaret Meserve](#), vice president and associate provost and professor of history, as the interim Edward H. Arnold Dean of Hesburgh Libraries and University of Notre Dame Press. Margaret is an accomplished historian of the Italian Renaissance and Italian humanism and a former associate dean in the College of Arts and Letters. Since last year, she has served as associate provost for academic space and support, and those duties will continue. K. Matthew Dames, who has served the library with great dedication over the last three years, is moving into a new position as senior advisor to the provost, where he will focus on, among other topics, the challenges and opportunities presented by artificial intelligence and open access issues. Thank you to both Matthew and Margaret for their willingness to take on these new roles.

Progress on the strategic framework

Executive Vice President Shannon Cullinan and I will provide an update on the University's strategic framework at the end of the semester. A few highlights now: We have just [announced the Arts Initiative](#), led by Art History Professor and Associate Dean Michael Schreffler, with an executive committee of arts leaders from across the campus. The [Bioengineering and Life Sciences Initiative](#) recently announced a competition for new funding opportunities open to all interested faculty, and the [Democracy Initiative](#) will announce a similar opportunity next week. Shannon, Scott Ford, Jim Frabutt, and others took the lead on our [successful \\$30 million Lilly grant](#) proposal to support the Downtown South Bend Tech and Talent Hub. Finally, after a retreat with the deans and consultation with a number of key stakeholders, Vice President and Associate Provost for Internationalization Michael Pippenger and I have drafted a short global strategy document as an addendum to [Notre Dame 2033: A Strategic Framework](#). We will be discussing it at various venues across campus this semester. This fall, I will be visiting every academic department and school to discuss not only the framework and other University matters but issues identified by each department and school.

As we begin the new semester, I also want to echo Father Dowd's recent message of unwavering commitment to academic freedom and his call to approach difficult conversations with a spirit of charity; seeking to understand, rather than vilify, those whose deeply held views differ from our own. As a University, we have a responsibility to foster a learning environment that facilitates respectful discussion and constructive engagement on challenging issues. One example of this engagement is the [Israel-Palestine series and coordinating course](#), co-led by Mahan Mirza, executive director of the Ansari Institute for Global Engagement with Religion, and Tzvi Novick, Abrams Jewish Thought and Culture Professor of Theology. Others include forthcoming events organized on democracy in the United States and around the world and the implications of Catholic social thought for this year's Notre Dame Forum theme, "[What Do We Owe Each Other](#)."

Academic updates

I'm pleased to announce that following the visit by a team of peer reviewers from the Higher Learning Commission in April, the University's accreditation has been reaffirmed for another 10 years. The next comprehensive evaluation is scheduled in 2033–34. I'm grateful to Vice President and Associate Provost Maura Ryan, Demetra Schoenig, and Caroline Maloney for leading this effort, and to the many colleagues across campus who shared their time and expertise.

I also want to remind you about the update to the fall semester finals schedule, which was announced in [a message to faculty](#) earlier this month. An email was also sent to students. The final exam schedule is [here](#), and the entire academic year calendar can be found on the [Registrar's website](#).

Please know of my best wishes for a productive semester. And thank you, again, for all that you do for Notre Dame.

Sincerely,

John T. McGreevy

John T. McGreevy

Charles and Jill Fischer Provost

Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History



University of Notre Dame

Office of the Provost 300 Main Building | Notre Dame, IN 46556 US

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