



September 03, 2025

Fall Semester Update

Dear Colleagues,

The start of a new academic year always renews my sense of optimism and purpose, and I hope the start of the semester has proceeded smoothly for all faculty and academic staff. I'm writing to share a number of updates with you.

New leadership

I'm pleased to welcome [Kenneth Scheve](#) (Class of 1990) back to Notre Dame as the I.A. O'Shaughnessy Dean of the College of Arts & Letters and to thank [Steven Corcelli](#) for stepping into the role of interim dean of the College of Science. We have launched an international search for the dean of science—supported by the search firm, Isaacson, Miller—in the hope of making an appointment this spring. This fall, we will also begin the process of selecting a dean of the library, and I am grateful to Margaret Meserve for her excellent work in the interim role.

I am also happy to [announce the appointments](#) of Nitesh Chawla as director of the Data, AI, and Computation Initiative and Kathleen Cummings as director of the Global Catholic Research Initiative. Both are exceptionally distinguished faculty leaders. These are the final two priority areas identified in [Notre Dame 2033: A Strategic Framework](#), and you will hear more about their efforts later in the year. Nitesh will continue to lead the Lucy Family Institute for Data & Society this academic year, and a search will begin to select a new director for a term beginning in July 2026.



New faculty joining Notre Dame in fall 2025

Investing in people

Please also join me in welcoming [our newest faculty](#), scholar-teachers who will help us advance Notre Dame as the leading global Catholic research university and educate the leaders and scholars the world needs. They are an extraordinary group.

As you know from the executive officer letters [from June](#) and [a few weeks ago](#), we face a number of significant and ongoing financial challenges. These include a reconfigured federal funding landscape and a likely decline in indirect cost support, as well as the increased endowment tax. I am grateful to all of you for your flexibility and resourcefulness as we absorb the budget reductions announced in June. I am also grateful to our colleagues in Notre Dame Research and in Washington, D.C., who are monitoring all of these developments and helping faculty develop alternative funding strategies.

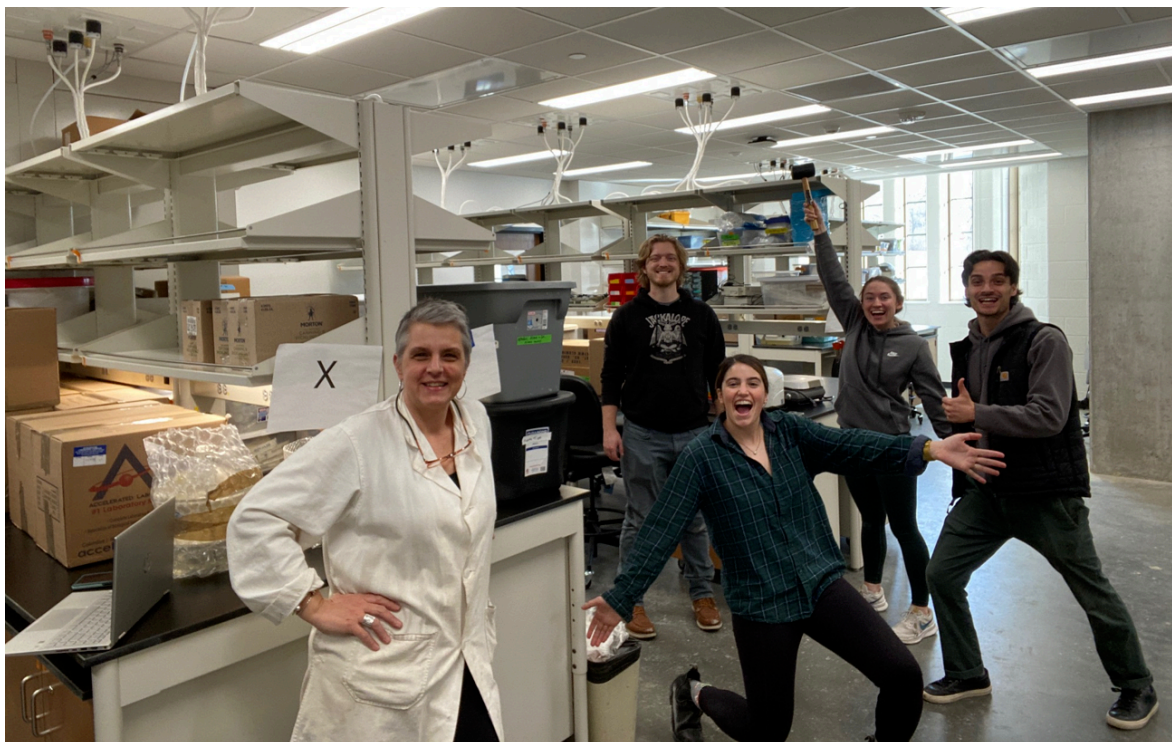
All of us benefit from the superb stewardship of our resources (over decades) coordinated by our University's finance, investment, and development teams, which enables us to continue protecting our core priorities. These priorities include supporting our current employees, ensuring that a Notre Dame education is accessible and affordable for all undergraduate students; funding graduate student stipends; and strategic faculty hiring.

We have an unusual opportunity to advance our collective efforts, given that many of our peer institutions have stopped faculty hiring this year and we are

deans, department chairs, and search committee members who will do the hard work of identifying and recruiting candidates to Notre Dame. As part of that support, we will soon release a faculty hiring guide.

I'm committed to making our faculty hiring as intentional as possible, and one important dimension of that intentionality is hiring faculty who are committed to our distinctive Catholic mission. I'm pleased to share that [Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.](#), professor of philosophy and president emeritus, has agreed to chair a task force on mission faculty hiring that will begin its work this fall. More details to come.

This fall, we welcomed 18 scholars as part of the [Provost's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program](#), a joint effort by the Graduate School and the Colleges of Science, Engineering, and Arts & Letters to support highly motivated and accomplished researchers who are committed to Notre Dame's mission to be a powerful force for good in the world. The several hundred applicants we received for the positions testify to the attractiveness of the opportunity. These provost's postdoctoral fellows are part of a significantly larger cohort of postdoctoral scholars at Notre Dame, an opportunity to enrich our intellectual community identified in the Moment to See, Courage to Act process beginning in 2021 and highlighted in *Notre Dame 2033*. We will soon begin recruiting the second cohort.



Biology Professor Jennifer Tank, Director of the University of Notre Dame Environmental Change Initiative, and graduate students celebrate moving into their new lab in McCourtney Hall East.

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Research highlights

Despite challenging headwinds, Notre Dame faculty across every college, school, department, center, and institute continue to strive for research excellence and to produce scholarship and creative works that advance knowledge and improve lives.

Over the past year, our faculty members have been [recognized with prestigious external honors](#) by organizations such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the European Academy of Sciences and Arts, the American Chemical Society, the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, among others. In April, Notre Dame particle physicists were [named co-recipients of the 2025 Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics](#). The [Department of Theology was again ranked #1 in the world](#). I could go on.

Construction on the [Veldman Psychology Clinic](#) continues to progress, and the second building of the East Campus Research Complex, McCourtney Hall, was completed last spring, offering 200,000 square feet of new space, including state-of-the-art laboratories for groundbreaking health research. Roughly 30% of the building remains unassigned, so that the University can continue to attract top-quality researchers and remain open to emerging opportunities.

We continue to develop strengths in artificial intelligence as both a research area and a site of pedagogical innovation. I am grateful to colleagues in Notre Dame Learning for their work on these issues; much of that work is summarized [here](#). The challenges posed by the technology, as well as the opportunities, will be discussed at [a listening session](#) tomorrow coordinated by Ron Metoyer, vice president and associate provost for teaching and learning, and Ardea Russo, director of the Office of Academic Standards.



Teaching my Moreau First Year Seminar class.

Undergraduate education

As you read in [the recent letter from Fr. Dan Groody, C.S.C.](#), associate provost and vice president for undergraduate education, this fall marks two important milestones—the transition to a four-year advising structure and the implementation of the reimagined Moreau program for first-year students.

Starting this fall, incoming first-year students will work with the same collegiate-level advisor throughout their time at Notre Dame, unless there is a significant change in their curriculum (such as changing majors, colleges, or schools) that necessitates a change of advisor. By building a model where students have a consistent, trusted advisor from start to finish, we're not just streamlining support and balancing caseloads—we're deepening relationships. We are grateful to the deans of the colleges and the more than 100 faculty and staff members who collaborated to make this transition possible.

Following a pilot last year, all incoming first-year students will take the reconceptualized [Moreau First Year Seminar](#) this year. The Moreau course asks students and their instructors to ask big questions about the meaning of life and the nature of community from the moment they arrive at Notre Dame. Led by [Faculty Director Bill Mattison](#) from the Department of Theology, the course is an even deeper collaboration between the colleges and the schools, the Division of Student Affairs, and the Office of Undergraduate Education. I am teaching a section of Moreau this fall, and I look forward to learning from my students and

the [roughly 120 faculty and staff](#) who have stepped forward to teach the new course.

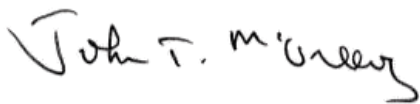
In addition, the College of Science and the College of Engineering are [piloting a program called STRAND](#), which provides a central web-based location for researchers to post and students to apply for research projects at set times throughout the year. The goal is to ensure more equitable access to these opportunities for all students. If all goes well, it will be expanded to the other colleges and schools.

These three initiatives are excellent examples of the kind of work envisioned in *Notre Dame 2033*: collaborating across units, fostering a more integrated academic experience, and ensuring that every student has the opportunity to flourish here at Notre Dame.

Looking ahead

This is a moment of exceptional disruption, but also an exceptional opportunity. The model of American higher education we have known since the 1960s may never return, but our mission as the leading global Catholic research university endures. I'm grateful for your spirit of collaboration and partnership as we continue this important work.

Sincerely,



John T. McGreevy
Charles and Jill Fischer Provost
Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History



University of Notre Dame

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