

STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESS

PRESIDENT MARVIN KRISLOV

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

Colleagues, students, friends—hello from the Kessel Student Center on our Pleasantville
C

In New York City, we opened our new campus center at 15 Beekman. It offers brand-new classrooms and common areas, a modern residence hall, a great library, and a state-of-the-art new home for the Seidenberg School of Computer Science and Information Systems.

And at Haub Law, our environmental law program was ranked No. 1 in the country for the third consecutive year. Our trial advocacy team last month took home a national championship. And we are deepening our commitment to serving our community through our clinics and our Access to Justice initiatives.

We launched the new Sands College of Performing Arts, recognizing a transformative gift from our Board chair, Rob Sands, and his wife, Pamela.

Faculty in Dyson College won major new grants to support experiential education in the humanities.

Our recently developed online degree programs in the Lubin School were ranked among the best in the country, both undergrad and MBA. The School of Education is developing an online doctorate in education, that school's first doctoral degree.

At the College of Health Professions, we're continuing to see impressive pass rates on licensure exams, we're posting record enrollment in some programs, and we're at work on a new doctoral degree in the Lienhard School of Nursing.

And the Seidenberg School is preparing a new artificial intelligence lab, which will serve as the AI hub for our entire University, providing opportunities for learning, training, interdisciplinary collaboration, and grant-funded research.

At Pace today, we are firing on all cylinders.

But as well as things are going at Pace, we must also recognize that today we are, as a nation, in a challenging moment for higher education.

Students and parents are questioning the value of college. Global pressures are creating new tensions on campuses. The pandemic led to learning loss and mental distress among students. We are still managing the implications of that.

But an extraordinary thing is that here at Pace we are demonstrating that a diverse community can work together productively in an environment of mutual respect. And that when done right, higher education can be the engine of success and mobility it has always been in this country.

We are proving these things by doing exactly what we've always done for nearly 120 years. We seek out motivated, hard-working students. We recruit faculty and staff who are committed to teaching and learning, and to helping our students succeed. We offer a powerful hands-on education that's grounded in the liberal arts. And we deliver for our students.

Pace University has always believed in experiential education, in learning by doing. Our students have always been a part of the world, not isolated in some ivory tower. Today we call that model the Pace Path. And what we're seeing in this challenging moment is that the Pace Path works.

People want to know that college is worth the investment. They want to know that students will graduate with useful, practical skills. They want to know that college grads will know how to work together, how to innovate, how to get ahead.

This is exactly what we do at Pace. And that's exactly why the Pace Path works. Across higher ed, we know that a college degree can transform a life—delivering higher earnings, upward mobility, even better health outcomes. But what we do at Pace exceeds what other colleges accomplish.

Just look at our placement numbers. Data for the Class of 2023 aren't final, but we know that results for the Class of 2022 were stellar. 94 percent of our bachelor's graduates are employed or continuing their education at six months after graduation. A whopping 97 percent of master's graduates are. Our employment rates are at least 10 points above national averages. As they have been year after year.

These outcomes prove that we deliver value. And they're thanks to the hard work of so many—the students who have such drive, the faculty who impart their knowledge and expertise, the staff who ensure our students have the resources they need to thrive. These outcomes are thanks to your dedication and commitment.

In this speech over the last few years, I've focused on some critical, nuts-and-bolts matters.

Today I want to talk about the most important asset we have at Pace. I want to focus on our commitment to supporting the people of Pace University.

Let me start with our remarkable students.

What I always say is true: Everything we do at Pace is in service to our students. Today, we know our students need even more from us.

That's why we expanded our Learning Commons academic support services. Students have access to tutors and other resources to help them with coursework in writing, math, science,

We are also augmenting the First Year Experience to ensure that all students get off to a good start at Pace—including by adding new advisors.

And we are redoubling our efforts to build out, differentiate, and promote our experiential education opportunities. Not just because it's our heritage and our formula for delivering stellar outcomes, but because we know that students who participate in hands-on learning are more engaged, perform better, and are more likely to retain and graduate.

Experiential education includes academic research and on-the-ground field work. It includes time spent in classrooms and clinical settings, externships and simulation labs. It's academic competitions, civic engagement, and creative expression. It's work in the Art Gallery, the Blue CoLab, the Design Lab, the Entrepreneurship Lab, and the new Pace Entrepreneurship Studio. Internships, of course, are experiential education, too.

In two weeks we'll host a provocative panel on our New York City Campus. It will consider the future of the humanities, featuring the president of the New York Public Library and the chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities. We will highlight the experiential humanities we're doing at Pace.

In other words, it's clear that this type of learning is happening all across our University. It is helping our students to succeed. And we want to make sure it is all recognized and supported.

We are also committed to making sure our students have the mental health support they need. I've always said that it is crucial for students—many of whom are living on their own for the first time—to learn time management and to prioritize their self-care by eating well, sleeping enough, and exercising.

Mental health needs today are even greater. This is true nationwide, and it's true at Pace. Our New York City Counseling Center, for example, has seen a 154 percent increase in walk-in visits in the past year.

Over the last few years, we've launched the full scope of our wellness programming, led by our Center for Wellbeing. We're making university-wide efforts to combat food insecurity. We're offering mini-grants for new proposals to boost wellbeing. And we've partnered with outside organizations that help to support our community members, to name just a few efforts.

An important collaboration is our work with the RADical Health program, which offers training to help students build resilience. Over the past two years more than 400 students have completed the four-week program.

All this is in addition to the ongoing work of Pace units like the Counseling Center and the Division of Student Affairs. And starting this year, we are offering training to all Pace community members on all three campuses in Mental Health First Aid, so that we're sure people in our

staffing levels and structure, spans of control, and salaries, and we look forward to sharing them with the community soon thereafter. This study will be an invaluable tool in ensuring that we can continue to attract and retain top talent.

We also know that adjunct faculty are an important part of our community, and we're eager to sit down with adjunct union leadership to start negotiations on the new contract.

We're all on the same team, and we want to do right by the people who work here.

Now, let me step back and offer a broader perspective on the next few years in higher education.

What we do at Pace happens within the context of the wider world. We are living in a difficult and challenging time. Politics have become both deeply polarized and all-encompassing, which to many can feel like a real emotional burden.

While the economy is thriving, housing costs keep accelerating and heightened interest rates are driving up the cost of living for many.

Devastating global conflicts—in Ukraine, in Israel and Gaza, and elsewhere—add to our distress, and for some of us pose life-and-death risks for friends and loved ones.

aherthierwhe -

The Center will also inaugurate fellowships for junior faculty and emerging scholars. It will start a small-group program for staff members to work together on DEI initiatives. And it will launch the new Gosin Network in Pleasantville, which will award retention scholarships to students who participate in designated courses or activities.

This work will make Pace a better community for at

We need to remain competitive, so that students want to come to Pace and be a part of our special community. That's why we're working hard to even further build out and differentiate our experiential education offerings. We know that is something valuable, something we do well, and something that makes us stand out.

That's why we've been investing in facilities across our campuses—whether that's the new buildings in New York City, the new Cyber Range in Pleasantville, or the new security improvements for Haub Law. We need to offer students the spaces and resources that make clear our commitment to supporting them, and make prospective students want to be on our campuses.

It's why we're pushing so hard for program innovation, to make sure we're offering students the educational opportunities they want and need to succeed in today's economy.

That program innovation doesn't always mean new programs.

As Professor Kelley Kreitz and others have talked about so effectively, we are bucking national trends toward decreased humanities enrollment by structuring our humanities programs to give students the practical, hands-on education they seek. While English majors nationwide are decreasing, for example, ours are growing because we offer innovative, experiential courses that excite our students and prepare them for careers.

At the same time, it's also why we're adding new curricular offerings and new extra-curriculars, like Seidenberg's new BS in videogame design and, in that same vein, our wildly successful Pace esports teams. These things keep us current—and competitive.

But the best thing we can do to ensure Pace continues to thrive—and I want to be very clear about this—is to improve our retention and graduation rates. So much of what we're doing is in service of those goals. Student success must continue to be our north star.

Making sure that our students stay on track toward their educational goals and graduate on time is, at its most basic, the right thing to do. Students come to Pace to learn and to earn a degree, and we owe it to them to do everything we can to help them achieve that goal.

But increasing our retention and graduation rates will also help us address so many other concerns. Improving our graduation rate is one of the single best things we can do to improve our rankings and reputation, which will in turn make us even more attractive to students and their families. Improving graduation and retention rates is also the simplest way to improve our finances.

o, let me say plainly that Pace University in 2024 is in an excellent position. The state of our

Here is what I ask from all of you as we chart our course forward.

We need to collaborate internally. The real world is not divided into departments, or schools and colleges. And to meet the needs of the real world we must work together across divisions—as we’re already doing in fields like public health, business tech, or law and sustainability.

We must engage externally—with local stakeholders and the global community. We are making real progress on partnerships—with universities around the world, with collaborations like the New York Climate Exchange, with local and regional companies big and small. We must become even more national and international to truly thrive.

We must elevate our academic profile by competing aggressively for funding and placing ourselves at the forefront of the public conversation. I’m gratified on how well we’re doing on that front, and I’m excited to see us do more.

We must be prepared to adapt in service of our steadfast mission. We must embrace new technologies, pedagogies, ways of learning, and forms of education.

And we must support all of our people—the fundamental core of our greatness—as we do all of this.

Our work is cut out for us. We are making progress. We are improving those retention and graduation rates. We are building for our future. We are making Pace an even better place to work.

We are getting better and better at delivering for our students.

So let me close today by saying thank you.

Thank you to our committed faculty and staff, for all the hard work you do, for the wisdom and compassion you demonstrate, and for your commitment to our students.

Thank you to our deans and vice presidents for your leadership, and thank you to our Trustees for your vision and counsel.

And, most of all, thank you to our students ... for your ambition, for your many accomplishments, and for inspiring us in everything we do.

Together, all of us, we will build a strong and powerful future for Pace, and we will make sure that we are always delivering on our historic mission of *Opportunitas*.

Let's do this.

And thank you.