

## UD doubled campus, funding in last decade

University has gained national reputation during Curran's 10 years.

**By Christopher Magan**  
Staff Writer

DAYTON — A decade ago University of Dayton leaders approached Daniel J. Curran about the presidency of the university and he turned them down.

Curran was eventually convinced UD was the place for him. Now, nearly 10 years into the presidency that almost wasn't, he has played a key role in transforming the Midwestern Catholic university into a school with growing national prominence.

"Dan has an energy that is just spectacular," said Allen Hill, chair of the UD board of trustees. "He is a great manager who knows when to delegate and when not to delegate."

Under Curran's leadership research funding has doubled and is approaching \$1 billion, the size of campus has doubled and the endowment has grown from \$258 million to \$420 million. The school now draws nearly half its enrollment from out of state and students' average ACT scores have jumped from 24.7 to 26.1.

Tuition has also nearly doubled under Curran's tenure, to \$31,640. Cost is something Curran and the trustees worry about "all the time," he said.

Curran is the first to acknowledge the university's successes are a team effort. "I have people here that make me look very good," he said. "When it comes down to it UD is an excellent community of good people and that allows you to make some bold decisions."

Curran is the first lay leader of UD, succeeding Brother Raymond Fitz, who led the school for nearly quarter century — the longest tenure in school history. Leaders acknowledge Fitz laid much of the groundwork for the school's current success, allowing the current administration to build upon a strong foundation.

"I think we had a lot of momentum before Dan got here. We've had a very productive 10 years," said Fitz, who now runs the university's Fitz Center for Leadership in Community, focusing on social justice programs.

After the quick expansion, Fitz believes administrators will be even more focused on "quality" of education and other programs. "I think we have a great undergraduate education program, we want to make it world class," Fitz said.

Increasingly the university has become more global. Now, 10 percent of undergraduates come from outside the U.S. with one of the biggest draws being China. "For us the driving force is to create a learning environment that would mirror what students would encounter when they went out into the world," Curran said.

Besides being more international UD has grown its recruitment nationally increasing out-of-state enrollment from 35 percent to almost



University of Dayton President Daniel Curran, talking to students, has been the school's president for nearly a decade. STAFF PHOTO BY TY GREENLEES.

50 percent. The school has also become more selective, with less than 10 percent of students coming from Montgomery County, but Ohio is still a strong market, with UD's largest "feeder" city being Cincinnati.

A national reputation and reach is key to UD's long-term success, Curran and Fitz said, but there is still room for local students with the right talents.

"I don't think we are turning anybody away," Fitz said. "I think the challenge we have is getting the students that fit the profile of what we want here in terms of academic preparation and the programs we have."

Research is one of UD's quickest growing endeavors with nearly \$100 million in sponsored research focused around the University of Dayton Research Institute. The university recently announced a unique partnership with General Electric to locate a research facility on campus.

Many of the research projects are tied to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base so the university needs to vet projects carefully because of its Catholic mission.

"Contributing to the legitimate defense of the country is a religiously valid thing," Fitz said. "We should never be afraid to ask that question. But we have tried to be involved at the more basic level, not things that contribute directly to weapons systems."

Looking to the future, Curran said, UD will continue to concentrate on research as well as academics. "I'm going to be here as long as I can," he said. "What I hope we do in the next decade is attract the next GE and be creative about some of the space we have. We need to be wise about what we do, don't rush into it and work on our challenges in a very analytic fashion."

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