

COMMENTARY BY DANIEL J. CURRAN
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The power of possibility

I remember feeling at home the moment I walked onto campus.

As the familiar strains of the hymn, *We are Called*, filled the chapel at the opening day Mass of my presidency, I felt so welcomed by the Marianists, students, faculty, staff and alumni. I felt so inspired by the University's powerful heritage and sense of mission.

As a community, I knew we were poised to do great things together — to make a bold leap forward. In the Marianist tradition, we would build upon our core values, read the signs of the times and embrace the power of possibility.

Today, 12 years later, I feel the same way. This is my home. And the University of Dayton is fulfilling that promise of greatness.

That's why this is the ideal time to look for a new leader to take our university forward. In December, I announced that I would step down as president in June 2016 after a 14-year tenure. The board of trustees has initiated a national search for my successor.

Two years ago, a reporter looked at the growth of the University's physical size and academic prestige and noted, "The pace of change has been among the most rapid and substantial seen at any American university."

When I became president in 2002, I inherited a university on the move from longtime president Brother Ray Fitz, S.M., and discovered a community willing to ask the big questions and seek out answers together. I have been humbled and privileged to be the steward of such a remarkable legacy and to be able to continue our historic upward momentum.

When other universities stepped back and froze faculty positions during the recession, we stepped forward and hired some of the brightest minds in the country.

We didn't turn away from the brownfield and vacant corporate headquarters on our border, but instead embraced the potential. We felt confident community and government partners would help us secure the funding to bring new life to that land. Today, that land is the canvas for the future and will benefit generations of students.

This fall, we welcomed our largest, most academically prepared first-year class. Faculty, staff and students gathered in the Central Mall as George and Amanda Hanley, through their Chicago foundation, committed \$12.5 million — the largest gift in school history — to support curricular innovations in sustainability. We honored Brother Ray by renaming the College Park Center as Raymond L. Fitz Hall, and community and state leaders helped us break ground on Emerson Climate Technologies' \$35 million global innovation center at the corner of Main and Stewart streets.

As I reflect on my presidency, I am most proud of the cumulative successes of our students, alumni, faculty and staff. You have spread the University of Dayton's excellence and reputation around the world.

Our work together isn't finished.

I will continue to advocate for social justice and sustainability, which stem from our religious mission to stand with the poor and promote the common good. With the help of alumni and friends, we will raise funds to renovate Chaminade Hall as a home for the Human Rights Center and the Hanley Sustainability Institute.

In 2016, I will take a sabbatical, then return to the students and classrooms I love and continue to build the University's international relationships, particularly in China.

The Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, founder of the Society of Mary, inspires us to be visionaries — to create our moment in history, to act upon this university's strong foundation of educational innovation and deep faith.

That's our calling.

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