THE FORDHAM UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT’S COUNCIL

Making Magis a Living Ideal

The Latin word *magis*, meaning “more, to a greater extent,” is one of the core principles of a Jesuit education. But it is much more than an abstract concept. It is a lifelong call to strive for excellence, to make the most of our God-given talents and use them to serve others.

The spirit of *magis* animates the Fordham University President’s Council, a group of successful professionals and philanthropists who are committed to mentoring Fordham’s future leaders, funding key initiatives, and raising the University’s profile.

Joseph M. McShane, S.J., president of Fordham University, established the President’s Council in 2004. Since then, more and more accomplished alumni, parents, and friends have been sharing their time, creativity, and financial resources with Fordham, and the council’s impact on the lives of students and alumni grows each year.
A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Fordham has been influential in my family for several generations and in many ways. My father-in-law, Nathan Albstein, worked as a technician in the chemistry department at Rose Hill in the 1970s, and found both meaningful employment and friendship at Fordham. In particular, he enjoyed sharing his passion for opera with a molecular physics professor, Robert Cloney, S.J. It was wonderful to discover that both my father-in-law and Father Cloney have Fordham scholarships dedicated to their memories. In addition, my husband, Andrew Albstein, my sister-in-law, Iris Albstein, and my nephew, Neil Albstein, are graduates of Fordham Law School. I am a graduate of the Gabelli School of Business. Fordham is at the core of my family.

As chair of the President’s Council, I consider myself fortunate to be able to build upon Fordham’s rich legacy, which was established by many generations of committed, talented individuals. This legacy has enabled Fordham to continuously reach new heights while never losing its sense of humanity.

The President’s Council brings broad and deep experience and expertise to Fordham students. In my own career, I have invested pension and savings plan assets for employees of both a drug company and a consumer products company. Other council members represent other industries and offer a multitude of skills and talents. Collectively, the council provides individualized guidance to students through many activities such as arranging internships, hosting mentoring events featuring industry specialists, and organizing other programs to give students a career advantage.

The council is committed to providing financial aid and scholarship funds to qualified students. The main vehicles for this are the annual Fordham Founder’s Award Dinner and the Founder’s Undergraduate Scholarship Fund. The entire council enthusiastically supports both of these, making it possible for many deserving students to attend Fordham, reach their potential, and inspire us all.

It is an exciting time at Fordham. Together, we will forge wholeheartedly into the future while never losing sight of the Jesuit ideal of magis that has made Fordham the special school that it is.

Carolyn Albstein, GABELLI ’82
Chair
When Todd Cosenza came to Fordham, he already was familiar with Jesuit education, having graduated from Manhattan’s Regis High School. But what he didn’t know was just how personalized his Fordham education would be.

“I had so many mentors,” from professors and administrators such as Sharon Smith, Ph.D., then the undergraduate business dean, and Joseph A. O’Hare, S.J., president of Fordham at the time, he said. “They were always willing to help. Everyone wanted to further develop my skills.”

Today, he strives to pass along the same kind of help he received as a student and magnify Fordham’s impact on current students. He and his wife—Elizabeth Pinho-Cosenza, a Fordham alumna and professor—annually host a reception for accepted students from Regis and other Catholic high schools in New York. He also participates in a number of other mentoring events, and recruits at Fordham for his law firm, Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP, where he is vice chair of Willkie’s securities litigation practice.

Above all, he is dedicated to carrying on the tradition of one Fordham generation helping the next.

“To me, it’s critical that Fordham students have an experience similar to what I had,” he said. “Fordham had a transformative impact on my life, and I’m very grateful.”
Anthony Carter recently retired as vice president and chief diversity officer at Johnson & Johnson, a position he calls “the culmination of everything I’ve learned and everything that I feel strongly about.”

He grew up in the South Bronx in a family of 10 children whose parents died when Carter was young. For high school, he was bused to St. Raymond’s in Parkchester, where he participated in a leadership program for young African-American men. “I started to take pride in who I was. And I understood the importance of inclusion.”

A communications major at Fordham, Carter wrote for The Ram and The Paper, and hosted a WFUV radio show on the African-American environment. “It made me realize,” he said, “that you just needed voices—strong, passionate, and balanced voices—to help people understand this need to relate to one another.”

As a member of the President’s Council, Carter plans to focus on diversity issues at Fordham. He’s a big supporter of Fordham CSTEP, which prepares minority students for careers in the sciences and licensed professions. And he’s been inspired, he said, by Father McShane’s commitment to bringing more students of color to the University.

“Fordham was my first shot at freedom. It was a culture that was protective and I think I needed that.”
v: to beget, engender, produce, create

Rick Calero joined the Army just a week after graduating from Xavier High School in Manhattan. Years later, one of his Jesuit guidance counselors lamented that the military got him first. “You would have made a great Jesuit,” he said.

As senior manager and director of strategic initiatives at TIAA, Calero is responsible for developing and executing key operational and business requirements across TIAA to drive how the company works, collaborates, and manages in the future.

The sense of nobility Calero finds in his work is something he encountered in the military and in his Jesuit education. “There’s just a value system in both,” he said, whether that system is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ or the U.S. Constitution. “There is a cause greater than yourself.”

An ROTC scholarship brought Calero to Fordham. He studied economics at Fordham College at Lincoln Center, a few miles from where he grew up on 132nd and Broadway. He recently mentored a Fordham ROTC student, and plans to do more mentoring as a member of the President’s Council, inspired by the sense of service that Fordham helped instill in him long ago. “Whether I was the Puerto Rican kid from the Upper West Side or the recent vet,” he says, “Fordham has just always been there.”

“Jesuit education is not just learning basic skills. It really is critical thinking.”
Peggy Smyth’s motivation for serving on the President’s Council is simple: “Everything good I have in my life,” she said, “I owe to Fordham.”

The chief financial officer for the U.S. at National Grid met her husband, Bernard G. (Berney) Smyth, FCRH ’85, when she was studying economics at Fordham College at Rose Hill on a presidential scholarship. Joseph A. O’Hare, S.J., now president emeritus of Fordham, baptized the couple’s two sons at the University Church. And Smyth is still best friends with her Fordham roommate.

Smyth achieved remarkable success in the business world at an early age; in 2002, Crain’s New York Business named her to its “40 Under 40” list. She went on to become a global business executive in some of the world’s biggest companies, including technology and energy firms.

After receiving a Fordham education, learning the “tech side” of her business was a challenge for which Smyth was prepared. “At Fordham you learn how to learn,” she said. “The world is constantly changing, so you always need to be studying to stay up-to-date. And Fordham teaches you that. That’s why I am a really big advocate of a liberal arts education.”

“Most Fordham students are pretty hungry to succeed, and that’s what I like to see. Attitude is everything.”
Coming from a small all-girls Catholic high school, Roberta Siciliano knew she wanted a broader university experience without losing that “sense of community and sense of family.”

“For me, Fordham was the right blend. It was large enough to have everything you wanted but still have the personal touch.”

While the future actuary was drawn to Fordham’s math and science curriculum, she appreciated the “ethical grounding” she found in her philosophy and theology courses. “It forces you to think about the larger issues beyond your field.”

Throughout her career, Garland has stayed grounded and held tight to what is most important to her. “I deliberately chose to keep my family time special, and those I love close.” So close that in 2002, she started her own actuarial consulting firm with her husband and stepdaughter.

As a member of the President’s Council, Garland enjoys mentoring Fordham students and young alumni, encouraging them to maintain a healthy work-life balance as they pursue their career goals. “Your worth is not determined by how many hours you work, but by your contributions to yourself, your family, your employer, your clients, and society as a whole.”

“Fordham is a nurturing environment, but also a challenging one. I never had a class where the teacher didn’t know my name.”
Making 

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Joseph M. McShane, S.J., president of Fordham University, invites the members of the President’s Council to engage in the life and mission of the University in a variety of distinct and meaningful ways. Specifically, President’s Council members:

• provide philanthropic support to the University at the highest levels, sharing both the inspiration and leadership necessary to help Fordham realize its greatest dreams as an institution dedicated to wisdom and learning in the service of others;

• reach out to and engage the University’s top undergraduate applicants, sharing with them the Fordham story and its lifelong impact;

• mentor current students and young alumni, promoting their academic success and career development;

• leverage corporate relationships to create enhanced opportunities for students and alumni;

• participate in the Executive in Residence program, guest-teaching classes and leading seminars in their areas of expertise;

• lend the volunteer leadership and support necessary to ensure the annual outstanding success of the Fordham Founder’s Award Dinner.

For more information about the President’s Council, please visit fordham.edu/prescouncil.