

INTERIM CHANCELLOR JANN JOSEPH REMARKS AT ALL-CAMPUS MEETING
August 17, 2018

We are going to do things a little differently at this All-Campus Meeting. Instead of reports on enrollment, budgets, and facilities I want to talk with you about our students and how everything we do impacts their success or failure.

I think that many of us love what we do at IU South Bend because of the diversity of our students' lives, backgrounds, hopes, and dreams. However, their diverse backgrounds and ambitions can also make them harder to identify and help. I want to use my time with you this morning to give you some information and some examples of our students and ways we are helping them. My hope is that some of this will speak to you and give you encouragement to continue to find ways in your daily interactions with students to help them succeed.

My first piece of information has been talked about before. We have overwhelming evidence that incoming students with a GPA of 2.4 or below will very likely not be retained to the following year and almost never graduate. As the evidence grew, the leadership team felt it was an ethical decision. We couldn't just take their tuition money and let them fail.

So we started the Early Start Summer Academy which began this summer. It required students with a high school grade point average of 2.4 or below to complete a six credit summer program to enhance their collegiate skills. It also included financial aid and career counseling. The program was free, paid for by the campus.

94 beginner students were identified as needing the program. 52 enrolled. We were happy with that number. We expected a higher rate of students declining because of summer work, travel, or not wanting to take classes in the summer. Of the 52 enrolled, 24 will be attending this semester. Others have been referred to Ivy Tech.

I am very proud of these students. They have already made a sacrifice to help prepare them for the rigors of academics at IU South Bend. They come from all backgrounds and situations. You couldn't recognize them from any other students on campus. Any one of them could be in your class or walk in your office needing help. We all need to be there for them.

Consider this, the first to second-year retention rate at IU South Bend is about 66% and has remained there for several years despite efforts to improve it. In other words, one third of our incoming students leave after only one year. We know that the first three weeks are critical for these students. Beginning next week, one of these students could be in your class or walk into your office needing help. We all need to be there for them.

Not all our students are unprepared or at-risk. On the contrary, many are the best and brightest in their high school classes. In fact, we have six Herbert Scholars in our incoming class this year. That is the most ever.

Herbert Scholars are eligible for a full-ride scholarship to any IU campus and would be sought after at any college or university. Six of these talented students chose IU South Bend. I had the privilege of hosting a lunch for them and their parents two weeks ago. They have different backgrounds and situations and you wouldn't recognize them from any other student on campus. One of them could be in your class or walk into your office needing help. We need to be there for them in a different way. Challenging them academically, getting them engaged with the campus, helping them find their passion in research or creative endeavors.

We have students from all over the world on campus. Each summer many of our international students return home to family. Some may need to visit their country's Consulate to get a visa renewal so they can re-enter the U.S. to resume their studies. For many this is a daunting task given our current political climate.

This summer, one of our international students called the IU South Bend Office of International Student Services from the Ivory Coast. He had been denied a renewal until he could produce a copy of his transcripts. He couldn't access his account because the phone with his Duo authentication app had been stolen along with his credit card. Staff members from OISS and the Registrar's Office found a way to deliver the transcript. The student got his visa and will resume studies next week. International students may be in your class or walk into your office needing a different kind of help. We all need to be there for them.

The School of Social Work received this letter from a student who was awarded a scholarship. She wrote quote, "Just when I was beginning to wonder if I had made the right decision in going back to school, with a heavy work load, kids, homework, two dogs, health issues and a home to maintain; the answer revealed itself in this congratulations letter that I had been selected for the Joann Phillips Master of Social Work Alumni Scholarship. Me! I feel blessed and grateful. Thank you." She could be in your class or walk into your office needing help. We all need to be there for her.

And I recently read about a faculty member at another institution who wanted to help students who were struggling in her class. She came up with a low-touch way to intervene. She sends a personalized, supportive email. With a small investment of time, she was able to signal to students that she cared. The email is an example of a classroom-based "nudge," or intervention that encourages, but does not mandate, a certain behavior.

Nudges have caught on as a way to help students through the many complex processes of higher education. The practice essentially says, "Let's all stop waiting for students to come and ask for help." At IU South Bend this fall we are starting the Student Engagement Roster which is a way of nudging students. I encourage faculty members to use it. Let's not wait for our students to ask for help.

I know that there is good work going on everyday here at IU South Bend to try to help our students. But we need to do more. Not only to improve our retention and graduation rates but to improve the lives of our students and their families. As administrators, faculty and staff in

higher education we are in a unique position to have a direct influence on the lives of the people who come here. They have chosen us. Their lives are complicated. They may be in your classroom or come to your office for help. We need to be there for them. I know you will be.

That concludes our program. Many of us will now walk to the Student Activities Center to get robed for the New Student Induction Ceremony. I hope to see you there and also at the All-Campus lunch that will follow.

Both events are great ways to show new students and their parents that we care about them. Introduce yourself, ask questions, help them feel welcome. They may be anxious and nervous about starting a new chapter in the lives. A kind word from you could go a long way.

Thank you all for coming. Let's have a great year together.