

**Karol Mason's Remarks at CUNY**  
**Trustee Board Meeting**  
**(May 1, 2017)**

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as the next President of John Jay College of Criminal Justice. I am drawn to the opportunity to be part of the John Jay family because of the high quality of work that I have seen emanate from John Jay over the past eight years. John Jay's goals and mission mirror my own philosophy and passions.

For the past three and a half years, I had the privilege of serving as the Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs at the U.S. Department of Justice. From this experience, I learned that in order to see long-term positive changes that result in opportunities for all people to lead successful and productive lives, especially those often marginalized and most in need, partnerships and leveraging resources across systems are

critical. John Jay has been a leading partner on the national level in addressing so many of the inequities in our criminal justice system. More importantly, John Jay has been training the next generation of our country's leaders in the criminal justice arena and well beyond.

I am a strong believer in the importance of a liberal arts foundation. The ultimate goal of an institution for higher education

is to prepare its graduates to be nimble and adaptable in order to succeed in a rapidly changing world. Because of John Jay's criminal justice focus, it has the added advantage of exposing thousands of students to the principles of justice and equity and fairness, which will inform their lives whether they ultimately work in our criminal justice system, or pursue other careers. John Jay is educating students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college, to be

critical players in society, with an understanding that access to education, healthcare, and jobs are critical to the success of our communities. From the students who I have had the pleasure of meeting, John Jay is excelling in its goal of developing fierce advocates for justice on all levels.

John Jay has the opportunity to raise its already high profile to another level nationally and internationally by serving

as a leading voice and convener and bringing others together to focus on what we know from years of research to address the inequities in our criminal justice system, and to be the leaders in improving the state of forensic science and cyber security. Through strategic partnerships with John Jay's students and faculty, other researchers, think tanks, and other advocacy groups, we have the opportunity to continue the progress that the country has made in so many areas:

(i) creating opportunities for those leaving our prisons and jails to succeed,

(ii) ensuring that all our young people receive the support they need in advance to be successful, and

(iii) linking across systems, using a public health approach, to ensure that communities are safe, healthy and happy.

For the past eight years, we had a Presidential Administration that was focused on building the capacity of neighborhoods and communities to

partner more effectively with the federal,  
state and local governments,  
philanthropic partners and their business  
communities.

We no longer have a federal government  
focused on these goals, but the roadmap  
to success is not dependent on federal  
government leadership. Continued  
progress toward justice involves an  
investment of time and a long-term  
commitment to what we know from



research works. It involves a will to realign systems in ways that support the success of those in need, and it involves a commitment to continue to test new approaches and carefully evaluate and learn from the results, whether positive or negative.

John Jay is positioned to be the leader we need now to make sure that we remain focused on advancing justice for those most in need. I am excited to become

part of the John Jay team that creates  
pathways for success for young people  
and our often-marginalized communities.

Thank you.