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University of Dayton

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UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON APPOINTS DANIEL CURRAN PRESIDENT, FIRST LAY LEADER DRAWN TO UD’S VISION, COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

DAYTON, Ohio — In a fitting announcement for Presidents’ Day, the University of Dayton’s governing bodies today appointed Daniel J. Curran, executive vice president and vice president for academic affairs at Saint Joseph’s University, as the University of Dayton’s 18th president.

The Philadelphia native will become the first lay president in UD’s 152-year history when he replaces Brother Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., on July 1. Fitz is stepping down after a record 23-year stint.

“What attracted me to the University of Dayton was its commitment to social justice, strong campus community and its vision to be a national leader in Catholic higher education. I’m very honored to become a member of this community with its rich Marianist tradition and mission, and I’m looking forward to playing a vital role in the Dayton community and region,” said Curran, 51.

A sociologist by training, he’s spent the past 23 years in various administrative and faculty positions at Saint Joseph’s University, a residential Catholic university on the western edge of Philadelphia where he graduated with a bachelor’s degree in sociology in 1973. Founded by the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1851, Saint Joseph’s University enrolls 7,175 students, including 3,750 full-time undergraduates from 32 states and 54 countries.

Marianists, trustees, administrators, faculty and students praised Curran for his collegial leadership style, vision, infectious energy, curricular innovations, commitment to social justice and scholarly track record. At Saint Joseph’s University, he helped boost academic reputation, test scores and enrollment while earning a reputation as a problem-solver.

“I think he’s a wonderful pick. He will fit the Marianist culture like a glove,” said Richard
Finan, chair of the presidential search committee and board of trustees. "His commitment to social justice matches the Marianist tradition. He's full of energy, just full of energy."

Besides the board of trustees, the members of the corporation (Marianists) approved Curran's selection. He was given a five-year contract.

Curran's appointment ends a 19-month process to find a new president. In November, the University of Dayton extended the search, expanded the search committee and promised to provide greater confidentiality to candidates after one candidate dropped out and the academic senate expressed reservations about the qualifications of the other two finalists. Representative groups of faculty, administrators, students, trustees and Marianists interviewed finalists Sunday at the Marriott Hotel at the Cincinnati airport and offered feedback to the presidential search committee, which recommended Curran's selection.

A sampling of Curran's accomplishments in five years as vice president at Saint Joseph's University:

- **Stronger academic reputation:** Applications have doubled. In fall 2001, Saint Joseph's University enrolled the largest, most academically qualified first-year class in its history. Test scores stand at an all-time high, and the university's acceptance rate has improved from 83 percent to a highly selective 58 percent.

- **Quality of faculty:** The number of full-time faculty has risen 44 percent, from 156 to 225. Approximately 90 percent hold doctoral or terminal degrees.

- **Curricular achievements:** With the awarding of a Phi Beta Kappa chapter in 2000, Saint Joseph's University is one of just 132 colleges and universities in the country to be recognized by the most prestigious of all academic honor societies and to have also received accreditation by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business. Three years ago, Saint Joseph's University started its first doctoral program in education.

- **International reach:** In the past three years, the university has developed ties with five universities in the People's Republic of China, resulting in 200 Chinese graduate students completing programs this academic year in business, training and development, and criminal justice. In India, the recruiting office established there last year attracted 75 new students from a new market.

- **Improved administration-faculty relations:** He helped develop a more collaborative model of decision making, while mentoring new administrators he promoted from within.

Before becoming a vice president, Curran served as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for four years. He started his academic career at Saint Joseph's University in 1979 with a series of faculty position in the department of sociology, including chair from 1988 to 1992. As a professor of sociology, he continues to teach courses in such topics as criminology, social problems, juvenile justice and white-collar crime. For six years, he traveled with students -more-
to Tijuana, Mexico, on a service-learning project. He sits on the board of trustees of Saint Joseph’s Carpenter Society, a nonprofit organization that purchases and rehabilitates homes in Camden, N.J., an economically depressed city near Philadelphia. He also is a member of the board of Philadelphia’s Summerbridge Program, a college-prep program for minority middle-school students.

Curran’s prolific scholarly record includes seven books in nine years, most of which he co-authored with his wife, Claire M. Renzetti, a professor of sociology at Saint Joseph’s University. One of their books is currently in press: *Theories of Crime: A Reader*. In 1993, the University of Pittsburgh Press published his *Dead Laws for Dead Men*, a historical analysis of coal mine health and safety legislation. In 1990, he served as a Fulbright Senior Scholar at the University of Melbourne in Australia. He currently holds a concurrent professorship at Nanjing University in China.

“As a sociologist, much of my writing has focused on social inequality and potential solutions to this problem,” he said. “I’m particularly concerned about inequality in access to quality higher education. I’m drawn to Dayton’s mission and tradition that stresses accessibility to all segments of the population. The University of Dayton’s mission coincides with my personal perspective.”

Curran earned a Ph.D. from the University of Delaware in 1980 after receiving a master’s degree from Temple University in 1978 and a bachelor’s degree from Saint Joseph’s University in 1973 — all in sociology. Curran and his wife, Claire, have two sons, Sean, 13 and Aidan, 11.

Founded by the Society of Mary (Marianists) in 1850, the University of Dayton is the largest independent university in the state and ranks among the dozen largest Catholic universities in the country. It enrolls nearly 11,000 full- and part-time students and operates under an annual budget of approximately $250 million. Its $275 million endowment places it among the top Catholic universities nationally. The University of Dayton Research Institute, with $40 million annual sponsored research volume, is the largest among Catholic universities without medical schools.

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