Message from Dr. Carter

Four years ago when we embarked on our strategic planning and scanned the future landscape in higher education, it became quite clear that if Johnson C. Smith University were to fulfill its promise, we had to commit to engaging in a radical transformation. We are well into the midst of that change and our Mission-in-Vision has become woven into the fabric of the University. I am happy that our faculty, staff and students not only understand it but also live it daily.

A critical step in achieving our Mission-in-Vision as a new urban university involves changing our business model. In order for this process to occur, we need strong leaders who can make tough decisions, create solutions, rethink business processes and test prototypes.

What I find most exciting is what the Board of Trustees identified five years ago as the Seven Expectations for Radical Transformation. These expectations mandated that we change our “business as usual” approach in order to survive
and thrive in a rapidly changing and highly competitive market in which students have many options for earning bachelor's and advanced degrees. Research shows that students in the year 2020 will demand an education on their terms and will seek a technology-based customized approach to learning. The bottom line is they will want it all: a plethora of learning options that they can mix and match to play to their individual strengths. I am excited that we’re on target in examining our business model for attracting and retaining students, while engaging experts who can help put us at the front of the higher education curve. I must say that our Board of Trustees was correct in their assessment, and I commend them for their courage and foresight.

On May 14, Mr. Greg Petzke began his role as interim Chief Financial Officer. I am very pleased to welcome Mr. Petzke, of the Monaghan Group, whose 30 years of experience will help us accelerate our move to a new business model. He has built accounting organizations from the ground up and has hands-on experience as well as strong leadership ability. Mr. Petzke has hit the ground running, and his reports to me thus far about our financial future have been very encouraging. He has developed a solid 90-day plan, and I am optimistic that this plan will make us even stronger.

The Board of Trustees, faculty and staff have played a major role in making the Mission-in-Vision a part of the University’s DNA. Because of their hard work, JCSU achieved several milestones this academic year. Here is what a few of them say about their accomplishments, challenges and triumphs in problem-solving to overcome expected and unforeseen obstacles on the difficult road of radical transformation.

Dr. Ronald L. Carter
President
What were the accomplishments for the year?

The Board of Trustees enjoyed several accomplishments that will enhance our students’ experience in the future. The University opened the Mosaic Village to accommodate students who want a more autonomous living arrangement. We broke ground for the new Science Center which will enable our students to learn and research in a cutting-edge facility. We now anticipate that Duke Hall, which will provide a fully-renovated residential asset, will be ready for occupation when the fall semester begins. And finally, the Board put forth and confirmed a new slate of candidates as officers who will be assuming their roles at our August 2013 meeting.

What were some of the challenges?

One of the biggest challenges that the University faced this past year was in closing the financial gap of the many students who arrived on our campus with significant financial deficiencies. It is clear that the University stretched well beyond what could be considered reasonable boundaries in an effort to assist a significant number of those students in their effort to stay on our campus in pursuit of their degrees. The board stood squarely behind the decisions to address the issue made by Dr. Carter and his administration. The Board of Trustees also took on the task of revamping the University’s by-laws, and after numerous discussions and presentations of various drafts, we have completed...
that task. We are currently working to assure that the University’s charter is in sync with the new by-laws.

I contend that we owe significant gratitude to Dr. Carter for his willingness to embrace and expound on the vision initiated by the Board in the Seven Expectations for Radical Transformation. Much of the success of our Mission-in-Vision has been driven by his insights, tenacity and leadership.
Enrollment Services

What was your biggest accomplishment during the year?

The higher education marketplace has become very competitive, particularly for the highly motivated and highly talented students JCSU recruits. I was very excited that we enrolled 1,800 students in fall 2012. Our admissions counselors worked hard to make sure prospective students and parents understood how the University provides a transformative education with a global perspective that allows students to grow intellectually, physically, socially, culturally and spiritually. This generation of students is keen on sustainability and community engagement. Many of them choose JCSU because of our deep commitment to the Northwest Corridor, Sustainability Village and community service requirements, especially since servant leadership is important to them.

What was your biggest challenge?

As the dean of Enrollment Services, it was very difficult for me when we lost 120 students at the start of the spring 2013 semester. Even though the Office of Financial Aid and the Office of Business and Finance worked diligently with all students to help them find options to pay their balances, some students were unable to secure the funds to validate. I realize that JCSU was no different from many other colleges and universities across the nation, particularly Historically Black Colleges and Universities, in feeling the effects of the U.S. Department of Education’s decision to change the rules in the approval process for families.
applying for the Parent PLUS loan. But it still didn’t make it any easier to watch those students put their academic careers on hold. We empathized with those students and their families. Staff in the financial aid and business offices continued working with students who could not validate, and several of them will re-enroll for the fall 2013 semester.

I am proud that the University did not shy away from the challenges caused by changes in the Parent PLUS loan, but instead, our leadership came together to problem-solve and find solutions. As a result, our Board of Trustees raised $100,000 for the President’s Gap Scholarship Fund this spring. I have already seen the positive impact of those funds as we have been able to help students with balances ranging from $100 to $2,000 validate for fall 2013.

**What is your forecast for the 2013-2014 academic year?**

I continue to be excited about our prospects for the upcoming academic year. Our efforts to attract a more diverse and international student body have proved to be successful. Students who want to pursue STEM careers (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) are showing increased interest in JCSU, because they have heard about our new state-of-the-art Science Center that will be built next year. The Enrollment Services Division will work hard during the summer to meet our enrollment goals, and in turn, start a new class of students on the path to realizing their dreams.
What was your biggest accomplishment during the year?

Today’s students have expectations for housing that go beyond simply a place to hang their clothing, to read a few textbook chapters and to sleep. Students are accustomed to living accommodations with the latest amenities including technology, space to interact with friends and even single bedrooms. Because they have these comforts and conveniences at home, they expect to have them at college also. In the Division of Student Success, our biggest accomplishment happened on October 4, 2012, when we opened Mosaic Village and simultaneously opened the door to a new era in housing for JCSU. The 124,000-square-foot facility on West Trade Street provides apartment-style living for 300 JCSU students and students at other institutions of higher education in Charlotte. From the moment we opened the doors and witnessed students and community leaders gasp in awe and excitement, I have been proud that we have one of the best options for housing in the greater Charlotte region. Mosaic Village is also proof of our commitment to the Northwest Corridor by serving as a model for how public/private partnerships can spark economic development and increase community pride.

What was your biggest challenge?

When I reflect on our biggest challenge, I turn again to student housing. In February 2013, a few residents in Myers Hall found evidence of bats in the
building. We focused our efforts on working with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Animal Control and Carolina Pest Control to solve the problem. The safety of our students is paramount, so we decided to take prudent, precautionary measures and close Myers Hall for the remainder of the spring semester. The Office of Residence Life worked quickly to develop an operational plan to relocate students to other residence halls. It was certainly a challenge to move 93 students in the middle of the academic year. It is a real testament to the professionalism and dedication of our staff as well as the maturity of our students that we were able to make it happen with minimal disruption to the students’ lives.

What is your forecast for the 2013-2014 academic year?

The upcoming year will be an exciting one for the Division of Student Success because we will be able to enhance our support offerings to students as a result of a two-year $150,000 grant from The Duke Endowment. The grant will allow us to hire two case managers who will address personal and health-related needs that often become barriers to academic success. Therefore, the University can develop and implement proactive student services and establish a stable, consistent system of care for students in times of critical need. I am convinced that this will help increase our retention rate while contributing to the personal development of our students.

Student housing will be a bright spot for us again in 2013-2014, because Duke Hall, which was built in 1940, will receive an energy efficient facelift and a renovation that will bring the three-story building into the 21st century as a contemporary residence hall. Funded by The Duke Endowment, the renovation will further the University’s sustainability efforts and provide 36 residential suites that will house 70 students. I'm thrilled that we will be able to offer our students another option for modern living in fall 2013. This is just another way that JCSU
offers a vibrant campus experience to complement the intellectual rigor that occurs in our classrooms.
What was your biggest accomplishment during the year?

In my role as Dean of Metropolitan College, my biggest accomplishment during the year was seeing students graduate. This year’s graduation feels like an accomplishment because the Class of 2013 includes students who are enrolled in programs that I had a hand in developing. There are students who entered the University through the Biddle Freshman program who are graduating this year – many with very good GPAs. These are students who otherwise would not have been admitted to the University – and now…they are graduating. The first “Mid-mester” student is also graduating in this class. Mid-mester is a pilot program that enrolled students into the University in mid-October 2011. In addition, the first non-traditional students are graduating. These ten adult students are a part of the Class of 2013 and nine of them have a GPA greater than 3.0. I am very proud of all of these students. Their accomplishment is graduation; my accomplishment is developing and administering the programs that have fostered their educational achievement.

What was your biggest challenge?

The biggest challenge this year presented for me was finding time to interact with students. I am extremely student-focused, so it is important for me to talk with them, advise and expose them. As the University moves forward with its transformation, more and more administrative planning, meetings and decisions
are required. Because these efforts have demanded more of my time, I have heard the students comment that I’m never in my office anymore. Technology has helped mitigate this challenge somewhat, but there is nothing like an old-fashioned face-to-face conversation. I personally believe many of our students want to be heard and need someone with whom to talk who is sincerely interested. I am sincerely interested, so I wrestle with this challenge constantly.

What is your forecast for the 2013-2014 academic year?

As I look ahead to next year, I am quite optimistic. I see many opportunities for our students and the community through public leadership as we develop a new program in that area. I know that reaching our goals will require hard work and more time, but I am energized by the notion of elevating faculty, staff, students and the community. As we develop new opportunities, we will continue exploring methods to increase enrollment at Metropolitan College and partner with more organizations in Charlotte to provide customized certification programs.
Institutional Planning, Assessment, Effectiveness and Research

What was your biggest accomplishment during the year?

This year was particularly gratifying for us in IPAER because the University really began to embrace planning and assessment as means for strengthening the academic enterprise and our administrative processes. As a result, we were able to fare very well with our journey towards the Southern Association on Colleges and Schools (SACS) reaccreditation. The SACS Commission on Colleges is the regional accreditation body for institutions of higher education in the southern states. In December 2012, JCSU successfully submitted our Fifth Year Interim Report, which included the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Impact Report. The QEP is helping to strengthen the quality of the freshman year experience through student engagement. SACS accepted our QEP Impact Report without recommendation. I am very pleased that JCSU was praised for effectively demonstrating and documenting sustained support for the QEP.

What was your biggest challenge?

As required by the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), the Fifth Year Interim Report is a review that monitors the institution to ensure ongoing compliance and marks the conclusion of the reporting on the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). As the Office of Institutional, Planning, Assessment,
Effectiveness and Research (IPAER) began preparing for the submission of the report, we discovered that our current process of capturing data as well as supporting documentation was inconsistent and limited. Moreover, members of the campus community could not continuously view and modify the information needed for the report. As a result, communication within and between departments was inconsistent and unclear. To address the challenges faced during the Fifth Year Interim Report, JCSU invested in Compliance Assist, a web-based solution to create a comprehensive, systematic and consistent approach to strategic planning, outcomes assessment and accreditation reports.

**What is your forecast for the 2013-2014 academic year?**

I am excited that Compliance Assist will help us to move forward along our reaccreditation journey more efficiently and effectively by centralizing and streamlining the process for cataloging data. As a collaborative tool, Compliance Assist organizes all relevant data, tracks progress toward each goal and prepares detailed reports – all using proven technology. Every division, department, faculty and staff member can access this online platform to showcase accomplishments. As a result, the campus community will be able to see the connections between unit learning outcomes, divisional goals and the University’s mission. People will be able to see how our Mission-in-Vision is being achieved comprehensively in our academic programs, student support services and our administrative functions. To build on the momentum we gained in 2012-2013 and to strengthen the institutional effectiveness efforts of the University, IPAER will continue to host several faculty and staff development sessions regarding planning, assessment and accreditation.
Sustainability Village Project

What were your accomplishments for the year?

In the past seven months, we have had great accomplishments working in the community garden, and these have also been accompanied by a few challenges or “teachable moments” along the way. We have engaged a group of extremely motivated and passionate students to work on this initiative. They have been the driving force behind all the strides and milestones we have achieved. We can say proudly that we had three harvests of vegetables that we shared with the community. This fulfills the goal for which this garden was created. Parallel to this has been the establishment of an aquaponics facility. We introduced fish to this system on Feb. 5, 2013, and had one full harvest of vegetables including radish, radicchio, lettuce and cabbage. We also had weekly harvests of basil which has been a prolific grower in our aquaponics system. Our fish will reach mature harvest size in about nine more months, and we will provide them to the community as food. We continue to build strong partnerships with our community around food choices and healthy lifestyles. These sustainable methods are made possible by support from The Duke Endowment and Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina.

One of the highlights of the year happened this past April when our Sustainability Village project was selected to be presented at a gathering hosted by President Bill Clinton. Four of our students participated in the
Clinton Global Initiative University (CGI U) at Washington University in St. Louis. While attending the annual meeting, the students heard from specialists in the field of global development as they brainstormed ideas and formed effective partnerships with government and private sectors.

**What were some of the challenges?**

Since our sustainability facility is a research and educational initiative, we have embraced our challenges as learning opportunities for our students. All of these challenges were resolved by the students in an engaged/interactive manner. The first was a power outage, which led to the shutdown of all pumps serving our aquaponics system. Since this would have led to toxin build-up in the system and lowered oxygen levels available to fish, our students mounted a temporary measure to transfer the fish to their laboratory in a different building. The outage ended abruptly after all the fish were ready for transport. This experience exposed our vulnerability and led the students to recommend alternative sources of energy.

A second learning experience was the introduction of a bacterial infection that caused the death of about a quarter of our fish in the aquaponics system. Again, students played a role in troubleshooting and were able to resolve it by purging and cleaning the entire system. Although this reduced the rate of growth significantly, and we had to restock the tanks, we were able to learn a great deal from the experience. The fish are doing very well now.

A common challenge in all greenhouse and community garden arrangements is the springtime attack by aphids, which pierce plant tissue and retard plant growth. Again, students were able to demonstrate their control by using three different methods, including hosing infected plants with water and using a mild natural soap. The third and favorite control
method is biological control in the form on ladybug beetles. Students were able to see how the use of an insect predator can actually control a natural plant enemy.
University Accomplishments

The following is an overview of the University’s 2012-2013 accomplishments:

Democratic National Convention
The University hosted the security operations for the 2012 Democratic National Convention, held September 4-7, 2012, and participated in events on and off campus that brought national attention to JCSU, including *UFuture: A Summit for Innovative Young Thinkers* which we co-hosted with the Congressional Black Caucus Institute.

Charlotte’s Web
The Charlotte’s Web Mentoring Project began serving 20 at-risk males from West Charlotte High School to help them develop self-confidence as they took part in hands-on learning activities around technology.

Mosaic Village
Students moved into fully furnished apartment-style suites at Mosaic Village on October 4, 2012, following a community ribbon cutting and grand opening celebration.
Science Center Groundbreaking
A ceremonial groundbreaking for the new 62,000-square-foot Science Center occurred on October 25, 2012. The center will house the University’s market-driven Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs.

HealthPlex Opening
The HealthPlex opened November 19, 2012, to promote health and wellness on campus and in the community as well as serve as a research facility to conduct studies on health disparities and healthy lifestyles.

Courage at JCSU

Sustainability Village
The grand opening of Sustainability Village on April 1, 2013 showcased the aquaponic system and community garden which will serve as a prototype for the local community as well as for Mahanaim Village in Haiti. The project is an innovative living-learning prototype on campus that incorporates academic coursework, service-learning activities and humanitarian work that will be replicated in Haiti. One goal of the sustainability initiative is to address the food desert in the city’s Northwest Corridor.

**Duke Hall Renovations**
Renovations to transform Duke Hall into a contemporary suite-style residence hall began in spring 2013 and are expected to be completed in the fall.

**Women's Track wins in the CIAA**
In April 2013, the JCSU women’s outdoor track and field team won its second CIAA championship in three years.

**Metropolitan College graduates inaugural class**
On May 19, 2013, Metropolitan College marked the graduation of its inaugural class. Since opening its doors three years ago with a grant from The Duke Endowment, the adult learning program has grown from 11 students to 200 students.