



Dear Friends:

I joined Johnson & Wales University in 1974. Among the many memories I cherish, I recall the time in 1976 when as a culinary instructor I met with then vice president, Jack Yena, to advocate for JWU students to gain relevant work experience and engage with employers prior to graduation.

While leaders agreed with the concepts, there was some skepticism around whether I could bring 25 recruiters on campus. I am happy to say I won the friendly \$10 wager and brought 29 companies to Johnson & Wales that year. It was another step in the evolution of JWU's focus on providing students with the knowledge, skills and work experience they need to build successful careers.

Today, with formal Career Development Offices (CDO) at every campus, more than 580 nationally and internationally recognized companies participate in on-campus career fairs and hiring expos, and close to 1,000 companies hire JWU graduates. These are strong accomplishments. But doing what you did yesterday will not prepare you for the inevitable changes that the present and future bring.

In 2004, I accepted the challenge of leading JWU into the 21st century and steering an almost 100-year-old organization through a process of transformational change. Our strategic plan, FOCUS 2011, is about pushing the envelope. It demands we move beyond measuring initial employment, and instead measure career progression.

This spring, JWU launched a study of alumni from the graduating classes of 1997 through 2007 to understand more about their career paths and the role their alma mater played in launching and advancing their professional careers. Their feedback will strengthen JWU's academic offerings, opportunities and career services, ultimately helping us prepare the next generation of JWU students. I look forward to updating you on the research results in the new academic year.

As you read, you will see we are re-engineering our experiential education efforts, addressing affordability in this changing economy, and continually striving to provide our students relevant and rewarding experiences. What we do now builds the foundation for what will happen throughout this century. There is much to be done and much success to be achieved, and like our students, faculty and staff, our alumni and friends remain at the heart of all we do.

University President John J. Bowen '77