



XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA

Office of the President

1 Drexel Drive
New Orleans, Louisiana 70125-1098
(504) 520-7541 • FAX (504) 520-7904

August 20, 2018

My dear students,

A heartfelt welcome to our new students and to our returning students for the 2018-2019 academic year! It is my hope that each of you enjoyed a wonderful summer and arrive ready for the tasks at hand.

Today, our freshmen class and new transfers to Xavier begin a new chapter of their lives, and each of you students returning to continue your studies is ready welcome them into our community. This new class is bright, creative group who bring an array of experiences and ideas that will enrich the campus.

Many of my conversations with students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents and friends of Xavier have reflected on a vision for our beloved university that rises to meet the challenges of today and days to come while upholding our mission and legacy. Here are a few key elements of that vision.

- Sustain our mission and honor our African American traditions and Catholic values
- Maintain academic rigor, standards of excellence, and outcomes
- Promote an inclusive learning community that provides a safe and welcoming environment for all members
- Elevate Xavier's reputation and recognition
- Contribute to equity and societal resilience in our region, especially by advancing high quality pre-collegiate education for all
- Build programmatic breadth

- Sustain and support environment of research and inquiry that addresses matters of import to the larger society, the Church, and the African diaspora
- Grow enrollment through innovative recruitment

Because of your engagement last year, we have made much progress to make Xavier a safer and more welcoming environment for all of our community members. On community safety, I am happy to announce a brand new [XULA Safe](#) app which everyone should download. Our blue light emergency system is at full operational capacity. We have established a process with students for regular review of the performance of that blue light system. To enforce Xavier's zero-tolerance policy for gender- or sex-related misconduct and to educate the community, I have established the independent [Title IX](#) office with its director reporting directly to me, and also established a hotline for [online](#) or telephonic (844-753-9414) reporting of complaints and concerns. We look forward to her arrival in September

My leadership team is working to improve food services, facilities, and support services. Many of you know or have been impacted by our growth in enrollment that has prompted our need to house students at two of our sister organizations in New Orleans. Please know that planning construction of new residential facilities at the top of my list as we work hard to make our physical infrastructure the equal of a Xavier education.

As I go about the campus, I hope that you feel free to approach me with any questions, thoughts, or concerns you may have. The same applies to all the vice-presidents, deans and other staff, who are all here to serve you. Later this semester, I will be establishing monthly office hours to hear from you directly. Also, I will receive regular input from the Xavier University of Louisiana Student Government Association. These student leaders serve as your representatives; please reach out to them so that your voices are heard.

In closing, I feel compelled to address recent things we have seen or heard [in the news](#), one of which has impacted one of your fellow students, who demonstrated dignity and clear thought when challenged. As you move about this world in these times, some may see you as threatening or arrogant - simply due to your characteristics that others may not appreciate. In the words of Ralph Ellison, the author of *Invisible Man*, this is due to a defect of the "inner

eyes” of them who misperceive you. Know that you are many things in my eyes. Arrogant is not one of these. You are intelligent. You are talented. You are educated. You are the fulfillment of the dreams of generations coming to fruition today in you. You are the keepers of Mother Katharine’s fervent hope. You are the champions of our founding mission: *to promote the creation of a just and humane society*. You are my hope for the future.

Go forth knowing who you are and whose you are when you interact with each other and with the wider world, treating all people with respect and care.

Welcome back to campus. I look forward to all we will accomplish together this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Reynold Verret". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Reynold Verret
President, Xavier University of Louisiana