



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Greetings from Ave Maria University! Are you ready for the challenge?

Ave Maria University is a nationally and internationally renowned Catholic, liberal arts University located in a unique community in Southwest Florida. The 2021-2022 academic year is one of new heights for the University. We have record enrollment this year as we welcome the largest incoming class ever. This group of new students also has the highest academic profile of any class in recent years. We offer exceptional career paths for our students, including many graduate school partnerships and internship programs with elite industry leaders. These opportunities, and the education our students receive, have consistently afforded our alumni a competitive advantage to obtain the best jobs or gain entry into competitive medical schools, law schools, and Ph.D. programs around the world.

It is not uncommon for people to ask what makes Ave Maria University such an outstanding institution of higher learning. This letter is too short to catalogue all of the benefits of an Ave Maria University education. However, one brief response that goes to the heart of the question is this: inspired by St. John Paul II's vision for the renewal of Catholic higher education, students at Ave Maria University are not asked to choose between the pursuit of academic and professional excellence or deepening their faith. In his great apostolic constitution on Catholic Universities, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, St. John Paul II issues a challenge to students at authentic Catholic universities:

"...to pursue an education that combines excellence in humanistic and cultural development with specialized professional training... This enables them to acquire or, if they have already done so, to deepen a Christian way of life that is authentic. They should realize the responsibility of their professional life, the enthusiasm of being the trained 'leaders' of tomorrow, of being witnesses to Christ in whatever place they may exercise their profession" (#23).

Every aspect of the university—all 31 majors, 29 minors and graduate degrees, the curriculum, faculty, student life, campus ministry, athletics—the entire campus and all of its activities are ordered towards the formation of students who will rise to meet this challenge.

As AMU's founding mission statement asserts, "...the University recognizes the importance of creating and maintaining an environment in which faith informs the life of the community and takes expression in all its programs." How many colleges and universities can say their students are challenged—not only academically, but in so many other ways—to become the trained leaders of tomorrow by pursuing both Christian and academic excellence? This is the very core of Ave Maria University's mission and identity: we form the leaders of tomorrow to be persons of deep faith who reach exceptional heights in their careers and fields of study. In a world that so often lacks truth, The Church, our communities, our families, and our places of work desperately need the next generation to meet this challenge.

In just under two decades, Ave Maria University has become one of the finest Catholic institutions of higher learning in the world. We hope you will consider responding to the late Holy Father's challenge by joining our vibrant, faith-filled, academic community named after the Blessed Virgin Mary and inspired by St. John Paul II.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Roger Nutt, S.T.D.
Interim President & Provost

Ave Maria University