

President's Message



Founding President and Trustee Emeritus, Dr. Frank DiPietro, has a story about sitting at his kitchen table in the early 1960s questioning the possibility of starting a four-year institution in New Hampshire. As I have listened to this story, and to

other stories about the launch of Franklin Pierce College that Dr. DiPietro has shared with me, I am struck by the vision, courage, and tenacity he had for realizing his dream. I think those characteristics are also reflective of the DNA of Franklin Pierce University.

It is no secret that the nation's economic recession has made things difficult for private higher education institutions to maintain a quality of education and provide access to that education. But, just as Dr. DiPietro overcame obstacles in the 1960s, so too have we begun to overcome the challenges of the early 21st century. This past fall we welcomed 607 new students to campus matching our record high enrollment at a time when many other institutions saw smaller incoming classes. How did we do it? New strategies for recruiting students, cooperative efforts between faculty and staff to put more information into the hands of prospective families, and new academic and athletics programs that responded to students' interests culminated in larger numbers of students interested in Franklin Pierce and an increase in the academic profile of these students.

At the same time, we know that one year of increased enrollment does not a trend make, and we have much work to do to emerge from years of lower enrollments and increased expenses. But this year proved that with the right outlook, the willingness to try new approaches, and extraordinary effort we can accomplish what we set out to do.

From my office in Peterson Hall I see examples of vision, courage, and tenacity almost every day. Whether it is the work of John Harris and his colleagues in the Monadnock Institute to advance sustainability efforts on campus, student government association President Kyle Mulcahy leading his peers through difficult decisions and dialogue, or Professor Lynn Chandler motivating students to present their academic work to students, faculty, and staff during last fall's Inquiry-Based Showcase, I have a privileged view to the character of Franklin Pierce University. It is humbling to see the great works of our students and my colleagues and to know that their efforts contribute to the mission and vision of this small but mighty university.

Many of you share the enthusiasm of our students and employees, and you express that through your participation in alumni events, visits to campus, and philanthropy. As we continue to celebrate our 50th Anniversary, let me thank you for your support of our work and encourage you to invite your classmates to share in our enthusiasm for Franklin Pierce. We have an ambitious goal to raise \$600,000 for the annual fund this year, and we need everyone's help to reach the goal so that we continue to offer students a high quality educational experience.

As always, please join us for the many gatherings, lectures, and athletic events planned around this year's 50th Anniversary celebration. Visit the Anniversary website at: www.franklinperce.edu/50

Vision, courage, and tenacity — they brought Franklin Pierce College to fruition in the 1960s... they are sustaining Franklin Pierce University today.

Ex Umbris Ad Lucem,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James F. Birge". The signature is fluid and cursive.

James F. Birge, Ph.D.
President