



December 5, 2024

Reimagine Jewell: The Path Forward

To Our Cardinal Community:

We are reaching out today with an important update.

Like many small liberal arts colleges across the country with modest enrollments and endowments, Jewell is facing significant financial challenges brought about by increasing costs. There have been many strategic innovations in the last several years including a tuition re-pricing, diversified enrollment growth, and the *In Pursuit* campaign. Despite these efforts which led to increased enrollment, the cost of operations has increasingly exceeded the pace of revenue. It's essential that we confront inefficiencies to build a solid foundation for future growth and sustainability.

Ultimately, we exist for our students and their futures. We are passionately committed to navigating these challenges to transform William Jewell College—now and for decades to come.

The College's leadership—including the interim president, cabinet, faculty leadership and the Board of Trustees—previously implemented a variety of strategic cost-cutting measures to achieve efficiencies. These included asset sales, savings through improved procurement and sourcing, operational cost cuts, deferral of maintenance on non-essential properties and equipment, and most recently, a reduction in administrative staff.

Despite these efforts, stronger measures and urgent changes are required to place Jewell on solid financial footing for the future. Additional immediate cost-saving measures must be implemented to balance our budget and ensure Jewell's future success.

Following extensive analysis and thoughtful deliberation, the William Jewell College Board of Trustees has voted to declare financial exigency, an intentional step toward creating financial stability and securing the path forward for the College. In doing so, the Board is deploying an important tool that enables reallocation of resources, restructuring of academic programs and scholarships and significant reductions in force. We will transition out of the financial exigency period in less than one year after efficiencies are being achieved according to plan.

This is a challenging time and will involve difficult decisions which impact our valued colleagues, all of whom have contributed to the historical legacy of Jewell. That said, we are collectively dedicated to the preservation of Jewell for the long term, and we see no alternative course of action. We are grateful to faculty for their collaboration and for engaging in meaningful ways in this process to ensure Jewell's future relevance as a leading higher education institution.

A committee comprised of faculty and members of the Board of Trustees will be tasked with evaluating departments, programs and majors in the context of marketplace demands and needs of today's prospective students. Further details will be shared in the coming weeks as the College's leadership, faculty and staff act to deliver programs more cost effectively and responsive to marketplace demand, while maintaining our reputation for the quality education and highly developed critical thinking skills demonstrated by our graduates.

We are determined to sustain our mission as a critical-thinking, career-focused college. Declaring exigency reflects our commitment to improving Jewell for the future and is the first step in the process toward ensuring long-term stability.

Additionally, the Board of Trustees has paused the presidential search to determine the most appropriate leadership needs during this period of transition. We will resume this search soon, after a re-evaluation of our leadership needs, with specific emphasis on financial health. Our interim president, Susan Chambers, remains committed to serving the College until longer-term leadership is identified.

We are committed to reimagining a Jewell that serves students, employers and our Greater Kansas City community long into the future. We extend our genuine appreciation for your continued support and welcome feedback and questions at president@william.jewell.edu and encourage you to visit jewell.edu/reimagine to learn more.

With Gratitude and For Jewell,

Bill Gautreaux, Chair - William Jewell College Board of Trustees, Class of 1985
Susan Chambers, Interim President - William Jewell College, Class of 1990