

Remarks by Prof. William Lahey for his installation as President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of King's College – October 13, 2016

Thank you to all of you for being here today. It is a great joy for me to look out and see so many people from all the parts of my life gathered together. My family and my new friends and colleagues here at King's with colleagues and friends from Dalhousie, government, law, Efficiency Nova Scotia, the Health Research Foundation and the Canadian Centre for Ethics and Public Affairs, as well as many friends from our old neighborhood, from my own student days and from my weekly hockey games. It is wonderfully validating to see you all gathered here today, for me, but more importantly for King's and education.

Students, alumni, faculty, staff, friends of the university, and distinguished guests: it is an honour to become your 25th president and a member of this generous community.

Thank you Chancellor Kevin Lynch, Chair Dale Godsoe and my fellow Governors for entrusting me with the stewardship of King's. I express my appreciation for the 24 presidents who led this college before me and for my immediate predecessor, George Cooper, who is with us today. Thank you.

I welcome Bishop Ronald Cutler. It is characteristic of King's that, while we continue to evolve as a secular university, our connection to the Anglican Church continues to be foundational to our identity. The duality is well captured in our chapel, a centre of worship, activity, outreach and friendship for students of ALL spiritual beliefs and traditions.

I thank Elder Geri Musqua-Leblanc, who has welcomed us to Mi'kmaq territory. King's stands on the traditional land of the Mi'kmaq. We are all called to be treaty people.

Also present are colleagues from other universities, including President Richard Florizone from Dalhousie, who have been incredibly helpful to me, and therefore to King's, in my first few months.

It is a pleasure to see the faces of many colleagues from my life as a law professor, both from the law school and from across Dalhousie, including the

faculties of Management, Health Professions, Medicine, the College of Sustainability and, of course, the Faculty Arts and Social Sciences. (A warm welcome to our colleague, Frank Harvey, Dean of the Faculty.)

The importance of the relationship enjoyed by King's and Dalhousie cannot be overstated.

It is critical to our existence as a college in the Oxbridge model.

A true Oxbridge college enriches the life of a larger university while the larger university supports the college as a distinct community.

I thank our Honorary degree recipients – Dr. Tracey Lindberg and soon-to-be Dr. Patrick Graham – for gracing our proceedings. I am thrilled you are each being celebrated at this installation.

There are also see many personal friends here from virtually every dimension of my life to lend support. Thank you.

It is my pleasure to welcome my family. I'm especially proud to have this opportunity to recognize my father, Raymond, and to thank both my parents for setting me on the path leading to this day.

With all my heart I want to thank my wife, Kathryn, and our children Elizabeth, Joseph and Claire.

They cheerfully agreed (mostly) to exchange their very happy lives on Lynwood Drive for an uncertain life inside a college.

The experience has been wonderful – we feel that we have been welcomed home.

Our dog, Casey, has already forged strong friendships with many people, including Greta Hamilton, who carried the mace today.

Casey has friends all over campus. Not long ago I encountered our master of ceremonies, Dr. Thomas Curran, while walking Casey in the Quad. As we chatted,

a steady stream of students walked over. They were polite to us, but it was obvious the real purpose was to have a few moments with Casey. When we parted, Dr. Curran left me with some thoughts that might be paraphrased as follows: “keep doing what you are doing but, for heaven’s sake, don’t let anything happen to that dog”.

Living here in the College, right next to the chapel and down the hallway from the senior common room, has revealed the critical importance, both symbolic and practical, of the President and his family living in the college, along with the Dean of Students and others.

Since my arrival, I have spent time with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and board members, formally and informally.

A highlight has been meeting and getting to know our extraordinary students — in the Quad, at sporting and social events, in Foundation Year Programme lectures and in Prince Hall.

I am blessed to enjoy the collegiality of so many intelligent, motivated and creative people who are dedicated to the transformational power that a King’s education offers. It benefits the student and our society. It leads to knowledge and character that is the foundation of a society that is free and democratic — and more just and prosperous.

I am coming to understand the distinct and wonderfully quirky community that is King’s College, a university that somehow also manages to be a college. Or, are we a college while also being a university?

It doesn’t matter — because it works. In that special King’s way, we are happy to entertain two contradictory ideas, confident we can defer reconciliation indefinitely. Or, we can leave the matter to be resolved into a higher truth through the dialectal process.

Our campus is undergoing renewal, which will continue. The renovation of North Pole Bay is complete. The Lodge, the Pit theatre, and now the famous Wardroom have all been freshly renovated - thanks to our generous alumni and friends.

Each has been remodeled in a very King's way that makes our campus feel both new and unchanged.

So here I am, educated in, and deeply fond of, the Oxbridge tradition, fortunate enough to be the president of a jewel of a college in the same tradition.

I am irrevocably and fully **FOR** King's.

I am, as they say, **all in**.

I know that although I may be expected to make change happen, I am in the process of being changed, for the better, by King's. This is the impact King's has on everyone.

I know this community faces challenges and that it's my role, as the first among equals, to ensure we thrive in meeting those challenges while remaining true to our vision.

I intend to carry out that mission with your full participation.

As President, I'm both open to and ready for anything. But I have some ideas about the ingredients of our success.

- We can ensure our interdisciplinary programs, including the Foundation Year Programme, continue to bring the study of philosophy together with the study of history, literature, the social sciences and the arts. This is true to their intent and important to their appeal.
- With Dalhousie, we can be leaders in overcoming the false division between the humanities and the sciences. We know that a person holistically and deeply educated in the liberal arts is educated in the literature and thought of both;
- We can build the profile of our School of Journalism, as an institution that excels at two important tasks;
 - First, integrating the skills and technologies of the changing media world with the foundational knowledge that makes journalism vital to a free and democratic society;

- and second, being a focal point for critical inquiry, investigation, debate and explanation of important issues;
- We can continue to make King's a wonderful place for faculty and staff to build fulfilling careers — aligning their professional objectives and their contributions to our students and King's;
- We can strengthen the already wonderful opportunities King's provides for a rich and fulfilling student experience that encompasses the arts and athletics;
- We can bring more diversity into our college so that students from all communities can be transformed by a King's experience and transform each other;
- To that end, we can – and must — make it easier for young people from diverse backgrounds to choose King's;
- We can – and must – answer the call from The Truth and Reconciliation Commission to make university education a pathway to reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous Peoples;
- We can continue the King's tradition of including contributions to the wider community in our mission. These include theatre and music, social and political activism, welcoming and helping refugees, producing award-winning documentaries and inspiring young people through organizations such as Youth Net.

I'm optimistic and confident of our success because we excel in the face of challenge.

We excel at creating and seizing opportunity.

We will prevail, just as we have done throughout our history, whether the change in circumstance was the American Revolution, a catastrophic fire, or the need in the 1970s to reimagine the college's academic mission.

We are, after all, the university that created the now-famous Foundation Year Programme, which is still being copied by universities seeking a more immersive and holistic experience for their students.

We however, are still leading, with three honours programs that extend the FYP approach to upper year studies.

We were also one of the first universities in Canada to create a journalism school designed on the principle that journalism is the humanities in action.

We have built on our leadership in journalism to create Canada's only Master of Fine Arts in Creative-Nonfiction, another apparent contradiction that works at King's.

We will address the challenges of today, including the challenge of enrolment, as we have met the challenges of the past: by fulfilling both our academic mission and our mission as a college community.

We will draw on our advantages: the caliber of our students, our committed and talented faculty and staff the success of our alumni and, of course, the distinctive educational experience students gain through the King's/Dalhousie partnership.

We are once more poised to evolve within the framework of the history, ideas, values and institutional character that make us King's.

And so, I call upon all of us — all those who study, teach or work here and all those who love and cherish King's from within and beyond the Quad — to strive for unity of purpose and common effort for the benefit of King's.

As we do that, we must live up to our reputation as a collaborative, collegial and creative university community.

I intend to embody these qualities.

Thank you again for the honour of inviting me and my family to join you on the journey.

As I said earlier, I am all **in**.