



June 28, 2021

Dear Friends,

I hope everyone you know and love is safe and healthy. As I begin my third week at the University, I thought I would write to convey my gratitude and mention a few things that have had my attention so far.

First, thank you to all those who came to the Meet & Greet sessions on June 18<sup>th</sup>. I was quite impressed by the turnout but more so by the love you have for Scranton and how obvious and authentic it truly is. I am blessed to be here!

Last week was taken up with new student orientation and it was so good to see students and their families back on campus. Our current students serving on the orientation team, along with the rest of the campus community, made the Class of 2025 feel most welcome and I look forward to meeting our remaining first-year students this week.

On Tuesday, I joined the presidents of the other Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States in an effort to lobby for an increase in the federal Pell grant program. As you probably know, over 20% of our students here at Scranton rely on Pell to help them afford their tuition but, at present, the annual award is less than \$7,000. With an increase in this grant, we will be better able to support our current students and attract others. Toward that end, Julie Schumacher Cohen and I had the pleasure of meeting virtually with Senator Casey and with staff members of the offices of Senator Toomey and Congressman Cartwright. They received us well and promised to do what they can. Let's hope for the best!

The chair of our board of trustees, Jim Slattery, came to town last week to show his support and to help me settle in. While Jim was here, the board met briefly to elect two new Jesuit trustees: Fr. Angelo Joseph (A.J.) Rizzo S.J., '03, the incoming president of Scranton Prep, and Fr. Tom Neitzke S.J., the new dean of Arrupe College of Loyola Chicago University. Their election now will allow them to attend the September meeting and I am certain that both will make fine additions to our board.

Beyond the above, I have enjoyed quite a few meetings with administrators and staff, faculty who reached out to say hello, and a number of our benefactors.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jeff Gingerich for a great job as acting president these past several months. I know from personal experience how challenging the role of a provost can be so to take on the responsibilities of president on top of that is really an act of great generosity. Thank you, Jeff.

Let us continue to pray intently for the victims, rescue workers, and all those affected by the collapse of the condominium building in Surfside, FL. I can't imagine the agony those families are enduring at this moment. And, finally, as Pride Month comes to a close, let us celebrate and stand with the members of the LGBTQ+ community at Scranton and be grateful for the countless ways they have enriched our lives and our mission.

Thank you once again for the warm welcome! I look forward to laboring with you in our shared mission and to all that lies ahead.

Yours faithfully,  
Fr. Marina