Daniel J. Curran has entered his 14th year as president of the University of Dayton, a top-tier national research university and one of the 10 best Catholic universities in the country. The Philadelphia native became the University of Dayton’s 18th president and first lay leader July 1, 2002.

An energetic man of faith and vision, Dr. Curran brings a forward-thinking approach and a strong commitment to social justice, internationalization, sustainability and the Marianist educational philosophy to Ohio’s largest private university.

Dr. Curran is guiding the University of Dayton through transformational times and presiding over an era of remarkable growth. He led the University in the largest land expansion in its 165-year history with two acquisitions from NCR Corp., including the former world headquarters and Old River Park. In 2012, the University of Dayton took a major step toward globalization with the opening of the University of Dayton China Institute in Suzhou Industrial Park.

By almost every measure—from selectivity and research dollars to rankings and endowed faculty—the University of Dayton has grown in stature during his presidency. The pace of change has been among the most rapid and substantial seen at any American university.

In fall 2015, the University set a new record for full-time undergraduate enrollment. Selectivity has improved by 25 percentage points during Curran’s presidency, with students enrolling from all corners of the nation and the globe. The University’s 91 percent retention rate places it among the top 7 percent of all colleges and universities in the nation. The University of Dayton has become nationally recognized as a leader in higher education for its transparent tuition plan that eliminates student fees and promises families that scholarships and grants will increase in value to cover any tuition increases over the four years.
Dr. Curran has focused the campus on enhancing the University’s prowess in research. Last fiscal year, the University of Dayton recorded $98.6 million in annual sponsored research with approximately $500 million in contracts on the books for the next five years. The University of Dayton ranks second in the nation in federally sponsored materials research and leads all Catholic universities in sponsored engineering research. NCR’s former world headquarters (1700 South Patterson Building) has been converted into a highly visible home for the University of Dayton Research Institute.

The University of Dayton has emerged as a national leader in partnering with high-tech companies who are locating laboratories and offices on campus and providing an invaluable training ground for students. In 2013, GE Aviation opened a $53 million research center — an extraordinary move for a Fortune 100 company — and Midmark Corp. moved its corporate headquarters to the 1700 South Patterson Building. In 2016, Emerson Climate Technologies will hold a grand opening for its $35 million global innovation center.

In 2009, the state of Ohio officially designated the Dayton region as Ohio’s Aerospace Hub and named the University of Dayton as lead partner because of its strengths in aerospace-related research and technology-based economic development. The University received five Ohio Centers of Excellence and funding from the Ohio Research Scholars Program to establish three endowed faculty positions in materials, sensors and energy. In 2015, the University garnered the largest research contract in its history — $99 million to help the Air Force quickly integrate new or better technologies to more affordably, safely and efficiently sustain its entire fleet.

A stellar group of faculty is advancing the University of Dayton’s academic reputation in fields ranging from theology to renewable energy. The number of endowed faculty has more than doubled, and the number of full-time faculty has increased nearly 20 percent.

In the classroom, for the 10th-straight year the University of Dayton’s entrepreneurship program ranks as one of the top 20 in the nation, according to Entrepreneur magazine and The Princeton Review. The University of Dayton is one of seven universities in Ohio training scientists to become teachers through the Woodrow Wilson Ohio Teaching Fellowship Program.

During Dr. Curran’s presidency, the University launched the nation’s first accelerated law curriculum; branched into high-demand health fields with doctor of physical therapy and master in physician assistance practice programs; introduced one of the nation’s first bachelor’s degrees in human rights studies; and offered the state’s first master’s program in clean and renewable energy. In addition, the University redesigned its undergraduate general education curriculum — what’s called the Common Academic Program — and launched the Dayton Early College Academy, a charter school that prepares first-generation college students to earn a high school diploma and college credits at the same time.

Internationally, UD’s Catholic, Marianist brand of education is resonating. The University’s global partnerships include more than 30 universities and colleges in countries such as China, India, France, Lebanon, Kuwait, Morocco, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, Argentina, Thailand and Russia.

On campus, the University is launching a Human Rights Center and the Hanley Sustainability Institute, initiatives that promote the common good and stem from the school’s Catholic, Marianist mission. In 2013, Dr. Curran signed the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment, committing the University to...
being carbon neutral by 2050. In 2014, the University received the largest gift in school history — $12.5 million — from George and Amanda Hanley’s foundation in Chicago to support sustainability curricular initiatives.

The University challenges students to be servant-leaders and is routinely named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, the highest federal recognition a college or university can receive for its commitment to volunteering, service-learning and civic engagement.

The nearly 400-acre campus has undergone a dramatic transformation. The University renovated NCR’s former world headquarters into a home for the Research Institute, graduate classes and the Alumni Center; transformed a former NCR office building, now known as Fitz Hall, into modern facilities for the School of Education and Health Sciences, the visual arts and music departments, and theater program, among others; renovated Roesch Library; built an Innovation Center in the School of Engineering; created the Science Center; renovated UD Arena; and built a sports complex. The newly renovated Chapel of the Immaculate Conception re-opened in August 2015.

In the residential area, the University opened the Caldwell Street Apartments and constructed two other facilities that combine living and learning — Marianist Hall, a residence hall with learning spaces, and ArtStreet, an imaginative housing and arts education complex in the student neighborhood. RecPlex, an ultramodern fitness and recreation complex, opened in 2006. Marycrest, Stuart and Founders residence halls underwent modernizations, and a new Central Mall offers a beautiful, relaxing green space for students and special events.

In addition, UD teamed with a commercial developer on University Place, a two-story mixed-use development on the corner of Brown and Stewart streets that includes graduate apartments, restaurants and shops. With new businesses, bike lanes and decorative street lighting, Brown Street today has emerged as one of the city’s most successful redevelopments.

Dr. Curran serves on numerous national, regional and local boards.

As a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association’s Division I board of directors from 2004–2008, Dr. Curran helped shape academic reforms designed to improve the graduation rate of student-athletes. He currently chairs the budget committee and serves on the executive committee of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities. He also serves on the executive committee of the Atlantic-10 Presidents Council and is a member of the Air Education and Training Command Commander’s Civic Group.

In the state, Dr. Curran chairs the Children’s Defense Fund and serves on the executive committee of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio.
In the Dayton region, he focuses largely on economic development and high-tech issues. For three years, he was named one of the most influential people in Dayton by the Dayton Business Journal. In 2010 and 2015, he received the Regional Leadership Award from the Dayton Business Journal, which also honored him as one of the 10 most influential people of the decade. In 2006, the Dayton Development Coalition named him the Dayton region’s most outstanding volunteer citizen.

He currently serves on the executive committees of the Dayton Development Coalition and the Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education (SOCHE). He also serves on a number of other boards, including the Homeless Solutions Policy Board, the Greater Downtown Dayton Plan Committee, the Leadership Council for Learn to Earn, the Miami Valley Research Foundation and the First Four Committee.

He’s dedicated to Marianist education. He is a member of the boards of the Marianist Foundation, Association of Marianist Universities and Chaminade University.

A sociologist by training, Dr. Curran spent 23 years in various administrative and faculty positions at Saint Joseph’s University in Philadelphia, including executive vice president and vice president for academic affairs.

He’s a noted scholar in criminology, juvenile justice and social problems, with a deep interest in international issues.

His prolific scholarly record includes eight books, most of which he co-authored with his wife, Claire M. Renzetti, the Judi Conway Patton Endowed Chair for Studies of Violence Against Women at the University of Kentucky. In 1993, the University of Pittsburgh Press published his Dead Laws for Dead Men, a historical analysis of coal mine health and safety legislation.


He held a concurrent professorship at Nanjing University in China in 1999. In 1990, he served as a Fulbright Senior Scholar at the University of Melbourne in Australia.

Dr. Curran earned a Ph.D. from the University of Delaware in 1980 after receiving a master’s degree from Temple University in 1978 and a bachelor’s degree from Saint Joseph’s University in 1973 — all in sociology. Dr. Curran and his wife, Claire, have two sons, Sean and Aidan.