

Provost Installation, Seattle University, September 21, 2018
Remarks from Shane P. Martin, Ph.D.

The Cuban poet, José Martí, once said, “The only way to be totally free is through education.” We live in a world where so many people are not free—they are bound and shackled by chains of poverty, of ignorance, of the loss of hope, of soullessness, dead to their true selves—their higher being. It is education that allows us to become our true selves and to reach a higher calling—for ourselves to live in service and relationship to others. Is this not the goal—is this not the dream—that we want for each and every person in our community, in our nation, and in our world—to become fully one’s true self? In the words of Irenaeus, to live into the vision that the “glory of God is the human person fully alive.” As an institution of higher learning, Seattle University educates so that the human person is fully alive—in the classroom, in a lab, in a residence hall, on the field, through relationships—through the education of the whole person. We are committed to an education that transforms—that leads to life—that leads to discovering and becoming one’s true self. Ours is a values-based education, grounded in the best of an almost 500-year Jesuit educational tradition that has stood the test of time, even in the face of war, genocide, scandals, and authoritarian and dictatorial leaders—all of which show the worst face of humanity. But while we do grieve the shadow side of our human condition, we do not despair, because in the words of Gerard Manley Hopkins, we believe that “The world is charged with the grandeur of God.” If we only have eyes to see, and ears to hear.

I am proud and honored to be installed as the Provost of Seattle University. As I reflect upon this moment, I realize that my previous educational background, my personal and professional experiences, and my entire life have prepared me for this moment. It is with a great sense of humility and zeal that I say an emphatic “yes” to this opportunity. I am aware of the challenges that are in front of us, and have learned about the difficulties of the past years. I am not Pollyannaish in my assessment of our situation or of the road ahead. But coming to you from the outside, perhaps I can see some things from a different perspective than those who have been fighting the good fight at SU. I see a community that has warmly welcomed me in a spirit of generosity and care. I see a dynamic institution of higher education that sits in the urban core of a vibrant city and a region that has embraced creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. I see a campus that is committed to inclusive excellence, to interfaith dialogue, to the environment and sustainability, and one that celebrates the human condition through the beauty of public art and spaces for spiritual reflection. I see great strength in the curriculum we offer our students, through a range of quality programs, anchored in the values of our core-curriculum in the Jesuit educational tradition. I see a comprehensive university that is making a difference in society through our undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. More than anything I see a talented and dedicated group of faculty and staff who love Seattle University—at times in ways that are eloquent, at times in ways that are scrappy—but at all times that showcase the heart and soul of this university, for it is the people that make the

university. I am honored to be one with you, to fully step into this opportunity, and to proudly declare that I am a Redhawk. Thank you, President Fr. Steve Sundborg, thank you Board Chair Nicole Piasecki, thank you Seattle University, for the faith and trust that you place in me. Let us move forward, together in partnership, to work for the betterment of Seattle University. In the words of our patron and founder Ignatius of Loyola, let us go forward and set the world on fire!