



Boston College

WILLIAM P. LEAHY, S.J.

William P. Leahy, S.J. became the 25th president of Boston College on July 31, 1996. Born in Omaha, he grew up on his family's farm near Imogene, Iowa. After one year of college at Creighton University, he entered the Wisconsin Province of the Society of Jesus in 1967. He received a bachelor's degree in philosophy and a master's degree in United States history from Saint Louis University in 1972 and 1975, respectively. Between 1975 and 1979, he studied theology at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California, earning a master's degree in divinity and a master's degree in sacred theology while there. Ordained a priest in 1978, he completed doctoral studies in United States history at Stanford University in 1985.



Father Leahy joined the department of history at Marquette University in 1985 and became a tenured associate professor there six years later. In July 1991, he was named executive vice president at Marquette, where he served until being named president of Boston College in 1996.

During his years at Boston College, Father Leahy has presided over an institution that has solidified its position among the nation's best and most selective national universities. Since 1996, BC's endowment, sponsored research grants and student financial aid have doubled, and the percentage of student applicants accepted has fallen from 41 percent to 27 percent, while SAT scores have risen by more than 100 points. In addition, 100 full-time faculty members have been added, minority student enrollment in undergraduate programs has climbed from 18 percent to 26 percent and cash gifts to the University have increased from \$24 million to \$95 million.

During his presidency, undergraduate applications to Boston College have grown from 16,500 to 28,800, making BC the fourth most-applied to private university in the United States. Currently, the University enrolls students from all 50 states and 80 countries, and its undergraduates have earned more than 150 prestigious fellowships, including two Rhodes Scholarships. Student-athletes at BC succeed in balancing the demands of academics and athletics, and BC consistently ranks among those universities with the highest NCAA graduation rates.

Most recently, the Boston College community has been engaged in a comprehensive assessment and planning effort that resulted in a 10-year Strategic Plan. This plan will build on Boston College's strengths and accomplishments of the past and will focus additional resources on undergraduate liberal arts education and formation, as well as integrated science research and teaching. The University also intends to increasingly apply the strengths of its professional schools to resolving critical societal issues, and foster even more international links. In addition, Boston College intends to remain faithful to its Jesuit, Catholic heritage and to become the leading Catholic university and theological center in the world.

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