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Loyola University Chicago Welcomes 24th President

Jo Ann Rooney, JD, LLM, EdD, Named First Lay Leader in Loyola's History

CHICAGO, May 23, 2016—Jo Ann Rooney, JD, LLM, EdD, has been elected by the Loyola University Chicago Board of Trustees as the University's 24th president and its first lay leader. Dr. Rooney was approved by the Board on Thursday, May 19, and officially introduced to the campus community today.

On August 1, 2016, Dr. Rooney will assume the role of president with an appointment that runs through 2021. She will succeed John P. Pelissero, PhD, who has served as interim president since July 2015, when long-serving president Michael J. Garanzini, S.J., stepped down and transitioned to the role of chancellor.

Today's announcement concludes a thorough, nine-month search for the University's next leader, which was led by Robert L. Parkinson Jr., chairman of the Board of Trustees, chair of the Presidential Search Committee, and a two-time Loyola alumnus.

"Dr. Rooney is a lifelong educator with an impressive and diverse array of experiences that will enable her to build on the University's tremendous success of the last decade," said Parkinson. "The outstanding leadership skills she gained from her roles in education, public service, and health care will position Loyola well to address today's emerging higher education challenges. Most importantly, her values and faith are fully aligned with our Catholic and Jesuit mission and identity."

This new appointment expands Dr. Rooney's leadership in higher education, as she has served as the president of both Spalding University—a private, Catholic, doctoral-level university in Louisville, Kentucky—and Mount Ida College, a baccalaureate-level college offering undergraduate and graduate degrees in Newton, Massachusetts. She has also spent more than 12 years in the classroom connecting with students and teaching at the graduate and undergraduate levels.

During her eight-year tenure at Spalding, Dr. Rooney led an impressive turnaround of an institution facing severe challenges. Leveraging her strong business, finance, and operational experience—and engaging support from the internal university community, the Archdiocese of Louisville, local business and community leaders, and alumni—she was able to stabilize the university and set it on a course of continued growth, allowing it to thrive to this day.

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In July 2010, Dr. Rooney was appointed president of Mount Ida College. After only months in the position, she was called by the Obama Administration to serve her country—a life-changing event that led her on an unexpected career path as the nominee for principal deputy under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness in the U.S. Department of Defense. She was confirmed for the position by the U.S. Senate in May 2011.

Within the U.S. Department of Defense, Dr. Rooney served as senior advisor to the under secretary of defense comptroller, principal deputy under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, and acting under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness. As senior advisor to the secretary of defense, she managed a broad portfolio encompassing recruitment, career development, health care, readiness, pay, and benefits for service members and their families. She had direct responsibility for more than 30,000 employees and a budget of more than \$70 billion, and served as a senior spokesperson for defense-wide issues.

In 2012, former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta awarded Dr. Rooney the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service, the highest award given to a civilian by the secretary of defense. In September 2013, she was again called to serve by the Obama Administration and asked to accept the nomination for under secretary of the Navy, the second-highest position in the department. Twice she was voted out of committee favorably, but requested her nomination be withdrawn after inactivity by the U.S. Senate.

“I have been blessed throughout my career with amazing experiences that have shaped and influenced me in numerous ways, but my passion is, and has always been, education,” said Dr. Rooney. “Education is life changing. It is the foundation for deep personal development, strong community engagement, inclusiveness, and positive, sustainable growth. Today, higher education is at a crossroads, and I am fully committed to making decisions that will allow us to thrive as an institution and community leader. During the search process, I was struck by the dedication and commitment exhibited by representatives of the faculty, students, staff, academic leadership, Jesuits, and board members. That commitment, and Loyola’s strong mission, drew me here.”

An 11-member Presidential Search Committee, with the assistance of search consultant firm Isaacson, Miller, led a process that included on-campus listening sessions, the development of a detailed leadership profile, and an intense screening and interview process that featured numerous qualified candidates.

“As the leader of one of the premier Jesuit, Catholic institutions in this country—and Loyola’s first lay president—Dr. Rooney has the full support of the Society of Jesus in this important mission,” said Very Rev. Brian G. Paulson, S.J., provincial of the Chicago-Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus. “Dr. Rooney is an accomplished leader and administrator with a passion for educational excellence and access. She is a woman of deep faith and strong character, and she has demonstrated her service to the Catholic Church.”

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In addition to her partnership with the Society of Jesus, Dr. Rooney will work closely with the Archdiocese of Chicago and Archbishop Blase J. Cupich.

“Loyola has a rich history and well-deserved strong reputation in Chicago as this great city’s Jesuit, Catholic university. I am confident it will continue to play an important role in the region’s health through its educational philosophy rooted in the Catholic intellectual tradition and its vigorous advocacy for social justice that is inclusive of all people,” said Archbishop Cupich. “I have met Dr. Rooney and am impressed by her diversity of experience and public service. Her background and commitment to the faith have prepared her well to lead a complex organization like Loyola, and I look forward to working with her.”

Dr. Rooney holds a Bachelor of Science with a finance concentration from Boston University School of Management, a Juris Doctor from Suffolk University Law School, a Master of Laws in taxation from Boston University School of Law, and a Doctor of Education in higher education management from the University of Pennsylvania. Other affiliations include various positions in the legal and business sectors. She is a member of the American Bar Association and three state bar associations and has served as a board member with a variety of civic and corporate organizations, including the Board of Directors of the Catholic Education Foundation, and as vice chair of Jewish Hospital & St. Mary’s HealthCare (a Catholic Health Initiatives organization) in Louisville, Kentucky. She currently sits on the Board of Trustees for Regis University, a Jesuit institution located in Denver, Colorado.

Dr. Rooney joins Loyola from Huron Consulting Group in Chicago, where she is managing director with responsibility for developing strategies to advance Huron Healthcare’s Federal Government Healthcare Sector consulting practice.

For more information on Dr. Rooney and the presidential search process, visit LUC.edu/presidentialsearch.

About Loyola University Chicago

Founded in 1870, Loyola University Chicago is one of the nation’s largest Jesuit, Catholic universities, with nearly 16,500 students. More than 11,000 undergraduates call Loyola home. The University has four campuses: three in the greater Chicago area and one in Rome, Italy, as well as course locations in Beijing, China; Saigon-Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Vernon Hills, Illinois (Cuneo Mansion and Gardens); and a Retreat and Ecology Campus in Woodstock, Illinois. The University features 11 schools and colleges, including the Quinlan School of Business, Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing, Stritch School of Medicine, College of Arts and Sciences, School of Communication, School of Continuing and Professional Studies, School of Education, School of Law, School of Social Work, Graduate School, and Arrupe College of Loyola University Chicago. Ranked a top 100 national university by *U.S. News & World Report*, Loyola is also among a select group of universities recognized for community service and engagement by prestigious national organizations like the Carnegie Foundation and the Corporation for National and Community Service. To learn more about Loyola, visit LUC.edu, “like” us at [Facebook.com/LoyolaChicago](https://www.facebook.com/LoyolaChicago), or follow us on Twitter via [@LoyolaChicago](https://twitter.com/LoyolaChicago) or [@LoyolaNewsroom](https://twitter.com/LoyolaNewsroom).