

**Remarks by Drew Gilpin Faust, President of Harvard University,
on the occasion of the inauguration of Julio Frenk as the sixth
president of the University of Miami**

**University of Miami, BankUnited Center, Coral Gables, FL
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Chairman Miller, President Frenk, Lieutenant Governor López-Cantera, Congressman Curbelo, faculty, students, staff, friends of the University of Miami it is a great privilege to join in saluting Julio Frenk as he assumes the role of university president. A great privilege, but not at all a surprise. Because, from the time Julio first took up his role as Dean of Public Health at Harvard, it was clear that he was captivated by the scope and potential of these curious institutions we call universities. When he told me he wanted to lead this one, it seemed a natural—even inevitable—next step. A bit, perhaps, of destiny.

Now, I recognize that not everyone in the world—or even in the academic world—is apt to consider it a good thing to be destined for such a fate. No less than the late Bart Giamatti—who was president of Yale, before he escaped the academic fray to become commissioner of baseball—he once famously quipped, and I quote him, “Being president of a university is no way for an adult to make a living.” And one of my predecessors—Edward Holyoke remarked nearly 250 years ago, “If any man wishes to be humbled and mortified, let him become President of Harvard College.” But some of us are still willing to steel ourselves, take the plunge, and give it our best shot. And Julio’s willingness is sure to raise our collective game.

Seven years ago, Julio came to Harvard to be a dean. And he excelled in that role—as an extraordinarily able and effective leader. He brought vision. He brought eloquence. He brought a thirst for excellence, and a passion for the power of education, a deep conviction in the promise of academic research to change the world for the better. He brought a wonderfully cosmopolitan outlook, a rare ability to straddle the world of ideas and the world of action, an enthusiasm for embracing the generative power of diversity and for inciting thoughtful change. If a test of a deanship is whether the dean’s school emerges stronger, more

ambitious, and better positioned to thrive in the years ahead, Dean Frenk aced the test.

But Julio was much more than just the dean of his school. His reach and his grasp touched the university as a whole. He sought out collaborations. He forged creative connections with other parts of Harvard. He encouraged the interplay of professional education and the liberal arts. He thought constantly, and with striking imagination, about how his own school could reap the benefits of being part of a larger university—and how his own school could, in turn, benefit the university as a whole. He emerged as a voice of clarity and of conscience on our university-wide Council of Deans. When hard issues were in front of us, when the occasional storms threatened to leave us in a puddle of ambivalence or indecision, often it was Julio whose voice framed things in just the right way, whose values elevated our discussion, whose insight pointed toward a promising path forward.

Occasions like our gathering today are opportunities to honor an individual. But, even more, they are opportunities to reflect on the institution the individual serves—why such institutions matter, what they hold dear and what they aspire to do, how they can best meet the challenges of a turbulent and often perplexing world. Julio Frenk comes to serve the University of Miami at an immensely consequential moment for universities like ours—whether they stand at the dynamic crossroads of the Americas, like this great university, or whether they're sedately tucked away in the hinterlands of New England, like my own.

Never before in human history has education been more vital to the prospects of individuals—to the capacity of each of us to lead lives of meaning and value. Never has academic research held greater promise to help the world confront its most vexing problems. More than ever, ideas born in universities are the lifeblood of progress and prosperity. And yet, our universities face a dizzying array of challenges—and a rising chorus of doubt. Doubt about what and how we teach. Doubt about the value of our scholarship and research. Doubt about our commitments to free inquiry and expression as well as our commitments to creating fully inclusive environments for all members

of our communities.

In Julio Frenk, the University of Miami welcomes a president who knows, deep in his soul, why universities matter—why they deserve and demand both our constant critical scrutiny and our profound encouragement and support.

At a time when people depend so deeply on the enlightenment and skills that higher education can bring;

at a time when the forces of globalization and technology open new pathways but also feed new anxieties;

at a time when the search for mutual respect and harmonious relations among people of different backgrounds and perspectives is both elusive and essential;

at a time when the ability to cross borders—intellectual, organizational, geographical—is more vital than ever to the progress of higher education;

at a time when the values and questions of the humanities must infuse the answers and solutions of the sciences;

at a time when the imaginative pursuit of knowledge and understanding holds promise to be the single most powerful force for good in the world—

At such a time, our universities have a singular and indispensable role to play among society's institutions.

For nearly a century, the University of Miami has brought those ideals vividly to life. With Julio Frenk as its guide, and with the support and partnership of so many of you here today, we can be sure there will always be wisdom and imagination, creativity and calm, humanity and humility at the eye of the hurricane.

Julio—in the favoring company of colleagues and friends both old and new, I wish you bright skies and warm winds ahead. Thank you very much.