



Rev. James J. Maher, C.M., D.Min.

President Niagara University

The Rev. James J. Maher, C.M., D.Min., a member of the Vincentian community, was appointed as the 26th president of Niagara University in 2013. His presidency has been distinguished by academic excellence, access, and affordability, as well as a deep commitment to the economic, social, and educational development of the Western New York community and, specifically, the revitalization of the City of Niagara Falls. In addition, Father Maher has been a champion for diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus and throughout the community, done in the context of deepening the Catholic and Vincentian mission of the university.

He is recognized for his ability to inspire others as an inclusive and collaborative leader, and has been honored with the Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center Nancy Gara Spirit Award (2024), the Just Communities of Western New York Citation Award (2020), the Leadership Niagara Leader of the Year Award (2019), the Key to the City of Vaughan, Ontario (2019), the Heart, Love and Soul Frances Ficorilli Volunteer Award (2016), and was the Trey Whitfield Foundation's Adult Honoree (2015). In addition, he has been named to the "Power 250" list of influential leaders by Buffalo Business First for 11 straight years.

Father Maher's leadership to advance the academic reputation of the university has led to increased retention rates, graduation rates that are in the top 25% of four-year institutions nationwide, and elevated Niagara University's academic profile. Since 2013, Niagara has climbed 40 places in the U.S. News and World Report's "Best Regional Universities – North" category, and its current position at number 30 is the best among independent colleges and universities in the Buffalo-Niagara region within that category. His commitment to providing an excellent and accessible education is reflected in Niagara's standing as the best value in New York state and number 2 overall in U.S. News.

Niagara has also established eight endowed funds and academic positions, including the Michael J., '60 and Aimee Rusinko Kakos Endowed Chair of Chemistry, which supports the groundbreaking research being performed on Niagara's Lewiston campus and in its lab in the Buffalo-Niagara Medical Corridor.

Niagara University's identity as a binational institution has been strengthened, as well. More than 500 students are enrolled in graduate and post-baccalaureate programs at the university's Vaughan, Ontario, campus, where the original 12,000 square foot space is being enhanced with an 18,000 square foot addition.



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Under Father Maher's direction, Niagara University has completed its \$125 million capital campaign, "Powering Transformation." Through Father Maher's vision, the campaign has strengthened Niagara's standing among its peers while providing students with the confidence, clarity of direction, and a heightened sense of purpose to realize their full potential.

Father Maher served as a national media correspondent during Pope Francis' visit to the United States in the fall of 2015. He appeared on "The Tavis Smiley Show," which airs on PBS, Telecare TV, a 24-hour Catholic news network, and several ABC, CBS, and NBC affiliates.

Before coming to Niagara, Father Maher served for 23 years at St. John's University in New York City. While there, he held the positions of executive vice president for mission and student services, vice president of student affairs, vice president of university ministry and campus minister, and executive director of the Vincentian Institute for Social Action (VISA).

He helped raise more than \$1 million for St. John's Bread & Life Program by growing the donor base from 800 to 2,500 and completing 11 New York City marathons to establish the Run Against Hunger, while leading a team of dedicated runners to raise funds and awareness of hunger and poverty in New York City.

Father Maher holds a doctor of ministry from the Immaculate Conception Seminary and Graduate School of Theology, focusing his research on worker development programs for Nike factory workers in Vietnam. He earned two master's degrees in theology from the Mary Immaculate Seminary, and a bachelor of arts in sociology from St. John's University. He has also completed professional leadership and management programs at the Harvard University Institute of Educational Management and Management Development Program, the Stevens Institute and the Scott Academy's Senior Student Affairs Officers Institute, among others.



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Father Maher served as the president of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference and as a representative to the NCAA Presidential Advisory Group, and is a member of the NCAA Division I board of governors. He is a member of the board of directors of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU), a trustee of DePaul University, and serves on the boards of the Darwin Martin House Complex and the Buffalo Niagara Partnership.

Father Maher's awards and honors also include the Pietas Medal from St. John's University (2009); Madison's Who's Who, Outstanding Leader in Education (2008); Top 100 Irish-Americans in the U.S. by Irish America Magazine (2004); and New Yorker of the Week, New York 1 News (1995).

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