

JCU president pleads for colleges

By **SHANNON MORTLAND**

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John Carroll University president Father Robert Niehoff spoke of the hurdles colleges face and urged the public to help solve those problems.

In a speech at the City Club of Cleveland today, Father Niehoff said all colleges are challenged with making college accessible and affordable and must be held accountable when it comes to the quality of education they provide.

To that end, he said colleges throughout the state — particularly those in Northeast Ohio — face even greater difficulties because of Ohio's struggling economy.

Even as students must deal with rising tuition, Father Niehoff said Gov. Ted Strickland wants to cut \$35 million a year from the Ohio Student Choice Grant, which provides a \$900 annual grant to any Ohio student to attend a private college in Ohio. He said the money then would be used to create a needs-based grant program.

Father Niehoff said cutting the grant could put even more strain on public colleges, which would need to build additional facilities to house more students, or could encourage students to attend a college outside Ohio. He urged the public to lobby state legislators to keep the Ohio Student Choice Grant in place for all Ohio students.

Father Niehoff also called for parents and schools to do more to prepare students for college and to make them aware of their higher education choices.

"We need more high school graduates in this region or we will never get more college graduates," Father Niehoff said. "Our state is at risk and our economic future — especially in Northeast Ohio — is at risk. We must do more."

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