**Remarks for the Mayor’s Press Conference**

*Friday, October 5, 2012*

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Thank you, Superintendent Mahaley. Mayor Gray, it’s a great pleasure to welcome you back to Trinity --- Vincent Gray and Trinity have enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship going back to my student days here when I first heard about his good work from my classmates majoring in Psychology who were interning with him to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities at the D.C. ARC. His long career in advocacy for children and for improving the lives of citizens of the District of Columbia reaches a new high today with this announcement of the first-ever publicly-funded needs-based scholarship program for deserving D.C. students.

Here at Trinity, we know what a difference the Mayor’s Scholarships can make in the lives of our students. Trinity educates more D.C. residents than any other private university in the nation --- nearly half of our student body, or about 1,300 DC residents attend Trinity. More than 500 of these are young women in our full-time weekday undergraduate program. About one-third of our D.C. residents come from neighborhoods east of the river where poverty is most acute, where the ambition of students to transform the lives of their families is so high.

The majority of our full-time students from DC at Trinity have “0” expected family contribution on the federal aid formula, meaning that they have no means to pay for college except the scholarships, grants and loans they can find to support their education, supplemented with the earnings from their own hard work. Trinity helps them with this, providing nearly $4 million in our own institutional funds in addition to the support of the DC Tuition Assistance Grants, DC CAP grants, DC Achievers grants and others. But, still, for too many students, a gap remains.

We know that a gap of several thousand dollars in financial aid support means that a student is at very grave risk of stopping out from her academic career, which delays degree completion and possibly ends her pursuit of a degree entirely. We know many students make a brave effort to find the additional money --- working long hours through the night to earn money to close the tuition gap and to support their families, but also putting their academic studies at risk, and even their health.

We also know that students who are able to live on campus have a much greater likelihood of retention, progressive academic success and timely degree completion, and additional grant support helps more students take the option of residing on campus and taking full advantage of the additional support services for resident students, such as having a safe and secure place to live each day, regular meals, quiet hours at night, counselors and health services readily available, and the ability to control who comes and goes in a room of your own.

Ultimately, we know that the achievement of a college degree means that the student will have greater lifetime earnings --- more than double the earnings of a high school diploma --- and also, that educated parents are the best possible influence in the educational attainment of children. The investment that Mayor Gray announces today is not simply short-term relief for these students, but in fact, these scholarships drive the hope for long-term economic and social transformation for families and neighborhoods throughout the city.

Please join me in thanking and welcoming to the podium Mayor Vincent Gray.