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Faculty and Staff Convocation Remarks  
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As is our tradition, we gather in convocation to begin a new semester at Loyola, renew the University, and mark the beginning of a new academic year. This is a good moment to see old friends and colleagues and for us to welcome new members of the faculty and staff to Loyola.

Like other colleges and universities in the United States, our convocation marks a renewal and the beginning of a new academic year. However, our renewal is not typical or ordinary as our city and region are also being renewed. The renewal of the university is happening because people—particularly faculty and staff—have worked incredibly hard, in the midst of your own difficult circumstances, to help make this renewal possible. I am deeply grateful to everyone for their work, creativity, and ingenuity in helping Loyola face the challenges of the present and create the University's future. Thank you. Without you, and your hard work, we would not be in the strong position we are in today.

Today I would like to do two things. First, I want to take a few moments to remind you of what we have accomplished in the past year. Second, I want to talk a bit about the tasks that lie before us this year.

## I. What we have accomplished:

As we begin a new year I think it is important to remember, and celebrate, what we accomplished this past year. What we were able to do last year provides part of the context for our work this year.

Let me take a moment and highlight some of the things we were able to accomplish in the academic year 2008-2009.

1. We completed work on an identity statement for the University. This effort was led by Fr. Jim Bradley, S.J. and the Office of Mission and Ministry. The statement complements the University mission statement, revised in 2004, and provides an excellent framework for our work of planning and implementation.
2. Last year a new, integrated University strategic plan was developed, reviewed, revised, and completed last year. It was reviewed by the Board at its March meeting, further revised and approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2009. A year ago I charged the Provost and the University Planning Team to develop a new strategic plan for Loyola. In the fall of last year, I set out the boundaries and the broad vision and charged them to examine the appropriate size of the University and focus for the plan. As part of the charge, I said that the plan had to be integrated. That is, it needed to look at not only at programs in academic and student affairs, but it also needed to include a financial plan and a facilities plan so that the plan might be realized. The development of the plan was a team effort – involving faculty, staff, students, and the Board of Trustees - and

the plan is an integrated plan that not only sets out what we hope to do, but does so with the appropriate business plan and support for the plan. Its approval at the May Board meeting was the conclusion to an exercise in shared governance.

*Loyola 2012* sets our agenda for the next few years.

3. Last year the proposal to revise the Common Curriculum was completed. This is a significant accomplishment and I am grateful to the faculty who were involved, especially to Alice Clark who chaired the committee. Our work now is the implementation of the new Common Curriculum.

4. Last year we welcomed three new deans in 2008-2009 (HNS, CSS, and CoB) and a new director for the School of Nursing.

5. Last year we successfully completed searches for new dean of Music and Fine Arts, Donald R. Boomgaarden, Ph.D., a new director of Mass Communications, Sonya Forte Duhé, Ph.D, and our first University Counsel, Gita Bolt.

6. Last year we established new programs:

- a. Dual-degree master of business administration/master of pastoral studies
- b. Doctor of Nursing Practice
- c. Pilot program for re-instituting Loyola Intensive English program

7. Last year we completed numerous successful searches to hire new faculty members who join us today. We hired three tenured faculty members, thirty tenure-track faculty members and twenty extraordinary faculty. We were able to

do this because of the hard work that was done in Academic Affairs. I would be remiss if I did not point out the important work that has been done in Financial Affairs, which has given us, in this difficult financial climate, the ability to hire when many colleges and universities were not.

8. Last year we established the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. The center is headed by languages and cultures professor Uriel Quesada, who has returned to Loyola to lead this new center. He is joined this year by visiting professor Rev. Michael Bouzigard, S.J.

9. Last year we established the Center for [Center for the Study of New Orleans](#). The center is headed by School of Mass Communication professor Leslie Parr. It is a cross-disciplinary resource hub that promotes research and reflection on the history, politics, culture, and environment of New Orleans.

10. Last year Monroe Library planned and implemented its new Learning Commons, which has been a success with students and will help us continually improve our teaching and research. And, last year the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship (faculty development center) opened in fall 2008.

11. This past summer the number of summer online courses more than doubled from 16 to 37.

12. Last year we planned for the expansion of first-year seminars from nine last year to 30 in 2009-2010. This increase will allow all incoming first-year students to take a seminar course. And, what I think is very important, we have 28 Learning Communities that are integral to 28 first year seminars. Roberta Kaskel

has done an incredible amount of work with Melanie McKay to organize these learning communities.

13. Last year workshops on the University's mission and its Jesuit, Catholic identity were held throughout the University. There was a growth in participation in programs for faculty and staff on Mission (especially AJCU leadership Seminar, the Heartland Delta Faculty Conversations, and the Ignatian Colleagues program) and more than twenty faculty and staff members participated in the 19<sup>th</sup> Annotation retreats on the Spiritual Exercises offered by the Office of Mission and Ministry.

14. Last year the first Jesuit Summer Institute was held. This is a new summer institute for honors students from all Jesuit colleges across the nation, focusing on New Orleans. Theme: 'After the Deluge: Culture & Crisis in New Orleans' led by Profs. John Biguenet and John Clark.

15. Last year we expanded our international immersion programs (Ignacio Volunteers), developed of a formative and comprehensive retreat program, and supported the growth of our Christian Life Communities.

16. Last year we worked with architects and consultants, the University we completed the initial phases of developing the master facilities plan. That process included multiple meetings with faculty and staff in all colleges and the offices of vice presidents.

I have received and accepted the recommendations for the campus master plan from the facility consultants and will post the entire report on the Office of

the President website. One of the key initiatives for us, this year is to move ahead with programming for the buildings which will be led by the respective Vice Presidents.

17. It is important to remember that we were able to do all these things, during a time when the nation was undergoing it's most turbulent economic crisis since the Great Depression. I am very proud of the way the Cabinet and the University Budget Committee worked together to help us move through these challenges.

And, I am very happy that we were able to keep our commitment to salary increases in the budget and to execute a robust plan for hiring faculty and staff all the while remaining within our budget for the year.

18. Through the Alumni Office, Loyola continues to build life long relationships with alumni. The 50 year reunion class of 1959 was inducted into the Golden Wolves Society and for the first time, participated in Commencement processing along side the Class of 2009. Loyola hosted 118 events for alumni in 17 cities. These events were attended by over 7,000 alumni, parents, and friends. There are currently 25 active alumni chapters across the country.

19. Our national profile continues to expand. Media coverage of Loyola was increased by 30% last year. This increase includes a 12% increase in local coverage, a 48% increase in national coverage and 133 stories in international media outlets. The web team will complete redesign of all 22,000 pages should be completed by next summer.

20. A case statement for a capital campaign was drafted last year. Built on our strategic plan, the case statement detailed the initiatives to be funded to accomplish the vision. The draft case was shared with 60 key supporters of the University at a series of five Presidential briefings. The case statement was then revised to include the input from these briefings. A fundraising consulting firm is now wrapping up confidential interviews with 50 individuals and has completed telephone interviews with over 260 supporters of the University. The results of these interviews will allow Loyola to determine the viability and timing of a campaign for these initiatives. The Board of Trustees will make a decision on the campaign at the December board meeting.

21. We continue to rebuild our undergraduate enrollment. Last year the Board approved enrollment goals, for this year, of 865 new students (750 first year students and 115 transfers). We will meet and surpass our goals. Our first year undergraduate applications were our highest levels ever. We expect more than 770 new first year students and more than 120 new transfer students.

In our incoming first year class, 37% are students of color, 57% are from outside Louisiana, and 29% are the first in their families to go to college. And the class is well accomplished academically.

In planning for this year we made an assumption that we would have a 76% retention of our first to second year students. At this point we expect our first to second year retention rate to be near 80%. Last year our retention rate was 73%. So this is an important and significant increase. I want to thank all of the

faculty and staff who contributed to these efforts and, in particular, I want to thank Sal Liberto and Cissy Petty for their work on retention. This is an excellent improvement and we should take the time to celebrate it and acknowledge it. But we can still do better.

Also students are enrolling in graduate and part time programs at slightly higher rates than recent years. And our enrollment in the College of Law is also excellent this year. We have 325 first year law students. There was a significant increase in our yield of accepted students (31% to 35%). And the diversity of the class has also increased over last year.

You can tell, just by this brief overview, that we have accomplished a great deal. Our work has not gone unnoticed. The recent rankings by *U.S. News* and *The Princeton Review* are evidence of our hard work has been noticed by others.

And, it is important to note, that all of this work was not done by any one person. It was done by the hard work of many people, faculty, staff, administrators, and Board members who worked together, in real project of collaborative governance to move us forward. I want to especially thank a number of people who play important leadership roles in these accomplishments. I want to thank Fr. Bob Gerlich, S.J., for his leadership of the University Senate. I also want to thank Bret Jacobs for his leadership of the Staff Senate, and Cade Cypriano, Student Government Association. And I want to thank my team, the vice presidents, led by Ed Kvet for their work.

## II. The Work Ahead

In the past is our future. The work of the past year provides a road map for the work of the future. In the year ahead we have two key objectives. First, this fall, we will complete the *Loyola 2012*. The core of the plan was done last year. This year, this fall, we will complete the last two pieces of the *Loyola 2012*.

First, we will complete a master plan for facilities, which will support *Loyola 2012*. The work on the initial plan has been done and now we need to move ahead on specific programming for the buildings. The overall facilities plan will be presented to the Board for its review and approval at the October meeting.

Second, I plan to bring to the Board a proposal for a capital campaign to support *Loyola 2012* at the December meeting. In the year ahead I will be working on two key areas for our fundraising. One will be to secure lead gifts for the campaign. The second will be to increase the participation in our annual giving from alumni, families, faculty, and staff. It is important to understand that when outside agencies, like foundations or ratings agencies, look at Loyola they look at the rate/percentage of giving from different populations. So, it is important for us to increase participation in all these areas. These two tasks, the facilities plan, and a fundraising plan to support *Loyola 2012*, will both complete the plan and our ability to implement it.

*Loyola 2012* has three overarching strategies: 1) enhance Jesuit values; 2) improve student retention; and 3) enhance the reputation and stature of the University. Our work this year, and in the years to come, is the implementation of

the plan. This is an important step for us. After years of discussing ideas and talking about the plan, we have completed the development of a plan that is mission driven, comprehensive, and integrated. Now we will move to implement the plan. I am particularly concerned that we continue to increase our retention of new first year students. The past year has seen a significant increase. But we can do better. I am also concerned to review and implement strategies to increase our graduation rates. Retention and graduation rates are indicators of the quality of our work and how well we engage students and support them.

I will ask the University Planning Team, with the Provost, vice presidents, and deans, to oversee the implementation of the plan. We will work to use normal University governance structures to implement the plan. Then in time, we will evaluate what we have done. In four years time, we ought to be able to answer the question: did we do what we said we would do and did it have the predicted effect? Then, we can begin a new planning process. In doing this we build an ongoing cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation, and planning.

My own top priority this year will be to work with the Cabinet, along with the faculty and staff leadership, in the implementation of *Loyola 2012*. I will work to finalize a master plan for facilities this fall. Also, I will work with the Board and IA to finalize a plan for a capital campaign and begin to implement it. A good deal of my time and effort this year will be on securing leadership gifts for the campaign. Finally, I will continue to be involved in civic leadership,

particularly the work of the Ethics Review Board with the primary task of hiring a new Inspector General for the city.

I remind you of something I have said in the past: Renewal is work. To achieve a renewed New Orleans and a renewed Loyola University, it will take focus, work, and dedication. But it is work that can be done. Look what we have been able to achieve! The work of renewal will meet with frustration and it will test our patience, good will, and charity. We are not simply doing work for the sake of working. We are working to do something lasting and important. We are working to build a renewed and better University and a better New Orleans. I believe, it is work worth doing and, if done well, will lead to a better, more humane city and a stronger, better university.