THE UNIVERSITY SENATE’S CALL FOR ACTION

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Draft Report from the Special Committee on Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans Universities confirms the concerns outlined in A Call for Conversation and Critique of Pathways. The University senior administrators have placed themselves at serious risk of AAUP censure and their post-Katrina actions are likely to result in censure of the Administration. Our collective interests are to avoid censure for the sake of the long-term health and vitality of our Loyola University.

The University Senate feels strongly that the only way to proceed at this point is to focus on addressing the mistakes made: the lack of process, inadequate communication and consultation with the faculty, faulty data and analysis used in decision making, and the lack of a shared vision for the future of the university. We must move with all deliberate speed to ameliorate the negative impact of ill-informed decisions on faculty and staff colleagues. The single most important way to avoid AAUP censure is to focus on the core issue of improving the relationship between faculty and administration by restoring shared governance as written in the Faculty Handbook. Therefore, we call on our President, Provost, and the Board of Trustees to implement immediately the following points:

PART I. PROCESS ISSUES

1-The President must immediately acknowledge that the Faculty Handbook is the equivalent of our Constitution whose primacy must be defended and maintained at all cost. Given this, he must also accept the Standing Council for Academic Planning (SCAP) Pathways report as “presumptively valid.” If all of the SCAP recommendations cannot be implemented at this time, the University should make every effort to place terminated, tenured or tenure-track, faculty in other appropriate University positions. If this is not possible, then the administration should begin negotiating fair agreements with all terminated faculty members “equitably adjusted to the faculty member’s length of past and potential service” (see the next point, I.2).

2- The administration (working with legal counsel) should negotiate fair and equitable separation packages with all terminated faculty members who cannot be placed in other university positions. Packages must be judged as reasonable based on the Faculty Handbook (see Chapter 9.E.2) which states that, in such matters, years of past and potential service be factored into such decisions. In fact, the University Administration should seek guidance from the AAUP to help develop these packages. After all, the University will have to settle with faculty members eventually and most Loyola community members would like to see the dollars go to our terminated colleagues rather than to legal representatives. The University Administration should move quickly on this item so that we can salvage as much good will and hope for our community as possible.

3-The administration should meet with representatives from AAUP immediately and demonstrate progress being made in effectively working with the faculty (especially on items I.1 and I.2). We need to engage in appropriate processes because the outcomes will impact adversely the life of this institution for many years to come. The University must avoid AAUP censure if at all possible.
4- All committees that are part of our university governance structure should begin regularly scheduled meetings immediately and do the work described in the Faculty Handbook. Further, the administration has to work collaboratively with the faculty representatives to establish the agendas for these meetings to ensure that faculty time is well spent working on substantive issues versus busy work designed to give the appearance of shared governance. This is especially critical for University committees, specifically the Standing Council for Academic Planning (SCAP), the University Planning Team (UPT), and the University Budget Committee (UBC). Faculty representatives should be provided with detailed agendas and support information in a timely manner to ensure informed discussion and participation. It is only through such a process that our claims to SACS that we operate under a system of shared governance and that we have a rational approach to planning and budgeting can be substantiated.

5- Suspended programs must have the opportunity to appeal their suspension immediately to avoid irreparable damage to those programs. Each suspended program shall submit a proposal justifying reinstatement to the appropriate academic Dean. Upon approval by the Dean, the proposal will be forwarded to the Provost to be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled SCAP meeting, where the Dean and respective department Chair will argue the merits of reinstatement.

6- The process for Program Review must follow the guidelines as specified in the Faculty Handbook. Thus, in October 2006, the University Senate charged a Senate subcommittee to review program criteria proposed by SCAP. The subcommittee presented its draft to the Senate in December 2006, and the criteria will be voted on by the full Senate in the February 2007 meeting. Once approved by the Senate, the criteria will be returned to SCAP for program review. It is important to note that any program review and any criteria developed for the review process must be dynamic and ever changing. Approval must involve the Senate and SCAP as the Faculty Handbook requires.

7- During the 2006-07 academic year, the University Rank and Tenure Committee (URTC) has been meeting to hear appeals brought forth by Pathways terminated faculty. To restore open communication and information dissemination, the University Senate requests from the URTC a summary of the appeal decisions along with their specific rationale. The Senate further requests a summary of the President’s reply to the URTC on the matter.

8- The University Senate in cooperation with the administration will formulate criteria for identifying a bona fide state of financial exigency and for determining proper institutional responses to such a condition (Faculty Handbook 9.F.). This proactive planning approach should be a part of our emergency planning efforts in the event of another disaster.
PART II. PERSONNEL ISSUES

1- The President should thank the Provost and his assistants for their service and grant them sabbaticals that begin as soon as possible and run through the 2007 calendar year. All of these administrators are tenured and can return to their departments.

2- The President should work with the faculty in identifying a suitable University community member to serve as Interim Provost. This person must have an understanding of Loyola culture, a good working relationship with faculty members, and be willing to operate under the guidelines of the Faculty Handbook. We propose the following procedure to help the President: The University Senate should elect a small committee of faculty members not interested in serving as Interim or Permanent Provost to identify acceptable candidates who are willing to serve as Interim Provost for a term of one academic year. This selection committee should consist of one Senate faculty member from each college, none of whom may apply for the position. A slate of 3 candidates should emerge after seeking community input and comprehensive consideration by the full University Senate. The Senate Executive Committee will submit the slate of acceptable candidates to the President for selection allowing the institution adequate time to search for the next Chief Academic Officer (CAO). Alternatively, the President in collaboration with the Board of Trustees and the University Senate may also bring to the community an acceptable external Interim Provost candidate with strong experience and evidence of commitment to shared governance.

3- The Interim Provost should recruit talented and capable faculty members from within the University to help create and maintain a solid bridge between the faculty and the administration. These faculty members will assist the Interim Provost in this transitional time and should be considered temporary. The Office of the Provost will review the need for assistant and/or associate Provosts in his/her office. We stress that, in agreement with our Faculty Handbook, the Provost should work directly with the Academic Deans on academic issues. The assistant/associate provost positions should not be administrative positions with higher authority than deans.

4- The President must focus on being President. This means hiring a competent and capable Provost and then staying out of her/his way. We need our President to recognize that his vision for the University is not necessarily a shared vision that unites students, staff and faculty across campus. Given this, he must work to build consensus around the Catholic, Jesuit mission of the institution and then consistently articulate this vision in a way that inspires the confidence of our community and can be tied to success in recruitment, retention, fundraising, and external relations. To attract strong Provost candidates, we must be able to assure them that they will be allowed to lead the academic side of the university without unnecessary interference from the President, the Board of Trustees, and/or their consultants/advisors. We should not overlook the possibility of appropriate internal candidates willing and able to serve our institution well.
CONCLUSION

The University Senate’s Call for Action is NOT intended to be a comprehensive plan but rather a starting point to attempt to avoid censure and sanction. Further, it is intended to begin open and honest discussion about how we begin to think about our future together. Our institution faces many challenges (e.g., negative external publicity; recruitment and retention of students, staff, faculty members; financial challenges; etc.). We must turn the challenges we face into opportunities by mobilizing our campus community, aligning our limited resources, and building a sense of common purpose and community. Faculty members need to be empowered by having a real voice in shaping a future that is built on the promise of a brighter tomorrow.