Loyola Campaign Communications Discovery Sessions
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Re Initial findings

Background
kor group and Libretto have been engaged by Loyola to develop a theme for the University’s capital campaign and a private phase case statement for presentation to the board of trustees in September. During April, our team spent several days on campus interviewing over 100 people, including cabinet members, administrators, faculty, staff, alumni, board members, Jesuits, and President Wildes.

We were impressed by the high level of professionalism and goodwill that we encountered throughout the Loyola community. Interview participants were generally enthusiastic about the campaign and encouraged by our presence on campus.

Key challenges
During our interviews, several key challenges to a successful campaign emerged. They include:

• A weak culture of philanthropy – Loyola faces competition from local organizations with stronger fundraising programs including Tulane, Xavier, Catholic high schools, and Mardi Gras krewes. Alumni and volunteer leadership speak highly of Loyola but are hesitant to take a leadership role or solicit gifts.

• Need for internal alignment – Many participants had disparate visions of how Loyola will be transformed at the conclusion of the campaign. Loyola needs consensus around campaign priorities and messaging prior to soliciting donors.

• Advancement staff inexperience – Loyola’s IA staff have little experience addressing the matrix of factors that inform a campaign of this magnitude.

• Advancement staff morale – The “start and stop” quality of the initiative has created some disillusionment and skepticism among IA staff. Achieving a key fundraising milestone – such as the announcement of a major gift – could have a galvanizing effect upon staff members.

• New vice president of IA – The appointment of the new vice president for institutional advancement could affect communications efforts. He will need to be apprised of relevant progress on the communications front as early as possible.
• **The Katrina factor** – Katrina has produced a combination of challenges (high staff turnover, temporary decreases in enrollment) and opportunities (new, young, optimistic faculty members) that must be factored into communication efforts.

• **"Concerned Catholics"** – A small but vocal group of alumni and potential donors are concerned that Loyola is too liberal and insufficiently Catholic. Donors need assurance that the campaign affirms, celebrates, and supports Loyola’s Jesuit Catholic values.

**Moving ahead**

None of the challenges described above are insurmountable, and many can be used to Loyola’s advantage. For example, Loyola’s young and eager IA staff could bring a great deal of energy and fresh ideas to the campaign. What’s more, the lag time between campaigns and the current philanthropic culture means that the capacity of Loyola’s alumni and other constituents has gone largely untapped with regard to both engagement and financial support.

While Loyola enjoys a positive reputation, many of the most impressive facts about the University and the achievements of its alumni, faculty, and students are unknown in the local community and beyond. Highlighting those achievements and personal stories in the context of the campaign will help enhance the University’s reputation.

With the campaign, Loyola has the chance to redefine itself locally and make a greater name for itself regionally and nationally. kor group and Libretto look forward to helping the University talk about itself in a fresh, accurate, and exciting way in order to galvanize donors – both current members of the Loyola community and new constituents – around Loyola’s mission and vision for the future.