Dear Trustees,

As you know our next meeting (7-8 March) will have a different format than our normal meetings. It is a format that we have used in the past, every other year, and it has been a successful way for us to have a more focused and in-depth conversation than we are normally able to have as a full Board.

The focus of our meeting will be a conversation around the general topic of what it is to be a Trustee for Loyola University New Orleans. As you recall, this past year there were some very important examples, in universities, which raised important questions about the role of a Board of Trustees. There were two examples, in the national news, which represented two different ends of the spectrum of ideas on how boards should function. On the one hand, there were the tragic events at Penn State which raised the specter of a Board that was disengaged from the life of the university. On the other hand, there was the turmoil at the University of Virginia, which raised the specter of a Board that was overly engaged in the life of a university when it removed and then reinstated the president.

The challenge, like many things in life, is to find the middle road. And, for the board of any university, this will be a continuing challenge and self-correcting process.

For the March meeting, we will not have our normal committee meetings and will have general plenary discussion. We have invited Ted Long, from the Association of Governing Boards, to facilitate our meeting. You may recall that Ted met with us as part of our October meeting.

One of the key roles for Trustees is the stewardship of a university’s identity and mission. In my presentation to the Board and in my convocation remarks in January, I talked about the changing nature of higher education in the United States and how “universities” now come in many different shapes and sizes. (A copy of that talk was distributed to you already; however, if you would like another copy, please contact Kristine.) For Loyola, as for any Jesuit university, our mission and identity are simultaneously religious and educational. The challenge ever before us is to help Trustees continually deepen the understanding of the University and its mission so they can be a highly effective Board. I hope that this retreat will allow us to look at both of these dimensions of our identity so that you, as Trustees, will feel confident in your role.

Included in your Board material are some readings that should be helpful to you and in our conversation together. First there is a document, several years in the making, by the Association...
of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) entitled *Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities: A Self-Evaluation Instrument*. As I have said to you before, there is a wide variety of types of universities in the United States today. This document was developed as a way to clearly articulate, and measure, if a college or university was living out its Jesuit identity. Archbishop Aymond will join us Thursday afternoon for an informal discussion with you about Loyola as a Catholic university.

Another important question nationally, and for any university, is about what students are learning. There are two pieces in your pre-meeting reading that address the questions of the Board’s role in educational quality and oversight. One is from AGB and entitled *Board Responsibility for the Oversight of Educational Quality*. The other is an excerpt from Peter Ewell’s, *Making the Grade* (2nd edition) or Richard Morrill, *Strategic Academic Leadership*. Also included, is an article by Charles L. Currie, S.J., entitled, *Trustees and Mission: The Ideal and the Real*.

Since we will not be having our normal committee meetings, you will find in your Board book, written reports from each vice president to update you on the different aspects of the University. Also, we will reserve time at the end of Friday morning to transact any University business that requires Board action.

I look forward to our meeting and conversation. And, again, thank you for all your work for Loyola University!

With prayers and best wishes,


Kevin Wm. Wildes, S.J.
President

19 February 2013