April 20, 2009

To: Father Kevin Wildes, S.J., President
   Loyola University
From: Petrice Sams-Abiodun, Ph.D., Executive Director
   Lindy Boggs National Center for Community Literacy
Re: 2008-2009 Annual Self Evaluation and Goals

Thank you again for an opportunity to reflect on my leadership as executive director of the Lindy Boggs Literacy Center and to outline goals for the upcoming year. This annual self-evaluation provides a summary of main activities for Academic Year 2008-2009. I will cover the following areas in this self-evaluation:

1. Highlights of 2008-2009
2. The Strategic Planning
3. Goals for the Center During the Next Fiscal Year

1. Highlights of 2008-2009

Organizational Structure
This year I have worked as the sole staff person at the Center due to financial constraints. This has created unique challenges in that although the staffing has decreased, the community continues to look to the Center for leadership and direction in adult, family and community literacy. Although, I am physically the only staff person, I have had extensive support both internally from the University community and externally from local and national partners. These relationships and partnerships have supported the Center in executing its community literacy agenda and programs.

Finances and Fundraising
I have continued to work closely with both the departments of Financial Affairs and Institutional Advancement to ensure the financial stability of the Center. With financial affairs, we continue to align the budgets of multiple grants and to stay on top of the Centers finances. We are presently working to ensure that the University is reimbursed for all funds expended in accordance with CDBG advance manufacturing and healthcare grants that ended in December 2008.

I have also been working with staff of the Institutional Advancement office to secure funding for the Center. Chris Wiseman and I have gone on site visits to share the Centers programmatic agenda with potential funders. With the support of the Institutional Advancement grant writer the Center submitted four proposals and received funding for two grants (A.T. & T - $25,000; Freeport- McMoran $7,500) totaling $32,000.00.

My work with Institutional Advancement has also resulted in a draft funding priority document to provide clarity and coordination for our funding efforts. Below are the five areas identified in the funding priority document to build the capacity of the Lindy Boggs National Center for Community Literacy at Loyola University to become a premier institution in addressing community literacy.
Priority 1: Strengthen Community Based Research Agenda

Priority 2: Expand Workforce Foundations Education Efforts

Priority 3: Establish Reading Excellence Initiative

Priority 4: Establishment of Endowment Fund

Priority 5: Create Applied Education Opportunities and Endowed Chair

Partnerships:
Although, the financial situation of the Center is not at its strongest, we have been able to continue to address community literacy because of the on-going support of the University as well as strengthened and expanded partnerships with both local and national partners.

Local

- Southeast Louisiana Regional Alliance (SLRA) - The mission of the SLRA is to form a sustainable Regional Alliance of employers, educators, workforce and economic development professionals, and community-based organizations who will collaborate to identify common goals, set regional priorities, strategically align and leverage resources to support stated objectives, and advocate for the benefit of broader talent and economic development initiatives in the region. I serve as the Chair Elect of SLRA and chair of the barriers workgroup that is addressing education, infrastructure and social support issues facing low skilled jobseekers.

- Literacy Alliance - This year the Boggs Center was instrumental in supporting the full separation of the Literacy Alliance from Loyola University. This will allow the Center now to move forward in branding its own identity. I am a board member of the Literacy Alliance.

- African American Men’s Initiative - rooted in a community-based research agenda, this initiative is addressing employment issues of low-income and unemployed black men using literacy as a bridge for social justice and change. This approach has added depth to the breadth of work already occurring around literacy in this community. The experiences of low-income and unemployed black men with literacy and work intersect with poverty and racism. The core experiences and voices of this economically marginalized group are guiding the development of a participatory action research agenda. Increasing the literacy and work potential of this sub-group of potential adult learners is paramount to strengthening low-income families and communities. I am the principle investigator in this research effort.

- New Orleans Fatherhood Consortium - The concern about the plight of low-income children, families, neighborhoods and especially the fathers connected to them inspired the formation of the New Orleans Fatherhood Consortium in 2007.
New Orleans Fatherhood Consortium (NOFC) is a strong coalition dedicated to developing comprehensive social supports, programs, public awareness and policies that will assist fathers in reaching their fullest potential. In the last year, NOFC has experienced amazing growth as a new organization and is viewed locally as a leader in the area of fatherhood issues. The Consortium has successfully engaged multi-stakeholders from diverse areas that include faith and community-based organizations, social services, education, criminal justice and health entities all working for the common interest of strengthening families by supporting fathers. The consortium has hosted several successful fatherhood events including focus groups, workshops for fathers and practitioners and a Father’s Day Celebration in partnership with the Louisiana Children’s Museum. NOFC provided leadership in a statewide public policy forum in Baton Rouge during the 2008 legislative session. This noteworthy event raised the awareness of legislators and their staff on how decisions made about fathers impacts the well-being of children, family and community. I am the chair of the policy committee that planned and executed statewide policy forum.

- The Central City Fatherhood Initiative is a current project that has stemmed from the work of the Consortium. Through community conversations lead by fathers from the community, NOFC’s policy committee will identify, refine, produce and disseminate policy briefs based on issues fathers identify. Our goal is to develop the competency of organizations in the Central City neighborhood to understand the connectedness of men/fathers to the issues they are addressing around neighborhood recovery, rebuilding and revitalization. This process and the briefs will assist the neighborhood in developing strategies to address other issues that affect the quality of life for all community members. Loyola University received a $35,000 grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to coordinate this effort.

- Mahalia Jackson Central City Family Literacy Center is an early childhood development initiative that will provide comprehensive services to children, families and other residents in the Central City neighborhood. I have provided the leadership and coordination in assisting this group to develop their family literacy model.

- Central City Renaissance Alliance (CCRA) is committed to resident engagement and leadership development in the Central City neighborhood. CCRA is working to ensure that residents are engaged leaders in the recovery and rebuilding of the neighborhood. I serve on the board of CCRA.

- Louisiana Coalition on Black Men and Boys is commissioned by Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu to develop a statewide report that addresses the plight of Black Men and Boys in the state of Louisiana. I serve on the Commission as a community member and am working with the workforce, education and family/community subgroups.
- New Orleans Black Men and Boys 2025 Campaign is a national initiative of the 21st Century Foundation to address issues facing black men and boys. The New Orleans project is presently in a planning phase that is defining its agenda. I serve on the steering committee.

National

- National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) funded technical assistance that is directly linked to our efforts to support capacity building of adult education providers.
- Center for Literacy Studies at the University of Tennessee (CLS) is the regional adult literacy partner that is administering the regional professional development and technical assistance grant from NIFL. In partnership with CLS and our local reading specialist the Center has created a training specifically to increase the skills of Literacy AmeriCorps members in reading instruction.
- National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) continues to serve as a partner to our local family literacy efforts. This year through the Toyota family literacy initiative NCFL provided four scholarships to the Center for attendance at their annual family literacy conference. The Center was able to send one AmeriCorps member that works in a family literacy program, two community partners and one university partner at Tulane University.
- Seedco is working with the Center on developing a comprehensive workforce development strategy that supports and promotes a low skilled population. We have been in conversations with the Greater New Orleans Foundation about the creation of workforce funders collaborative.
- PASCAL is an international group of universities, business and other stakeholders that are engaged in workforce development. The Center has been invited to participate in this international think tank and agenda.
- Annie E. Casey Foundation continues to be a strong national funder interested in the Center’s approach to community based research and engagement. As noted earlier Casey has invested $35,000 into the fatherhood work of the Center.
- Women in Fatherhood Inc., is working to provide women’s perspective on fathers, fathering and fatherhood. I serve as chair of the research and policy committee.

2. Strategic Planning Process
The Boggs Center is presently undergoing a strategic planning process. This year marks ten years that the Center has served as a beacon to the community around adult literacy. The Boggs Center is recognized locally, nationally and now even internationally as a leader and resource for adult literacy in the greater New Orleans region. Many of our state, regional and local partners look to the Center to provide expertise and products necessary to work with the immense number of low literate individuals. Now is the time for the Center to build upon and expand the above successes, so that the size of the approach is equal to the problem. I believe that by re-visioning the Center’s role as a literacy leader, over the next ten years we will be able to assist in moving towards the vision of a 100% literate community.
In order to accomplish this, the Center must reposition itself to meet the immense needs of low literate and low skilled individuals in the region and the state. It must also strengthen its internal link to the assets of the university which are our Jesuit mission, students, faculty and staff. This broader vision and scope of work cannot be achieved through a piece meal programmatic agenda, but will take a comprehensive and detailed plan that is compelling to multi-level stakeholders and potential champions.

The strategic planning process is being facilitated by Dr. Linda Usdin, the president of swamplily LLC. Dr. Usdin’s work has focused on neighborhood development and community change. She has worked extensively in the neighborhoods of New Orleans, where she was born and raised, and throughout the Gulf Coast. During the last ten years, Dr. Usdin has worked for local and national foundations as a program development and evaluation consultant. She has worked with the Ford Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Open Society Institute, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, and the Greater New Orleans Foundation. In addition, she has taught courses on building community engagement in public health efforts for the South Central Public Health Leadership Institute, the Centers for Disease Control, and Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, and has facilitated strategic planning processes for groups such as the City of New Orleans, National Network of Public Health Institutes, the Louisiana Public Health Institute, and Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx. The focus of her academic work has been on the planning and evaluation of community development and change initiatives. In 2008, she wrote a monograph for The Alliance for Justice on foundations and advocacy. I am honored to have her donate her expertise and time to the center and the university.

Below is an outline of the strategic planning process that includes all components, elements and a timeline.

Framing Questions
- How do we realign the Lindy Boggs National Center for Community Literacy over the next 5-10 years to realize its vision?
- How do we align our work and efforts institutionally at Loyola University?
- What organizational and governance structure must exist to sustain the work?
- How does the Center develop long-term and sustainable funding to realize its vision of a 100% literate community?

Challenges
- Re-visioning and branding
- Balancing
- Funding
This broad vision and agenda comes with many challenges. The first challenge is defining the Center’s “niche” and developing the branding needed to move the work forward. The second challenge involves the articulation of a clear vision that balances the internal strategic plan of Loyola University with the externally defined needs of literacy in the community. The third challenge is to develop a strategic plan for the next
five to ten years that is sustainable and fundable, allowing the Center to move the literacy agenda to scale.

The strategic re-visioning process time commitment, schedule and focus are as follows:

**Time commitment**
- April, May & June 2009
- Total of 5 meetings, one every other week. 4 strategic re-visioning meetings and 1 review meeting if necessary.
- Meeting length 2 to 2-1/2 hours

**Schedule and Focus**
- Wednesday, April 29 9-11 a.m. Session 1 – Introduction to the Center
- Thursday, May 7 9-11 a.m. Session 2 – Programmatic Thrust
- Thursday, May 21 9-11 a.m. Session 3 – Organizational Structure
- Thursday, June 4 9-11 a.m. Session 4 – Sustainability
- Monday, June 15 12-2 p.m. Session 5 – Review 1

There are two teams involved in the strategic re-visioning format, the planning and advisory team. The planning team is composed of community, university and national partners. The role of the planning team is to provide guidance and direction in the strategic planning process. The advisory group’s role is to review and respond to outcomes from the strategic planning process. Below is a list of both strategic planning and advisory team members.

**Community Partners**
- Carol Bebelle, Executive Director
  ASHE Cultural Arts Center
- Michael Cunningham, Associate Professor of Psychology
  Department of Psychology, Tulane University
- Rachel Nicolosi, Executive Director
  Literacy Alliance of Greater New Orleans
- Hazel Parker, Reading Specialist Consultant
- Mary Rowe, Director
  New Orleans Institute for Innovation
- Ilana Scherl

**University Partners**
- Kelly Brotzman, Director of Service Learning
  Office of Service Learning
- Michael Cowan
  Common Good
- JoAnn Cruz, Dean of Humanities and Natural Science
- Joshua Daly, Associate Chaplin
  University Ministry
- Ted Quant, Director
Twomey Center

- Karen Reichard, Director
  Women’s Resource Center
- Kim Waggoner, Assistant Director of Grant Development
  Institutional Advancement
- Chris Wiseman, Associate Vice President Major Gifts
  Institutional Advancement

National Partners

- John Comings, Harvard Graduate School of Education,
  Former director National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL)
- Julia Shapiro – Senior Vice President for Workforce Development
  Seedco

Advisory group members

- Deirdre J. Burel, Director of Education and Community Investment
  Greater New Orleans Foundation
- Teresa Falgoust, Kids Count Coordinator
  Agenda for Children
- Brett Matherne, Assistant Professor
  College of Business, Loyola University
- Allison Plyer, Executive Director
  Greater New Orleans Data Center
- B. Allan Quigley, Professor of Adult Education
  Department of Adult Education
  St. Francis Xavier University
  Antigonish, Nova Scotia  Canada

Participation in this strategic process serves as an example of a committed group of international, national, regional and local champions that are prepared to assist the Lindy Boggs National Center for Community Literacy to think through these issues and move toward a prosperous future. Their time and effort are greatly appreciated as the Center continues the commitment we made as a university ten years ago to a group of immensely marginalized individuals in our community.

From the completed strategic plan, Dr. Brett Matherne will work with Center staff to create a comprehensive business plan to address short-term and long-term funding strategies.

3. Goals over the next year Lindy Boggs National Center for Community Literacy

- To begin to implement the strategic and business plans as recommended.
- To concentrate on the fundraising and development plan that is the outcome of both strategic and business plans.
• To strengthen internal connections with other Loyola University departments and entities to increase coordination that will better connect assets of students, faculty and staff.

Overall, literacy is an issue and barrier that is front and center in the recovery and rebuilding of this region. As a Jesuit university with strong themes of Catholic humanism, social justice and engagement of community organizations and stakeholders, the Center is uniquely positioned to partner with other university stakeholders and to provide the leadership required to realign systems and resources to enhance literacy levels. Consistent with Loyola University’s values - “Think Critically, Act Justly” the Center gives students and faculty a vehicle to implement the University’s social justice mission. Both service learning and community-based research are two unique assets that the Center brings to this work that is central to the mission of Loyola University and to the needs of the community. This last year has been one of change, transition and challenge. However, there is great opportunity in the re-visioning, rethinking and re-aligning of our work both internally and externally. I look forward to leading the Center in this future agenda.