



March 3, 2008

Dear President Wildes:

We would like to thank you for the good will expressed recently in an email message to our chapter president concerning a meeting with the AAUP chapter members. It has now been four months since the chapter's president and vice-president met with you, and despite our efforts to arrange a time for you to meet with the chapter, it has unfortunately not yet been scheduled by your office. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to communicate some of the concerns of the members of the AAUP chapter. In view of the seriousness of many of these concerns, we assume that they will be of immediate interest to you.

At the meeting in October, you asked for suggestions about what you might do to reassure the faculty about the future of the University and its commitment to the tenure process. We believe that one of the most substantive ways in which the University can demonstrate its commitment to the Faculty is through adherence to the procedures delineated in the Faculty Handbook. We therefore request specifically that you adhere to these procedures by issuing contracts by March 15, as stipulated in chapter 6, section A, page 6-1 of that document. The Handbook states that faculty contracts will be issued "ordinarily on or before March 15." Receiving a contract in a timely manner in accordance with the Handbook and traditional practice is an established Faculty prerogative, thus it is self-evident that any divergence from such procedure should occur only as the result of clear and substantive causes.

In addition, we urge you to support the allocation of a small raise pool of 3.5% for Faculty salaries. This will help faculty members keep up in part with an escalating rise in the cost of living. As you know, inflation has been increasing rapidly in recent months. The rate of inflation has been over 4% for the past three months and was 4.28% in January. Furthermore, the Consumer Price Index increased 4.3% nationally between January 2007 and January 2008. Moreover, it is generally agreed that the cost of living in New Orleans has been increasing disproportionately since Hurricane Katrina. Many Loyola employees saw the cost of health care insurance increase by 30% from 2007 to 2008. Thus, the allocation suggested will mitigate a de facto *reduction* of Faculty salaries next year in constant dollars and buying-power.

Loyola has a dedicated and enthusiastic Faculty that is highly committed to the University and its students. We believe that despite the crisis we have endured in recent years the University has the potential for greater excellence in teaching, research and service to the community. We believe that we have the potential to draw new students to the University and the city, and do a much better job of retaining students.

On the other hand, the University is presently in an extraordinarily precarious position. Full-time undergraduate enrollment is at its lowest level in the past 20 years (see the attached graphic). We have lost not only hundreds of majors due to cuts of academic programs but also many hundreds of additional students. The full-time undergraduate enrollment this spring is almost one-third lower than in Spring 2005, down from 3,052 to 2,189.

Given what is known concerning the financial picture for the university in the current academic year, it is clear that the university has resources available to allow an increase in the salary pool. The university has received some, or perhaps all, of the proceeds from the \$15 million in business interruption insurance. A 5% increase on the faculty salary pool of \$19 million is \$950,000. Such an allocation of less than \$1 million in an operating budget of ~\$130 million, or less than 1% of the budget, is not only highly desirable but also clearly feasible.

We cannot at this crucial point in our history afford to have needless conflict or disunity within the University, nor can we risk discouragement or possible loss of any of our dedicated faculty members. Rather, we must reward the faculty for their notable efforts on behalf of the University, such as their work in the Spring II semester of 2006 (which generated \$8 million), and the extra efforts made by many faculty in the face of vacancies in their departments.

We urge you therefore, out of a sense of justice and fairness to the Faculty, and from a concern for the future of the University, to approve these requests.

We will continue to try to meet with you to discuss a number of other important issues, especially how other universities in the area are responding to AAUP censures.

Sincerely,

The AAUP Members of the Faculty
Loyola University New Orleans