

Faculty Evidence and  
Communications Committees

**Report to the Board of Trustees  
On the State of Saint Louis University**

December 10, 2012

*Above all, trust in the slow work of God....  
We are impatient of being on the way to  
something unknown,  
something new.*

Teilhard de Chardin

# Report to the Board of Trustees On the State of Saint Louis University

December 2012

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **Introduction:** This report, drawing on the contributions of many faculty members, sets out to understand the current state of the institution and the conditions that underlie the recent unprecedented votes of no confidence in the President and the Vice President of Academic Affairs.
2. **What the votes of no confidence reveal:** By academic tradition, the votes are calls for the removal of the officials involved. Those by the Senate were not the actions of a few but of official representatives of the 900+ faculty serving in every school and college of the University (except the Madrid campus, which sent a letter of support). Before the vote on the President, senators reported unit by unit on the widespread faculty support for such a decisive measure.
3. **Need for immediate action by the Board:** Surveys of academic chairs in Arts and Sciences show an alarming number of faculty—many of them junior but others established, with substantial grant funding—who are seeking employment elsewhere because of the current crisis. Board action showing serious engagement in resolving the crisis at the top may help to stave off departures that will set the University back in quality and prominence for many years.
4. **Mishandling of University finances:** Understanding the recent problems of the University requires understanding its finances. In key indicators such as growth of the endowment, alumni giving, and grant funding, the University has declined so that it lags behind many of its official peer institutions.
5. **Precipitous drop in national rankings:** In consequence of declining funding for academic programs, SLU has fallen in rankings compared with peer universities. At a time when the administration has stressed the goal of moving into the top 50 universities in the nation, SLU's rankings have in fact dropped more than those of any other institution in the top 100.
6. **Failure to adequately support academics:** Largely because President Biondi stresses real estate development at the expense of academics, funding for students, faculty, and programs has suffered. Many departmental operating budgets have not increased for 13 years, the library is chronically underfunded, faculty salaries are at uncompetitive levels—and this despite healthy operating surpluses for the University. Our recent dramatic decline in national rankings will be reversed only by spending more on academics rather than real estate development and by returning decisions about academic programming to the faculty.
7. **Impacts on students:** In comparison with our peer institutions, we are extremely high in net cost to students and below average in funding for academics. Not surprisingly, students struggle to pay their bills, leading to low graduation rates. Recently discovered strategic plans indicate a push to stress on-line courses and large lectures over the small discussion classes that parents expect of an expensive Jesuit education. A repressive climate on campus, attacks on respected faculty leaders, and concerns about a drop in the value of a SLU degree have also had serious impacts on students.
8. **President's lack of full disclosure to the Board:** The President has maintained a wall between Trustees, faculty and students that has prevented communication about problems that have been developing for years. With respect to the University's finances, rankings, alumni giving, and other academic indicators, the presentation that the President sent to faculty and the Board on October 30 stresses data carefully selected to be favorable and ignores or minimizes information that

indicates serious problems. If typical, the presentation is an indication that the Board has not been kept appropriately informed.

- 9. *Unprofessional conduct by the President:*** In recent appearances before several faculty groups and representatives of the staff, the President has named prominent members of the faculty, calling them liars and suggesting that the Senate rejected Dr. Patankar and his proposals out of racial or religious bias.
- 10. *Improper centralization and a culture of secrecy:*** The administration has departed from best practices at top American universities by not disclosing the bylaws of the Board of Trustees. It has also attempted to centralize evaluation and rewards for faculty rather than entrusting such measures to chairs and deans who know their disciplines best. More generally, it has paid lip service to consultation while developing plans in secret, without the shared governance usual at major research institutions. A case in point is the recent cut in the acquisitions budget for the library.
- 11. *Inappropriate handling of building projects:*** Decisions to move the School of Public Health and, more recently, the Law School were undertaken without properly consulting the faculty. This and other precipitous actions contributed to the angry and public resignation last summer of the Dean of the Law School. Constant acquisition of property and construction of inessential projects such as the Hotel Ignacio are not appropriate when SLU's academic mission is not being appropriately funded.
- 12. *Faults in strategic planning:*** Although a recently discovered University Strategic Plan was never approved by the faculty, versions of it seem to have been approved by the Trustees and presented in secrecy to the University's accreditation body, the Higher Learning Commission. The plan contains in embryo the proposals of Dr. Patankar on faculty and departmental evaluation that have recently caused such controversy. It also lays out potentially harmful plans to change the nature of a SLU education to favor large lectures and on-line courses.
- 13. *Violations of required procedures and contracts:*** Dr. Patankar's proposals have often been developed without reference to the contractual agreements contained in the *Faculty Manual*. His many violations of required procedure also include establishment of doctoral programs that he favored without the necessary approval of the Board of Graduate Studies.
- 14. *Dysfunction in the Office of Academic Affairs:*** Emphasis on planning rather than administration, along with the imposition of burdensome reporting and approval processes centralized in the hands of the Vice President, have led to unprecedented delays in processing vital paperwork at the University. The important and pointlessly stalled new Latino Studies Program is a case in point.
- 15. *Conclusion on the University mission:*** In altering the relationship between the upper administration and the faculty and students from one of trust and support to one of disrespect, retribution, and suppression, the University has departed from the Jesuit tradition that is the source of much of its greatness and hope for the future.

## **SOURCES OF DATA**

Numerical data in this report came from the Department of Education's National Center for Education Data System, *U.S. News and World Report*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *The Saint Louis Business Journal*, and the Saint Louis University *Factbook*.

## REPORT

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The report below grew out of an attempt by faculty from various schools and colleges of Saint Louis University to understand the current state of an institution that we love. Many have collaborated in the effort, spending hundreds of hours researching, checking, and rechecking the facts in order to find answers to three **fundamental questions**:

- Why are our national **rankings** in *U.S. News and World Report* declining rapidly when, by all accounts, our students and our reputation have never been better and our faculty is at its highest level of productivity and national prominence in many years?
- Why does it cost a student more to attend SLU than it does to attend peer institutions, and why is our funding for academics lower, though new building projects never lack for funds?
- And why has the higher administration recently departed so radically from **administrative practices** accepted as norms at the virtually all top U.S. research universities?

Because President Biondi and Vice President Patankar keep university finances and the basis of many of their decisions secret, rarely consulting the faculty in meaningful ways, we cannot claim to have found all the answers to these questions.

What we have uncovered, however, is the nature and extent of **many of the serious problems** that face the University—problems that, in their aggregate, support the recent votes of no confidence in the President and Vice President.

The report that follows was produced by the Faculty Evidence Committee and the Faculty Communication Committee, which began as *ad hoc* committees of the Arts and Sciences Faculty Council but have since expanded to include members from a variety of schools and colleges of the University who have volunteered to contribute to the research or the writing of the document.

Those who provided information or analysis or worked more directly on the report number in the dozens. Many are long-time faculty members with highly successful academic careers. Since some are new and not protected by tenure, and others hold administrative posts in academic departments from which they might be dismissed, we have not put all their names to the report.

All those involved are deeply committed to the University. Over the last few years, all have worked patiently and hard, waiting for improvements in support for academics at SLU. All of us understand that leaders sometimes err. All, however, have been increasingly disappointed in the recent direction that the higher administration has been taking. In conducting our research, we have been surprised to find,, not simply occasional missteps by the President and Vice President but widespread and endemic patterns of misadministration.

In our view, current conditions require **decisive actions by the Board** of Trustees at its December 15 meeting. We do not presume to know what all those action should be, but if faculty are to gain trust in the Board, clear indications of serious engagement with the problems we face and determination to set them right through a change in our top leadership is essential. And it cannot wait long. For reasons spelled out below, careful deliberation about the crisis will need to be balanced with speed and decisiveness if the University is not to suffer serious harm in the months that lie ahead.

We hope that, based on the joint statement of initial actions by the executive committees of the Senate and the Trustees on November 30, the two groups can agree on concrete steps to address the university's difficulties, and that recommendations can be **brought to the full Senate** for consideration in the near future.

## 2. WHAT THE VOTES OF NO CONFIDENCE REVEAL

Overwhelming votes of no confidence such as those taken recently at SLU are extremely rare in U.S. higher education, and even rarer at Jesuit universities. By tradition, they are equivalent to calling for the **replacement of the administrators** involved. Following nearly unanimous votes of no confidence by the Faculty Council of Arts and Sciences, the Faculty Senate of the University voted on September 25 (by 50 to 3) to ask the President to replace VP Pantankar. On October 30 (by 51 to 4), the Senate called on the Board of Trustees to remove President Biondi.

These were **not the actions of a disaffected few**, nor were they confined to a single college. As the officially sanctioned representative body of the entire faculty, the Senate heard on the record from all the largest colleges and schools. The Madrid campus, which is not represented by the Senate, sent a letter of support.

**Not one senator reported strong support for the President or the Vice President.** Discussion focused on the prudence and timing of a vote calling for the President's removal, not on its substance. Though Fr. Biondi's past accomplishments in developing the campus and the Midtown area are widely acknowledged, the representative nature of the vote against his continued leadership is clear, and the need to seek new leadership pressing.

## 3. NEED FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION BY THE BOARD

A survey of academic chairs conducted in Arts and Sciences in November reveals immediate and alarming consequences of the President's refusal to remove Dr. Patankar and work with the faculty to resolve our current problems. Of the 25 chairs who responded, 21 reported **faculty seeking to leave** their departments, and 23 felt that hiring top new faculty at this time will be difficult or impossible.

In an earlier survey of the entire faculty of Arts and Sciences with a response rate of 79%, 42% said they would either leave the university or go on the job market. These numbers were higher for grant winners (51%) and for junior faculty (59%), groups that we can ill afford to lose. Reasons given by **professors who have already left** included the administration's undervaluing of faculty, inadequate salary and resources, promises of support that were never fulfilled, and archaic methods of research administration.

Since faculty commonly apply for jobs between September and May, the time from now till March is critical. Without **decisive action, the university can expect a steady exodus** from its ranks, and it will be difficult to replace departed faculty with candidates of the same caliber.

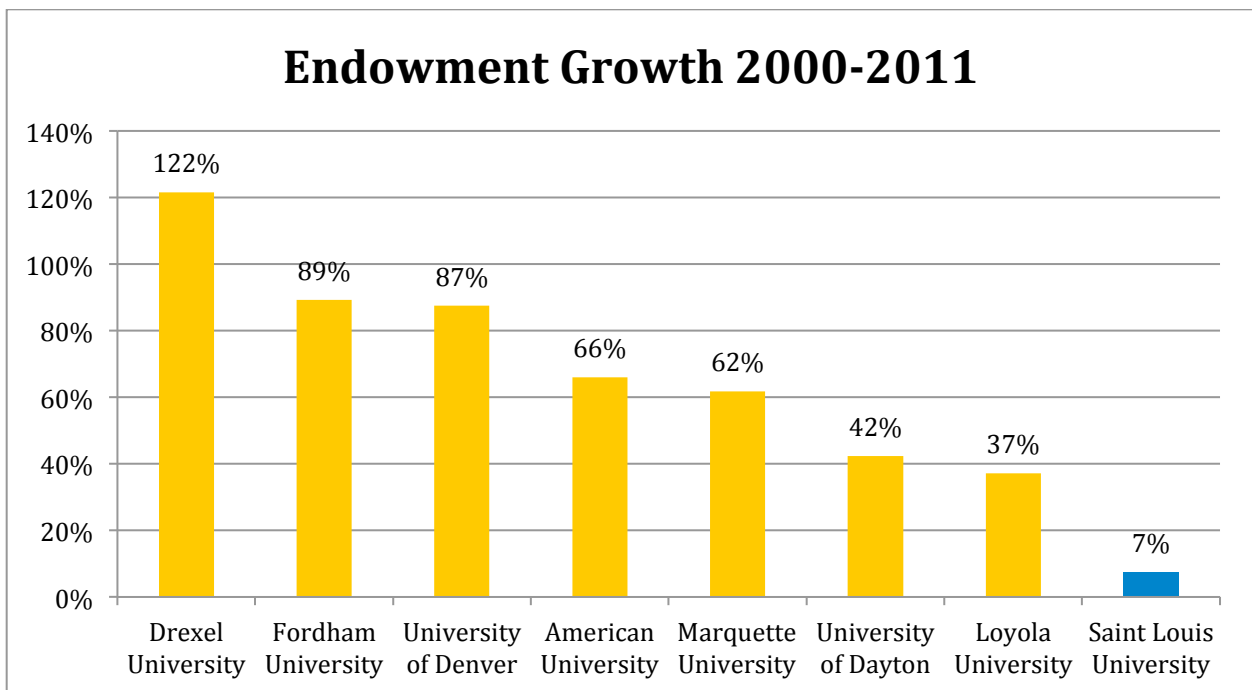
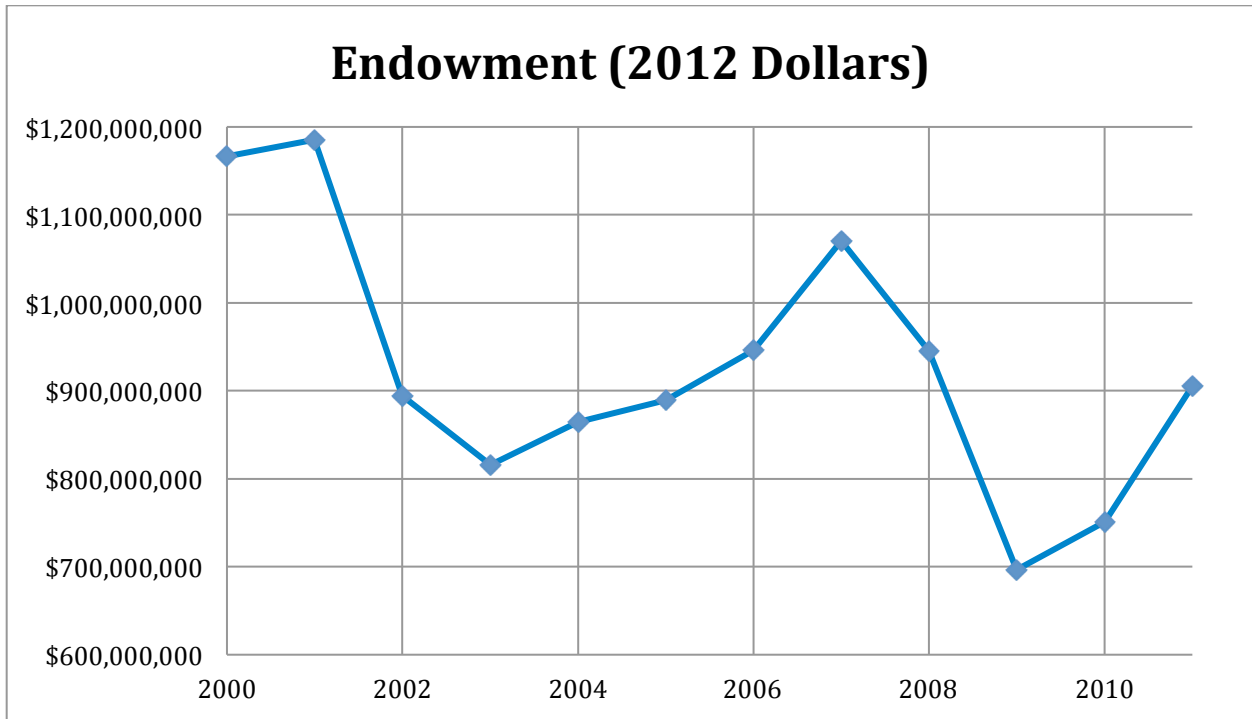
## 4. MISHANDLING OF UNIVERSITY FINANCES

The University's endowment, alumni giving, and grants peaked in 2007, a fact not surprising given the nation's subsequent plunge into recession. Of serious concern, however, is the fact that our peer institutions rebounded and have continued to climb in a way that SLU has not. Of the Jesuit Universities that we compare ourselves with, SLU is now consistently below average.

During the first part of the President's tenure, **the endowment** performed well. With the sale of the hospital and related ventures, there was a major cash infusion in the late 1990s. In 2012 dollars, however, the value of the endowment peaked in 1999. In the period since 2000, which is the focus of this report, it has declined an alarming 22% when adjusted for inflation. The last two years are the only ones since the peak when we have outperformed our peers.

**Grants and gifts** are another cause for concern. Although we did well in relation to our peers in the period 2000-5, we have fallen sharply since then while they have risen, leaving SLU in 2010 (the last year for which figures are available) below our peer average.

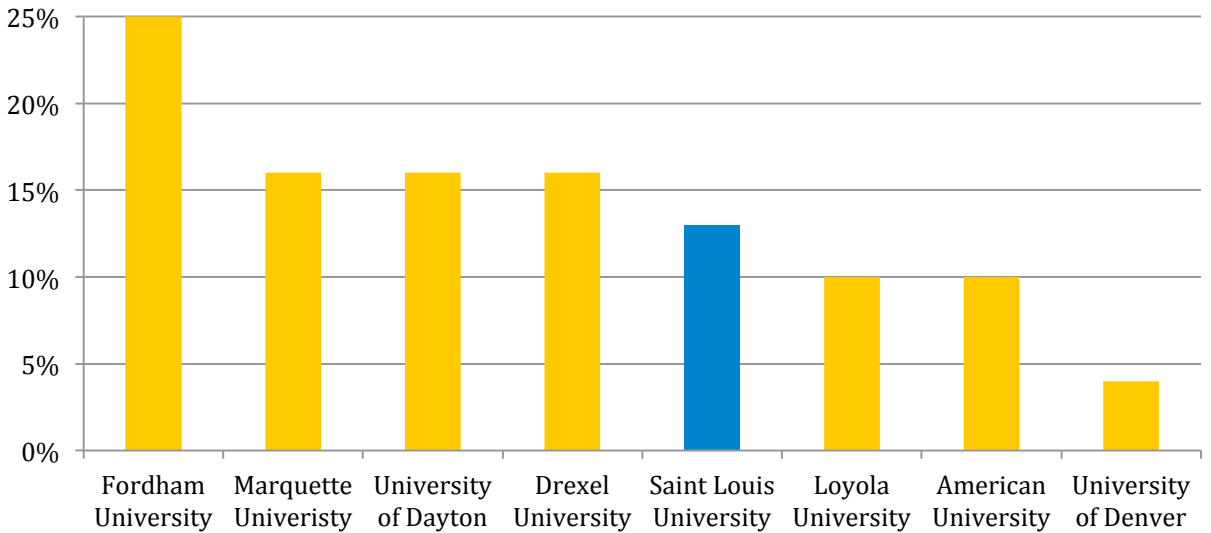
A worrisome instance of lost grant funding involves the **National Institute of Health**. Although the University has recently built a state-of-the art medical research building, we have lost more than 32% of our funding from the NIH since the facility opened because researchers have left SLU, taking their grants with them. During the same period, NIH funding at peer institutions has risen.



## Total Grants and Gifts

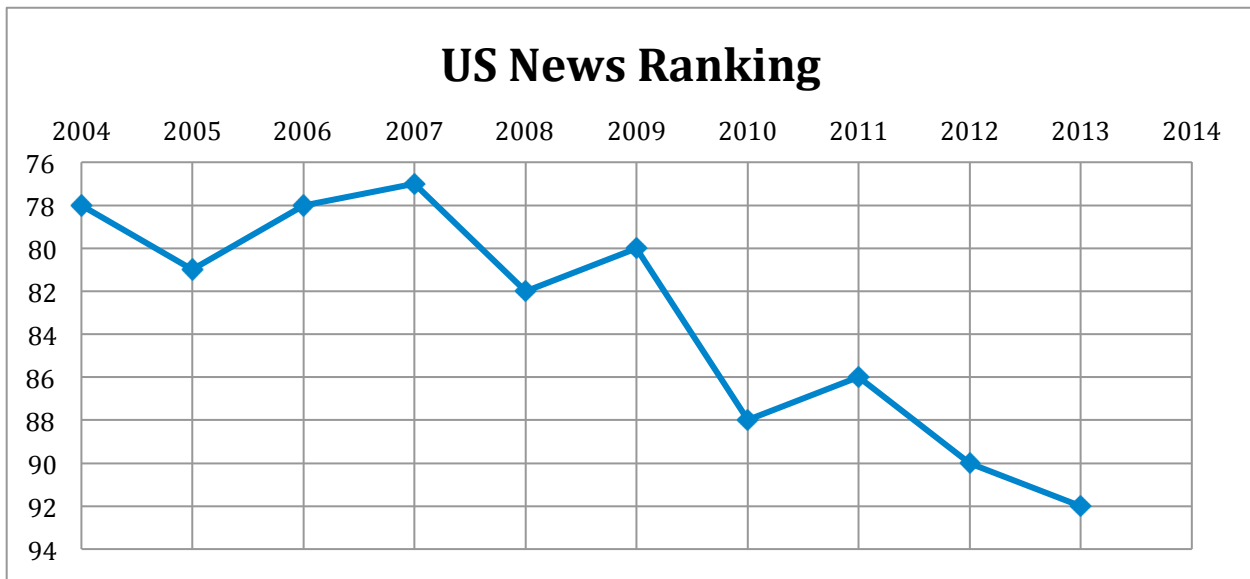


## Alumni Giving Rate (From 2013 US News Best Colleges)



## 5. THE UNIVERSITY'S PRECIPITOUS DROP IN NATIONAL RANKINGS

In consequence of declining funding for academic programs, SLU has fallen in rankings compared with peer universities. From 2004 to 2013 (the only years in which figures on the top 100 institutions are available), *U.S. News and World Report* has lowered our rank from 78 to 92. At a time when the administration is touting its goal to move into the top 50, SLU's place in the rankings has dropped faster and further than that of any other institution in the top 100. If the University does not change course and begin to focus on academics more and real-estate development less, we are not only unlikely to rise into the top 50, but we will be lucky to stay in the top 100.



## 6. FAILURE TO ADEQUATELY SUPPORT ACADEMICS

Although the administration claims that the solution to its problems with **national academic rankings** lies with its 900+ faculty, a more likely explanation—since the faculty has improved dramatically over the last two decades—is that the problem lies with the top leadership of the University.

The amount of money spent on academics for each student rose during the first part of the President's tenure. Since 2000, however, it has dropped nearly 6% in constant dollars. Academic spending per student is one of the major components in the college rankings of *U.S. News and World Report*, and it correlates closely with overall ranking. While our spending has been leveling off and dropping, our peers have concentrated on academics more than we have, allowing them to surpass us in the rankings.

Without access to the University's finances, we cannot provide a detailed analysis of the flow of funds to particular non-academic projects. What is clear, however, is that the Administration has been giving the **purchase and construction of facilities and buildings** priority in ways that are debilitating:

- Most academic departments are underfunded, with operating budgets at or below their 2000 levels. Since university enrollment has increased by approximately a third, departments have been forced to do more with less.

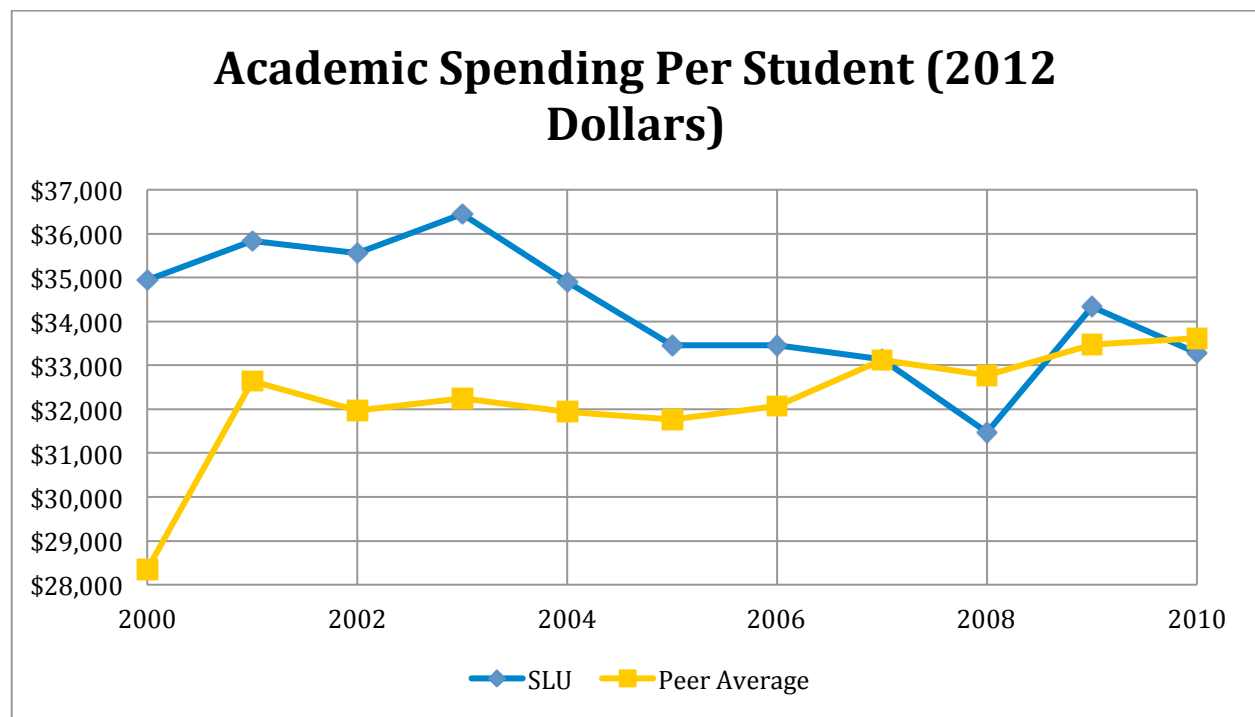


- **Tuition** has gone up steadily, though outlays per student at SLU have fallen 6% since 2000, while those among our peers have increased by an average of 19%.
- **Library acquisitions**, a major indicator of the academic quality of a university and its faculty, have for years lagged behind those at the best Jesuit universities. Over the past decade, library spending per student has plummeted from far above peer averages to well below them.
- **Faculty salaries**—currently frozen—rose just 1.7% in the preceding two years, while average salaries for top administrators shot up 15%. After adjustment for inflation, faculty salaries have fallen 8.6% since 2000, while those for faculty at our peer institutions have increased by 3.5%. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, after adjusting for cost of living SLU faculty salaries are in the bottom 25% of all U.S. universities.

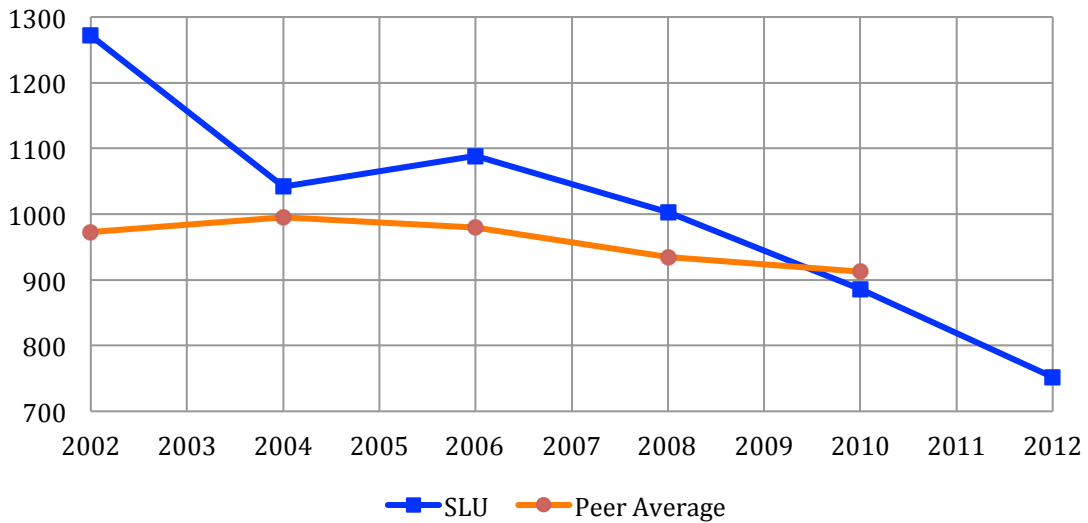
And it need not be so. According to the *Saint Louis Business Journal*, in the fiscal year just ended, when faculty and staff were called on to accept a **freeze in wages and salaries** for the coming year, SLU had a \$41.7 million **operating surplus**. The margin of that surplus since 2008 has ranged between 5.5% and 9%.

It is difficult to understand, then, why SLU is not spending on academics anything like what its official **peer institutions** do. We lead them in net cost to students; in fact, among universities of comparable size and kind, we rank 17<sup>th</sup> in the nation in that statistic. Yet our peers spend two to three times as much on academics per student as we do.

If the Administration were truly serious about **moving into the top 50**, it would change its funding priorities, focusing on students and faculty in key categories that determine the rankings in *U.S. News and World Report*. These include general financial resources, selectivity, and alumni giving, but also a number of academic indicators, including reputation, retention rates, graduation rates and performance, class size, student-teacher ratios, and faculty salaries. In all these, adequate academic funding is the issue, and in all of them, we rank low among our peers.



## Library Spending Per Student (2012 Dollars)



Average Faculty Salary (2010-11) Among 290 National Universities		
Rank	School	Salary
17	Washington University	\$115,292
25	Boston College	\$110,740
28	Notre Dame	\$108,060
31	Georgetown	\$107,601
48	Fordham University	\$103,253
71	American University	\$95,477
84	Drexel University	\$90,982
101	Loyola University-Chicago	\$88,520
124	Marquette University	\$84,605
147	University of Denver	\$81,011
<b>172</b>	<b>Saint Louis University</b>	<b>\$76,535</b>
182	University of Dayton	\$74,879

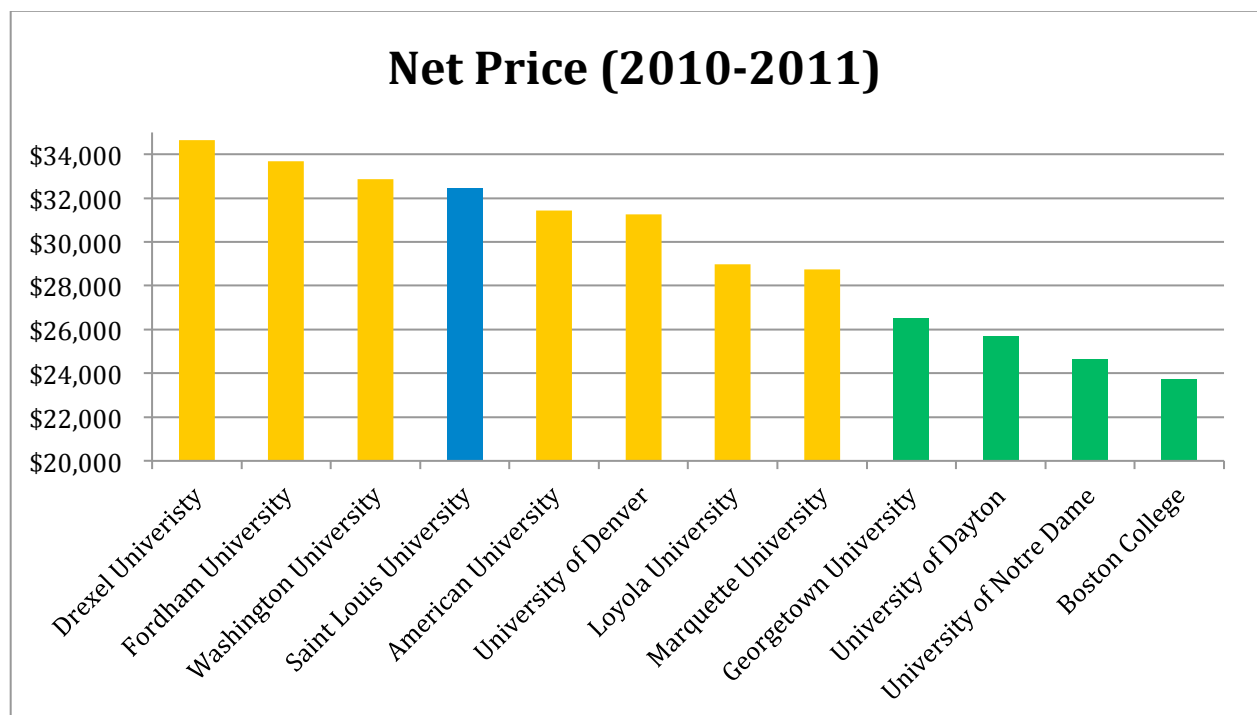
## 7. IMPACTS ON STUDENTS

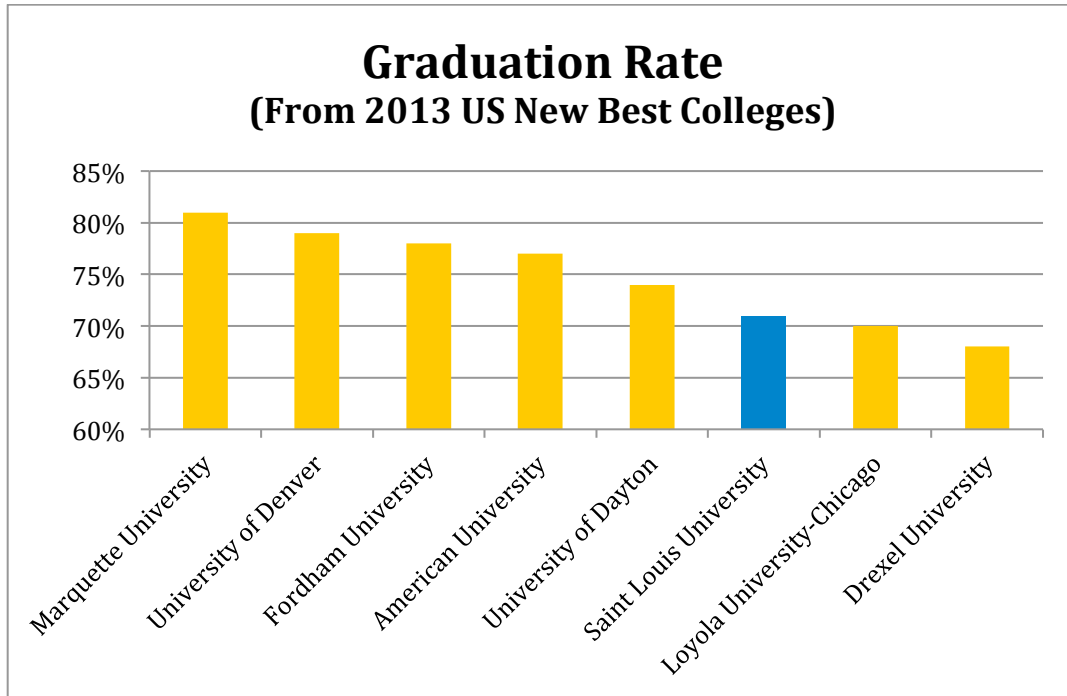
The **net price of attending** Saint Louis University is high in relation to that of most of our peers. Since our students could attend Washington University for about the same net price, and could enroll at Notre Dame, Boston College, or Georgetown for significantly less, it is not surprising that many leave the University, as reflected in our relatively low graduation rates.

Of even more concern is the upper administration's apparent intention to take measures that are likely to make the situation worse. In a **secret Strategic Plan for Academic Affairs** recently discovered by the faculty, the Academic Vice President sets out incentives that would reduce the number of small classes and privilege lecture courses over those taught by discussion. The plan also sets a goal of increasing on-line courses to 30% of all offerings. If national studies of retention are any indication, such tactics would make a SLU education less personal, more distant, and so less likely to retain students. The doubt that such changes would cast on the quality of the University would also diminish the value of a SLU degree.

The **repressive climate** that has been created is also affecting students. Firing department chairs and deans who have spoken out over the last three years has disrupted academic programs and set a bad example of the way a large organization such as a university should treat its middle-level administrators. Dismissing faculty criticism without giving it a fair hearing—as Dr. Patankar did recently in addressing the Student Government Association and as Fr. Biondi has done in his visits to various groups, academic departments, and schools—breeds distrust within the university community and places students in a cross-fire.

With remarkable perceptiveness, however, our students have gone their own way and formed their own views of the current situation. Their concerns, as set forth in the report accompanying the **Student Government Association's vote of no confidence** in Dr. Patankar and Fr. Biondi, should be taken into account in any appraisal of the present turmoil on campus and its probable long-term effects.





#### 8. PRESIDENT'S LACK OF FULL DISCLOSURE TO THE BOARD

By strictly **limiting access to the Trustees**, Fr. Biondi has arranged that they have virtually no opportunity to communicate with faculty or students. As a result, the body legally charged with overseeing the University has, until now, had no independent source of information about the serious problems that we are facing.

The presentation that the President sent to the Board on October 30 raises concerns about his candor in giving the Trustees a complete picture of the situation. With respect to the University's finances, rankings, and other vital data, the assessment that he gives is selective and misleading.

- Fr. Biondi notes with pride that SLU's endowment grew 24.3% between 2010 and 2011. Unlike our peer institutions, however, SLU's endowment has not recovered from the crash of 2008. Institutions such as Georgetown, Boston College, and Fordham have all made up the ground they lost. SLU has not.
- President Biondi claims that SLU has moved up in "eight different metrics" in the *U.S. News* rankings. The metrics he cites, however, are not the main ones by which *U.S. News* actually ranks universities. Moreover, the president misstates SLU's rank for "academic reputation." We are not 64<sup>th</sup> in the nation but 104<sup>th</sup>.
- The President points out correctly that 86% of SLU students are receiving financial aid. The more telling number, however, is that SLU meets only 64% of its students' overall need, a number that places us near the bottom of our peer and aspirational institutions.
- The increase in operating revenue from \$267 million in 1986 to \$704 million in 2012 is impressive, as is the expansion of the student body from 9,869 to 13,981 in the same period. When taken together and adjusted for inflation, however, these figures actually show an 11% decline in operating revenue per student for the period 1986-2012. In constant 2012 dollars, SLU spent \$57,099 per student in 1986 but only \$50,354 in 2012.

## 9. UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT BY THE PRESIDENT

In response to the recent actions of the Faculty Council and Senate, the President has not conducted himself in ways appropriate in a chief executive officer. As numerous witnesses can attest, during a series of recent visits to the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, the School of Nursing, the School for Professional Studies, and the Staff Advisory Committee, Fr. Biondi engaged in serious misconduct:

- Without explanation or substantiation, President Biondi **identified distinguished members of the faculty as liars**. These included, among others, the President of the Senate, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the Henle Endowed Chair of Philosophy, and the Chair of the Philosophy Department. Two of those under public attack are Catholic priests. At any university, ungrounded accusations of untruthfulness by a president are serious, since they attack the credibility essential to effective teaching, research, and university service. At our own university, the gravity of such misconduct is even greater, since SLU has as its Jesuit mission “the pursuit of truth to the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity.”
- In several forums, Fr. Biondi also **suggested that the Faculty Senate acted against Dr. Patankar out of racial or religious bias**, seeing him, in the President’s words, as “not one of us.” In making this slanderous charge against some sixty respected representatives of the faculty, the President offered no evidence.

## 10. IMPROPER CENTRALIZATION AND CULTURE OF SECRECY

Since the President has kept secret the **Bylaws of the Board of Trustees**, we do not know the obligations of the higher administration to the Trustees or the precise nature of the authority that the Trustees exercise over the administration. No copy of the Bylaws has been published since 1985.

Since, however, the votes of no confidence now call for collective action governed by those Bylaws, they are as material to the leadership of the Faculty Senate as to the Board. It is important to know, for example, whether the Bylaws allow the Board **right of removal** of the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Those of 1985 allow such action, but since then, there may have been amendments. It is vital that the Board of Trustees communicate the bylaws to the Faculty Senate before further actions are taken.

More generally, **centralization and secrecy** extending well beyond the usual practices of major research universities characterize the current higher administration at SLU. Dr. Patankar has a long history of ignoring faculty views, planning major changes to the University in secret, then presenting them suddenly, with little time to respond.

The most notable recent example is his ill-conceived **proposals on faculty evaluation and tenure**, which the deans, Faculty Senate representatives, and the other Vice Presidents forced him to withdraw at a meeting on September 14. It is notable, however, that he and the President were among a minority who continued to support them at the meeting, voting against the large majority that rejected them.

The initial release of the proposals in August caused a firestorm unlike anything seen at SLU in decades, not only because they abolished tenure but also because they established a single, unwise and **unworkable point system** for evaluating faculty across all schools of the University. The issue was not faculty evaluation, which has long been mandatory every year, or even removal of faculty for underperformance, which is allowed under the Faculty Manual. The issue was taking power to assess

faculty performance away from chairs and deans, who know their disciplines, and putting it in the hands of the Vice President and President, who don't.

Since no other major research university in the country operates in this way, **top faculty are less likely to come here**, and the best current faculty are more likely to leave. No doctor, lawyer, engineer, or other professional in outside practice would accept such second guessing from administrators who lack the expertise to evaluate the person's work.

**Shared governance** recognizes that faculty members—because of their disciplinary knowledge, grasp of professional standards, and direct involvement in teaching and research—are the people best suited to make decisions related to most academic functions of the institution. Traditionally, the administration in top American universities builds buildings, recruits and enrolls students, raises funds, and handles other support functions for the faculty. The Administration is not the master, but the servant.

Under Dr. Patankar, however, that relationship has been reversed. **The Faculty Manual** has largely been ignored. "Consultation" tends to mean collecting faculty views only to ignore or overrule them, often by promulgating policy changes shortly before they are to go into effect. "Faculty representation" increasingly means that a few professors sit on temporary decision-making bodies out of sight of the rest of the faculty. Communication between the faculty and the Board of Trustees is tightly restricted—to the point that, in the current crisis, few faculty even know who the Board members are or what responsibilities they have toward the University.

The President's abrasive style and frequent firing of members of the higher administration has made it difficult for deans to speak openly about academic problems. It has also led to constant **administrative turnover**, which makes planning and implementation of academic programs difficult. Since 2004, there have been 5 deans in Public Service, 5 in Parks College, 4 in the Law School, 4 in Public Health, 4 in Arts and Sciences, and 3 each in Philosophy and Letters and at the SLU campus in Madrid. Combined with disregard for shared governance, such turnover in academic deans has led to **centralization of academic decisions** in the hands of Dr. Patankar and the President, often with damaging results.

The recent **reduction of the Library budget by 10%** is a case in point. Students and faculty rely on the electronic and print resources of the library more than on any other single source of research, analysis, information, creative work, and reflection. Since great universities have great libraries, faculty recruitment is often affected by the resources available in Pius Library.

Yet in late June 2012, just as the new fiscal year was about to begin, Dr. Patankar announced debilitating cuts to the acquisitions budget of the library and a plan to incorporate the facility into a new **School of Informatics** with the intention of bringing in tuition from it. He did so without review or deliberation by the library staff or the faculty at large, and without offering any justification. Had there been consultation, librarians might have prepared plans to deal with ongoing subscriptions to print and online resources, and faculty might have warned him of the folly of taking a shared research resource and attempting to make it part of a profit-making unit.

## **11. INAPPROPRIATE HANDLING OF BUILDING PROJECTS**

As the highly public exchange of angry letters surrounding the resignation last summer of the Dean of the **Law School** revealed, Fr. Biondi's plan to move the school downtown was carried out without appropriate consultation with the dean or the faculty.

A similarly heavy-handed decision was made previously in moving the **School of Public Health** away from units that it had long collaborated with, including Business and Law. Though providing space for a growing university is challenging, to make precipitous moves without proper consultation and allowance

for the vital needs of affected programs is bad management. For an administration that says that it prizes collaboration across disciplinary lines, it is inexplicable.

## 12. FAULTS IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

The reason that the President proposed his now defunct Blue Ribbon Committee was, in part, to implement an ill-conceived **University Strategic Plan**. Although such a document was apparently approved by the Board in December 2011 and presented in March 2012 to the University's accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission, it was kept secret at that time in a locked room. Faculty and students have still not been allowed to see it in final form, though early drafts have been discovered and circulated.

The plan was never submitted to faculty for approval, though parts of it were discussed without disclosure that they were part of a final strategic plan. As discussed above, the plan shows lack of the most basic understanding of Jesuit education and the steps needed to rise in national stature. It also contains in embryonic form the evaluation systems used to close departments last year and the controversial faculty evaluation and tenure proposals hastily withdrawn by Dr. Patankar this fall.

## 13. VIOLATIONS OF REQUIRED PROCEDURES AND CONTRACTS

While Dr. Patankar was still an interim Provost in 2009-10, he gained approval from the Trustees for new **doctoral programs** that he favored, although they not been submitted to the Board of Graduate Studies, as required.

Throughout his tenure, the Vice President has repeatedly and seriously violated the **Faculty Manual**, a binding contract between the Administration and the faculty. He did this most seriously by undertaking planning without the sort of faculty consultation required. Notable examples are

- A secretly developed and quickly discredited strategic plan in 2009-10
- The evaluation standards used to close the Departments of Public Policy Studies and Counseling and Family Therapy in 2011-12
- The secret University Strategic plan of 2011-12
- The proposals on faculty evaluation that sparked the current crisis.

## 14. DYSFUNCTION IN THE OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

A practical result of recent over-centralization is that, under VP Patankar, **routine decision-making** has become slow and inefficient. Approvals to hire new faculty, send out annual personnel contracts, grant sabbaticals and leaves, approve foreign travel, and sign off on grant proposals are delayed far longer than under previous administrations.

A notable example is the new **Latino Studies Program**. Developed over the last two years to serve the growing Hispanic population of the U.S., which has a Catholic heritage and tends to hold Jesuit education in high regard, the initiative was approved last spring by all the necessary committees. More than half a year later, however, it has still not been attended to or signed by Dr. Patankar.

Newly imposed and **cumbersome on-line systems** to handle activity data on the faculty and staff, prepare their annual evaluations, and reimburse them for travel have contributed to delays and

frustration. Since the systems are complex, labor intensive, and slow, they provide centralized oversight at the expense of efficiency.

## 15. CONCLUSION ON THE UNIVERSITY MISSION

Before the President began to seek unprecedented control over academics at the University, and before Dr. Patankar joined the higher administration, SLU faculty were regarded as valued and trusted professionals in their fields, “**companions**” in the Jesuit mission to seek the truth, educate, and serve. For years, professors have put up with underfunding for academics and overemphasis on building projects because they love what the University stands for: personalized teaching and mentoring of students, care for the poor and marginalized, and concern for the good of society and the greater glory of God.

Since Father Biondi appointed Dr. Patankar as VPAA, the Vice President’s low regard for consultation, his unwise centralization of authority, and his establishment of impersonal management systems have changed all that. A now-iconic photograph of a student holding a sign during a recent protest suggests the **depth of the backlash**. It reads “Disrespected, disdained, and devalued NO MORE.”

Faculty prepare for an average of 7-8 years to receive a Ph.D., vie for positions in highly competitive national searches, and are on supervised probation for another 5 years before they receive tenure. They generally undergo the **rigors of long preparation** out of a love of learning and teaching.

To ask them to **do their work for points** in a numeric evaluation scheme of the sort favored by Dr. Patankar is to misunderstand the extent of their dedication and the depth of their commitment to the University’s mission. To treat companions in a great and exciting work as employees in need of burdensome monitoring mechanisms and crass incentives such as gift cards, as recently proposed, is to demean them and the entire institution.

Unthinkable as it may seem at a Jesuit university, 96% of the more than 260 faculty who answered surveys in the College of Arts and Sciences this fall reported a **climate of fear on campus**, and 82% expected retribution if they dared to speak out.

In such a climate, and with so many instances of serious misadministration weighing against Dr. Patankar and Fr. Biondi, it is difficult to see how they can continue in their positions longer than it takes to find interim leaders and begin an orderly transition. As a distinguished faculty member recently put it, **you can force a university into submission, but you cannot force it into greatness**. What is needed now is a fresh start, a renewal at the top, in which leaders work closely and creatively with faculty to expand knowledge, serve the needy, and educate the young in the finest tradition of Jesuit education



For the Faculty Evidence and Communications Committees,

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