

Colleagues,

In the past few weeks, the SLU community has participated in two University-wide Town Hall meetings to review the results from the 2018 University Feedback Survey. The results of the survey are sobering – but also not surprising. Since our last survey in 2016, SLU has had to move quickly to deal with significant financial challenges and this has had an enormous impact on our ways of working. We have lost colleagues, taken on more work, and been asked to do more with less. We all become frustrated when we put our hearts and souls into this great institution but feel that our efforts are not recognized, or not supported enough for us to make a real difference.

In our Strategic Plan, we committed ourselves to a “culture of excellence, effectiveness, and efficiency deeply rooted in our institutional mission and Catholic, Jesuit values.” The Feedback Survey and related discussions are reminders that, in the midst of carrying out our vision, we also need to listen, take stock, and adjust to ensure that we do indeed care for the whole person.

Additionally, there are some very practical things we are now doing that should make work life at SLU easier, and hopefully, send a signal to all that we recognize how hard things have been the past few years. We have new technologies being implemented this summer to make it easier to schedule classes, to advise students, and to submit grants. The University Core development process is underway and is proceeding within the shared governance structures of all the colleges. We have repeated the faculty compensation study and have committed to making this a high budgetary priority (I’ll be communicating more about this soon). And we are investing in a faculty mentoring program to enable our talented faculty to reach their full potential across their career cycles.

These are just small steps, though. As a community, we have committed ourselves to an ambitious vision for SLU’s future. To realize that vision, it is clear to me that we need to do a better job of listening to each other. In the months ahead, you will see me and the staff from the Provost’s Office much more. For my part, I will do a better job of sharing how I am seeking to carry out our vision, getting your input on what is and is not working, and seeking to understand how I can best help you carry out your commitments to SLU and those we serve.

Nancy