



Message from the President
March 1, 2010

Dear LMU Community,

At today's quarterly meeting of the Board of Trustees, I submitted my resignation as LMU's 14th president, effective at the end of this academic year. Our board has accepted my resignation, and a search will begin soon for my successor. Executive Vice President and Provost David W. Burcham will become interim president and will serve during the search for a new president. Dave has a long and distinguished history with LMU, first as a student, having received his J.D. from Loyola Law School, as a faculty member when he returned in 1991 and as an administrator when he was appointed the 15th dean of the law school in 2000. He took on the role of provost in 2008. Dave is well-prepared to lead LMU until a new president is selected.

Two (not three!) considerations have motivated my decision. One is my health. The recovery from my back operation has been slow and has affected my ability, because of my schedule, to do the physical activity and exercise advised and, more importantly, to do my job to the fullest. I plan to take a sabbatical and that should allow me time to do what is required to return to full health, or at least to as much health as my age allows!

The other consideration is deeper. It is what I might call "the rule of ten." Ten years in these kinds of jobs is usually enough and after that both the institution and the person benefit from change. At least that is true of me. I served as Dean of Georgetown College for ten years and had originally intended to serve in this job for ten as well. I am now in my eleventh. I subsequently thought that it made sense, given the extension of the campaign until October, 2011 and the centennial celebration in 2012, to continue until then. But our fundraising professionals are superb, and both Dave and, I am sure, my successor will be more than able to work with them to meet our ambitious goal of \$380 million.

Moreover, the dedication of the William H. Hannon Library affected me deeply. John Ruskin "proposed that we seek two things of our buildings. We want them to shelter us, and we want them to *speak* to us." The library said powerfully to me that my work at LMU was basically complete, that I had accomplished what I came here to do.

Now, finally, we get to what I most want to say (I guess I do have three points after all)! As Sebastian says to Antonio in "Twelfth Night," "I can no other answer make, but, thanks, and thanks, and ever thanks." Thank you all, faculty, staff, students and alumni, so much for making my LMU years so wonderful and fulfilling. To have worked and played with you in caring for this great university and the larger worlds it serves has been a grace indeed. My feelings these days are best expressed by Saint Exupéry:

Old friends cannot be created out of hand. Nothing can match the treasure of common memories, of trials endured together, of quarrels and reconciliations and generous emotions.

May God bless LMU now and for centuries to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Lawton S.J.".

Robert B. Lawton, S.J.