

November 1, 2012

To: Board of Trustees

From: Blake Exline, Student Government Association President

Last evening, the Student Government Association approved the following motion by a vote of 38 in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 abstention:

To express the opinion of the student body, as represented by their elected officials, that the students no longer have confidence in the leadership of Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Manoj Patankar, and in the President of Saint Louis University, Rev. Lawrence Biondi, S.J.

With this vote, the Associated Students of Saint Louis University unanimously call for the Board of Trustees to remove the President. Below, you will find the legislation in its entirety as well as a list of grievances providing context for a decision of this magnitude.

The seriousness of this vote is well understood by all members of the Association, and thus its constituents. I can assure you that this decision was not made hastily; rather, it is the result of a methodical process that included intense deliberation, serious conversation, and incredible thought and reflection. This action is not that of a few, but of the many—of the student body.

Student Government Association representatives will not be attending any meeting in which the President or Vice President of Academic Affairs are presiding, including the Blue Ribbon Committee and its working groups. The students do not have faith in their leadership or decision-making abilities.

The Associated Students of Saint Louis University in their duty as representatives of the student voice, are in full commitment to this vote, to its consequences, but importantly, to its goals. Respectfully, I expect the Board of Trustees to take action to restore the confidence of the student body.

Sincerely,

Blake Exline

Student Government Association President

40th General Assembly

Associated Students of Saint Louis University
Student Government Association
Senate Bill (SB) – 031-13
October 31, 2012

Intent and Purpose: To express the opinion of the student body, as represented by their elected officials, that the students no longer have confidence in the leadership of Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Manoj Patankar and in the President of Saint Louis University, Rev. Lawrence Biondi, S.J.

Whereas, the students recognize the Board of Trustees has a unique power to address the multitude of issues plaguing the academic and residential climates of the University and to restore a safe and comfortable environment for the SLU community by removing Rev. Lawrence Biondi, S.J. and Dr. Manoj Patankar,

Whereas, the students feel that Dr. Manoj Patankar is not fit to be the Vice President of Academic Affairs at this University due to the multitude of conflicts that have arisen from the development, content, and implementation of his policies (See List of Grievances),

Whereas, the current disrespect towards the students, faculty, and staff evidenced by Father Biondi, creation of an environment of fear, and proliferation of student concerns have been a recurrent theme throughout the past ten years of Fr. Biondi's time as President (See List of Grievances),

Whereas, Fr. Biondi's leadership over the past ten years has been detrimental to the faculty, students, staff and health of this University (See List of Grievances),

Whereas, "the Association shall act as the official and final student voice on all appropriate matters concerning the students and Saint Louis University community" (ASSLU SGA Constitution, Article II, Subsection A, Paragraph 1),

Whereas, "the Senate shall have the power to pass resolutions and bills which concern the welfare of the Saint Louis University community as a whole or as necessary to carry out the will of the Association" (ASSLU SGA Constitution, Article VI, Subsection A, Paragraph 1, Subparagraph C)

Therefore, let it be enacted that the ASSLU Student Government Association calls for the removal of Dr. Manoj Patankar and the appointment of a Vice President of Academic Affairs that will enact policies in keeping with the Faculty Manual and in the best interest of the student body and the University as a whole,

Therefore, let it be enacted that the ASSLU Student Government Association calls for the Board of Trustees to remove Fr. Lawrence Biondi S.J., from his position as the President of the University as soon as reasonably possible and to begin the immediate search for a new President who will better advance the University in accord with the best interests of the University and its Jesuit Mission.

Written and Submitted By:

Andrew McLaughlin, College of Arts and Sciences Senator

Co-sponsored By:

Ryan McKinley, College of Arts and Sciences Senator

Samantha Radcliffe, College of Education and Public Service Senator

Jimmy Meiners, Committee Representative

Kunjan Patel, Marchetti Towers Senator

Ann Knezetic, Marguerite and Pruellage Hall Senator

Becky Killian, DeMattias Hall Senator

Ellie Cash, College of Education and Public Service

Luke Sapa, Commuter Senator

Roya Massoudnia, Commuter Senator

David Gembara, Committee Representative

List of Grievances

Introduction: The purpose of this List of Grievances is to provide a non-comprehensive presentation of the concerns and complaints held by the student body in relation to the leadership of Rev. Lawrence Biondi, S.J. as the President of Saint Louis University and Dr. Manoj Patankar as the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Grievances concerning the leadership of Rev. Lawrence Biondi, S.J. and Dr. Manoj Patankar,

1. The students believe that poor compensation of faculty, a deficiency of resources for faculty, and a deliberate lack of effort toward consultation with the faculty resulting from the decisions of Fr. Biondi and Dr. Patankar, is ultimately detrimental to the welfare of the Saint Louis University community.
2. The students believe that the contractual principles and procedures listed in the Faculty Manual have not been adhered to by Fr. Biondi and Dr. Patankar, specifically with regard to collaboration as an essential component of shared governance.
3. Fr. Biondi has continually defended Dr. Patankar's qualifications, in spite of an overwhelming vote, 50 in favor, 3 against, and 4 abstentions, of no confidence against Dr. Patankar in Faculty Senate, which has shown a lack of respect for faculty and a failure of shared governance.

Grievances concerning the leadership of Dr. Manoj Patankar

1. The abrupt closing of the Department of Public Policy Studies and Department of Counseling & Family Therapy within the College of Education and Public Service, an idea that was not fairly discussed with faculty and students for their opinions until after the decision was made, represented a failure in shared governance.
2. The value of these programs was seen as low because of the lack of money they brought in rather than how they are an integral part of our Jesuit mission and the mission of Saint Louis University, which is to foster "programs that link University resources to local, national and international communities in collaborative efforts to alleviate ignorance, poverty, injustice and hunger; extend compassionate care to the ill and needy; and maintain and improve the quality of life for all persons."
3. The December 2011 draft of the Strategic Plan that would make University wide benchmarks which would evaluate every college in the same manner is very concerning to students because it would not bring about accurate results due to the stark differences between what is taught within each college.
4. The proposal of an Honors College within the December 2011 draft of the Strategic Plan after such as proposal was unanimously voted against by the Academic Deans at the beginning of Dr. Patankar's time as Vice President in 2009 shows a complete disregard for and disrespect of faculty opinion.
5. The proposals within the December 2011 draft of the Academic Strategic Plan that call for the development of metrics to evaluate deans and chairs, in addition to the already divisive call for a "progressive faculty evaluation system," which are further expounded upon through the hopeful Success Indicator of "100% of the schools/colleges hav[ing] a post-tenure review policy," are especially worrying to students.

6. The use, within the December 2011 draft of the Academic Strategic Plan, of yield rate, retention rate, graduation rate, and transfer population as Success Indicators to measure this University provides a “Distinctively Jesuit Undergraduate Core Experience,” rather than the use of service or social justice related measurements seems to represent a fundamental difference in interpretation of the ideals represented by the Jesuit Mission.
7. Students remain concerned on the issues arising from the closing of the Graduate School in 2009 that have failed to “enhance graduate education across the University” as it had touted, with the added concern that faculty and graduate students were once again talked to and subsequently ignored when the proposal at last came out.

Grievances concerning the leadership of Rev. Lawrence Biondi, S.J.

1. The University endowment has risen only 7.46%, or approximately \$60 million dollars, from 2001 to 2011 and shows a neglect by the upper administration regarding its investment and growth as it has dropped twenty-five places in the rankings of national endowments and its gains have been miniscule compared to those of our peer, competitor, and aspirational universities that have averaged 80.07% gains over the same time period.
2. The University libraries were shown to be significantly behind libraries at peer institutions in total library expenditures, prior to this year’s \$317,000 budget cut. This directly inhibits the University’s goal of being a top research facility.
3. Saint Louis University, despite its improvements, was still tied for 111th place nationally in its retention rate for 2012 by the U.S. News and World Report, demonstrating an inability to keep its students engaged and interested in attending the University relative to the other 110 schools ahead of it.
4. The net price (tuition minus financial aid) to attend Saint Louis University is significantly greater than that of peer and competitor institutions, we rank 17th most expensive out of 517 schools, without any tangible signs of improvement in that category over the last three years.
5. From 2008-2010, four of the University Vice President positions saw an average salary increase of 30.25% while the Faculty (full-time instructional staff) only experienced a 0.97% raise in overall compensation, leading students to ask where the administration’s priorities lie.
6. Tuition has risen approximately \$14,000 (67.2%) from 2002 to 2012, with a corresponding drop of 16 places in the U.S. News and World Report, resulting in concerns as to what exactly this extra money is being used towards over the years.
7. On average, only 64% of student financial aid needs are met at this University, and compared to peer and aspirational universities, among which the average is 87%. We are specifically far behind Boston College and Georgetown who average 100%, which shows a lack of focus on financial aid needs of students.
8. The leadership of the President has resulted in lower faculty and student morale as demonstrated by teach-ins, sit-ins, and other forms of protest.
9. The upper administration has publicly shown a deliberate lack of respect toward the faculty in the form of disregard of shared governance, hindering the University’s ability to attract strong candidates for open positions which have been the result of retiring faculty and faculty being lured away by other Universities.
10. In a recent survey created by the College of Arts and Sciences Faculty, 261 faculty members responded to a survey where more than 96 percent of faculty members said they felt there is a culture of fear at SLU, while 70 percent of faculty members said they felt pervasive fear in regard to Dr. Patankar’s policies and retention as Vice President of Academic Affairs despite an overwhelming vote of no confidence in him by Faculty Senate.
11. In the above mentioned survey, 73 percent of faculty were considering looking at other universities in response to Dr. Patankar’s retention as Vice President of Academic Affairs.

12. There have been many cases of students afraid to speak out against the upper University administration for fear of retribution. For example, when the Graduate Student Association met to decide if they would make a formal statement to the Student Government Association, the motion did not go through because they were afraid of reprisals from the upper University Administration for funding and for advocating graduate student rights.
13. The stifling of free speech has been used by Fr. Biondi in the past, such as the revoked charter of the *University News* in 2007 due to the newspaper's persistent disagreements with the upper administration's conduct (see 1999 SGA vote of no confidence), and continues to be a cause for great concern among students as to their rights at an academic institution that should sponsor such freedom.
14. The students feel that the stifling of free speech is a direct violation of the Jesuit mission and the mission of Saint Louis University, which is to create "an academic environment that values and promotes free, active and original intellectual inquiry among its faculty and students."