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The decision by the Saint Xavier University (SXU) Board of Trustees to withdraw recognition from the faculty affairs committee and transition to direct communication with all faculty while working collaboratively with the Faculty Senate is aligned with our goals of integral leadership, effective shared governance and institutional transformation. This decision provides a greater opportunity to focus our collective efforts on mission integration, educational quality, student success and financial sustainability. By renewing this time-honored governance structure on our campus, we are embracing a more democratic environment that allows us to consider the perspectives of all faculty members on a broader range of institutional issues. This approach works well for the vast majority of other Catholic universities. Available data shows that fewer than five percent of non-adjunct faculty at Catholic universities across the country are unionized.

The University worked in good faith for the better part of two years to reach an agreement with the faculty affairs committee. Negotiations proved ineffective, unproductive and uncivil, diverting critical institutional resources. Progress was stymied repeatedly, and the faculty affairs committee continued to go backward in its offers and raise new issues. These challenges were exemplified by the faculty affairs committee's last proposal that sought to undermine faculty tenure and retention protections of the University by compelling all faculty—including tenured faculty members—to pay the faculty affairs committee as a condition of keeping their academic positions with the University.

The Board's unanimous decision was made carefully and with full consideration of Catholic Social Teaching regarding worker justice. The Board considers this transition consistent with Catholic Social Teaching regarding the dignity of workers, rights of labor, fair and safe employment practices and compensation, as well as the right and responsibility to participate in decisions affecting worker well-being through the body of the Faculty Senate. It is important to note that nothing has changed in terms of faculty oversight of academic policies and programs, faculty hiring, tenure and promotion processes, shared governance or academic freedom—the hallmarks of the professoriate.

In 1971, Pope Paul VI published "Octogesima Adveniens: A Call to Action on the Eightieth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum." In this apostolic letter, Pope Paul VI recognized the wide diversity among regions, cultures and systems, which makes a uniform message on this issue very difficult. He said it is up to local communities to analyze with objectivity their own situation and draw principles of reflection, norms of judgement and directives of action from the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching, and that our decisions must come from careful reflection and analysis

of concrete situations. The SXU Board of Trustees has done the hard work of critically thinking through the complexities of the social justice issues brought before them and has addressed them in an informed way with the full complement of data that only they have access to given their fiduciary responsibility to preserve the mission of SXU in perpetuity.

In light of our commitment to the inalienable dignity of each human person, we, in agreement with Catholic Social Teaching, believe that workers have a right to compensation to provide for their basic needs of self and dependents, safe working conditions and a measure of job security and support. Saint Xavier has a long history—133 years prior to the 1979 inauguration of a collective bargaining unit—of attending to the basic principles of *Rerum Novarum*, and to the spirit of standards promulgated by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). SXU remains in ongoing contact with the Conference for Mercy Higher Education (CMHE), active in its membership with the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) and firm in its fidelity to its Catholic Mercy mission.

Further background and statement from the University:

Higher education has struggled with periods of instability and uncertainty that are exacerbated by additional hardships created by the pandemic. The effects of the current global crisis are multifaceted and complex, and they magnify the pressing challenges facing our institution as well as an ongoing divergence in the organization that is no longer tenable. It is imperative that SXU be able to move quickly and adapt to the external landscape and anticipated education trends in the coming years.

In recent years, Saint Xavier has made important progress in enhancing its educational offerings while protecting the financial health and long-term sustainability of our University. This work has been critical to enable us to continue providing an exceptional educational experience grounded in Mercy values that prepares students for meaningful lives and successful careers. We are now on more solid financial footing having recruited two of the largest first-year classes in our 174-year history; improved first-to-second year retention two consecutive years; extended accreditation with both the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB); increased our quasi-endowment; paid down our institutional debt by 40 percent while holding tuition virtually flat; and secured the largest individual gift in nearly 15 years, establishing the University's first endowed professorship. Still, the economic implications of this pandemic and ongoing challenges for higher education will be far-reaching and felt for years to come.

We know these times bring a great deal of uncertainty among colleges and universities, with many having to make the difficult decision to lay off or furlough faculty. We cannot know for certain what the coming months hold, but we are proud that SXU has been able to pay everyone – including all faculty – without interruption since our shift to remote operations in March. We are going to do everything we can to continue to protect, promote and competitively pay our faculty moving forward.

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Founded in 1846 by the Sisters of Mercy, [Saint Xavier University](#) is a private, Catholic, four-year, coeducational institution that provides a transformative educational experience to more than 3,500 undergraduate and graduate students who are prepared to become compassionate leaders in their field of study and their communities. As a mission-driven, student-centered institution, Saint Xavier educates for competence, character and career success, with program offerings through our [College of Arts and Sciences](#), [Graham School of Management](#) and [School of Nursing and Health Sciences](#). Recognizing Saint Xavier's excellence in education, [U.S. News & World Report](#) has ranked SXU consistently among the best colleges in the Midwest.