**This document is an non-editable copy of the motion and rationale submitted to the Clerk of the Faculty of Lafayette College on January 22, 2025.**

**To:** Voting Members of the Faculty

**Date:** January 22, 2025

Compelled by our dedication to Lafayette College and our obligation to protect institutional excellence, defend shared governance, and safeguard the power of the faculty and the centrality of the academic division, we, the undersigned members of the Lafayette Faculty, **bring to the faculty a motion of *No Confidence* in the leadership of President Nicole Farmer Hurd at the January 28, 2025 faculty meeting.**

In bringing this motion forward we are motivated by concerns regarding the steadily declining conditions at the College, the ongoing crisis of leadership, and threats to the role of the faculty and to shared governance.

The rationale for this motion is lengthy because it is evidence-based and its claims are supported with specific examples. We believe the faculty will, and should, expect nothing less than a full and factual accounting for such a motion. We have provided exactly that. We respectfully urge our faculty colleagues to read this motion and the rationale thoroughly and with great care.

Respectfully submitted (in alphabetical order),

Mary A. Armstrong, Charles A. Dana Professor of Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies and English
William Bissell, Professor of Anthropology
Robert Blunt, Associate Professor of Religious Studies
Alessandro Giovannelli, Professor of Philosophy
Caroline Lee, Professor of Sociology
Michael Nees, Professor of Psychology
Monica Salas Landa, Associate Professor of Anthropology
Angelika von Wahl, John L. '67 and Jean A. Hatfield Professor of International Affairs
Jeremy Zallen, Associate Professor of History
Eric Ziolkowski, Helen H. P. Manson Professor of Bible/Religious Studies

***Motion of No Confidence in the 18th President of Lafayette College Nicole Farmer Hurd***

***Whereas,*** President Nicole Farmer Hurd has harmed the institution of Lafayette College by destabilizing its operations, exercised ineffective leadership and poor administrative personnel management in the face of alarming staff attrition, and failed as the College's executive head to appropriately steward the academic division;

***Whereas,*** President Nicole Farmer Hurd has divided the College community, failed to communicate and work effectively with the faculty as a whole, practiced a defensive leadership style, and failed to lead the strategic planning process successfully;

***Whereas,*** President Nicole Farmer Hurd has failed to be transparent in dealings with the faculty, failed to "develop and build a shared vision for the institution" and lacks the "vision and acumen to elevate Lafayette even higher on the national and global stage";

***Whereas*****,** the Faculty of Lafayette College have shown patience in a context of deteriorating circumstances and have, to no avail, repeatedly and in good faith communicated concerns about critical shortcomings of leadership and operations to both the Administration and the Board of Trustees;

***And Whereas,*** President Nicole Farmer Hurd has failed in her presidential duty and violated the principles of shared governance in several ways, including 1) her October 31, 2024 letter to the Board of Trustees regarding the creation of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Financial Stewardship and Accountability, 2) her leadership of the Strategic Planning "Endorsement Process" and attempted disenfranchisement of the faculty and, in particular, 3) the December 7, 2024 "Strategic Plan Approval Update" co-authored with Board of Trustees Chair Robert E. Sell '84, in which she misrepresented the faculty's rejection of the proposed strategic plan "Becoming Lafayette" and forfeited the trust and confidence of the faculty,

***Be it resolved that*** the Faculty of Lafayette College hereby express a vote of no confidence in the leadership of President Nicole Farmer Hurd and call for immediate steps to be taken by the Board of Trustees of Lafayette College to address this leadership crisis, and

***Be it resolved that*** the Faculty of Lafayette College call for the support and assistance of staff, students, parents, alumni, trustees and trustees emeriti in demanding leadership befitting of this great institution, and

***Be it resolved that***, in the face of this crisis and despite ongoing attempts to diminish us and dismiss the centrality of our role in the College, the Faculty of Lafayette College will continue, as we always have, to provide steadfast service and leadership to this institution and deliver a world-class academic experience to the students of the College.

## *Rationale*

Lafayette faculty and staff have always been, and remain today, deeply committed to the mission of this institution. We are invested in the long-term health and advancement of the College and completely dedicated to the education of our students. The rationale below outlines the most salient and consequential failures of leadership of President Hurd, as well as her abrogation of duty and violations of agreed upon shared governance principles. Each of the motion's claims is supported with detailed, factual, and documented evidence. Such evidence not only justifies our loss of confidence in the President's leadership, it also explains how the past three and half years of the Hurd administration have generated a working environment that no longer allows us to fully thrive in our jobs as teacher-scholars and as staff members. We are discouraged to see the current drift away from our core mission and commitment to excellence.

Since becoming President of Lafayette College in July 2021, President Nicole Farmer Hurd has:

### ***I. Diminished the Institution and Destabilized its Operations***

#### ***Poor Administrative Personnel Management in the Face of Alarming Staff Attrition, Failure to Steward the Academic Division as Executive Head of the College***

President Hurd has led with a "disruptor" approach and has, despite a rhetoric of community-building and love, alienated and/or dismissed many talented and enthusiastic staff dedicated to this institution's advancement. As the new and top-ranked institutions of these now former colleagues attest (Haverford, Princeton, Union, and so on), the College has lost many highly-skilled leaders who are recognized talents in higher education.

Under the President's leadership, the entire senior administration of the institution has been hollowed out in three years. Losses far exceed norms for administrative transitions. They include every Vice President--Advancement (formerly Development), Communications and Marketing, Enrollment Management, Finance and Administration, Human Resources and General Counsel, Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, and Student Life (formerly Campus Life)--and the Provost, as well as many key leadership and staff positions: Dean of the Faculty, Dean of Libraries, Dean of Admissions, Director of the Dyer Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Director of the Center for the Integration of Teaching, Learning and Scholarship and Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning, Dean of Students (twice), Director of Institutional Equity and Title IX Coordinator, Director of Intercultural Development, Associate Director of Intercultural Development, and Assistant Director of Intercultural Development for Gender and Sexuality Programs. Losses have been significant in Advancement (including senior staff with significant donor relationships) and include the Associate Vice President for Development, Executive Director of Alumni Relations, and Associate Vice President of Alumni Engagement and Advancement, as well as numerous Major Gift Officers. The Communications team has been decimated (including the Director of Content Strategy and the Executive Director of Marketing), also taking considerable institutional knowledge with them.

The President has not effectively addressed the mass exodus driven by her administration, generating an administrative landscape that can be accurately described as chaotic. In this context, she has neither fostered a culture of leadership development nor provided evidence of ongoing succession planning. She has failed to ensure that critical leadership positions are filled in a timely manner, exposing the College to long periods of risk and uncertainty. Filling the General Counsel/Vice President for Human Resources role took 16 months from the retirement

announcement of GC Leslie Muhlfelder to the hiring of current GC Timothy Cedrone. It took the President 2.5 years to fulfill her initial (August 2021) commitment to a Vice President for Inclusion. After holding "interim" status for the duration of the Hurd presidency (3.5 years), Vice President for Marketing and Communications Pete Mackey (who during that time has also been CEO of his own business, Mackey Strategies) appears to have suddenly left the College. He has been replaced by a second Interim VP, Scott Morse. Mr. Mackey's departure ends a long-standing conflict of interest: since September 2023, Mr. Mackey has privately employed the College's Interim Vice President for Advancement, Kim Verstandig (she is an associate of Mackey Strategies). The search for a Vice President for Advancement is long overdue: in September 2023 the President stated: "[Verstandig] will serve over the next six to nine months, during which time a permanent search will be conducted" (Fa

culty Meeting Minutes 9-19-2023). At that time, the President also announced that the Mackey Strategies team will continue at Lafayette when their extended "interim" appointments come to an end; it is now unclear if Mr. Mackey will continue as an employee of the College: "Vice Presidents Mackey and Verstandig will both remain with the College beyond their interim appointments to help with the Bicentennial and the [capital] campaign" (Faculty Meeting Minutes 9-19-2023).

It is particularly alarming that although the departure of the Vice President for Information Technologies and Chief Information Officer (CIO) John O'Keefe was announced in September 2024, the President has still not identified an interim or announced the search timeline. This shows a disregard for the CIO's critical role in ensuring the institution's stability, functionality, and success. Technologies such as generative AI have been identified as one of the top issues facing higher education but the College currently lacks anyone with deep strategic knowledge to advise the senior leadership team and the faculty in this area.

In the context of these many losses across many leadership and management levels, the President's approach has diminished Lafayette's working environment while demonstrating an indifference to institutional memory and experience that continues to endanger core functions.

***Failure to Steward the Academic Division as Executive Head of the College***

The President has failed to steward and advance the academic division in a way that is fitting for the executive head of an elite liberal arts institution. For example, at no faculty meeting has the President addressed problems with faculty retention, despite heavy losses of faculty of color at the end of the 2022- 2023 academic year. In contrast, she has been overeager to advance the Athletics division, immediately elevating the Director of Athletics position to the highest senior leadership level (the President's "Leadership Team"), funneling resources and staff positions towards Athletics (including centering the Athletics Division in developing our new "third campus," Metzgar Fields), and tilting the College away from its core academic mission. The President has spent staff time and institutional resources on uncertain projects such as hosting the 2024 Vice-Presidential debate instead of consistently elevating the academic division by seeking out and spearheading opportunities at the level of executive institutional leadership. This failure can be seen in small but high-impact moments such as the annual Jones Lecture. Sponsored by the President's Office, these formerly signature moments for the academic division have either not happened at all (there was no Jones Lecture in 2022-2023) or have become last-minute, woefully under attended affairs. This failure is equally apparent in the context of a momentous occasion like the once-in-a-lifetime Bicentennial (see below).

## ***II. Divided the College and Failed to Work Effectively with the Faculty as a Whole***

### *Defensive Leader Who Does Not Communicate and Work Effectively with the Faculty as a Whole*

The Position Prospectus for the 18th President of Lafayette (see Appendix A) states that the President of Lafayette should "Demonstrate an inclusive and inspiring communication style with an ability to galvanize the community to move forward." President Hurd does not communicate with the faculty in an "inclusive and inspiring manner" and is often reluctant to communicate with the faculty at all.

Rather than being an "inclusive" communicator who shows open-mindedness and flexibility, President Hurd has defensively doubled-down at points of critique, often refusing to communicate with the faculty as a whole or to acknowledge and address serious issues when they arise. In some cases, this has taken the form of the administration's silence around public missteps. For example, when the College destroyed 46 trees without approval while building the $1.2 million escarpment/stairs project in Spring 2023, work was halted by the City of Easton and a settlement had to be reached. This was a moment of real public embarrassment, especially for an institution ostensibly committed to sustainability. President Hurd did not report the issue to the faculty or acknowledge culpability at the May 18 faculty meeting even though the College was notified of the issue by the City on May 15. Instead, faculty were forced to ask about the situation at the faculty meeting and were then told, without proof, that "many of those trees were diseased or dead" and "President Hurd added that sustainability is a priority as we think about campus" (Faculty Meeting Minutes 5-18-23).

In some cases, this failure to communicate has been specific to issues concerning the faculty directly. For instance, instead of engaging with the critiques and the offer of cooperative partnership outlined in the February 2023 "Points of Concern" letter (Appendix B) the President attended a meeting of the Academic Department Heads/Program Chairs (which is not part of the formal shared governance structure) but opted to remain totally silent on the serious issues raised when addressing the faculty as a whole. Much like the deforestation of the escarpment, the existence of the "Points of Concern" had to be brought up in a faculty meeting by a faculty member (there was no response from the President): "[A faculty member noted that] following a meeting of 23 department heads and program chairs, four DH/PCs sent an email on that group's behalf to all of their fellow DH/PCs, copied to the President, Provost, and four Dean designates, expressing a number of urgent concerns … There was no additional discussion of the report" (Faculty Meeting Minutes 4-25-23).

Despite repeatedly stating that she wishes to be held accountable by the faculty, President Hurd evades difficult issues--and also evades the opportunities for engagement with the faculty as a body that faculty meetings provide. She has not taken questions at a faculty meeting since December 2023, despite opportunities such as a quarter-hour's worth of unfilled meeting time in September 2024. This is a failure to be a "prominent, visible, and accessible leader within and across the campus community who is eager to engage directly with students and faculty members" (Presidential Position Prospectus). Although she is deep in her fourth year as President, she has failed to learn (or failed to accept) that faculty business is done openly and collectively and not behind closed doors. President Hurd continues to state that individual faculty members should come to her personally rather than bring motions collectively, and that individual faculty who have concerns should work with her one-on-one outside of shared governance processes: "[The President] asked rhetorically why the Faculty cannot have conversations about these topics [such as financial transparency] before the need to bring a

motion seeking change, saying that this is the fourth time during her presidency that this has happened without people having raised their concerns directly to her" (Faculty Meeting Minutes 10-22-24).

The President has refused to (or is unable to) work effectively with the faculty as a group and she will not (or is unable to) demonstrate the institutional leadership and personal capacity required to bridge-build to the faculty members who disagree with her decisions.

***Unsuccessful Leadership of the Strategic Planning Process***

The President has shown a divisive and institution-damaging failure of leadership in the strategic planning process. This is in direct contrast to the qualification outlined in the Presidential Position Prospectus which highlights that the president will "Demonstrate the ability to think strategically to develop and build support for a shared vision for the institution."

Faculty participants on the steering committee and working groups were appointed by the President, who then repeatedly touted the process' inclusivity by referring to the number of people she herself appointed.

In keeping with this administration's diminished interest in advancing the academic division, the President did not appoint the Provost, who is the chief academic officer of the College, to the Strategic Plan Steering Committee. The President did, however, appoint the Director of Athletics to the Steering Committee.

Only two out of 32 faculty appointed by the President were pre-tenure, creating an unacceptable gap in faculty representation. This issue is magnified by the President's commitment to structurally and substantively include pre-tenure faculty, a commitment that was not fulfilled: "President Hurd referenced a recent email that announced the formation of the Steering Committee and its membership, and the formation of a Junior Faculty Advisory Committee to provide untenured faculty members a direct voice in the process" (Faculty Meeting Minutes 3-28-23). Forming a "Junior Faculty Advisory Committee" is noted explicitly in the Charge to the Strategic Plan Steering Committee and remains part of that document as of January 20, 2025 (web page reads: "Posted March 2023; Updated to include Working Group Co Chairs January 2024," see Appendix C).

The President did not take seriously the concerns around institutionally supporting the technology infrastructure of the College and related issues of teaching and learning, despite these being among the most pressing issues currently facing US higher education. The President did not appoint the Chief Information Officer to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. This refusal to address technology issues (or, alternatively, disconcerting lack of awareness of the higher education landscape) spawned the "Digital Lafayette" letter in March of 2023, through which more than 80 faculty and staff petitioned the President to include these issues in strategic planning. It is unacceptable that faculty and staff had to spend time and energy advocating for such an obvious and important issue to be included in planning efforts, particularly since (as the Position Prospectus states) the President of Lafayette should "Understand the evolving nature of higher education in the 21st century."

The strategic planning process wasted financial resources and faculty/staff time with remote consultants who, according to many participants, gave unhelpful virtual presentations and then were not heard from again. Feedback was a "black box" approach: responses to "listening sessions" and online Qualtrics feedback disappeared with no system in place to communicate resulting effects or outcomes, setting up a system that accepted feedback without any obligation

to transparently respond to suggestions and criticism or report on adjustments (if any).

In February 2024, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee brought the Mission Statement and Values to the faculty. Usually used to guide a strategic planning process, the Mission Statement and Values were tacked on after strategic planning was underway and thematic subcommittees were already created. Faculty critique reflected many issues cited in this motion, i.e., the academic mission of the College being underemphasized by this administration and Athletics, in contrast, being overemphasized (to the point of describing Athletics as "co-curricular"), and that suggestions submitted via a Qualtrics survey entered a "black box" and were generally ignored. As Chair of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, the President withdrew the motion to approve the Mission Statement and Values because it was in peril and unlikely to pass. The Mission Statement had to be extensively revised and brought back to the faculty in March 2024.

In contrast to best practices at leading institutions of higher education, the President led a planning process that reversed the proper order of operations, placing the master plan ahead of the strategic plan. The strategic planning process never at any point synced with campus master planning. Master planning completed Phase I of its work before strategic planning even started: "President Hurd stated that the Strategic Plan Steering Committee had recently had its first meeting, and that it had received all the raw materials developed through Phase I of the process. … Second, for the Campus Master Plan, SmithGroup had released online a summary of its findings from its Phase I survey. SmithGroup will continue its work, and the results will feed into the Strategic Planning process" (Faculty Meeting Minutes 5-18-2023). The President has insisted that the faculty should accept this illogical approach and has relied on the concept of "iteration" to mask the shortcomings of the strategic planning process, particularly its out-of-sync relation to campus master planning. This misuse of the concept of "iteration" promises a continuation of the instability that characterized the planning process itself.

***III. Failed to be Direct and Transparent in Dealings with the Faculty***

***Deceived the Faculty To Secure an Athletic Donation***

When asked at the November 2022 faculty meeting about the odd sequence of master planning preceding strategic planning, the President concealed the reason for beginning the campus master planning process before the strategic planning process, namely, to secure donor satisfaction with the relocation of the Wallach Lacrosse building. She told the faculty the College "...needed to first build some muscles to be able to do [strategic planning] well. … Regarding the timing of the campus master planning relative to the strategic planning, President Hurd stated that the two processes will be iterative, but that she felt it was important to slow the pace of construction, based on feedback that she had received during her listening and-learning tour" (Faculty Meeting Minutes 11-29-22). The President revealed to the faculty in March 2023 that her reason was a deception: "Lastly, President Hurd addressed questions that she had received about the timing of the Campus Master Plan vs. the Strategic Planning process. She explained that results from the initial stage of the Campus Master Plan were needed in order to reconsider the location of the Wallach Sports Performance and Lacrosse Center, for which construction would have already proceeded. The College needed to proceed in a discrete [sic] and sensitive way in order to garner support from the donors to place that building out at Metzgar Fields Athletic Complex rather than at its originally agreed upon location adjacent to Kirby Sports Center" (Faculty Meeting Minutes 3-28-23). It is disturbing that President Hurd would intentionally deceive the faculty in this manner.

***Failure to "Develop and Build a Shared Vision for the Institution"***

As we enter the second half of President Hurd's fourth year at Lafayette, she has never reported to the faculty on her vision for the College.

As the rejection of the strategic plan by the faculty attests, the academic division is divided around what plans there actually are and what their value is. The prospectus for the 18th President of Lafayette states that the President will "develop and build support for a shared vision for the institution." President Hurd has not successfully done this.

Indeed, President Hurd has done the opposite. Projects are sometimes hinted at but goals and intended outcomes are not always revealed. One obvious example is the "Metzgar Campus," a now long-standing, top-down project that has been reverse-engineered into the new strategic plan—as if developing Metzgar Fields has not already long been underway. It is impossible to know if the President's faculty meeting remarks on the development of Metzgar are going to be (or are being) pursued: "[The President] suggested that [Metzgar Fields] might be used for a wellness hub or for a hotel and conference center, which could be revenue producing for the College" (Faculty Meeting Minutes 10-25-22). Another example: in the April 2024 Department Head/Program Chairs meeting Vice President Jeffries conveyed the President's decision that faculty (and students and staff) would receive "civil discourse" training before the end of the 2023-2024 academic year and noted there could possibly be a new Center for Civil Discourse at the College. This announcement was not followed-up on in any context, the training never took place, and faculty remain unsure if this rumored Center has been funded, will be forced upon us, and/or is intended to impact our curriculum. Many faculty have serious concerns about such centers, given that they have recently been mobilized elsewhere for explicit political reasons.

***Diminished Faculty Confidence in the Hurd Administration's Financial Transparency: The Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Financial Stewardship and Accountability***

The President has lost the faculty's confidence in her administration's financial transparency, forcing the faculty to take action to secure information on fiscal issues. The Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Financial Stewardship and Accountability, which was approved by the faculty in October 2024 by a 2:1 margin (92- 43) despite the President's protracted appeal against it, provides clear evidence of faculty's depleted trust in the President's fiscal transparency and accountability generally, and their waning belief in the sincerity of her commitment to the current institutional peer group and to appropriate faculty compensation, specifically. (See also "Abrogation of Presidential Duty and Violation of the Principles of Shared Governance I: President Hurd's Letter to the Board of Trustees Regarding the Creation of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Financial Stewardship and Accountability," below).

***Bicentennial Planning: A Process Missing the "vision and acumen to elevate Lafayette even higher on the national and global stage."***

Bicentennial planning is behind-time. Faculty participation in such an important moment for the College is far below what is normative for this institution and not befitting a yearlong recognition of the historical and academic excellence of the College. The Position Prospectus states the President should be "authentic, curious, compassionate, and ambitious in all aspects of leadership" and bring "imagination and vision to their leadership." Those characteristics are absent in the context of this significant moment. Bicentennial plans were scheduled to be released in Fall 2024; as of January 20, 2025 the Bicentennial website lists only three events: the Bicentennial kickoff, a 3/9 Founders Day celebration, and a concluding event. At this late stage, the inclusion of faculty is encapsulated by a single bullet point: there will be individual grants for

faculty to include the bicentennial "as part of their teaching and research." As executive head of the College, President Hurd has wasted years' worth of opportunities to deploy the enthusiasm, expertise and ideas of the Lafayette faculty around the Bicentennial and to bring the academic division together in genuine excitement and anticipation. The Bicentennial is now typically spoken of by faculty as a "fundraising opportunity."

## ***IV. Abrogated Her Presidential Duty and Gravely Violated the Principles of Shared Governance***

### *Abrogation of Presidential Duty and Violation of the Principles of Shared Governance I: President Hurd's Letter to the Board of Trustees Regarding the Creation of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Financial Stewardship and Accountability*

The President's October 31, 2024 email/letter (Appendix D) to the Board of Trustees announcing the creation of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Financial Stewardship and Accountability has broadly circulated among the College community. It provides evidence of her abrogation of her duty as President, per the Statutes of the College, which explicitly require that the President be "the official medium of communication between the Faculty and the Board" (*Statutes*, Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 60).

In the letter, sent the week after the faculty approved a motion to begin the process to form the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Financial Stewardship and Accountability, the President does not communicate to the Board *on behalf of* the faculty but *against* the faculty majority. She undermines a faculty committee before it has even been constituted. She attempts to delegitimize its work before it has begun, intentionally prejudicing the Board against potential outcomes, including a possible financial analysis by Howard Bunsis, Professor of Accounting at Eastern Michigan University, whose name is mentioned in the faculty motion's rationale. President Hurd selectively presents arguments from the *minority* faculty group and includes an outside link so as to more powerfully discredit Professor Bunsis and undermine the perspective of the *majority* of the faculty and the work of the committee: "[Howard Bunsis'] analyses lack rigor and present the same findings regardless of the institution. This concern was pointed out by several faculty members during extensive discussion at the meeting (a good example of concerns related to Dr. Bunsis' work is available here)" (Email/Letter from President Hurd to Board of Trustees 10-31-24).

The President also misrepresents faculty motives for the Ad Hoc Committee, reducing the motion to discontent with compensation and omitting explicit faculty concerns regarding the provisioning of the academic division, fiscal non-transparency at the College, and issues associated with her lack of leadership: "It is believed that the impetus for this motion (it was the focus of the discussion in the meeting) and its passage is a long-standing frustration among the faculty regarding their salaries" (Email/Letter from President Hurd to Board of Trustees 10-31-24).

When she misrepresents the rationale for the Ad Hoc motion, the President also distances herself from the established peer group against which Lafayette has long benchmarked faculty salaries, a stance that conflicts with her repeated assurances (in several faculty meetings) that she will work to return faculty salaries to the median of that very peer group: "In particular, the faculty note a goal stated that faculty salaries would be equivalent to those at the median of a defined peer group. This peer group, established in 2009, includes the top 25 liberal arts colleges in the nation, several with financial resources well beyond those of Lafayette" (Email/Letter from President Hurd to Board of Trustees 10-31-24).

***Abrogation of Presidential Duty and Violation of the Principles of Shared Governance II: The Strategic Planning "Endorsement Process"***

The strategic plan endorsement process, which was led by the President as Chair of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, violated shared governance principles and processes. The *Faculty Handbook* states that under shared governance "the views of each constituency are carefully considered in a manner that is transparent, democratic, and respectful" (1.1.1). The strategic plan endorsement process violated the principles of shared governance by attempting to replace normative faculty participation (i.e., open debate and a formal vote) with an online Qualtrics "community survey." A Qualtrics survey is *neither transparent nor democratic*—and attempting to replace open debate and a faculty vote with a survey process is *decidedly disrespectful*. Replacing a key faculty debate and vote with a non-transparent survey additionally represents a dangerous and unacceptable precedent whereby the Lafayette faculty could be disenfranchised at any time in the name of "inclusivity" and at the will of any administration.

As a result of this violation of the principles of shared governance, faculty were forced to re-enfranchise themselves by calling a non-regular faculty meeting (November 14, 2024) to discuss the strategic plan and then put forth a motion requiring the Advocacy and Coordination Committee to bring the draft strategic plan to the faculty at the December 3, 2024 faculty meeting for a debate and vote. That motion, the "vote on a vote," passed 102-18 with 10 abstentions (See Appendix E).

The strategic planning endorsement process and the attempt to replace a faculty vote with a Qualtrics survey additionally demonstrates a new approach taken by President Hurd. In this approach, Lafayette faculty are rendered equivalent to groups such as the Student Government, staff, and alumni groups. The reduction of the faculty to one of several equal constituencies, as opposed to the entity that oversees the curriculum of the College and without which the College literally cannot exist, diminishes the faculty and is unacceptable (see below).

***Abrogation of Presidential Duty and Violation of the Principles of Shared Governance III: The Strategic Plan Approval Statement from President Hurd and Board Chair Sell***

On December 3, 2024, after a lengthy, thoughtful, and forthright debate at the faculty meeting, the Lafayette faculty rejected the proposed strategic plan "Becoming Lafayette" by a vote of 66-73 with 12 abstentions.

Immediately after the result of the vote was announced, the President adjourned the meeting without offering a single comment and offered no suggestions as to possible steps for moving forward. The next the Faculty heard from the President was on December 7, 2024. On that date, President Hurd and Board Chair Sell released a joint statement announcing the Board's unanimous approval of "Becoming Lafayette" (Appendix F).

This statement marks a low point in terms of the President of Lafayette College failing in her duty to the faculty, failing to recognize and defend the role of the faculty, and violating the principles of shared governance.

The Hurd/Sell statement is manipulative and not honest. It misrepresents the faculty's formal rejection of the strategic plan, disingenuously describing the final tally as a "split vote" and entirely omitting the critical fact that *the strategic plan was rejected by the faculty*. The statement's rendering of the faculty vote is deceptive and unscrupulous, and it is an embarrassment to the College.

The Hurd/Sell statement works hard to diminish the Lafayette faculty and portray the faculty as

just another constituency. Much like the President's approach to the strategic planning endorsement process (see above), the statement equates the "no" vote of the faculty (which it intentionally obscures) with the votes of other entities, including regional alumni councils. The statement diminishes the faculty of Lafayette College and minimizes the uniquely central role the faculty play. It is the faculty who decide who receives a degree from Lafayette College and, without us and our expertise, there *can be* no Lafayette College. The statement from President Hurd and Board Chair Sell is an attempt to fundamentally weaken the role of the faculty in the shared governance process.

This diminishment of the faculty is unacceptable. We adjure our colleagues to consider the following excerpt from former Clerk of the Faculty and now Smith Professor Emeritus of English James Woolley's highly regarded essay "The Power of the Faculty," which can be found in its entirety on the current Clerk of the Faculty's web page:

*The Faculty's essential connection to that core mission explains why* ***the Faculty ought not to be merely a "constituency" or "stakeholder" within the College, another of many groups clamoring for attention (alumni, parents, students, prospective students, neighbors, support staff, administrators)****. In comparison with most members of those groups, the average member of the Faculty is more intimately and often more durably engaged with the institution, and especially with its educational mission. As experienced educators and as highly experienced learners themselves,* ***faculty members have a special vantage point from which to make important judgments and to give important advice about how the College's educational mission is best carried out. This kind of influence is the power that the Faculty should most cherish*** *(p.3, emphasis ours).*

Amplifying its violations of shared governance principles, the Hurd/Sell statement repeatedly quotes from the *Faculty Handbook* section on shared governance (FH 1.1.1), repetitively extolling shared governance and its principles even as it purposefully undermines them. This is both offensive and unethical. Faculty have variously described the hypocrisy of the Hurd/Sell statement as "making a mockery" of our values, a "master class in gaslighting," and simply "Orwellian." As one of two signatories to this statement, President Hurd, who is required by the Statutes of the College to represent the faculty to the Board, undermines the faculty.

With this statement, the President forfeits what remains of our trust in her as the leader of this institution.

In this statement, President Hurd not only betrays her duty to the faculty and shared governance—a fact that is more than sufficient to justify the faculty's loss of confidence—she does so at an institutional moment of enormous importance. The strategic plan will guide decisions for many years to come, and the President of Lafayette has publicly stated that, in effect, it can and should go forward without the faculty.

***Conclusion: Defending the Power of the Faculty, the Future of Shared Governance, and Excellence at Lafayette***

The responsibilities of the President of Lafayette College are many. As the Position Prospectus shows, the job of the President goes far beyond raising money. Despite the erroneous belief held by some, the President's job is not only to fundraise (or, as the Presidential Prospectus puts it, "attract new resources to the College"). The President must also build and manage collaborative and effective teams, elevate the College as an academic institution, successfully communicate a clear, shared vision in an inspired way, and (to again quote the Prospectus) "possess a respect for, and commitment to, shared governance" while having "the ability to inspire confidence in the community they lead." President Hurd does not meet these standards.

Even in the face of so much undeniable evidence, we anticipate that arguments against this motion may avoid the facts and conjecture that passing a no confidence motion will “hurt the College.” We strongly disagree. In fact, we have assembled this evidence and these examples, and painstakingly pointed out ongoing patterns of failed leadership, in order to *protect* the College. We bring this motion to preserve our tradition of academic excellence for students, to secure the role of the faculty today and the role of the faculty tomorrow, and to defend our agreed-upon, fundamental values of shared governance.

These are extraordinarily difficult times for US institutions of higher education and a growing body of literature advocates the urgent need for colleges and universities to successfully face new, existential challenges and for "leaders who can harness the strengths of the institution and its governing constituencies” (King and Mitchell, *Leadership Matters: Confronting the Hard Choices Facing Higher Education*, Johns Hopkins UP, 2022). We bring this motion because we believe that Lafayette College is badly in need of such a leader.

After almost four years of the Hurd administration, we respectfully ask our faculty colleagues: after reviewing the examples to the contrary we have provided, do you have confidence that President Hurd has and will honestly communicate for the faculty to the Board? Do you have confidence that when in “her judgment immediate action is required in the area of Faculty responsibility, [she] may decide any question which may arise and [her] decision shall be regarded as the decision of the Faculty” (*Statutes*, Chapter 2, Article 1 Section 63)? That she has developed and communicated a shared vision, securing broad support for a clear and honest agenda? That she has been transparent in her dealings with the faculty? That she has been an inspired communicator? That she has led critical administrative processes effectively? That she has handled conflict and disagreement without defensiveness and self-absorption? That she has positively “galvanize[d] the community” and brought us together as a faculty, as a community, and as an institution? Do you have confidence that more years of the Hurd administration will be the best thing for Lafayette College? We believe the evidence shows plainly that the answer to these questions is no.

Halfway through the fourth year of the presidency of Nicole Farmer Hurd, it can be said with candor that the Lafayette faculty have been remarkably patient. Now, based upon the severity, seriousness, and clear patterns of wrong actions and leadership failures described above, as well as our obligation to protect the role of the faculty and shared governance, the Lafayette faculty should strongly support a motion of no confidence.

## APPENDIX A

## PRESIDENT PROSPECTUS 2020

### Lafayette Search for the 18th President

### DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Lafayette College seeks a President who embodies an innovative spirit and imagination, demonstrates broad intellectual curiosity, possesses significant administrative experience with a facility for change and management systems thinking, and can attract new resources to the College. The next President will prioritize diversity and inclusion as a key tenet of leadership and possess a respect for, and commitment to, shared governance. Ideally, the next President will also:

• Exhibit a passion for the power of a liberal arts education and the vision and acumen to elevate Lafayette even higher on the national and global stage.

• Demonstrate the ability to think strategically to develop and build support for a shared vision for the institution.

• Possess financial acumen and a track record in effectively managing significant budgets.

• Show an aptitude for managing and developing a collaborative, high performance team.

• Bring a proven track record in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

• Strive to be a prominent, visible, and accessible leader within and across the campus community who is eager to engage directly with students and faculty members.

• Demonstrate an inclusive and inspiring communication style with an ability to galvanize the community to move forward.

• Bring an intuitive commitment to community involvement and civic engagement.

• Understand the evolving nature of higher education in the 21st century.

• Be able to balance current needs with the long-term sustainability of an institution.

• Bring imagination and vision to their leadership.

• Be a person of action with the ability to inspire confidence in the community they lead.

• Be authentic, curious, compassionate, and ambitious in all aspects of leadership.

**APPENDIX B**

**"Points of Concern" Letter**

**Academic Department Heads/Program Chairs**

**March 2, 2023**

Dear Fellow Department Heads and Program Chairs,

We write regarding the unofficial meeting for interested DH/PCs that took place February 28 (per our February 24 invitation to all DH/PCs), in lieu of the officially scheduled DH/PC meeting canceled by the Provost's office. The purpose of our meeting—which was neither secret nor a boycott of strategic planning events—was to collectively "unpack our thoughts about the current state of the College and see if we can provide guidance to help move everyone towards a more productive path."

Twenty-three members of the DH/PC group, representing all four divisions of the College, met from 4:10- 6:30 pm. Our discussion was robust and productive. At the conclusion of the meeting, we developed summary points that we collectively agreed reflect the thematic gist of our conversation and concerns. We share those points below. They are not confidential, and we are copying this message to the President, the Provost, and the four Dean-designates.

Representing the consensus of that group, we ask that Department Heads share these summary points during upcoming department meetings (this Tuesday, March 7) and that Program Chairs make their Advisory Committees aware of them via email (since interdisciplinary programs will not meet again until March 21). We also request that the Provost place these points at the head of the agenda at the next scheduled DH/PC meeting (Tuesday, April 4) and devote our time together to deep discussion of them.

We are cognizant that a substantial number of DH/PC colleagues have empowered us to correctly convey their nuanced insights and serious concerns, and we have made every effort to present the conversation with accuracy. We hope that you will help us continue the conversations needed to move the College forward.

Sincerely,

Mary Armstrong

Rebekah Pite

Daniel Sabatino

Eric Ziolkowski

February 23, 2023 Meeting Regarding the State of the College/Points of

Concern

The 23 Department Head/Program Chair attendees of the Tuesday, February 28, 2023 meeting regarding the state of the College concur on the following points:

- Trust and Institutional Culture are broken: the hollowing out of administrative and professional staff, and the dismissal and erasure of colleagues, institutional experience, and real community, have created a culture of fear and distrust and are harming the College.

- "Process" is running backwards: master planning precedes strategic planning, Dean positions are created and filled before Dean positions are defined, input is requested only after key decisions are made—a disingenuous narrative of "collaboration" and a lack of transparency are wearing away faculty trust and sapping faculty energy.

- Top-down approaches and bureaucracy: administrative concerns remain foremost and faculty concerns are not at the table; rationales for initiatives such as the new Dean structure, for example, are moved forward based almost solely on administrative, bureaucratic needs.

- Shared Governance and its values are imperiled: Beyond a top-down approach to change there is often little regard for parts of the process that the faculty should "own." The recent resignation-in protest of the former Chair of the Governance Committee, MacCracken Professor of History Deborah Rosen, confirms a crisis of shared governance that remains unaddressed by the administration but in fact cannot be ignored.

It is time to pause: continued, frantic action in a context of deep dysfunction would only do the College more harm. The faculty are marginalized and exhausted, large departments are overwhelmed, smaller programs are running on fumes, and important academic commitments and initiatives need support. Administrative discourse often appears devoid of substance, lacks respect for previous efforts, (e.g., "Becoming Lafayette"), and is frequently at odds with what is actually unfolding at the College. Effective leadership is clearly needed but not always present. Some initiatives (such as the new academic dean structure) should be paused until the root causes of the issues summarized here have been addressed and resolved through meaningful collaboration between the faculty, staff, and administration.

APPENDIX C

Site Menu

# Charge to the Strategic Plan Steering Committee

Page Menu

*Posted March 2023; Updated to include Working Group Co-Chairs January 2024*

## Steering Committee Members:

Nicole Hurd, President

Michael Butler, Biology

Tim Cox, Advising and Co-Curricular Programs

Tanuja Majumdar Dehne, Member, Board of Trustees

Nicole Eramo, Chief of Staff to the President

Jaison Freeman, Student Life

Sherryta Freeman, Director of Athletics

Melissa Garrison, Director of the Counseling Center

Dru Germanoski, Geology and Environmental Geosciences



Brett Hendrickson, Religious Studies

Mary Jo Lodge, Theater

Ana Ramirez Luhrs, Librarian

Chelsea Morrese, Director of the Landis Center for Community Engagement

Sarah Moschenross, Vice President for Student Life

Jenn Rossmann, Mechanical Engineering

Joe Woo, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering

Ex-Officio: Scott Morse, Assistant VP for Communications & Marketing

Simon T. Tonev, Director of Institutional Research

Charge: In March of 2026, Lafayette College will celebrate the 200th anniversary of its founding by the citizens of Easton, Pennsylvania. Inspired by the return of the famed revolutionary war general to America in 1824, the College was founded to create educated citizens who could lead this still-young nation to a bright future. Much has changed in America and in higher education since those early days, but the College remains a stalwart force that continues to educate young people to serve and lead in organizations and communities of every kind, in the US, and across the world. While the core mission of educating our citizenry has not changed, the commitment, ingenuity, and the immense intellect of our faculty, staff, and students have ensured that our methods for reaching that goal have remained vibrant and innovative.

It has been almost 15 years since the College embarked on a full strategic planning process that engaged the entire community in deep dialogue and thorough contemplation of this vital institution's mission, values, and priorities. The rapid pace of change in our society, and in the landscape of undergraduate higher education, calls Lafayette to accept the challenge now of renewing close

consideration of our future and harnessing the collective power and

 creativity of our dedicated community of faculty, staff, students, alumni, parents, neighbors, friends, and other stakeholders. As I stated when this process began: “Building a strategic plan that will guide College decision making for the years ahead presents all of us with a critical opportunity to chart our future together.”

The strategic planning process’s name, *Becoming Lafayette*, reflects the theme of my inaugural address. In that address, I noted that I was inspired by Michele Obama’s book, *Becoming*, and its emphasis on the evolutionary journey we all can take toward a better future. I suggested that leading the College would not be a sprint, or a marathon, but a relay that our community would engage in together. Through this planning process, we aspire to “become Lafayette” anew by honoring the accomplishments of those who carried the baton before us and, in building upon that strong foundation, defining the next stage of Lafayette’s service to our students, our community, and our world. The Steering Committee will play a seminal role in helping to chart that path forward. The Action Steps noted below outline the essential activities expected from the Committee over the course of their process. While not an exhaustive list, it is also meant to provide a meaningful set of touchstones for the committee’s discussions, explorations, and ultimate recommendations. All activity must be informed by close review of relevant data, including benchmarks from peers and aspirants, and careful consideration of the feedback provided through the stakeholder listening sessions conducted in Phase One of this process and summarized in the forthcoming Phase One Executive Summary as well as the further learning and listening the processes ahead allow. With this in mind, the Committee, and any subsequently appointed thematic working groups, may wish to conduct further dedicated listening sessions or focus groups with stakeholders to test emerging ideas and potential priorities or initiatives.

As the strategic planning processes ahead will continue to be instructive and dynamic, amendments to this Charge may be required and, if so, will be discussed with the Steering Committee prior to formal adoption.

I will also be appointing the following additional strategic planning bodies soon:

1. A Strategic Planning Executive Committee, consisting of representatives from the

College's leadership. This Committee will review all recommendations

 made by the Steering Committee prior to their dissemination to trustees, faculty governing bodies, other College entities, and the Lafayette community.

2. A Junior Faculty Advisory Committee, representative of untenured faculty, whose responsibilities will include providing ideas and recommendations to the Steering Committee and vetting the emerging strategic planning document at pivotal stages. This committee will help provide a direct voice for our untenured faculty colleagues in a strategic planning process that will shape and guide the College across their emerging Lafayette careers.

## Action Steps:

1. Reaffirm the institutional mission statement to ensure its language remains anchored in a clear articulation of our community's values and a vision for Lafayette's third century, for ultimate consideration by the College community.

2. Identify up to four overarching strategic priorities for the future of Lafayette College.

3. Appoint and charge strategic planning working groups for each strategic priority. These working groups will be expected to explore and discuss related information and ideas, engaging the campus community as necessary upon Steering Committee approval, and then make specific and actionable recommendations towards achievable and measurable goals that advance the relevant priority in lasting and beneficial ways.

4. Coordinate and connect the working groups, as appropriate, including to bring together their recommendations into a clear, cohesive, and actionable Strategic Plan for the Executive Committee's consideration, including key recommendations, initiatives, and prospective investments to help meet the stated priorities. This Strategic Plan should include an approximate timeline and plan for implementation and achievement of the proposed initiatives.

Respectfully,

Nicole Farmer Hurd

President

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APPENDIX D

**From:** Nicole Hurd <hurdn@lafayette.edu>

**To:** Active Trustees <trustees@lafayette.edu>; Emeriti Trustees <emeritiTrustees@lafayette.edu> **Cc:** Nicole Eramo <eramon@lafayette.edu>

**Sent:** Thursday, October 31, 2024 at 08:40:07 AM EDT

**Subject:** [LAFAYETTE COLLEGE] Update from College Hill

Dear Trustee community,

We are having a lovely and productive fall here on College Hill! It was great to see so many of you as we welcomed alumni and families to campus for a beautiful Fall Weekend filled with time for connection and celebration, including the official groundbreaking for the Wallach Lacrosse and Sports Performance Center at Metzgar, and a pinning ceremony for our Legacy Leopards. I also hosted retired faculty last evening for another listening session about our strategic plan, with two more to come with alumni and emeriti Trustees next week, and we will host our final campus master plan briefings in the coming days as well. We have made significant progress on our planning efforts and look forward to bringing both the strategic and campus master plans to you for approval by the end of the semester.

I wanted to take a moment to make you aware of a recent development in faculty governance that you may hear about through the student media or through others in our community. At the regularly scheduled faculty meeting on Tuesday, October 22nd, a group of faculty members brought to the floor a motion to form an Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Financial Stewardship and Accountability. The responsibilities of the group noted in the motion are as follows:

1. gather and analyze information from faculty about their concerns regarding the current financial health and stewardship of the College, particularly in its bearing upon faculty compensation and strategic planning priorities;
2. gather and analyze information on the College's financial health and stewardship, by commissioning an independent external financial analysis;
3. review the alignment between the faculty's assessment and findings from the financial analysis, and make recommendations, as necessary, to address faculty concerns regarding financial stewardship and accountability;
4. provide a written report to the faculty, including the results of the external financial analysis;
5. report on their findings to the faculty, the administration, and the Board of Trustees, and make recommendations to these bodies, as necessary.

In the rationale, those bringing the motion posited hiring Dr. Howard Bunsis, a Professor of Accounting at Eastern Michigan University, to complete the external financial analysis. They estimated the cost would be approximately $5000 and would be raised through contributions from the faculty. Dr. Bunsis is a somewhat controversial figure in this space, having completed several such reviews for other colleges that argue for an increase in faculty

compensation, but his analyses lack rigor and present the same findings regardless of the institution. This concern was pointed out by several faculty members during extensive discussion at the meeting (a good example of concerns related to Dr. Bunsis' work is available here). Despite these concerns, the core of the motion ultimately passed by a vote of 92 to 43.

It is believed that the impetus for this motion (it was the focus of the discussion in the meeting) and its passage is a long-standing frustration among the faculty regarding their salaries. In particular, the faculty note a goal stated that faculty salaries would be equivalent to those at the median of a defined peer group. This peer group, established in 2009, includes the top 25 liberal arts colleges in the nation, several with financial resources well-beyond those of Lafayette.

As I noted to the faculty last week, a commitment to excellence and competitive compensation is shared by all of us. A stated goal of our draft strategic plan is to "refine and implement an equitable compensation strategy that optimizes the College's ability to recruit, maintain, and develop the diverse talents and abilities of both faculty and staff." To move toward achieving that goal, I recently announced that I would be establishing a task force devoted to developing a sustainable and long term strategy for competitive compensation. Further, since taking office, with your partnership, we have restored $2 million in salary that had been removed during the pandemic, significantly increased faculty travel funding for the first time in over 20 years, increased funding for faculty research, and, as many of you know, we are actively fundraising for a Faculty Excellence Fund to establish a sustained resource that supports faculty research and activities that promote engaged student learning. In short, we have been explicit in word and deed about our commitment to this exceptional faculty.

In the next few weeks, the Governance Committee of the faculty will compile a ballot of nominees for this Ad Hoc Committee developed from self-nominations. This ballot will be voted on by the faculty and the Ad Hoc will move forward with their business. I will plan to appoint and charge my compensation Task Force once the Ad Hoc voting is complete.

As always, please feel free to reach out if you have questions about the above or any other matters. We are excited to be hosting a special session to review the campus master plan on November 13 and look forward to seeing you in December.

With gratitude and best wishes,

Nicole

Nicole Farmer Hurd

President

Lafayette College

www.lafayette.edu

316 Markle Hall, Easton, PA 18042-1768

Tel: 610-330-5050 Fax: 610-330-5700

APPENDIX E

November 12, 2024

To: Voting Members of the Faculty
From:

- Mary Armstrong, Charles A. Dana Professor of Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies and English
- Robert Blunt, Associate Professor of Religious Studies
- Lindsay Ceballos, Assistant Professor of Russian and East European Studies
- Il Hyun Cho, Associate Professor of Government and Law and Asian Studies
- Dana Cuomo, Assistant Professor of Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies
- Michael Dougherty, Assistant Professor of Mathematics
- Bianca Falbo, Associate Professor of English
- Alessandro Giovanelli, Professor of Philosophy
- Rachel Goshgarian, Associate Professor of History
- Gabrielle Isabel Kelenyi, Assistant Professor of English
- Robert Kurt, Kreider Professor of Biology
- Caroline Lee, Professor of Sociology
- Abbey Mann, Assistant Professor of Psychology
- Chip Nataro, Marshall R. Metzgar Professor of Chemistry
- Seo-Hyun Park, Professor of Government and Law
- Rebekah Pite, Professor of History
- Rohan Prabhu, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering
- Robin Rinehart, Professor of Religious Studies and Richard H. Jr., '60 and Joan K. Sell Chair in the Humanities
- Mary Roth, Simon Cameron Long Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering
- Caroline Séquin, Assistant Professor of History
- Angelika von Wahl, John L. '67 and Jean A. Hatfield Professor of International Affairs
- Wendy Wilson-Fall, Professor of Africana Studies
- Jeremy Zallen, Associate Professor of History

**We will bring the following motion to the Faculty at its November 14, 2024 meeting:**

In accordance with the well-established precedent of shared governance and the faculty's deep commitment to the long-term well-being of the institution, the faculty direct the Advocacy and Coordination Council to bring to the faculty a motion for a vote on the Strategic Plan, "Becoming Lafayette: A Vision for Our Third Century," at the December 3, 2024 meeting of the faculty.

**Rationale**

The draft strategic plan opens with a statement mentioning "pride in our history." Part of our history is that the faculty have voted in a faculty meeting on every single recent strategic plan or strategic direction. When we vote at faculty meetings we have an opportunity for formal discussion, and our votes are recorded as part of the minutes of the meeting and therefore remain on record. Such voting is central to the faculty's role in shared governance.

*Shared Governance*

The opening section of our *Faculty Handbook* [1.1.1] states:

> Integral to the mission of Lafayette College is the concept of **shared governance**. Shared governance recognizes the mutual interdependence and the unique expertise of different College constituencies, including faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, students, and alumni. …. Shared governance translates the voices of these different constituencies into a single voice that speaks for the College as a whole. Under shared governance, the views of each constituency are carefully considered in a manner that is transparent, democratic, and respectful. [Added 13-17]

The tradition of shared governance for the faculty has long centered on voting on matters of crucial importance, such as any plan that charts a direction for our academic mission. Formal voting is one important means of maintaining transparency, as well.

The Charter and Statutes of our College, dating to the early days when the College was first founded, make clear that it is the responsibility of the faculty to be actively involved in the government of the College and that it is the role of the President to bring matters to the faculty for a vote.

Chapter III, Section 74 of the Statutes of Lafayette College states that "It shall be the duty of each officer of instruction to bear an active part in the immediate government of the College and to discharge the particular duties of the chair or rank which he or she occupies in accordance with the regulations of the Faculty and the Board."

Chapter II, Section 62 of the Statutes of Lafayette College states that the President "shall publish and carry into effect the proper decisions of the faculty. . . and lay before the Faculty such matters as he or she deems necessary for their attention, and may at any time take a vote upon any proposition submitted to the Faculty by him or her, and may call for the ayes and nays" (https://about.lafayette.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/07/Charter-and-Statutes_2020.pdf).

*Recent History*

On October 2, 2007, the faculty endorsed the proposed strategic plan ("Plan for Lafayette") by voting on a motion brought by an elected faculty committee (Faculty Academic Policy). The plan centered on "strengthening Lafayette's academic core" (https://news.lafayette.edu/2007/10/24/trustees-approve-strategic-plan/). (The motion is ~~appended below.)~~

On February 2, 2016 the faculty endorsed the proposed strategic direction ("Strategic Growth Initiative") by voting on strategic advice brought as a motion by an elected faculty committee (Faculty Academic Policy). Core components of that strategic direction were crafted by Presidential Working Groups that included representatives from elected faculty committees. In 2024, shared governance and elected faculty representatives have been and remain disconnected from the work of the College's strategic planning process and the endorsement process. Faculty currently serving on the sixteen person Strategic Planning Steering Committee (the entity bringing the Strategic Plan forward) have been selected and appointed by the President, not elected by the faculty. The exclusion of shared governance processes and elected faculty representatives is amplified to an alarming degree with the proposed elimination of a formal faculty endorsement vote and the substitution of an "online survey" for that vote.

*Need for Vote*

Faculty meetings and faculty votes are the mechanisms by which all faculty have the right to exercise the unique powers inherent in their status. Technically, meetings are obligatory: Section 92 of the Statutes of the College states "It shall be the duty of every member of the Faculty to attend [faculty] meetings." A vote in a faculty meeting is also recorded, ensuring that future faculties can continue to know our history. A vote in a faculty meeting ensures discussion.

The College is long overdue in addressing issues that make meetings accessible for some and not others. But moving to an online survey and eliminating a faculty vote on a plan that will literally shape the institution for the coming decades unacceptably bypasses norms for faculty engagement and shared governance, wrongfully impedes the faculty's abilities to exercise their right to discussion and debate, and diminishes our voice in the academic mission of the College. The faculty should not be denied the chance to vote on such an important matter.

*Why Direct the Advocacy and Coordination Council to Bring the Motion?*

The directive to ACC is founded on the fact that it is the nearest equivalent to FAP, the committee that has brought such motions forward in the past. Relevant aspects of ACC's charge are found in *Faculty Handbook* 5.4.4.4:

The responsibilities of this Council are to:

> a. coordinate efforts between the various committees and other College constituencies to augment communication and effectiveness; [Added 21-32]
> b. advocate for Faculty interests and for Faculty influence in College policies; [Added 21-32]
> c. tender its advice on all significant matters of concern to the Faculty that affect the academic life of the College; [Added 21-32]

*Why Is An Online Endorsement Out of Line with the Principles of Shared Governance?*

An online survey is not a legitimate substitute for a vote and does not carry the weight of a formal endorsement by the faculty.

In the October 2024 faculty meeting, the President cited a general Qualtrics survey as "more inclusive" because not all faculty can attend a faculty meeting. However, this approach is the opposite of inclusive. It sets a dangerous precedent that disadvantages and disempowers the faculty. Indeed the evidence of that particular meeting itself belies this claim: attendance at the meeting was so robust that there were not enough clickers available for faculty to vote and when there was a quorum call well past 6:00 pm there were more than sufficient faculty still present.

In addition, the substitution of an online Qualtrics survey erodes the power of the faculty by establishing a *de facto* equivalency among the faculty, current students, the public, and other "stakeholders." In other words, without the power to vote, Lafayette faculty are no longer partners in shared governance but just one of many groups. Given our specific role and unique obligations in shared governance, as well as our singular and central role in the academic mission of the institution, the faculty should be consulted in ways appropriate to the principles of shared governance and that particular role. That means the involvement of elected faculty in the endorsement of the Strategic Plan and a formal vote taken at a faculty meeting.

*From the Minutes of the October 2007 Faculty Meeting*

***Faculty Academic Policy***

Professor Niles presented the committee's report, along with a copy of the strategic plan, "The Plan for Lafayette" (Attachment 9) and moved

**Motion 07-5** That the strategic plan be endorsed, as follows:

(a) The Faculty endorses the objectives articulated in *The Plan for Lafayette 2007*:

- **Objective 1:** To build a truly outstanding faculty dedicated to the Lafayette model of education; • **Objective 2:** To create a curriculum and learning environment for the new century that are innovative, progressive, challenging, and distinctive;
- **Objective 3:** To establish an integrated center for the life sciences equal in quality to the finest at any small college in the nation;
- **Objective 4:** To make programs in the creative arts an essential feature of the College and ensure that they are known for their outstanding quality, presence, and relevance to both the campus and larger community;
- **Objective 5:** To attract and support a diverse campus community and to promote, celebrate, and sustain this commitment to diversity in all areas of the College;

and the initiatives to support essential resources:

- To upgrade the campus infrastructure;
- To augment financial resources for the present and the future;
- To strengthen the sense of community – and communities – at Lafayette;

in the belief that adopting them would advance the core educational mission of the College.

(b) The Faculty, further, will work with the President and others at the College to implement those parts of the plan that fall within its charge.

The motion was seconded and adopted. [By e-mail 23 October 2007, President Weiss reported that the Board unanimously approved the strategic plan at its 20 October meeting.—Clerk.]

APPENDIX F

december 7, 2024

Menu

# Strategic Planning Board Update

Explore this site

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff,

With finals approaching next week, we want to begin this update on the Strategic Plan with our very best wishes to our students and faculty as they complete their important academic work  together and to our staff as they continue to provide the vital support and expertise students and faculty depend upon and that keep the operations of the College running smoothly.

As you know, this weekend the Board of Trustees met on campus for its annual winter meeting. The Board's agenda included a thorough discussion of the College's strategic and campus master plans. As it strives to do at all times in its responsibilities to the College, the Board approached this discussion in the spirit of shared governance that is articulated so well in the *Faculty Handbook*:

*1.1.1 Integral to the mission of Lafayette College is the concept of shared governance. Shared governance recognizes the mutual interdependence and the unique expertise of different College constituencies, including faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, students, and alumni.*

*Shared governance facilitates continual conversation among multiple voices while acknowledging that each constituency bears primary responsibility for certain decisions. Shared governance translates the voices of these different constituencies into a single voice that speaks for the College as a whole. Under shared governance, the views of each constituency are carefully considered in a manner that is transparent, democratic, and respectful.*

With this essential principle of shared governance in mind, we want to commend the College community for its thoughtful and engaged participation in developing the new Strategic Plan's five priorities and associated goals (https://becoming.lafayette.edu/strategic-plan/). Thanks to your commitment, this thoughtful, inclusive, and iterative process embodied the best of shared governance, with hundreds of students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and community members attending the numerous open sessions held to discuss the plan, more than 2,000 individuals completing related online surveys, and more than 10% of the faculty and staff driving the dedicated efforts of the plan's five campus-wide Working Groups.

This process began in earnest in spring 2023 and, in the 20 months since, your participation has made it possible to bring the five priorities and associated goals of the plan to an exciting stage. In the past two weeks, representatives of our campus constituencies have each taken the opportunity to endorse these priorities and goals, further reflecting this inclusive process. Student Government endorsed these priorities and goals unanimously, as did the Alumni Association Board and our four Regional Councils of alumni representatives, staff voted 244-3 to endorse the priorities and goals, and the faculty vote on a motion to endorse the priorities and goals resulted in a split 66-73 vote, with 12 abstentions.

In its deliberations on the Strategic Plan this weekend, the Board reflected on the extent of participation and ultimately support that the plan received from across the College community. The Board also discussed the concerns several faculty members raised at the faculty meeting during their discussion of the motion to endorse the goals and priorities this past Tuesday. The Board recognizes that these concerns can and will be addressed during the plan's implementation. The Board does so knowing that a sound Strategic Plan is always a dynamic one, adapting and evolving as priorities and goals are brought to life, as new opportunities emerge, and as conversations unfold with the donor community whose investments in those priorities and goals will contribute substantially to the College's future.

In this regard, the priorities and goals are indeed exciting and provide a compelling foundation for the comprehensive campaign that is now underway and that will be the most ambitious campaign in Lafayette's history. The priorities of the plan, which the campaign will support, call for extensive commitments to academic excellence and student success; expanding Lafayette's engagement with and reputation across our region, nation, and world; taking a leadership role in exploring, understanding, and strengthening the connection between democracy and technology in the 21st century; deepening the sense of belonging that everyone on campus and in our wider Lafayette community enjoys and builds together; and investing in our physical and technological infrastructure to advance academics, student life, the vital roles of staff in College life, and more. Indeed, foremost in the Board's discussions about the plan this past weekend were not only the imperative of shared governance and the inclusive and iterative process of developing the plan, but also the promise of the plan to comprehensively advance academic excellence and the College's liberal arts mission.

Following these deliberations, the Board resolved to unanimously approve the five priorities and associated goals of the plan. As articulated in the Board resolution (https://becoming.lafayette.edu/strategic-plan-board-resolution/), in this unanimous vote the Board also endorsed the commitment of the president and administration to enact the plan in a manner consistent with the principles of academic excellence, shared governance, inclusivity, and iteration. With the plan's priorities and goals as a guide, we are confident that, as the specific actions and investments that will drive the plan forward are defined and secured, the plan will deliver on the highest aspirations we all share for the College as a leader in liberal arts education where students, faculty, and staff thrive together.

We are grateful for the tireless dedication to the strategic planning process of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, the Strategic Planning Feasibility and Implementation Committee, the five campus-wide Strategic Plan Working Groups, and the numerous faculty and staff who served on these important planning and development teams. We extend our deep thanks, as well, to the students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and community members who so consistently and generously contributed to the thoughtful and productive work of iteration, reflection, and conversation that has brought the plan to this pivotal stage. The Board looks forward to doing everything it can to support both the work of the plan as it goes into action and the comprehensive campaign that will generate the investments that elevate these goals and ambitions.

It is an extraordinary time to be part of this great College, with the Strategic Plan, campus master plan, bicentennial, and comprehensive campaign all moving forward. We are grateful to you for

everything you do to make the College a stronger and better community of learning every day. We wish you the very best for the end of the semester and a wonderful holiday time.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Sell ’84, Chair, Board of Trustees

Nicole F. Hurd, President

categorized in: Presidential News (https://news.lafayette.edu/category/presidential news/), Strategic plan (https://news.lafayette.edu/category/strategic-plan/)

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