January 7, 2015

Dear Xavier community,

This morning I accepted the resignation of one of our most valued faculty members, Dr. Loren Blanchard.

Loren has accepted a position as Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs for the California State University System. Knowing the track of his 23 year career in higher education, it seems that the position was created precisely for him.

This is a bittersweet moment for me personally and professionally. It is truly an honor that one of Xavier’s own has been selected to a top position at the largest four-year comprehensive public higher education system in the United States. Yet his leadership and presence on campus will be missed. He has assured me, though, that while he may physically be on the West Coast, he will not be far away.

Upon receiving Loren’s resignation letter, I recalled the story of our founder, St. Katharine Drexel. When she met Pope Leo XIII, she asked him to send more missionaries to Wyoming. The pope replied, “Why don’t you become a missionary?” His answer prompted her to consider new possibilities. Not unlike St. Katharine Drexel, Loren is pursuing a calling to be of greater service. He has been instrumental in increasing success rates at Xavier University, and in his new role at the largest and one of the most diverse university systems in the country, he will be able to help an even greater number of historically under-represented students succeed in life.

While some speculated that Loren would follow me as the University’s president, I knew this would not be the case. Loren made it clear to me on numerous occasions over our years together that he did not aspire to a presidential role and that his career path would take him in a different direction.

Though it may not appear so, today’s announcement comes at a good time for the University, and I thank Loren for that. By timing his and my departures at the conclusion of the school year, we are clearing a path for a new generation of leadership to carry on the vision, mission, and values of Xavier far into the future.

As I stated upon the announcement of my resignation, I am confident and absolutely certain that Xavier is better prepared than ever to continue its educational and spiritual mission and to build on its tradition of excellence.

Please join me in congratulating my dear friend and colleague, Loren, and thanking him for his 17 years of service to Xavier.

Sincerely,

Norman C. Francis
President
P.S.: You may read a copy of Dr. Blanchard’s resignation letter here and a news release announcing his new appointment here.

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