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To: Broadcast\_LSU\_Faculty\_Staff@LSU  
cc:  
Subject: Advancing LSU: Toward a Diverse Learning Environment

LSU is committed to diversity. In accord with the University Planning Council's recommendation that we set performance indicators for key objectives under each of the nine strategic directions in the University Planning Document, we are now turning to Strategic Direction 2, specifically to objective 2.3: "To recruit and retain students, faculty, and staff from underrepresented groups."

Diversity has many dimensions: gender, age, nationality, social class, geographic origin, religion, ethnicity, and race, among others, all contributing to the creation of an effectively diverse learning community. We must continue to work hard to bring more women into fields in which they are underrepresented and to enrich our University community with greater numbers of students, faculty, and staff from all underrepresented groups.

For LSU, our African-American population is of particular importance. As Louisiana's flagship University, we must provide access to quality in higher education to all of the citizens of Louisiana. As a University with a legacy of exclusion of our state's African-American citizens, who comprise 31% of Louisiana's population, we must do better--and we will.

Just as we sought to focus the attention of the community on a single key performance indicator for Strategic Direction 1--a six-year graduation rate of at least 63% by 2005--even though we knew full well that there are many other things we must do to fulfill the goal of creating a challenging learning environment, so we are setting a pair of key performance indicators for Strategic Direction 2, even though we know full well that there are many other things we must do to pursue all that is implied in that challenging phrase: "To foster ethical conduct and multiculturalism." Assuming that overall enrollment and faculty numbers are held constant, by 2005 Louisiana State University and A&M College will at a minimum:

\*\* Increase African-American student enrollment by 20%, from 2,852 to 3,407

\*\* Increase full-time African-American faculty by 73%, from 30 to 52

We will achieve these performance indicators without compromising increasingly high admissions requirements, academic standards, and criteria for the selection and evaluation of faculty. These targets, which are only steps toward longer-term goals, will place us in the top tier among our peers. We are already among the top twenty of the nation's research universities in African-American enrollment. Our target for 2005 will move us from fourth to third among the eleven schools designated by the Board of Regents as our peer group in the South. Since African-American Ph.D. production nationwide has never been as high as 4% of total Ph.D. production and is currently only 2.6% (with large numbers of African-American Ph.D.s, moreover, opting for careers outside academe in government, non-profit agencies, business, and industry), we will, if we achieve and maintain our faculty goal, also be among the national leaders.

The success of the University as a center for intellectual and personal development depends on our recruiting and supporting a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff. Our effort to create vibrant learning communities as foundations of lifelong success for our students rests on two key premises: 1) that learning proceeds at least as much from students' interactions with each other as from their interactions with teachers and 2) that the quality of intellectual transactions among peers is critically dependent upon difference, upon their bringing to each other a variety of backgrounds, experiences, ways of looking at the world, problem-solving styles, habits of learning, and so on. We know, moreover, that employers expect universities to prepare students to work successfully in diverse workplaces. We must meet that challenge.

LSU will achieve these objectives only if we work together. There was a strong consensus for effective diversity initiatives among participants in the retreat we held last week with the vice chancellors, deans, members of the University Planning Council, and leaders of the Faculty and Staff Senates and the Student Government. In full compliance with all legal obligations to afford equal education and employment opportunities and with your help, we will be developing a broad range of specific actions and strategies to ensure success in this undertaking. We will continue, of course, to pursue all dimensions of Strategic Direction 2. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.