

**OUR LADY OF THE LAKE UNIVERSITY FACULTY ASSEMBLY
PRESIDENT'S REPORT
April 27, 2016**

I thank you for the warm welcome and support that you have extended to me this year. I have appreciated your counsel and encouragement. Not a day goes by without one of you pausing to share your wisdom, a smile, conversation, or an invitation to learn something new about the university or our community. Because of your willingness to be open to a new president and a new year, we have continued to thrive. I also want to especially thank Carol Jeffries-Horner, Antoinette Winstead, and Kathryn Anderson for their leadership. They have worked tirelessly to advocate on behalf of the Faculty Assembly by promoting open communication and shared decision making. Please accept my sincerest appreciation for your work throughout the year.

San Antonio Campus Safety

As the work on Lake Elmendorf Park progresses, we are becoming more excited for its completion. The enhancements open opportunities for us to engage with the greater community through academic and recreational activities. The work on the park should inspire us to upgrade our San Antonio campus.

Plans for the addition of a residence hall on the east side of campus will greatly enhance the visibility of the campus from the park and Commerce Street. We have had a chain link fence topped with barbed wire on the east campus, dividing the campus from the park, for many years. Chain link fences are quick to deteriorate and ours is no exception. Not only is it an eyesore it restricts access between the campus and park. As part of the planning for the residence hall, a design for a replacement has been proposed. The concept includes pillars and knee-high walls, constructed with masonry that complements the "yellow brick" of our historic campus and that will keep the fence from drooping and bending over time. It also includes wrought iron vertical railing that will allow a clean view shed to and from the park; as well as gates that will allow access to and from the campus. Additionally, it has been suggested that green plantings be added to either replace or supplement sections of the project, and I am asking our architects to provide options for including these in the design.

As the plans for the park began to take shape, concerns for safety began to emerge. These concerns were first raised by the Staff Advisory Council. I have also heard from individual students, staff and faculty who feel vulnerable during specific periods during the day. The concerns, as I have heard them include the following:

- Faculty, staff and students have spoken with me about feeling especially vulnerable when their responsibilities require them to navigate campus during non-traditional work hours. As examples, I have heard concerns from our buildings and grounds staff who arrive at 5:30 a.m. and before the campus is populated; faculty who teach night classes and are the last ones in the parking lots in the evening; resident assistants who must move between buildings late at night; and staff assigned to Casa Caritas and Elliott House who have experienced encounters with individuals who have no legitimate purpose in the buildings.
- The new walking trails bring with them increased vulnerability that did not exist before. After viewing the new park infrastructure, the Chief of Police reported to me that the changes in the park configuration have resulted in a new risk to safety that have emerged as his highest priority of concern for the campus. A new trail has been constructed along the north shore of Lake Elmendorf. Where formerly there was no pedestrian access to the west side of campus, the newly created trail is steps away from the Physical Plant work yard, Casa Caritas, Elliott House, Metz Hall, International Folk Culture Center, and Providence Hall, all of which have campus

members working and studying during the day and in the evenings. His concern is two-fold. First, even if we were to add significant numbers of personnel, the configuration of the shared space will make it impossible for our officers to adequately monitor who is coming or going between the two areas. Second, the configuration of the space will make it difficult for our officers to apprehend individuals who engage in criminal activities on campus if they exit through the park. Finally, I have been told that while the city will continue to patrol the park as it had in the past, no additional security is planned and the park will be accessible after hours. Problems experienced prior to renovation will likely reemerge once construction fencing is taken away. In light of these concerns, the chief has recommended a fence as the most effective and economical approach to mitigating the immediate concerns.

The President's Council and Board of Trustees have been fully advised of the safety issues that come with the renovation of Lake Elmendorf Park. For these reasons, we are compelled to act.

I understand that there are concerns that with this addition we are trying to separate ourselves from our community. That is not our intent. Our intent is to address an area that has been identified as posing a significant safety risk while improving access to a wonderful resource, and creating a visually pleasing view shed for the greater community.

The planned project will not isolate our campus from the community. Rather, it increases access from the east and west campuses by adding gateways where previously there have been none. Nor does it change our relationship with the greater community as the 24th Street corridor has always been the primary interface between the campus and the neighborhood. While I hope that this report addresses any concerns that you might have, please know that I am listening for concerns as they arise and will be glad to receive your input.