



Dear Students and Families of Lourdes University,

We write to provide an important update about Lourdes University. Like many institutions across higher education, Lourdes has faced mounting financial pressures driven by declining enrollment, rising costs and a funding model that is increasingly unsustainable. These realities are not unique to Lourdes, but they have spurred thoughtful and meaningful discussions about our future. Today, it is with heavy hearts and deep respect for this community that we write to share difficult news.

After careful deliberation with the Board of Trustees of Lourdes University, the Sisters of St. Francis have resolved that the University will close at the end of the academic year. This decision is one we do not make lightly, but it is one we are charged to make.

As part of this process, the University has experienced a leadership transition. The Sisters of St. Francis have charged one of their own sisters to oversee the University's closure, and Dr. Bisset has graciously agreed to step down as president. The Sisters have appointed Sister Dr. Nancy Linenkugel, OSF, DM as the 13th and final President of Lourdes University. Sister Nancy has a long history in higher education administration at Xavier University and served as the former Congregational Minister for the Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania.

Importantly, all classes and University operations will continue throughout the remainder of this academic year. Soon, the University's leaders and administrators will share more information about how we will support students, faculty and staff in transitioning to the next step in your educational journeys before we close. The University closure will not affect Lifelong Learning Programs or Franciscan Center events.

## **How This Decision Was Reached**

We recognize the gravity of this moment and the pain this news may bring. However, this decision reflects a sober assessment of what can be sustained responsibly while preserving the quality and integrity that define Lourdes.

For decades, the Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania have supported and sustained Lourdes University with extraordinary generosity, faith and commitment. Their belief in this University and its mission has enabled generations of students to learn, grow and serve. That support has been both steadfast and sacrificial. However, the Sisters can no longer continue to subsidize the University at the level required to sustain its operations. With this knowledge, the Board of Trustees, along with the Sisters of St. Francis, have devoted considerable time to reviewing the University's financial outlook and long-term viability. We have worked closely with University leadership, consulted other stakeholders and weighed our responsibilities with prayerful discernment.

In reaching this decision, the Board took a hard and honest look at every aspect of the University—its finances, enrollment trends, academic programs and long-term viability. We explored possible paths forward with care and seriousness. Ultimately, the Sylvania Franciscan Sisters who sponsor Lourdes University concluded that continuing operations beyond this academic year is financially unsustainable.

Regrettably, it is now clear that there is no path forward for this institution, and this decision is the most responsible one for our students, our faculty and our mission. We are profoundly grateful for all the Sisters have given us for decades, and, in these remaining months, we will honor the spirit in which that support was offered.

## **What This Means for Students**

Lourdes University will continue to operate as normal through the remainder of the academic year, including the completion of all scheduled courses, academic programming and student services. The University is fully committed to honoring its academic commitments to students during this time.

We are working closely with regulators and local universities to ensure continuity of your education. Final details are still being coordinated and will be shared as soon as they are confirmed. This work is our highest priority, and University leadership and the Board of Trustees are fully focused on securing clear, viable pathways that allow you to continue your studies with minimal disruption.

In addition, in the coming days, University leadership will share detailed information about plans to support students through this transition, including guidance on degree completion, transfer options, academic records and individualized support. Dedicated resources and points of contact will be made available to assist students and families every step of the way.

## **Our Commitment to You**

While this moment marks the closing of the University as an institution, it does not diminish the value of the education Lourdes students have received or the community that has shaped so many lives. The Franciscan values that inspired the founding of Lourdes—care for the whole person, service to others and a deep respect for human dignity—continue to guide how we approach this transition. Our Franciscan mission, commitment to service and dedication to student-centered education remains at the heart of how we approach this transition.

**We know that this news will raise questions. University Leadership will hold an all-parent Zoom meeting at 6pm on Tuesday, February 17th. A student zoom meeting with the President of the University of Toledo and their admissions leadership to outline the transfer process is scheduled for Wednesday, February 18th at 1pm. Instructions to join these meetings will be sent closer to the time of the meeting.**

And in the weeks ahead, we will continue to communicate openly and provide timely, accurate information as next steps unfold. We ask for your patience as details are finalized, and we commit to sharing information as soon as it is meaningful and reliable.

We are profoundly grateful to our students and families for your trust, resilience and commitment to Lourdes University. We will walk this path with you, with compassion and responsibility, and with a deep respect for this community.

With respect and gratitude,

Sincerely,

Board of Trustees, Lourdes University

The Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania, Ohio