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School of Law
Office of the Dean

August 8, 2012

Dear Faculty and Staff Colleagues,

It is with deep regret that I write to inform you that I have resigned my position as dean of Saint Louis University School of Law, effective immediately. This is not a sudden decision but one that I have thought long and hard about over the course of the past several weeks, including during my recent vacation.

I am resigning because I fundamentally disagree with the president and vice president for academic affairs (vice president) as to the responsibilities of the law school dean and the importance of honesty, integrity, and honoring one's commitments. As a result of a number of their actions, I no longer have confidence in their ability to lead this institution or in their commitment to the well-being of the School of Law and so I cannot continue to serve as a member of this administration.

I began my deanship with the discovery that the president had transferred over \$800,000 from the law school building fund to the President's Opportunity Fund on the final day of Sandy Johnson's interim deanship without her knowledge and counter to her understanding of their agreement regarding how her compensation and that summer's research stipends would be funded. I learned of this transfer not from a meeting with the president or vice president but only when the financial report came to the attention of one of my staff members over a month after the transfer occurred. Early on, I was warned by the vice president that the president operates on emotion, not reason, and that the law school was going to have to "pay the price" for the autonomy it had enjoyed in the past. Perhaps that's why I was kept completely in the dark regarding the acquisition of the building downtown and its designation as the new law school building, learning the news only three days before the announcement was made public. I was accused of being uncooperative by the president because I insisted that the faculty needed to have private offices, not cubicles, in the new building. I worked tirelessly on the building renovation campaign, only to receive an email from the president stating that I hadn't been sufficiently helpful in fundraising. I dealt for months with convincing the university leadership

to permit the law school to continue to provide summer research support to the faculty, finally reaching agreement on a process and working with the faculty to follow all of the prescribed steps, only to be told by the vice president in May that the president would not permit the funding of any summer research stipends in the law school. When I objected and took the issue to the faculty, I received a peremptory letter from the vice president informing me that further opposition to the president's or vice president's decisions would not be tolerated.

I could go on, but the last straw, the one that tipped the balance for me in deciding to resign, is the president's flagrant violation of an agreement he made just six weeks previously, an act that took from the law school over a quarter of a million dollars raised from our alumni.

A little over two weeks ago, one of my staff members discovered that on June 30, the last day of the fiscal year, \$260,000 was transferred without our knowledge or agreement from the law school's annual fund to the President's Opportunity Fund. If you do the math, you'll see that \$260,000 equals 20 summer research stipends at \$13,000 each. In other words, despite the president's agreement at the May 19th meeting with five faculty members and me that we could fund 20 summer research stipends from the law school operating budget, he purposefully undid that agreement a little more than two weeks after being embarrassed by the article that appeared in the Missouri Lawyers Weekly.

In a phone call, the vice president confirmed my suspicions, admitting that the withdrawal from the annual fund was for the summer research stipends. When I challenged him that this went against the prior agreement, he then claimed that the withdrawal was justified by the law school's revenue shortfall. However, in truth there was no substantial change in the enrollment/tuition revenue picture between May 19th when the president made the commitment and June 30th when this withdrawal occurred. In addition, an ordinary budget cut would not come from the annual funds contributed by our donors, it would come from specified lines in the operating budget, plus there is no apparent reason why the amount would be exactly equal to 20 summer research stipends. I am thus firmly convinced that the president's withdrawing \$260,000 from the School of Law's annual fund was in retaliation for the truthful and accurate emails I sent to the faculty and the article that appeared in the Missouri Lawyers Weekly.

In a meeting with the vice president on July 25th, I explained that as a result of this unexpected withdrawal, only \$60,000 remains in our annual fund, which leaves us in a precarious financial position because we use the annual fund as a reserve to cover expenses that the very tight operating budget won't cover. That's particularly true given the \$125,000 in budget cuts the law school has already been told to absorb for FY-13. So, now we are left in a position where the president first authorized us to use our operating budget to pay for the summer stipends and, then, after we made legally binding commitments to the faculty, he unilaterally withdrew the amount of the summer stipends from the law school's annual fund, putting us in a far worse financial position than if he had simply disapproved the summer stipends. The vice president's response to the concerns I raised was to shrug his shoulders and to tell me to start making cuts in discretionary expenditures. He also told me specifically, when I asked what to tell the faculty, that I was not to say that this "budget cut" was related to the summer stipends.

I am appalled and shocked by the president's and vice president's actions surrounding the summer research stipends generally, but especially by this most recent withdrawal from the annual fund. I am telling you what has occurred, even though doing so is in clear contravention

of the orders I received from the vice president, because I believe I have an ethical obligation to disclose this conduct, which I view to be immoral, in violation of an express commitment made by the president, and harmful to the law school. I do not wish to be complicit in, or provide cover for, these actions.

This has obviously been a challenging time to be the dean at SLU LAW. From the beginning we have worked together to manage a number of difficult issues, including a building renovation project that the president dropped on the law school without any prior communication or consultation, the expectation that we would raise millions of dollars for that project in a few short months, an ABA site inspection in which the president stood up the site team, and the continuing battle with the university over funding the law school's summer research stipend program. As I outlined in my recent dean's update, we accomplished a great deal in the past year despite these obstacles and I am extremely proud of the work we have done together. Most of all, I am proud of you as a faculty and staff.

Words cannot describe how deeply saddened I am by this turn of events. I chose to come to SLU LAW because I was drawn to what you've built here, to your genuine and heartfelt commitment to the students and to creating a collegial and welcoming learning environment, and I fully intended to make this law school and St. Louis my home. I have the greatest admiration and respect for the faculty, staff, students and alumni of this law school, and it has been an honor and a privilege to lead you this past year and to be a part of this law school community. As much as I regret that I will no longer be your dean, I regret even more that my decision to resign will provoke uncertainty and concern about the law school and its future. You deserve far better.

I have performed my duties as your dean with every ounce of integrity, dignity, and grace I possess and I leave this position with a clear conscience and the knowledge that I did everything within my power to move the law school and the university forward. In terms of my future, I will remain on the tenured faculty for the present, but I anticipate that I will be seeking another deanship in the near term.

I thank you again for your support, encouragement, and friendship during this past year. It has meant the world to me.

Yours,

Annette