

“A Catholic University pursues its objectives through its formation of an authentic human community animated by the spirit of Christ. The source of its unity springs from a common dedication to the truth, a common vision of the dignity of the human person and, ultimately, the person and message of Christ which gives the Institution its distinctive character. As a result of this inspiration, *the community is animated by a spirit of freedom and charity; it is characterized by mutual respect, sincere dialogue, and protection of the rights of individuals. It assists each of its members to achieve wholeness as human persons; in turn, everyone in the community helps in promoting unity, and each one, according to his or her role and capacity, contributes towards decisions which affect the community, and also towards maintaining and strengthening the distinctive Catholic character of the Institution.*” John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, ¶ 21
(emphasis added)

Unexpectedly, and without any prior notice that an early decision was forthcoming, an apparent quorum of the Ave Maria School of Law Board of Governors, via Dean Bernard Dobranski, announced its decision today, February 20, 2007, to close the Ave Maria School of Law Michigan entity in Ann Arbor, and “relocate the Law School to Florida,” near Immokalee.

Faced with this tragic decision to close our alma mater in Michigan with little more than the hope that a similarly successful law school can begin elsewhere under the same name, the Ave Maria School of Law Alumni Association Board of Directors maintains its position that such a decision at this time is not in the best interests of the Law School or its community. Due to repeated and willful dismissal of Alumni, Faculty, and Student concerns, along with a pending and serious investigation by the American Bar Association that touches on credible governance questions – questions that have likewise been dismissed without adequate explanation – the Alumni Association Board of Directors condemns this decision.

The Alumni Association Board of Directors believes our alma mater’s early success counsels against a decision to close the school in Michigan. We have difficulty believing that Ave Maria School of Law’s amazing success is sufficiently likely to recur after “relocation.” We disagree with the Board of Governors’ acquiescence of control of the school to persons whose insistence on moving caused the school and its community severe harm, while benefiting primarily other institutions to which the law school Board of Governors should owe no obligation in making this decision. We are skeptical that the financial commitment from Florida interests will be more reliable than the promises for funding through 2009 that are documented in the report by Professor Joseph Falvey. We further mourn the inevitable loss of our founding faculty, who are the heart of our school (and indeed of any truly Catholic academic institution).

We continue to pray for the major constituencies of the Law School, who must now face the consequences of this ill-considered decision.

In Christ,

The Ave Maria School of Law Alumni Association Board of Directors
February 20, 2007