Garanzini meets with Rahm: Chicago Mayor promises to help Loyola with its development plans
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Loyola President the Rev. Michael J. Garanzini, S.J., met with Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel in the mayor's office at City Hall on Aug. 13. The two discussed Loyola's development goals and ways in which the city can collaborate with the university in order to achieve them.

The changes are meant to better not only Loyola's Lake shore and Water Tower campuses, but their surrounding areas as well, including the Loyola El stop. Garanzini says the open communication between him and Emanuel will be crucial to getting things done, from sharing helpful business contacts, closing down streets for construction and bringing more businesses to the area.

Also at the meeting with Emanuel and Garanzini were Emanuel's major directors, and Loyola's Vice President of Public Affairs Phillip Hale and Wayne Magdiarz, and Vice President of Strategic Planning.

The Phoenix sat down with Garanzini to get the scoop on what they discussed that Saturday afternoon.

Q: What was your first impression of Mayor Rahm Emanuel?
A: The first impression is here's a very hardworking mayor, who in the middle of a Saturday afternoon has got not only himself in the office, but he's got about six of his department heads. This was part of a process that they're going through of looking at and discussing the plans that the major universities have for the development of their areas of the city. I was really very impressed with how energetic, how involved and how supportive he was of everything we were doing.

Q: What did you two talk about?
A: He wanted to know specifically Loyola's plans for investing in the area, what our priorities were. So, we explained that we're putting approximately $100 million more into the development of the main campus, that we're putting another $100 million in the village on the south side of campus that includes new residence halls and ecology center and property acquisitions.

And we talked about the developmental opportunities that we're looking at for the El station, including the fact that the mayor and the CTA, the Chicago Transit Authority, is already committed to enhancing the Loyola El Station and to creating a plaza. We just acquired the last piece of property we need to create a plaza at the El station. It's another $10 million for that, besides the $10 million CTA investment.
We talked about more collaboration with the Aldermen in our area and perhaps even looking at how Loyola can be a better neighbor. We also talked about building up the economic zone between the El stop at Loyola all the way down at Broadway [Street].

Our contention is that the students who come here constitute a big economic resource for all these businesses around here, so just look at all the eateries and all the places to shop: from RadioShack to eyeglasses to you name it, there's all kinds of things that our students, about 8,000 to 10,000 undergraduates, contribute to in this area.

We left it as that we're going to both cooperate with these agencies and we're going to work on helping secure the permits to do all these things. He wants to help us expedite things. He doesn't want anything in the city to kind of hold us up on getting these things accomplished. Getting collaboration is really important if you're going to keep your projects moving forward because all of the infrastructure work could really hold up your projects. He wanted to make sure that the CTA, city water and gas, electric, all those things that we were all going to be working together to make sure that the projects go well. He's even going to put us in touch with some developers who might want to help us develop the area around the El station.

Q: Mayor Emanuel recently made a pact with The University of Chicago creating a framework for both the city and the university to work together. Is there anything in the works for a Loyola pact? If yes, then what would this entail?

A: No, nothing special. It's a matter of keeping the lines of communication open and him telling his department heads in front of us help them get their stuff completed. The tradeoff will be their cooperation if we have to close streets, if we have to redirect traffic, they're going to be going out of their way to make sure all that stuff goes smoothly ... also, he's going to let developers that he knows what opportunities they have for coming into our area here. It's a logistical nightmare to get all these projects done - changing the El stop, for example. You can't stop people from using the El. So those are collaborations you need.

Q: How did you come to have the meeting?

A: For my first 10 years here, I met with Mayor Daley every year usually in the summer or in the fall, so about this time. And when I met Mayor Emanuel during the campaign, I suggested that those meetings continue. Apparently, he had a meeting with University of Chicago because they needed something done; they had some trouble with a project that they were doing with city agencies. So they met with him first, but that jogged his memory about DePaul and Loyola, 'I need to meet with them too.' Loyola already said we expect ... to hear from you. I said that, 'I hope to hear from you.' We have a lot of things going on that you should know about. He was very faithful to his promise. Within his first hundred days, we were in his office.