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Faculty Senate Newsletter, January 2012

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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LSU FACULTY SENATE

Monthly Newsletter

January 31, 2012



President's Message

Few would doubt that experience carries a value, yet few would be ready to accord to experience the irrationally high esteem granted it by the various units, agencies, and boards that govern and deliver higher education in Louisiana. In an educational establishment where "retire-rehire" could almost qualify as the refrain of a top-ten tune, where retreads and reassigned old hands move from juicy appointment to juicier portfolio while youngsters scramble for bread, where middle age is all but marginalized, where "double dipping" may sometimes lead to the ejection of a Commissioner but will usually create happy prosperity for everyone else in Louisiana's aging in-groups, and

where diversity concerns never stop the same old crews from staffing the same old ships, it may be time to ask whether those with experience are quite all that they are cracked up to be. If the long-serving officers who now steer Louisiana's academic ships were as clever as experience would make them seem or could make sounder policy than all others, it would be unlikely that our state would be in the mess that it is today.

Without hammering too hard at our distinguished greybeards and greybeardesses, we can surely conclude that the approach to Louisiana higher education taken by established leaders is not working. Looking at the big campus in Baton Rouge, for example, the wise and fair observer recognizes that the "Flagship Agenda" created by the ambitious Mark Emmert and then adopted by several followers has provided a rallying cry for the improvement of universities and colleges in our beleaguered state. That much is good. The ever-experienced LSU administration, however, in its enthusiasm for sports-style slogans, fast-paced promotional announcements, and gung-ho enthusiasm, routinely overlooks the down side of such campaigns, whether the alienation of those campuses that send students to the "Flagship" or the undervaluing of membership in a System or the overlooking of opportunities to cooperate with other campuses. Perhaps the most tragic oversight is the missing of the whole "Flagship" point, which is that a big research campus ought to provide leadership and fraternal support to regional institutions.

What the insider's mentality of Louisiana higher education is producing is, rather, an array of territory-defending structures that counteract any efforts at leadership. Imposing ideas about institutional preeminence from the top down causes those at the grassroots, in smaller institutions, to redirect their energies toward turf protection, with the result that programs at both the Flagship and other campuses fall into the low completer category (or worse). Students see no clear path to graduate programs and rightly wonder whether a career in academe means a life spent in calculating whether Nicholls State is producing more publications than ULM or whether both together might rival the Flagship campus. It is understandable but not admirable that lawmakers respond by creating commission after commission to study the structure of higher education with the sole (and destructive) purpose of putting every institution, whether mighty or meek, in its perceived place.

One way to counter these problems is to encourage enlightened amateurism, with an emphasis on "enlightened." Many campuses have support groups and all have management boards; most of these organizations are characterized by the worst kind of experience, lifelong wide-eyed enthusiasm. At the LSU A&M campus, for example, the Flagship Coalition wavers between a support group, a lobbyist association, and a meddling club; it does some good work but it never challenges insiders' thinking and never articulates more than a provisional list of a few ambiguous goals. Alumni groups from Shreveport to the New Orleans Lakefront seldom veer from cheering to critical thinking. Especially given the great number of Jindal appointees on management boards around the state, it is high time that the amateurs who influence higher education prove their worth by doing something other than showing how well they can agree—by thinking.

New Monthly Feature: Secrets of the Policy Statements

Louisiana higher education is awash with policy statements, policy memoranda, bylaws, constitutions, and procedures. In so vast a quasi-legal literature, anomalies and oddities are certain to occur. Beginning with this issue, the *Newsletter* will begin a monthly feature on the "secrets of the policy statements." Policy documents from all four higher education management systems and their campuses will be featured on a regular rotation.

This month, we will begin with the LSU System "permanent memorandum" dealing with travel, PM-13. PM-13 attempts to reduce the myriad of state travel regulations to a digest usable by academic professionals and pertinent to academe. In so doing, it opens a wide door to those who enjoy the admirable hobby of flying private aircraft. In some circumstances, this policy document shows, it is economically more prudent as well as a whole lot more fun to fly one's own Cessna or Piper to an academic obligation than to travel by car. Under the present regulations, travelers in Louisiana who use their own vehicles to travel to a destination may be reimbursed for only ninety-nine miles, for a sum roughly equal to \$51.48 at the standard rate of fifty-two cents per mile. At the same estimated mileage cost, however, the round trip from Baton Rouge to Alexandria costs \$143.52, yielding a net loss to the travelers of \$92.04. A traveler renting a Cessna 172 with fuel at the going rate of \$160.00 per hour could make the round trip in approximately ninety minutes, or a cost of \$240.00. For an itinerary that covered 170 air miles, the pilot-professor would receive a reimbursement of \$1.29 per mile, or \$219.30, producing a net loss of only \$20.70, thus saving \$71.34 over the car travel cost. PM-13 does require the traveler to certify that no other commercial carrier can traverse the selected itinerary, but smart bettors will put money on the proposition that no airline flies direct from, say, ULM to LaTech.

Select Departments to Begin Sharing Grade Distribution Data with Faculty

Those who wonder whether faculty governance can ever enforce its assorted dicta may take solace in the advice of the Roman satirist Horace, who counsels young poets not to rush into publication but rather to allow their productions to ripen "nine years in the drawer," to allow their works to remain in sequestration until a slightly older versifier may decide whether they were the products of a hot young brain or whether their publication really would benefit the public. In the year 2003, the LSU Faculty Senate passed [Resolution 03-04](#) under the sponsorship of the inveterate Carruth McGehee. Resolution 03-04 called for an assortment of measures relating to grading practices, including the distribution to faculty of grade distributions with overall, departmental or college or university grade distributions as benchmarks and means of comparison. Now, nine years later, selected departments at LSU are indeed releasing such data sets to the professors and instructors who generate them. Horace's "nine years in the drawer" pronouncement, we must remember, was meant to be cautionary. The witty Roman wanted to protect impetuous writers from making fools of themselves. If the intervening nine years between legislation and enforcement has led to an impulse to help faculty grade more wisely, then the ghost of Horace will surely join in the widespread applause; if, on the other hand, the goal is to begin exerting pressure to enhance graduation rates by going with the flow and passing the same number of students as everyone else, then faculty members may want to adopt a Horatian skepticism.

Diversity Report Lacks Diversity

"Units" around the state have lately developed a love of the slick, multi-color, annual or biannual "report," a lavishly produced pamphlet abounding in pictures and pie charts proclaiming an assortment of achievements and, like those annual summary letters that circulate with Christmas cards, never mentioning setbacks. Two new reports have crossed the *Newsletter* desk, the first from LSU's Diversity department and the second from the same institution's Office of Research and Economic Development. On the one hand, the diversity report is surely among the best designed and richly illustrated artifacts in the history of university publishing. Yet a close inspection of the visual record elicits curiosity. Truly a "facebook," this mini-volume features dozens, even hundreds of countenances, yet representatives of more than a few diverse groups seem to be missing. Indeed, a careful review will uncover only one possibly Hispanic person; if there are any Pacific, Asian, or Native American persons included, they are surely difficult to identify, which is odd in a book that is all about identity. This volume makes for an interesting contrast with the even more lavish report of the Office of Research and Economic Development, where splendidly arranged and emphatically colorful texts and illustrations illuminate the huge range of activities at LSU, whether the study of the insect kingdom or the tightening of the French connection or the barnyard advances of veterinary science or the mysteries of materials science. Matthew Lee and Tom Klei and their staff have scored an intellectual touchdown with the release of the best unit promotional pamphlet in the history of LSU.

ADMINISTRATOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Jason Tolliver, Director, Auxiliary Services

A university as big and complex as LSU must rely on many departments and organizations to serve the needs of its community. Because of the emphasis that people place on the name LSU and the images it conjures, the critical services these departments provide to advance the university's goals and ideals often go unrecognized. Perhaps no department embodies this dichotomy more than University Auxiliary Services, a department whose unofficial mission is 'making your tiger life easier.' Few students and faculty, for instance, have probably heard the name Jason Tolliver, the man in charge of this crucial unit.

Making the university experience easier for everyone takes a lot of elbow grease. Tolliver is in charge of everything from overseeing dining services, the Faculty Club, and the Child Care Center; to reviewing and negotiating contracts with vendors;



to managing all retail space and recruiting new businesses to campus; to managing athletic concessions. Tolliver admits juggling all of these responsibilities can be hectic. "I can go from negotiating a contract one minute to test tasting gelatto to see if we're going to sell it over in Tiger Stadium the next minute," Tolliver says with a laugh.

In a job that connects him to so many different aspects of the business side of university life, Tolliver has been involved with quite a few changes that have come to and are coming to campus. Tolliver is responsible for bringing in Ricoh Mailing Services, which began this past fall. Similarly, Tolliver had a hand in renovations to the Union Theatre, which will be hosting performances by the Ellis Marsalis Quartet as well as of *The Phantom of the*

Opera by Vox Lumiere this term. Tolliver also handled the contract that led to the new 46,000 sq. ft. bookstore being built on the site of the Old President's House across from the Union on Highland Road. Among the many new features the much larger bookstore will boast are a children's area and an Apple store. Meanwhile, much of the space in the old Bookstore will be used to relocate Career Services, which is currently split between Coates Hall and the CEBA building. In addition, a 24 hour computer lab downstairs will replace the current one on the union's third floor. Several several new shops will be added, including a salon and possibly an optical shop. Tolliver stresses that Auxiliary Services welcomes input from the LSU community on what kinds of businesses it would like on campus. "I just received a presentation this morning from a dentist who wants to open an office here," Tolliver comments.

Tolliver's business acumen and enthusiasm to serve the LSU community go back to his days as a student. A first generation college graduate from the small town of Winnsboro in Franklin Parish, Tolliver holds a B.S. in Finance and an M.P.A. from the university. Tolliver confides that his connection to LSU goes back even farther to a visit to campus with his elementary school's 4H club, during which he was given an award in the Union's Atchafayla room. Tolliver looks back on the experience fondly. "This building means a lot to me," he says sincerely.

The prospect of making life easier at a large university like LSU can be challenging, especially in the twenty first century as campuses across the country form partnerships with corporations like Barnes & Noble. Tolliver is very much aware of the role he plays in this regard: "It's being a good advocate and a times a salesperson." Yet it is clear from his good natured demeanor and love for the people that make up the LSU community that Tolliver is more than up to the task. Perhaps the biggest challenge Tolliver faces is knowing that he can't please everyone. "I would like to be able to tell everybody yes," he observes.

"I would like to be able to tell everybody yes."

LSUUnited Update

By Mike Russo

Brain work is work; don't kid yourself. Most academics may not think of themselves as labor, but if you are working for fixed wages under conditions that have been prescribed for you by someone else, you are as much a laborer as the guy popping rivets on an assembly line. And if you think your tenure system and professional rank place you on a different plane than Joe Six-Pack, talk to your colleagues across town at Southern, the ones who are all now on the chopping block. Or talk to your colleagues at Southeastern, the tenured professors who, after being laid off, were generously offered positions as instructors.

Academic work is work, no matter how much regalia you try to dress it up in. This is precisely why the LSU faculty needs a union.

Of course, at LSU, reasons for unionizing abound. Most of them seem to derive from the farcical way in which the great state of Louisiana is governed and financed. The funding of the retirement system is a case in point. This is a bifurcated system in which one side cannibalizes the other. While the side doing the cannibalizing survives in the short term, once there's nothing left to devour on the other side, both must ultimately perish. Our Faculty Senate has been working on this problem for years. Now LSUUnited is available to assist and to take direct action in the legislature. Our Legislative Contact Team is preparing for the March legislative session. Retirement is one of several issues we will be engaging.

A few things have developed in recent months, such as the endorsement of the union by the Faculty Senate. This endorsement of a resolution introduced by LSUUnited member Patrick McGee has had more than just symbolic effect: we have acquired a few new members as a result.

For the past six months, we have been working with a professional union organizer from New York, who was brought here by LAE. That experience has left us more organized and in a better position to advance our agenda and meet our goals, one of which was conducting elections. By the time you read this, we will have conducted our first election and installed our first officers. Though the union is still small, the members are committed and determined.

Our encounter with the chancellor during Fall Fest was spirited and vigorous. After several months trying to get a meeting with the chancellor, he finally came to us to express his thoughts about the university and his role in it. It was clear he wanted to discourage us. Even so, he seemed to accept our overture to work with him to address those things we agreed on, and we will be following up to see if the door he apparently opened really is. (continued on page3)

SACS/SACSCOC Institutes New Accreditation Criteria

As if the hundred or more "principles of accreditation" were not enough to keep campus-visiting committees engaged until the apocalypse, SACS/SACSCOC, the leading accrediting agency for Louisiana higher education institutions, has now developed two new regulations, designated 4.8 and 4.9. Principle 4.8, apparently triggered by expansion in online education and other forms of remote interaction with universities, requires adequate means for the verification of identity for those seeking college credit (i.e., when completing exercises leading to credit). Principle 4.9 formalizes the definition of the credit hour, proposing that one hour of instruction involve that one hour of teaching plus two hours of out-of-class study (whether homework or laboratory activity or other appropriate undertaking). The relation of principle 4.9 to federal definitions of credit hours, to definitions at play in policies around the Louisiana campuses, and to the great variety of teaching and homework that occurs in any worthy institution remains open for interpretation; we again wait for time to tell.

Carville Discusses University Governance, Consolidation on WWL

The romance between higher education decision makers and the advertising industry took a new turn as all-spinzone star James Carville visited radio powerhouse WWL, there to voice his opinions regarding [university governance](#). Hosted by a talk show jock who had trouble pronouncing the word "exigency," Carville, who developed a specialty in small numbers when vaulting Bill Clinton into the presidency with a 41% vote, complained about the proliferation of Chancellors. Speaking from an urban New Orleans venue against the alleged excess of administrators on rural campuses, Carville dissed the highly productive Eunice and Alexandria campuses, took aim at Shreveport, and voiced displeasure with the independence of the AgCenter. While arguing against what he called "fiefdoms," Carville, whose latest cultural achievement includes a cameo appearance in the admittedly wonderful new *Muppet Movie*, called for a massive consolidation of authority, including the subordination of the medical, law, and agricultural schools under the LSU A&M campus. Never one for decentralization, Carville proposed delegating the job of "training the professional class of this state" exclusively to the big house in Baton Rouge.

LSU to Spend \$100k to Deploy Task Stream for Re-Accreditation Bid

Now and then, the *Newsletter* drops its spear and instead puts up the shield for administrations hither and yon. Occasionally something does go right. Like many universities around Louisiana and indeed around the nation, LSU A&M has inked a contract to deploy a software package known as *Task Stream* to carry out an array of functions pertaining to its bid for re-accreditation by the former SACS, now (fans of Poultry Science rejoice!) SACSCOC. Rumors ran rampant on the LSU campus that the administration had dropped a big dollop of money into the Task Stream cash flow, with estimates ranging into the seven-figure range. It turns out that the actual price for the three-year contract comes in around \$100K, which, considering the time and with that payroll saved, is rather a drop in the bucket than a gash in the cash tank. A conservative estimate of 10,000 usages over three years (by all departments and units in the university) would bring the cost down to ten cents per click, and probably a lot less if clicks multiply, as they likely shall.

TaskStream
Advancing Educational Excellence

LSUnited Update (continued)

The chancellor has persisted in opposing payroll deduction for dues collection. In spite of that, we have begun collecting dues by other means, and the majority of our original members have stayed in the organization in spite of this added financial burden. This is dedication to a cause. Besides, the dues are tax deductible.

Our open letter to the state decrying its failure to prioritize higher education appeared in [The Advocate](#) as well as three other newspapers around the state and was distributed nationally. We will certainly be seeking as many mass media forums as possible to bring campus and educational issues to the public and to raise our profile in the consciousness of decision makers.

And along those lines, LSUnited will be there when the new legislative session opens to advocate for LSU and the faculty. Rather than expressing appreciation to an indifferent governor that budget cuts were not as bad as they could have been, we will be lobbying the legislature to put that funding back and to protect it constitutionally. Our legislative initiatives are still in process, but you will hear more about them the closer we get to the legislative session.

Being a member of a union is a little like buying an insurance policy. Without union backing, when you find yourself in conflict with the administration, you are alone in that fight. As a union member, not only do you have colleagues who will rally to your support, you have access to legal resources you might not have otherwise.

The union needs your support so that it can support you. In an organizational behemoth like LSU, individuals don't count. As the patriots of 1776 proved, there is strength in union.

Janet Zadina Gives Colorful Lecture on Retention Strategies at Winter Meeting



Janet Zadina

Educators throughout Louisiana continue to look for that magic mix of instructional methods that will maintain academic standards while retaining enough students to meet the LA GRAD Act criteria and thereby earn administrative autonomy and economic incentives. So it was that the appearance of UNO Professor and Tulane researcher Janet Zadina on the LSU campus drew a huge crowd even in the middle of the winter break. Sonny and Cher may have complained about an excess of mental input when reporting that “drums keep pounding a rhythm to my brain,” but Zadina chose not to take so aggressive an approach to the hammering in of knowledge, offering a variety of offbeat strategies to synchronize learning with students' cerebral cycles. Zadina involved audience members in some novel exercises not altogether outside the pop music sphere, demonstrating, for example, how quickly one learns about infectious diseases by a summary of leprosy symptoms set to the tune of the Beatles hit *Yesterday* and how readily the accepted model of star formation conforms to the tune of *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* (there's one for music history as Mozart strikes again!). Zadina also recommended that students take a lesson from the impressionists by drawing professors' lessons rather than recording them in non-photogenic prose. We await the results.

Governor's Proposal to Revamp Retirement Plan Built on Deceptive Ideology; Unfairly Burdens Higher Education Retirees

No one doubts that the state retirement plans need immediate repair and revision or that the unfunded accrued liability (UAL) is spinning wildly out of control while eating not only faculty lunch but breakfast and dinner as well. Nevertheless, some features of governor Bobby Jindal's plan to tamp down the UAL give reason for pause. Most startling is Jindal's proposal to offer cost-of-living adjustments only “when we have enough assets on hand to pay all the retirement benefits already promised”—which, in a word, will be never. Elimination of “COLA's (cost-of-living adjustments) amounts to a kind of reverse tax on retirees in which inflation and the accompanying (apparent, inflated) asset value growth reduces the effective payout to pensioners while capital gain circulates back into the retirement funds. Second, Jindal's claim that raising the retirement age does not decrease benefits is false, for it deprives retirees of two years or payments. Finally, the Jindal proposal to increase employee contributions from 8% to 11% constitutes a selective tax on those who already work at substandard wages in the service of the state—a state which shares in the benefit produced by those workers. Also worthy of note is Jindal's exclusion from this austerity plan of K–12 educators and emergency responders and his inclusion of higher education personnel (who will, under the present arrangement, continue disproportionately subsidizing the payouts to K–12 retirees). Despite its “tea party” connections, the Jindal administration thus imposes a taxation without representation on Louisiana's most freethinking citizens. Faculty and administrators, however, may also learn from this latest erosion of their post-retirement stipends. Participants in the state “optional retirement plan” (“ORP”) have crusaded since 2009 for a complete overhaul of pension plans for professionals and for exemption from an unfunded liability that its members did not create and that was illegally entailed on a putative independent plan. Participants in the defined-benefit plan, colloquially known as “TRSL,” have been slow to join the campaign owing to a belief that TRSL benefits would not be affected by the UAL or by the levies that ORP members pay to reduce it. It is now clear that defined-benefit, “TRSL” participants will suffer from the poor quality of retirement plans to an equal or even greater degree than ORP members. TRSL members would be well advised to mobilize.

Regents Take Hard Line on LSUE Performance Results

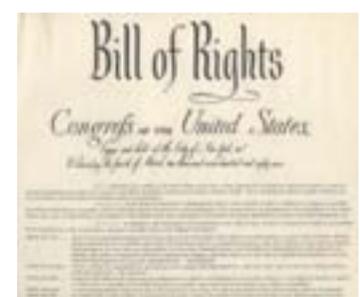
Those who study literary history know that tragic heroes generally aren't such bad guys (or gals, in the case of Antigone and a few others)—that they often come to their unfortunate ends through either fresh ambition that runs aground in a stale world or through the expectation that merit will be rewarded rather than condemned. So it is that LSU in Eunice and its mirthful but also meditative Chancellor, Bill Nunez, received the blunt end of a mixed message from the Board of Regents. Nunez, it seems, erred in setting performance goals that were too high, with the result that his campus fell short of the bar, triggering funding restrictions under LA GRAD Act criteria. LSU System President John Lombardi went to bat for LSUE, but the folks downtown at least seemed not to budge from a fundamentalist, literalist approach to LA GRAD Act strictures. Thus emerged a curious mixed message: be ambitious and boost educational standards and productivity but play it safe lest soaring ambition lead to a hard fall. Perhaps that is why Louisiana is always hovering around the 60th percentile, just above the threshold of ambition but well below both excellence and danger.

LSUHSC-Shreveport Study Suggests University Salaries Averages Far Below Average

History more often than not confirms our cultural and geographical prejudices. Time and again, innovation has stormed down from the north, whether with Alexander the Great as he rampaged out of Macedonia or with the old Northern Alliance as it swept down into pre-war Afghanistan. Once again the north is leading the way as an ad hoc group of faculty activists at the northern medical campus, the LSUHSC-Shreveport, has begun a study of faculty and staff compensation and pay policies at Louisiana campuses. Having gathered data from a variety of campuses and departments whose activities graze the disciplines of medicine, chemistry, biology, veterinarianism, and food science, this new northern alliance has already discovered that Louisiana schools are running \$20 to \$30K behind the salary averages for each and every rank at each kind of institution. Evidence is suggesting that some schools may have fudged salary data by drawing putatively statewide data from some of the A&M campuses and then creating spurious averages. The project is the beginning of a larger undertaking, encouraged by ALFS (the Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates) to examine compensation policies around the state.

Higher Ed Commissioner Proposes Faculty Rights Discussion

Although the Board of Regents attracts criticism as readily as a nail attracts a hammer, not everything in the Claiborne Building comes as a knock in the head (or in a worse location, depending on one's political posture). In a bold move that belies the devil-may-or-may-not-care attitude of some state decision-makers toward their faculty betters, Commissioner Purcell has borrowed from that successful quarterback of political theory, Thomas Jefferson (as well as from his favorite receiver, James Madison) and has proposed a “faculty bill of rights” by way of restoring, preserving, and advancing the prerogatives and liberties of professional persons in the employ of Louisiana educational institutions. Purcell invited ALFS Vice-President Kevin Cope to a preliminary planning meeting to discuss four categories of faculty rights (and sometimes needs): those pertaining to economic, facility, and resource provisions; those concerned with management of institutions; those pertaining to academic pursuits and the freedoms appertaining thereto; and those that count as fundamental, whether absolutely or as preconditions to the other liberties. In a wide-ranging discussion that touched on a variety of allied issues, Purcell showed readiness to open what is, in Louisiana, a new world of faculty dignity. Let us hope that he prevails and overcomes, if not the renowned madness of King George III, then perhaps the blunders of the two Bobs.



Senator Nevers off to Never-Never Land

The latest legislative committee assignments have emerged from the capitol. Sadly but not unexpectedly, a great friend of education, Senator Ben Nevers, a Democrat, has been ejected from the Senate Education Committee. Senator Dan Claitor and possibly Senator Eric LaFleur bode fair to offer friendly support to higher education. The others may now choose whether or not they seek the favorable judgment of generous professionals.

Moving from Judicial to Educational: Addressing Student Behavior in Today's Academic Climate

By D. Matthew Gregory, PhD, Associate Dean/Director;
Student Advocacy & Accountability

Two recent books have me thinking about the future direction of student conduct administration in today's educational climate. In her book, *The Trials of Academe: The New Era of Campus Litigation*, Amy Gajda (2009) explores the litigious nature of higher education. Specifically, how legal matters pertain to the academy and regularly involve both faculty and students. Gajda presents a compelling and humorous case to support the notion that the higher education environment is not immune to lawsuits. As a means to avoid litigation, Gajda recommends the use of mediation and conflict resolution strategies as a viable alternative to legal action. In another book, *Foundations of Higher Education Law & Policy: Basic Legal Rules, Concepts, and Principles for Student Affairs* represents a legal guide of sorts for higher education student services professionals (Lake, 2011). In this book, Peter F. Lake argues in support of a more educational student adjudication process as opposed to a criminal court-like process to include court-like terminology (judge, counsel, guilty, not guilty, etc.). Essentially, both works support the notion of grounding student behavior correction in a student growth process as opposed to that of what could be interpreted as a punitive process and as associated with the familiar court process. As a student services administrator, a former adjunct faculty member, and an education administration scholar, I also prefer the educational approach. An approach designed to educate and foster developmental growth through a balance of both challenge and support (Sanford, 1960). Additionally, I feel it is important to have a process inclusive of policies that reflect the mission of the academy and outcomes that maintain some resemblance of consistency. A delicate balance must be achieved between a need to foster student growth while maintaining high academic standards. For degrees to mean something, degrees must not be devalued by dismissing issues of behavioral and academic integrity under the guise of cognitive growth, skill acquisition, or development growth. From my experience as a student conduct specialist for almost 16 years, students wish to be heard, wish to be understood, and more times than not are accepting of responsibility. Achieving these outcomes, however, is not simple. These outcomes take time, patience, due diligence, procedural fairness, respect, trust, and a desire to explore the gray areas of student choices. I have had too many instances where a given student informed me that I was ruining his/her life but then visited again a few years removed to inform me that he/she would not be graduating if it were not for the accountability matter. Trends in student conduct administration, much like many fields, is cyclical. The notion of being more educational, communal, and student growth focused is not new (i.e. John Dewey). We in higher education appear to be positioned in the middle of yet another paradigmatic shift toward a more educational and socially just accountability process. As a result, Nevitt Sanford's tenant of presenting students with a balance of both challenge and support continues to be applicable in today's academic environment and is far from court-like.

Southeastern Provost Attempts to Align Tenure Evaluation with LAGrad Act Criteria

If anyone doubted that pressure from the LAGRAD Act would impact not only top-level administrators but indeed everyone in academe, that misconception vanished when Southeastern Louisiana University Provost Tammy Bourg pulled a rather squirrely rabbit out of the hat, creating, ex nihilo, a committee to "align" tenure, evaluation, and promotion criteria with LA GRAD Act criteria. In a memo now available on the [LSU Faculty Senate website](#), Bourg advised the confected committee that to "assure that all University personnel discharge their job responsibilities in a way that is consistent with the performance expectations established for the University, relevant GRAD Act performance standards should be incorporated into extant employee evaluation processes." Considering that the LA GRAD Act emphasizes retention and graduation rates, it is unlikely that this mandate is intended to encourage rigor in grading practices or curriculum development or to promote free evaluation of academic policy by untenured professionals. The LSU Faculty Senate has already responded to this initiative by passing a [resolution](#) entitled "Distinguishing Faculty Evaluation Criteria from LAGRAD Standards" that forbids such linkage on the LSU campus and roundly condemning the SELU administration. Other campuses will be preparing similar resolutions forthwith.

Noel Collection, LSUS Archival Materials to be Digitized, Shared Through the Cloud



Example of Antiquarian Natural History Illustration in The Noel Collection

Followers of Louisiana history and book lovers alike will delight at news of major projects initiated by faculty activists and bibliographical experts Robert C. Leitz and Laura McLemore. Leitz, the Curator of the gigantic yet underappreciated Noel Collection, the rare book library on the campus of LSU in Shreveport, has, along with LSU Faculty Senate President Kevin Cope, announced plans for an ambitious expansion of the online Noel Collection image gallery, an array of historical visuals drawn from seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries books and bibliographical novelties. On the docket for Leitz and Cope are enlargements of the online portrait gallery, a widely used assemblage of images of notable historical personages, and the recording and release of all images in the centuries-long run of *The Gentlemen's Magazine*, that pioneering periodical that continues to exert its influence on publications such as this newsletter. Meanwhile, McLemore, the author of the list of contradictions and inconsistencies in [Louisiana higher education policy](#), has written a grant seeking a top-level scanning machine that will allow for the digital recording of the fragile historical materials in the LSUS archive, many of them one-of-a-kind sources, documents, and images pertinent to the history of northern Louisiana. When complete, Leitz's and McLemore's offerings will reside in the computing "cloud," in servers accessible to everyone from everywhere. Congratulations to Leitz and McLemore in this first step toward cloud computing in the humanities, indeed cumulonimbus-level service to the digital cultural history of our state.

LSU UCW Soliticing Faculty Governance Members



The LSU University Council on Women ("UCW") under the leadership of Maribel Dietz has taken a bold step forward by seeking faculty governance representation in its ranks. To date, the UCW, which considers topics such as child care, family leave, and overall gender equity as well as issues pertaining specifically to women colleagues, has included faculty members on an informal basis. Surfing the new wave of growing faculty governance even before the swell develops, Dietz has asked the LSU Faculty Senate to nominate an LSU Faculty Senator for an allocated seat on her council. The first occupant of that seat is likely to be Agriculture professor Jeff Davis (subject to ratification from the LSU Office of Academic Affairs, which is expected) with Faculty Senator Graham Bodie as alternate, backup appointee.

Selective Retention Raises for Top Level Administrators Produce Copy Cat Phenomena at Sister Campuses

The *Newsletter* has previously reported that the Regents authorized selective retention raises (perhaps not recognizing that such raises tend to favor the ambitious and disloyal rather than the sedulous servants of the state). The spectacular results of that loophole in the state's austerity program are already appearing, predictably enough at the medical campus. LSUHSC-New Orleans doled out a \$53,000.00 raise, hurtling its recipient over the \$400K level while drawing the financing from something called the "faculty income plan" (no sign-up instructions for that juicy plan were offered). Meanwhile, LSUHSC-Shreveport relieved the burden of "additional duties and responsibilities" imposed on its Vice-Chancellor for Administration with a whopping 25% or \$70,000.00 holiday increment.

Rare Mark Catesby Image Finds Way onto Greeting Card

Patrons of the stationery section of upper-end victualer The Fresh Market were delighted to discover an implicit commemoration of Louisiana's rare book rooms and other archive sources. There, alongside the veggies, fruits, and flowers, was a greeting card featuring an image of the greater flamingo from eighteenth-century explorer, cartographer, and natural historian Mark Catesby. Catesby's early eighteenth-century *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands*, which covers what we now call Louisiana as well as the titular states and regions, was published in two versions: one a value-priced black-and-white version and one with exquisite watercolor renderings of southeastern flora and fauna. Of those hand-colored versions, only fifty were ever produced, and only a paucity remain. One of those few treasures resides in the Hill Memorial Library. And so we have another evidence that the world appreciates what we have more than do many citizens of our under-informed state.



Letter to the Editor: Re Penn State

By Chad Seifried, Assistant Professor of Kinesiology

As a Penn State alum and native of State College, PA, I wanted to express my displeasure with the latest Faculty Senate newsletter released on December 9th, 2011. Specifically, I do not care for the language which identified the unfortunate sexual abuse case at Penn State as a "Penn State" episode. I believe it was a poor choice of words and more consideration should be shown in the future about how notes of interest to the faculty are delivered. I understand this small point of interest was related to how Human Resources would handle sexual abuse but by limiting and connecting sexual abuse to Penn State, the institution was unfairly stigmatized for the poor choices of a few administrators.

I would like to note that I have heard poor jokes at LSU that PSU stands for "Pedophile State University." Furthermore, I experienced uncomfortable glares and sneers as I wear my Penn State apparel around campus. When I went home for the holidays others associated with Penn State (i.e., alumni, fan nation, State College community, etc.) also shared that they too felt they did not deserve recognition or the unfair labels propagated by those outside the institution that we [i.e., Penn State] are supporters of child abuse. To address concern, I want to defend my institution and educate the people at LSU about how we should aspire to be "Penn State" in so many other ways and seek out activities which will help us improve our products and services.

Roughly 25 years ago Penn State committed to being recognized as one of the nation's top public universities, a similar goal within LSU's Flagship Agenda today. Penn State has been able to achieve this objective through a variety of accomplishments. For example, according to the August 26th, 2011 issue of *The Chronicle of Education*, Penn State's \$753 million in "Total Research and Development Expenditures for Science and Engineering" ranked 9th in the country for FY 2009. This kind of investment along with previous others to the institution has led to incredible facility construction projects which have transformed the campus and its various academic programs. The investment and results have allowed the university to recruit and produce the most Fulbright Scholars of any faculty in the country for the 2011-2012 academic year into an environment which welcomes their presence and supports their teaching, research, and service ambitions. These resources further trickled down into 32 doctoral programs which now rank in the top 10% of programs in their field according to a 2010 study by the National Research Council. The undergraduate and masters students produced at the institution are also reflective of this investment as a September 2010 issue of *The Wall Street Journal* suggested. Specifically, Penn State was identified as the top university by corporate recruiters because Penn State graduates are "Bright, well-rounded students...with the core competencies we desire." Appropriately, Penn State today ranks within top 1% of all higher education institutions worldwide according to the October 2011 edition of *The Times Higher Education*. We should call on our institution and state to invest more heavily into us and keeping our talents as well as recruiting new ones so that one day we might say "We are" LSU!

Provost Creates Founding Dean Position Ex-Nihilo and Without Faculty Governance Input

The only thing more unpredictable than the name of a new, consolidated college at LSU is the procedure for appointing its leadership. In a brief situation comedy worthy of *McHale's Navy*, the LSU Faculty Senate Executive Committee reminded the LSU Provost that Dean's positions at LSU were appointments of interest throughout the university (owing to the material role played by deans in university-wide decision and owing to faculty concern for the quality and character of the administration as a whole), whereupon the Provost genially agreed to consult with Faculty Senate leadership henceforward on the formation of search committees for all positions at the rank of dean or higher. Two hours later, alas, that promising position had been reversed owing to a theory that members of a college would resent interference from outsiders. Then, days later, along came the announcement that Laura Lindsay, who has served the University with grace and distinction but who has fallen into an awkward position vis-a-vis faculty prerogatives, had been converted from an "interim dean" to a "founding dean," a post not mentioned in any policy documents in either the LSU System or LSU campus codices. A later LSU [press release](#) explained events with respect to passion, with the Provost reporting that "we" (whoever that may be) "feel" that a year of stabilization would make the post more attractive to future dean candidates.

Memorial Plaza, Crenellations to be Added to Tiger Stadium



Tiger Stadium Plaza

Those who have wandered about Bavaria have doubtless gaped in amazement at the architectural follies of kooky King Ludwig, builder of Neuschwanstein Castle, the grandiose historical fantasy that became the bricks-and-mortar exemplum for Cinderella's Castle at the Disney theme parks. Those who have followed Ludwig's other architectural ambles know that the mad monarch had a taste for heroes and what he fancied to be immortal fame, with the result that he built more than a few halls of fame, palaces for porcelain heroes, and other display cases worthy of a Curley Hallman or a Sparky Wade. Now those enthusiasts for immortal fame who have deep pockets and heaven-cast eyes will be funding a new plaza along

the north side of Tiger Stadium, Huey Long's historically nostalgic memorial to the gladiators and other roughhewn Roman role models. Approved at the December LSU System Board of Supervisors meeting and coming at a cost of \$7,000,000.00 (an amount roughly equal to the mid-year budget cut at the A&M campus), the new ambulatory of athletic achievement will feature an unspecified number of memorial arches, each celebrating some man, woman, or moment in the archive of athletic excellence. Paris itself will reel in jealousy as LSU unveils not only one, but a dozen, Arcs de Triomphe. Meanwhile, other, even more ambitious plans are afoot for the top of Tiger Stadium, where new fencing will be installed (presumably to guard against excess enthusiasm by the pole vaulters on the track team) and where purple and gold uplighting will challenge the heavens with beams from the parapets of play.

LSUnited to Hold First Elections

LSUnited, the fledgling union for Louisiana's higher education professionals, took another step in its accelerating maturation process by announcing elections for its first governing board. Candidates include Patrick McGee, running unopposed for President; Wilfred E. Major for Vice-President; Anna Nardo for Secretary; and Jorge Morales and Mike Russo for Treasurer. Be sure to tune in at LSUnited's new [Facebook page](#).

Chef Folse Lends Name to Online Marketing

Louisiana higher education recently discovered that the pathway to preeminence can pass over the Cajun countertops as the nominal founder and longtime patron of Nicholls's distinguished John Folse [Culinary Institute](#) emerged as a sidebar endorser in one of America's leading cookware catalogues. Following the advice of William D'Avenant to divide his attention between the court and the camp, celebrity chef John Folse, appeared in camouflage but maneuvering among the economic big boys, popped up in recent issues of [Chefs Catalog](#) as an endorser for Lodge cast iron cookware and, better, as an advocate for smothered chicken with butter beans. Congratulations to Nicholls State on creating an alliance with industry that brings pleasure.



Pizzeria Review Downgrade-Upgrade Report

Readers of the Holiday 2011 issue of *The Faculty Senate Monthly Newsletter* were treated to a panoramic review of the principle pizzerias of the Baton Rouge area in the hope that those in the ever-offbeat intellectual caste who might be at loose ends during the holidays could at least pass Christmas over a perfect piece of pepperoni pie. Since the publication of that review, two majors changes have occurred in the world of plentiful Parmesan. On the down side, the former Louisiana Pizza Kitchen, now the LPK Bar and Grill, seems to have undergone a management change and with that to have dropped in class. Linen tablecloths have been replaced with dingy beige oilcloth, free baked bread and fragrant olive oil for dipping have been withdrawn from the tables, wait staff has lost discipline (indeed, seems to do nothing but sweep and wipe in anticipation of early departure), and courses arrive lukewarm (a recent visit resulted in the return of two out of four dishes). On the up side, the curious but promising (if overpriced) Oscar's Pizza and Ice Cream Joint has been sold to the ambitious young chef who operates Nino's Italian Restaurant at the busy corner of Bluebonnet and Perkins. Said chef has reportedly worked transformative wonders at his first, formerly in-groupish bistro, and so we are hopeful that he will move the experimental if not always successful Oscar's in new directions.

Facility Naming Trend Approaches Game Show Proportions

Campuses all over the state are cashing in on the facilities naming opportunity market. Top naming event of this month: "Mark and Judy Weaver Ideation Lab." Runner-up: "John C. Hamilton Family IT Technical Storage Repair Bay."

HRM Matters

By A.G. Monaco

If you are from my part of the world it takes a little imagination to consider L.S.U. as an urban campus. Any native New Yorker (I mean the city not the Canadian suburbs above Yonkers) will tell you that if you have to drive to a place called Prairieville for a decent slice of Pizza you don't live in much of a city. Still there are segments of Baton Rouge trying very hard to impress us with their big city talents.

Baton Rouge's criminal element competes well against their colleagues in far larger cities in terms of productivity. The number of assaults, robberies, and murders in Baton Rouge betray its "bucolic" nature and present all the challenges of a big city without the troublesome aspects of too many exciting cultural opportunities.

Our campus is statistically quite safe but that does not equate to guaranteeing your personal safety. Somewhat knowledgeable about the performance of campus public safety I am quite confident in the abilities of the LSU-PD to provide a high level of public safety. They are however not our personal bodyguards. In the end personal safety is our own responsibility.

We need to ensure our personal safety by learning and practicing good personal safety habits. This includes securing our offices when we are not there as well as when we are. It means not leaving our personal property unattended. It also means paying attention to our surroundings, particularly during those times when campus is less populated, and it means reporting situations and people who appear out of place or who seem confrontational or acting strangely. At night be more cautious and hold off listening to the greatest hits of Rachmaninoff (or if you prefer Bob Marley and the Wailers) on your Iphone until you get in your car or building. While technology has made the pleasures of music and communication more convenient it can also shut us off from our surroundings and dull our instincts.

I am not saying that we should stop trusting those we know and no longer be welcoming to those we do not know. In no way do I want to erect an altar in my office to a Communist Dictator and suggest that we develop a network of informers. I am however recommending that we all utilize the services of the LSU-Police Department on campus by reporting those situations and people who make us feel unsafe. Most importantly simply being aware that danger can find anyone goes a long way to helping you avoid it— be aware of your surroundings, particularly at night, and be alert to problems. If you think an area is unsafe, avoid it. And when it is unavoidable seek a colleague's company or police assistance.

Finally, find out who has unfettered access to your work area. Within your department or building question the distribution of keys. Ask about when outside doors are locked and make sure that the building's keys are secured and not distributed too widely or without appropriate oversight. Both the Chief of Police and the Executive Director of Facility Services are exploring better ways to control unauthorized access while creating a minimum of disruption to comfort of all employees. Demanding proper key control within your building would go a long way to helping them.

If the staff of Human Resources Management can assist you in any way to improve your safety on campus please contact me. There are a lot of smart people working at LSU so I am betting we can find a way to improve our personal safety while still keeping our shoes on.

By the time of publication a number of news articles will be written about the Governor's recommendations for pension reform. At this time we are working closely with Professor Cope and his colleagues on the Faculty Senate to decipher what challenges and opportunities we will be afforded. So next month we most likely will be back on the subject of pensions.

NCHEMS Report Raises Hackles

Considerable press attention has gone to the recent NCHEMS (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems) report, but little has been exerted in figuring out who or what NCHEMS really is or who supports or subsidizes it. Certainly the NCHEMS website offers precious little information. What can be deduced is that it is something of a hothouse organization funded by large but remote charitable organizations such as the Ford Foundation and staffed by experts from western states with questionable academic traditions, an assortment of unnamed policymakers and executives, and an array of consultants with minimal long-term records in any one venue. Similarly, the NCHEMS report on Louisiana higher education abounds in what Republican strategists once called waffling, what with calls to put the regional universities in one homogenous system while at the same time reserving special super-regional status for the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and for Louisiana Tech. Some of the suggestions, including a one-month turnaround time for development and deployment of curricula tuned to specific, fluctuating workforce needs could only have emerged from an organization long on thought but very short on experience.

New Residence Hall Design Short of the Mark

Animated by a commitment to the improvement of on-campus life, LSU Vice-Chancellor for Student Life and Enrollment Services Kurt Keppler scored a big bucket with the approval by the LSU Supervisors of the schematic design for a new 350-bed residence facility for the LSU campus, near what is now the Hart parking lot. Aware that on-campus residence promotes retention and graduation, Keppler has slogged through the usual obstacles to reach the beginning point of a major facilities advance. Not so successful is the design of the building, which features three main structures but which falls short of a three-point shot, looking for all the world like an array of Wehrmacht barracks (LSU has yet to come to grips with the origins of its architecture in the unsavory ideologies of the early twentieth century). A visit to the web site of the architects, Hanbury Evans Wright Vlattas, shows that this firm is more than capable of designing a modern building but that it must have been pressured by locals to come up with more of the same old gunk. Nevertheless, an ambitious building that promotes not only residential life but identification with campuses is just what every Louisiana school needs.



EBR Sewer Commission Agrees to Upgrade Campus Plumbing System



Those who have followed with amused delight LSU Chancellor Mike Martin's quest to find a donor willing to apply his or her resources and name to a new sewer system for LSU could only rejoice along with the man from Minnesota when the LSU Board of Supervisors

approved a right-of-way agreement allowing the East Baton Rouge Sewerage Commission to do at least part of the dirty work by running a new sewerage main through the A&M campus as well as some A&M holdings around Baton Rouge. Those who follow professional wrestling know that The Rock applies such post-socialist tags to his "holds" as "the people's elbow," and so with this acceptance of metropolitan charity Mike Martin has at last procured "the people's pipe."

Faculty Senate Exe Committee Investigating Graduate Faculty, Student Compensation Issues

Under the leadership of Faculty Senate Executive Committee members George Stanley and Bill Daly, the LSU Faculty Senate is pursuing help and clarification with several economic issues bearing on graduate education. The first of these matters is that of supervision of tuition-paying students during the summer without extra pay; the second is eligibility for in-state tuition for graduate students receiving private support; the third is fringe benefit assessment during the summer on those who have already paid assessments during their normal nine-month employment period; and the fourth is the tendency of compensation models to encourage the hiring of research associates, who may work up to forty hours per week, rather than graduate assistants, who may work only twenty. To date, the Executive committee has received good cooperation from the administration.

New Commencement Regalia Turns Heads

The December 2011 degree conferral (commencement) ceremonies marked the debut of LSU's new purple-and-gold commencement regalia. Drawing rave reviews and eliciting thousands of photographs, the regalia marked the beginning of a new era in Louisiana commencements. It is hoped that campuses around the state will take advantage of the design resources provided by regalia manufacturers to upgrade commencements from Shreveport to Thibodaux. See the beautiful pictures online!

Feeling Heat, TRSL Turns to Survey Monkey

In what is surely the grandest understatement of the new millennium, the Teachers' Retirement System of Louisiana ("TRSL") has undertaken a customer service satisfaction survey among its ORP (optional retirement account) clients. Considering that the TRSL will not even allow ORP account holders to vote in its elections and considering that TRSL chief Maureen Westgard has unflinchingly testified, in legislative hearings, against the requests and proposals of professors, this bargain-basement survey on the Survey Monkey platform comes a bit late in the game. Especially notable is the announcement that such a survey "allows us [TRSL] to share your opinion with your ORP provider." That would be an example of passing the buck were it not the case that fifty-four cents of every dollar paid to TRSL ends up in the unfunded accrued liability or in management fees.

Lombardi Mesmerizes OLLI with Athletics Insights



In an example of community outreach and the embrace of older Americans, LSU System President John Lombardi spoke to members of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, which held its January meeting at the First Christian Church just down the street from Whole Foods. Speaking with his characteristic wit and energy from a rostrum decked in brilliant orange carpet (perhaps so as not to outdo Lombardi's red-carpet-quality address), the piquant President dazzled an audience of experienced hands with his insights into the intricacies and the underpinnings of intercollegiate athletics. Among Lombardi's most acrobatic intellections were his discovery that Ivy League institutions such as Harvard had a much higher ratio of stadium seats to students than the average bigtime, land-grant football research school and his mind-bending explanation that student athletes are indeed paid in the currency of premium facilities and marquee coaches, remuneration that amplifies their options for future athletic careers (the suggestion that coaches' pay ultimately is student pay makes Ripley's Believe-It-Or-Not look like kid stuff). In one of those miracles of public administration that we read about in motivational treatises, Lombardi entered a room full of skeptical elders but left the room applauded by rejuvenated enthusiasts. The full house churned up question after question as Lombardi's cultural as well as economic analysis of the history of college sports opened eyes and cured error.

Top Louisiana Administrators Weathering Financial Storm Comfortably via Emoluments

Ever wonder how much shared sacrifice and doing more with less is going on at the top of Louisiana's administrations? And who is paying whom? One lesson to be learned from Louisiana's schools of Mass Communication is the importance of using source materials accurately as well as forcefully. Investigative reporting using such reputable sources as Forbes Magazine and the EDGAR filing system of the Security and Exchange Commission reveals that LSU Provost John Maxwell Hamilton is showing leadership in the compensation category, having drawn, according to the SEC, a 2010 corporate director's compensation package worth \$101,825.00. From Forbes we learn that 2009 was an even better year, with a total compensation package of \$138,876.00; 2008 and 2007 were not shabby either, coming in respectively at \$95,702.00 and a whopping \$210,439.00, all paid by Lamar Advertising, of which Flagship Coalition Chair Sean Reilly serves as President. With its numerous rectangular billboards around America, Lamar has made symmetry a specialty, and so it is that Reilly's salary is recommended by the Lamar board's compensation committee, of which Hamilton is a member.

Regents, Board of Supervisors Emergency Project Lists Offer a Ray of Sunshine

Winter is the season for the release of capital outlay priority lists, which govern the order in which major, tangible projects and possessions are built, procured, or repaired. At the peak of the administrative pyramid, on the Regents' list, the top five emergency projects include the ADA compliance project at McNeese State University; re-roofing and other safety repairs statewide; electrical upgrades at LSUHSC-Shreveport; emergency library deficiency corrections at Grambling State University; and Long-Jones Hall renovation at Grambling. The top five emergency projects on the LSU Board of Supervisors' list include the electrical system upgrade for LSUHSC-Shreveport; the LSU A&M sewer line; and replacement of hospital equipment at three sites, viz., LSUHSC-Shreveport, E. A. Conway, and Huey P. Long hospitals. Both lists also prioritize continuing, revenue self-generating, and continuing projects. The lists are surprisingly reasonable given the unreasonable conditions in which most schools must operate; congratulations are due to the Regents as well as to the other management boards.

LIFESTYLE FEATURE

The Grand Boulevards of Louisiana

When thinking of the great streets associated with French cultures, cognoscenti tend to recall Paris, with its grand boulevards and frenzied traffic circles directing all the world's peoples to all the world's shopping. What unduly humble Louisianians forget, however, is that our state abounds with magnificent non-freeway boulevards, with big and long streets that abut as many choices in the panoply of human options as do the avenues transecting France's radiant capitol. Legendary newsman Walter Cronkite was accustomed to concluding his broadcasts with the line "that's the way it is [on this, that, or the other date]." Cronkite limited himself to the events of one day; Louisiana's boulevards, however, tell us the way it is in Louisiana, not only on Tuesday or Wednesday but, if not for all time, then at least for a good long while. Staffed by veteran travelers, the Newsletter would like to recommend several of the most revealing drives in old Louis's province: streets not characterized by beauty so much as by epiphanic value.

When probing far southeast Louisiana, the twin spans of Highway 1 and its clone Highway 308 from Larose to Grand Isle offer an incomparable display of nautical wonders and hybrid land-sea transportation modalities. Fans of James Bond and his amphibian vehicles will enjoy the sensation of the land seeming gradually falling away from under the tires and giving way to octopus-like jetties, to berms supporting roads that seem to run straight into Neptune's kingdom. Colorful shrimp boats line the bayou betwixt the two roads until Highway 308 falls away, leaving only Highway 1 to surge out to Port Fourchon and then on to Grand Isle, where a birding sanctuary annually receives the "fall out" of migratory birds arriving from their long and foodless sojourn across the Gulf of Mexico. But spectacular and legendary Grand Isle, a kind of living, mercantile-culture-enhanced super-sponge, is not the only destination for drivers in the southeast. What might be called the "Houma-Thibodaux Expressway," modest Highway 24 offers a more accessible window on Acadiana (Grand Isle, after all, is nearly a four-hour drive from Baton Rouge). After completing the journey from Baton Rouge as far as Thibodaux, and after having passed such legendary establishments as D&D Decorative Concrete, where giant concrete polychrome bears and tigers tower over miniature St. Francis figurines, the driver may sheer off in a southerly direction, passing the first of two of the co-cathedrals, that of Thibodaux and that of Houma, which Highway 24 connects. The cathedral in Thibodaux, with its Spanish gothic facade, its reliquaries, and its polychrome saint figures, is more than worthy of a visit; its ungainly counterpart in Houma is somewhat less so, although the latter suggests the dark and mysterious dimensions of Cajun spirituality. (continued on page 8)

Online Countdown Timers Added to Senate Website

The LSU Faculty Senate website is now offering an array of online countdown times indicating the time remaining until an assortment of legislative, economic, personnel, and campus events. Countdown clocks have been prepared for events ranging from the start of the next legislative session to the next opportunity for football coaches to collect post-season bonuses. Monitor the progress toward events on the dedicated web page. Ideas for more events are gladly solicited.

Catering Services Implements Rigid Advance Notice Policy

Fans of the hit Food Network show *Chopped* will be terrified to hear that a policy of unknown origin has forced LSU Catering Services to put flexibility on the chopping block. Effective immediately, approved AS499 forms must be submitted to the *brigade de cuisine* no less than three business days prior to the catered event—otherwise, would-be diners will be chopped. Why it is that, in an age of instant electronic data flow, so vast an incubation period should be required remains more unexplained than even Bigfoot.

Rainwater Portrait Provides Cautionary Lesson Against Privatizing OGB

Those familiar with the efforts to privatize the Office of Group Benefits, which, through good management, has accumulated a half-billion dollar reserve by which to fund employee medical care and other insurance, will not want to forget that art-historical moment in which Commissioner of Administration Paul Rainwater posed for his "state portrait" in the hoosegow after being apprehended for reckless operation of a vehicle and DWI first offense. By way of advancing the history of portraiture and of acquainting readers with the character of their officials as disclosed by apt imagery, the Newsletter offers this portrait in courage here.



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Staff Senate President Now Obligated to Pay for Post-Season Football Tickets and Accommodations

Once upon a time, the monarchs of great peoples practiced *noblesse oblige*, a custom that continued in the diluted modern monarchy of Louisiana in the form of two free post-season football tickets and accommodations for the elected representatives of the hard-working staff (at LSU, the Staff Senate President). Nowadays, however, the *noblesse* has given way to the *oblige*, with Staff Senate officers receiving instead an opportunity to plunk down \$350.00 twice over for the privilege of viewing LSU's gridiron hijinks. For a staff member, that sum, which would easily represent three percent of gross annual income, if not more. Meanwhile, the LSU football teams experienced six days in a New Orleans hotel, to which they were squired aboard an lavish multi-bus motorcade escorted by a large police detail (one would think that varsity athletes could easily set a "green" example by bicycling along the flatlands to the stadium, and that the coaches, in virtue of their superior skill, could make the trip on unicycles; one could also imagine such hardy warriors erecting a tent city rather than dwelling in a sumptuous hotel). LSU managed to pony up for over 300 tickets plus expenses for the Tiger Band, which equally well could have marched to, in, and out of the event in the manner of dozens of New Orleans ambling bands.

LIFESTYLE (continued)

While traversing this pilgrimage route, the traveler soars over highway superstructure that defies the sky in its effort to hurtle over the swamplands. Those feats of radical modern civil engineering contrast with the folksy and funky ways of little towns like Gray, Schriever, and Bayou Cane, where the timelessness of the main settlements counterpoint the occasional modern tract development that seems to have been plunked down in the middle of cleared wetlands, as if a squadron of chainsaw wielding superheroes from HGTV had fallen in from the sky.

South-central Louisiana offers two boulevards of special note. Deep in the sub-Lafayette Bayou, the bend of Route 90 and Route 329 that connects the Acadiana Regional Airport to Avery Island might be described as the “avenue of abandonment” for its forlorn but entrancing feeling of the far away, the forgotten, and yet the fantastic. Acadiana Regional Airport hosts a squadron of Stearman biplane aircraft that remain in brand-spanking-new condition, lovingly tended by their aviating owners even in the midst of weed-strewn Acadiana Airport, as if the airplanes lived among the ageless immortals while their habitat had been ravaged by time. Following the bend toward Avery Island, one again snuggles along a vast jetty gradually leading into the Tabasco Kingdom on Avery Island. In recent years, Avery Island has fallen off a bit, with its Tabasco factory tour becoming a bit routine and its jungle gardens being staffed by as many sourpusses as natural history enthusiasts, and yet there is no denying the enchanting quality of its sheer distance—physical, cultural, psychological, emotional—from apparently anything and everything. A bit further north in the south-central quadrant we find the stretch of Highway 190 that runs from Opelousas to Eunice. As soon as one passes what might be designated the “official greeter of Eunice”—a gigantic statue of a gorilla facing route 190 who is brandishing a spear and sometimes an American flag in an example of one of Acadiana’s most mixed of messages—one suddenly enters the Cajun prairie and even gets a whiff of Texas as the sky opens up, the trees seem to disappear, and the wide open spaces unfurl. The sudden transitions and also quaint, 1950s buildings that dot this boulevard leave all visitors with the sense that one might meet romantic Desi Arnaz or rustic Howdy-Doodie along an expansive time warp that not only links two Cajun settlements but that also links 1959 with 2012. Don’t miss the Cajun dance at the Liberty Theater on Saturday night!

Forlorn and usually forgotten Southwest Louisiana offers automotive charms in abundance. Shoot over to Sulphur (the town, not the mineral) and follow Highway 27 south to Holly Beach to experience nature as the birds see it: not as a natural-history theme park with interpretive sign but as a magnificent wreck in which opportunities abound amidst chaos. The recently revived Creole Nature Trail discovers the strange mix of grandiosity and slovenliness that is all too familiar to those working within Louisiana’s political culture. Along this route, the traveler may walk along boardwalks deep into wetlands, there to observe birds, bees, and everything else under the hot Louisiana sun; but the traveler must also be prepared to overlook ruined rest areas that have been smashed and abandoned rather than cleared. Deeper down, all the way to the coast, Holly Beach presents a sublime if also sad image of daunted ambition as empty boulevards where vacation homes once stood offer only ruined foundations as testimony of an elegance that maybe never quite was. Remarkable juxtapositions abound as every sort of flotsam that a combination of natural disasters and passing ships from every nation can deposit in these most intercultural of waters. After completing this journey, be sure to travel out to Delta Downs, near the Texas border, for a wonderful open-air experience of the sport of kings!

The overlooked inland empire of Central Louisiana affords no less than three declaratory drives. Travelers to Alexandria often forget that, from southeast Louisiana, the quickest route is not the rampaging Interstate 49, but rather Route 71, which Huey Long and his road gangs built on the Roman model, in a perfectly straight line. The segment from Krotz Spring, itself a colorful location marked by an array of salvage and junk stores that sell an assortment of kitsch treasures, to Cheneyville is especially worthy of note. The first twenty miles or so of this journey take the amazed driver through wetland venues abounding in bird life (and with some camps possibly occupied by birdbrains) as redoubtable Route 71 roars militantly over its environment, having been jammed through the bayou in the interest of public works and jobs, whether or not nature was disposed to host it. Once the wetland is left behind, the segment from Lebeau to Cheneyville leads the traveler through the living ruins of former agricultural dynasties, with empty and abandoned grain elevators soaring over devastated communities. The strange mix of agriculture and apocalypse suggests a hybrid movie combining the vampire-Lycan franchise with the old *Green Acres* series. A different version of this same saga is played out in the segment of Highway 1 running from the Morganza Spillway to Marksville, where early-century shacks present both the sad and the happy face of poverty to the passerby while the road bores straight ahead not to progress, but to the opulent Paragon Casino. But perhaps the most remarkable road in the middle of the state is that section of Highway 117 that connects Kurthwood and Hagewood and that runs through a swath of the Kisatchie National Forest. On the one hand, the road is unlike any other in Louisiana, with a genuine “mountain feel” and with scattered dwellings suggesting the presence of the last alumni of the Esalen Institute; on the other hand, the near-monoculture Kistchie Forest, although a welcome bit of greenery, leaves one somehow startled, looking for all the world less like a forest than a vegetable garden planted with lines of overgrown radishes.

Way up in north Louisiana the voyager will also view assorted vivacities. Far on the west side of the state, the newly refurbished Route 171, running from Converse to Stonewall, leads the antique-eyed observer through an assortment of nineteenth-century settlements, including historic Mansfield, which appears never to have departed from the classic old west. Route 1, heading north from Shreveport, takes the traveler into the odd world of piney woods and pawn shops that is no less than Arkansas. We need not forget Interstate 20 itself, which, headed east out of Shreveport, takes the dazzled view from the gold-toned Horseshoe Casino to the futuristic National Cyber Command and then out to a refreshingly open expanse of cotton and soybeans. And let us not overlook Minden, the would-be German town with, as previously reported, a Gherkin pickle as its spokesman.

Happy travels!

Midyear Cuts Hit Regional Universities Hard

Contrary to boasts by state officials about developing the workforce and educating our children, Louisiana’s highly productive regional universities are reeling from the latest round of midyear cuts. Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, in the heart of meat pie country, has halted a bevy of maintenance projects and has implemented a stringent program of purchase and acquisition deferrals (say “sayonara” to paper towels in the restrooms). Top performer LSU, one of the most beautiful and ambitious institutions in central Louisiana, will fill no vacant positions and will slash travel funding. Out in Calcasieu Parish, the \$1,400,000.00 hit to McNeese State University has elicited a total hiring freeze, a moratorium on the purchase of equipment, and a total elimination of travel. Even the cash-pumping public hospitals under the aegis of the LSU System may impose layoffs and may reduce services, with the little Moss Bluff clinic in north Lake Charles facing severe stress.

Change in Class Start Times Set for Fall 2012

The LSU Faculty Senate recently passed a regulation moving the start time of classes to the exact hour and half-hour rather than the now-standard ten minutes after those waypoints on the clock. LSU Registrar Robert Doolos has gone into high gear to implement the change, which will now occur at the beginning of the fall semester 2012. Thanks to Robert for this spectacular demonstration of administrative prowess.

Tip of the Month: Grace Internet Radio

Other than the admirable Jim Engster Show and a few jazz features on NPR affiliates on the weekend, Louisiana radio, even in college towns, is a grimly monotonous array of talk shows, sermons, and auditions for the Bayou Superfest. Those eager to enjoy the world’s storehouse of music without losing teaching and research time scanning CD catalogues may now rely completely on internet radio: on specialized data streams delivering every sort of music on this whirling planet. To date, online listening has been limited to computers, laptops, iPods, and other devices noted more for their portability or ease of use than for their sound fidelity. A few internet tuners had hit the market but were impaired by difficulty of use and poor databases. Now Grace Audio of San Diego has taken the internet tuner not only to the next, but to intergalactic levels with a compact unit capable of extremely high fidelity output in both digital and analogue format. Better, the Grace GDI-IRD200 comes with a breathtaking (and continuously updated) database of over 30,000 stations, sources, and streams in every genre from bluegrass to bamboo flutes. The ease of use and the intuitive mapping of the database will bring smiles even to internet and audio duffers. The full suite of output options—RCA, HDMI, USB, and more—allow this unit to integrate with any system. And, indeed, one need not be disloyal to the home turf, for most Louisiana culture-oriented stations are in the ever-growing database.





[F]or more than forty years, Mignon Faget has designed wearable works of art celebrating the history, culture, and natural beauty of her native Louisiana. This exhibition recognizes her life's work, exploring her creations and her creative process. The display features hundreds of items, including jewelry, textiles, prints, drawings, and glassware, as well as one-of-a-kind pieces rarely seen publicly.

MIGNON FAGET

A Life in Art and Design

[AN EXHIBITION]

Organized by The Historic New Orleans Collection



November 17, 2011 – February 25, 2012

The Louisiana State Museum on Capitol Park presents

MIGNON FAGET

A Life in Art and Design

[AN EXHIBITION]

Organized by The Historic New Orleans Collection

On view November 17, 2011–February 25, 2012
660 North 4th Street
Baton Rouge

[OPENING RECEPTION]
Honoring Mignon Faget

Presented by the Louisiana Museum Foundation
Thursday, November 17, 2011, 6:30–8 p.m.

Exhibition viewing only (*no ticket required*), 8 p.m. until 9:30 p.m.
Rsvp (504) 558-0493 or info@theloc.org

2nd Annual "Evening with Great Authors" LSU Chapters of The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi and Gamma Sigma Delta

Guest Speaker: Thomas J. Durant, Jr., Ph.D., Jonathan Roberts, Ph.D.

Time: 7:00-8:30pm, 02/02/2012

Location: LSU Energy, Coast & Environmental Building - Auditorium/Rotunda

Tickets: \$30 for General Public, \$20 for Senior Citizens, \$10 for Students

Purchase Website: <http://www.pkp.lsu.edu/>, <http://www.adultliteracyadvocates.org/>

or calling Adult Literacy Advocates at (225) 383-1090

or at the door

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Questions? Comments? Email gmlch1@tigers.lsu.edu or ngu1@tigers.lsu.edu

