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Faculty Senate Newsletter, April 2012

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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LSU FACULTY SENATE

Monthly Newsletter

April 30, 2012



President's Message

The topics that present themselves at the inception of a new issue of the *Newsletter* are always numerous and usually interesting, but in moments like those following on the insurgency that led to the decapitation of the LSU System there is really only one topic, and that is the import and finally dubiousness of revolution. The pretentious quasi-tyrannicide perpetrated by a loose confederation of would-be academic boosters is being presented by its sponsors as a genial version of the Arab Spring, with spontaneous support coming from every corner of Louisiana—every corner, that is, where “diversity” applies to one’s choice between a hamburger and a hot-dog rather than to matters of socioeconomic status, vocation, race, gender, creed, or any other affiliation. The “real” Arab Spring has rightly been criticized for its lack of women, Christians, Jews, and migrant workers; the not-so-Arab uprising in the LSU System office evidenced similar deficiencies. Voting for the retention of the beleaguered President was the only southwestern Louisiana woman on the Board; the only non-majority member voting for the elimination of an open-minded if not liberal northeasterner who had been hired to reform the System was an otherwise distinguished minority member who is up for reappointment.

Few doubt that the buoyant President Lombardi will rebound into some new position or role where the receiving system or institution will rejoice in LSU’s loss. What faculty governance around the state—not only at LSU or at LSU System campuses, but across the state, for LSU and its affiliates have been designated “statewide” institutions by the Regents—needs to recognize is that, in the first instance, the attack on President Lombardi is also an attack on academic freedom. True, the issues at stake are not of the Ward Churchill or J. Robert Oppenheimer variety. He never made recklessly provocative nor cogently academic nor even highly political statements. His primary offense was the stating of the truth (or at least the truth as he believed it to be) with force, integrity, and enthusiasm. His secondary offense was in the attempt to purge his segment of higher education of influence-peddling and to maintain the integrity of the statewide educational project. Those who caviled at his schemes to equalize funding among institutions may have sincerely believed in their ideas; nevertheless, the hysterical reaction to Lombardi’s policy positions went far beyond routine differences of opinion and wandered into attempts to shut down the open discussion of alternatives. During his last days in office, Lombardi was under what amounts to the standard edict of the present gubernatorial regime: “my way or the highway” coupled with “shut up or you’ll be shut down.”

The second major concern for academic people on all campuses that arises from the denouement of the Lombardi story is that of xenophobia. One colleague who is highly placed in faculty governance on a non-A&M campus refers to Louisiana as a “brother-in-law state,” as in “there’s a job opening that you control and I’ve made a contribution and I’ve got a brother-in-law who needs a job.” What got John Lombardi in trouble almost from day one is that he was, as the idiom goes, “not from around here.” Sharp, witty, quick, and multi-coastal—a truly modern man who seemed to have been to and to have come from everywhere—Lombardi represented a threat to people who, for good or bad reasons, fear that their culture or way of life of just plain attitude is under attack. The irony is that the Lombardi approach, which would stabilize the statewide campuses and maintain both regional and campus identity within Louisiana, would help to preserve those threatened cultures. John Lombardi, for example, would never axe a French program, as has happened at one south Louisiana campus, if the pittance required to keep it going could be found on another campus. The self-defeating tribalism that has manifested itself in the gangland-style elimination of the Lombardi regime is the driving force behind the tragedy of Louisiana’s self-defeating attempt to preserve its identity by homogenizing every campus into one big superboard or one unvaried amalgam of regional campuses or worse.

“Tragedy” is an apt word, for Aristotle reminds us that persons of great powers but finite resources routinely succumb to ravaging by the world. So it was that, rather than cut the usual deal, shake hands, retire, and go away saying that the LSU System has a bright future with the next generation of leaders, Lombardi chose instead to go out as a hero—a tragic hero, but a hero nonetheless. Standing in the halls of the LSU System at 11:45 am on Friday, April 27th, a herald like those in classical tragedies walked through the corridors, crying out “John Lombardi has left the building.” The famous presidential red jeep had pulled away, leaving the buzzards to cruise the aisles, but, like Agamemnon or Oedipus or Creon, Lombardi overcame the final indignity, vanishing offstage and going out, as football coaches say, “with his head held high,” a hero and a legend.

Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Workload Formed in Response to State Reviews

In Louisiana higher education, persecutions come and go with a frequency that would amaze and delight even the most experienced Grand Inquisitor. Post-tenure review and financial exigency count among two of the most memorable attempts to make life difficult for mainline professionals. Of late, the perpetual persecuting frenzy has attached itself to faculty workload, with several high-ranking administrators having wandered around various campuses scolding department members about the alleged indecipherability of their assignments. In an attempt to break the cycle of gubernatorial pressure, committee formation, administrative aggression, and faculty resistance, the LSU Faculty Senate created an ad hoc committee on faculty workload under the direction of agricultural whiz-kid R. Wesley Harrison. For once, happy discoveries resulted. The committee opined that the diversity of effort and the variety of disciplinary needs were properly represented by the wide panorama of policies. The committee did urge the colleges to update or in some cases to formulate policies so as to fend off future criticism. See the full report [online](#).

Board of Regents Proposes More Cuts to Gen Ed Requirements Under Guise of Common Course Numbering

Never reluctant to remove obstacles to increase graduation rates—after all, in Aesop’s famous fable, the tortoise really did defeat the hare—the Board of Regents staff has circulated a set of proposed changes to statewide general education requirements, all by way of lubricating the emerging machinery of common course numbering. Two proposals question the need for certain segments of the population to know the deep secrets of the difficult disciplines. The first of these suggests the superannuation of the requirement for a course at least at the level of college algebra, recommending instead a course in “analytical reasoning” and quipping that “there are undergraduate degree programs (e.g., in some liberal, studio, or performance arts and/or social/behavioral sciences) that realistically are better served with a different math requirement than calculus-preparatory algebra” (so much for Leonardo da Vinci’s number-mania; and, in any event, da Vinci’s calculation-intense aerospace-engineering inventions flew about as far as Louisiana’s pursuit of the Hawker-Beechcraft plant). A second proposal would eliminate the requirement for a course in the social sciences at the sophomore level or above. This, on the grounds that “graduation may be delayed” if this “technicality” is enforced. The relation between this aversion to “delay” and the definition of colleges by delay-length (e.g., “a four year college” that automatically imposes a four-year delay before the diploma arrives) remains to be explained.

Board of Ethics Sets Limit on Wining and Dining Legislators

The law of not-altogether-unintended consequences was again at play as the [Louisiana Ethics Board](#) once again undermined the success of restaurant-related programs such as Nicholls State’s John Folse Culinary Institute. The ever-wise Ethics Board, which recently announced the squandering of thousands of hours of compensated time by requiring employees statewide to pass an ethics course, has once again sought the appearance of propriety by setting the maximum that lobbyists may spend on restaurant meals for legislators at \$56.00. Colleagues who have supplemented meals for job candidates know that not only will that sum seldom underwrite a ceremonial meal but that its modesty will stymie the expansion of Louisiana’s culinary industry, one area in which our state excels. So much for encouraging enrollment in workforce-producing programs like those down along Bayou Lafourche.

LSUnited Issues New Edition of Its Newsletter

LSUnited, LSU’s fledgling faculty union, has issued its latest edition of its newsletter, an edition chock-full of information concerning the retirement plan controversy. For information on how to receive this and other LSUnited publications, write to LSUnited President Patrick McGee or LSUnited newsletter editor Jeffrey Roland, whose email addresses are available via the LSU directory at www.lsu.edu.

ADMINISTRATOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Beth Paskoff, Dean, School of Library and Information Science

The ongoing budget crisis has affected most if not every department at LSU and other institutions in higher education around the state in one way or another. Yet perhaps nobody is more aware of the challenges that budget cuts have presented to administrators than the Dean of the School of Library and Information Science Beth Paskoff. Just two years ago, the Chancellor informed Paskoff that he would recommend eliminating the entire program. Though the Chancellor never forwarded his recommendation to the Board of Regents, due in part to the overwhelming support of employees, alumni, students, and others, Paskoff and her team have had to fight and find innovative ways to keep the program from the chopping block. "Saving the school has been a big project," Paskoff says.



One of the ways that Paskoff and her staff have saved the school has been to transform the two year MS in Library Sciences into a distance learning and online program. While students retain the option to take classes in a traditional setting, the distance learning program allows students to meet with educators in real time via teleconferencing software that is free to download. Paskoff positively beams with excitement regarding the changes new technology has made possible for long distance learning and what that has meant for her department's continued success. "We can even bring in guest speakers," she comments at one point. Paskoff also holds her colleagues in high regard for achieving such a transformation during the two year period when the program's status remained in doubt, observing that, facing termination from the university, faculty could have chosen to look out for themselves. "They didn't have that attitude," Paskoff says pointedly.

Paskoff has seen her fair share of ups and down at LSU. May will mark her thirty-fifth year working at the university in various administrative and teaching capacities. Paskoff and her husband Paul came to Baton Rouge from the DC Baltimore area, where she had been The Chief Librarian at the Veteran's Administration Hospital, so that Paul could take up a professorship in the Department of History. Paskoff then worked her way up from Science Reference Librarian at Middleton to her present position, which she has held for the past twelve years. During the economic downturn in the late eighties, Paskoff also took an educational leave of absence to pursue a PhD in Library and Information Studies at Florida State, which she completed in just three years. "I did a double load of courses each semester," Paskoff says with a chuckle, "something I tell my students not to do."

"We have an obligation to the citizens of Louisiana to provide education."

Despite the great successes in revitalizing the School of Library and Information Sciences -- a school, it should be noted, which offers the only two-year Masters of Library Science program in the entire state--, the ongoing budget crisis has meant that Paskoff and her department continue to adapt to changes as they come. Paskoff notes, for instance, that the school, which has been an autonomous entity since 1931, will be integrated into the College of Human Sciences and Education effective on July 1. Paskoff herself will report to the Dean of the College. But like many of the administrators working for the university, Paskoff's focus is squarely on how the school can best serve the students who choose to come to LSU. Pointing to the university's mandate as a land grant institution, Paskoff says, "We have an obligation to the citizens of Louisiana to provide education."

ALFS Breaks Story on Retirement Scheme Audit

The public newspapers were quick to spread the word, but the Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates was the first to break the news to a wide readership of the release of the state auditor's report on the legality of proposed changes to state retirement programs (including TRSL and LASERS, of which many academic professionals and professional staff members are members). That report may be accessed [online](#). This document is, admittedly, long and complicated and occasionally written in "legalese," but its importance is not to be underestimated. In a nutshell: the auditor reports that almost every aspect of the proposed changes to the state retirement will produce litigation and that this litigation has a high probability of succeeding. In effect, the auditor finds that the courts will likely find the proposed changes illegal and that those on whom those change might be imposed will have good cause to seek damages. Those who wish to look at details will find considerable interest in the sections on cost-of-living adjustments ("COLAs"); on property rights; on retirement age increases; and on the "takings" clause in the Constitution (in relation to the retirement plan adjustments). The legislative analysis pertains mostly to defined-benefit plans (colloquially known as the "TRSL" plan), but the report also discusses matters of interest to Optional Retirement Plan ("ORP") members, including the proposed administrative mergers among state-administered plans and the aforementioned "takings" clause, which may eventually apply to the question of the diversion of funds to pay down the unfunded accrued liability ("UAL"). This document is somewhat more than easy reading but is a must for anyone who wants to understand the enormous stakes in the controversy over the tarnished coin being doled out to professional in their golden years.

Guillory and Pearson a No-Show at Retirement Forum

In an effort to hold legislators accountable, the LSU Faculty Senate and LSUnited co-sponsored a forum featuring two of the masterminds of pension plan reform, Representative Kevin Pearson and Senator Elbert Guillory. Despite having the nerve to pluck hundreds of millions of dollars from a small group of educators with minimal representation, the looming specter of an academic audience seemed too much for these knights of nominal funding. As the clock ticked up to the opening hour, both Pearson and Guillory suddenly discovered insurmountable conflicting engagements. All was not lost, however, as a convergence of expertise comprised of LSUnited retirement guru Stuart Irvine, Louisiana Association of Educators Executive Director Michael Walker-Jones, and blogger Dayne Sherman opened up the opportunity for an informal roundtable, with the three experts taking questions and demonstrating their acumen. The engagements that stymied lawgivers Guillory and Pearson on their way to the judgment bar were apparently brief. Blogger Dayne Sherman headed to the capitol immediately following the roundtable, chased them down, and posed the questions that the audience would have delivered.

SEC Faculty Achievement Award Procedures Short on Details

Continuing its fixation on celebrity and position, the wealthy and influential Southeastern Conference, to which many a prominent southern university athletics powerhouse belongs, is continuing its old habit of equating faculty support with the consolidation of administrative power. The academic world rejoiced when the SEC announced its plan to create Faculty Achievement Awards, but even at the outset ALFS Vice-President Kevin L. Cope registered his concern that relying on Provosts to develop the competitive selection process was akin to Barack Obama campaigning against smoking. As it happens, the "competitors" who received the award appear to be worthy and laudable persons. Unfortunately, procedures for and an announcement of the competition cannot be found on the LSU web site, not even in the annals of Media Relations. A list of FAQs on the SEC web site notes that "each university is responsible for implementing a competitive process" for this coveted nomination and further notes that "the Provost on each campus is responsible for managing this [university process](#)". A search specifically of the LSU Office of Academic Affairs web site only leads the searcher back to the announcement of a *fait accompli*.

Former Monroe Dean, President Questions LaTech-LSUS Plan

If there is one virtue that comes with emeritus status, it is the ability to speak freely, without fear of reprisal. More than once, high-profile Louisiana administrators have articulated truth that remains behind the vocal cords of active administrators. So it is that former University of Louisiana at Monroe Business Dean and President Dwight Vines has toured around northern Louisiana warning against precipitous merger schemes, including the proposal to merge Louisiana Tech and LSU in Shreveport, and also cautioning against the decline in campus, especially faculty, morale owing to perpetual uncertainty and to anxiety about back-room deals. The *Newsletter* has obtained a copy of Vines's latest position paper, which includes background information concerning the evolution of the present distribution of campuses in north Louisiana and concerning previous reorganization schemes. That paper is now available [online](#).

Datacrunching Reveals Staggering Sums of Money Diverted from Retirement Plans Over 20 Year Period

As faculty awareness of the wretchedness of Louisiana retirement plans increases, so does ad hoc investigative activity. Through the extensive network of spectators who help this *Newsletter*, a table has surfaced that shows the "ORP contributions retained" by the state for use in paying down the unfunded accrued liability and ultimately for subsidizing state projects other than the support of retirement accounts. The number is big. Between 1991 and 2011, over \$733,000,000.00 has been siphoned off from contributions without one shred of benefit to plan participants. To provide perspective, that sum is nearly double the entire annual budget of LSU A&M and is more than enough to launch three weather-observing satellites or a ballistic-missile detection satellite loaded with the latest Pentagon optics and software. The increase in the siphon rate is also staggering: from six million in 1991 to nearly ninety million in 2011. Statewide faculty activists continue an assortment of initiatives to deal with a situation that ranges from wrong to obscene to illegal. More on this story will come.

Lombardi Out as System President

By the publication of this newsletter, most everyone will have heard about the coarse power play that led to the ejection of LSU System President John Lombardi. The ugly facts are in plain view for everyone to see, whether through *The Chronicle of Higher Education* or in dozens of popular periodicals. Those of us who had the mixed good fortune—mixed, because exposure to truth is always good but truth is often troubling—to witness the *putsch* up-close observed details of the story that reveal the whole bitter narrative. For one, those who receive the official communiqués from the top-level management received word of a new agenda item in the late afternoon immediately prior to the Board of Supervisors meeting. That agenda item was phrased in slightly, curiously optimistic euphemisms, as “Presidential Succession Planning and Actions,” as if some preparatory instructions were going to be offered to Prince Charles or to Kate and William. When the drama began, LSU Faculty Senate President and Council of Faculty Advisors Chair Kevin Cope delivered public comments exposing the motivations and drawing into the open the role of coalition groups and politicians in sandbagging a leader whose primary sin was in being more intelligent than Louisiana’s Brahmin caste. While Cope spoke, every faculty senate president from every LSU System campus stood in solidarity, a move that demonstratively undercut the claim that President Lombardi lacked traction with the people and could not communicate with the people (a patently absurd contention with respect to a person who is probably the most garrulous academic leader in America). As debate continued, it became clear that the ringleaders for the *coup d’état* had not bothered to discuss the matter with those members of the Board who had been appointed by former Governor Kathleen Blanco, a subset which includes the only woman among the Supervisors. Board Chairman Hank Danos refused to answer questions from Supervisor Tony Faltermann, who wondered how the Chairman could know that he “had the votes” for the *coup* without having privately polled some Board members, in violation of the open meetings law. Danos’s claim that this was all just happening as Board members thought their way through the problem stood in stark contrast to Supervisor and tourism promo man Stephen Perry’s claim that the matter had been under consideration for months, something which came as a surprise to the more temperate members of the Board. Perhaps the biggest shocker came when Chairman Danos revealed that William Jenkins had been contacted and had already agreed to serve as interim President, a complex development that would hardly fit with the claim that no private meetings outside the canopy of the open meetings law had ever occurred. The instantaneous appointment of a search committee that contains at least one member whose status following the expiration of his term as a Supervisor likewise discredits any claims to transparency, debate, or even thinking.

The *Newsletter* is beginning an investigation into the money exchanges and donations behind these astounding developments and also into the connections between the new *junto* at the top of the Flagship system and the various support coalitions (The Flagship Coalition, the Shreveport-Bossier Initiative, and CABL, to name but a few). The discoveries of that probe will appear in an upcoming *Newsletter* issue.

Lombardi, Board of Supervisors Talk Future of LSUA with Faculty, Students, and Community Leaders at April Meeting

By Mary McCampbell, President of the LSUA Staff Senate; and Dr. Elisabeth Elder, Vice President of the LSUA Faculty Senate

Dr. John Lombardi, and several representatives of the BOS visited Louisiana State University at Alexandria (LSUA) on Tuesday, April 10, 2012. To accommodate interested parties, the visit included meetings for community leaders, the LSUA Chancellor’s Council, students, staff, and faculty. Each meeting included a presentation by Lombardi followed by a question and answer session. For the community leaders, the primary foci were the need for the local business community to become more involved in the University through financial support, encouraging students to attend, and hiring graduates; the importance of the University in the economic development of Central Louisiana; the importance of growth of the University from approximately 2,600 to 4,000/5,000 students; the need for collaboration between LSUA and the incoming Central Louisiana Technical Community College (CLTCC) to insure proper program development on each campus; and Lombardi’s continued commitment to, and confidence in, the University’s role as a prominent, successful four-year institution in the Louisiana State University System. For students the foci were sufficient support to the University to enable completion of degrees, to provide financial aid, and to retain faculty able to teach courses needed for degree completion; opportunities for integration and collaboration between CLTCC and LSUA; retention of LSUA within the LSU System; options for graduate programs on the LSUA campus; and mechanisms to increase TOPS availability. For the staff the foci were the placement of CLTCC on the LSUA campus; lack of money for raises despite the lifting of the hiring freeze; changes in the retirement system; and the proposed merger of LSU Shreveport and Louisiana Tech University and how it impacts the future of LSUA in the LSU System. For faculty, the foci were the potential impact of CLTCC on LSUA enrollment and programs; the future of LSUA within the LSU System; the ongoing economic challenges facing higher education; the need to have everyone involved in the future of LSUA; retention of current, along with development of new, programs.

The outcomes of the various meetings were very similar. There is definitely interest in retaining LSUA and LSUS as autonomous units within the LSU System. The programs offered by LSUA are strong and need to continue to be available to serve Central Louisiana people, businesses, and industries. New undergraduate programs should be developed to fit the needs of the population and the area. The integration of CLTCC into the LSUA campus will fulfill several of these goals including the provision of strong programs, fitting the needs of the area, and increasing enrollment. Enrollment can also be maintained by assessing and altering the requirements for TOPS, PELL Grants, and loans to enable more people to obtain their goals of college degrees. A question on changes to the retirement system was one that President Lombardi was unable to answer. A very notable outcome was attendance. The turnout of community members, students, faculty, and staff were indicative of their support of the University and their interest in the future of the institution.

Russo Lends Voice to Chronicle Article on State of Faculty Salaries

The acclaim for LSUnited Co-Founder and devil-may-care activist Mike Russo has grown even wider than its already beamy extent. On April 8th, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* released an [article](#) on the stagnation of professorial salaries, including commentary by Mike, who voices cautious optimism that the nationwide downturn in academic compensation will yield the favorable effect of increased engagement by distressed professionals along with increased skepticism regarding administrative decision-making.

LSU System Releases Commitment Plan

While coalitions, initiatives, and other cartels are rambling around the state offering 200-word news stories on an imagined future for north Louisiana institutions, LSU System experts under the leadership of John Lombardi, have produced a combined study and proposal for an array of programs in fields ranging from nursing and international studies to petroleum engineering and sports administration. Geared to the measured workforce needs of the Shreveport-Ruston area rather than to ideological or in-group affiliations, the *Louisiana State University Shreveport Commitment Plan* issued on April 4 offers a nuts-and-bolts list of programs, phase-in times, and responsible persons, all by way of providing the solid groundwork for statewide educational pathways. The plan allows students to enter a program affiliated with Shreveport and then eventually complete their training with LSU A&M resources, thereby offering students the best of both north and south Louisiana.

Board of Regents Releases Preliminary Estimates of Support Fund Distribution

No one yet knows how much money will end up in the Board of Regents Support Fund (“BoRSF”), but preliminary estimates head up toward the twenty-six million range. Institutions around the state have been given an estimate of the money available to support “priority one” projects. In this low-stakes derby, the biggest but also probably least adequate sum of \$3,200,000 will support endowed chairs, there being a very large queue of unfunded professorships. Teaching-oriented proposals garner most of the crumbling chips, with \$1,600,000 headed to undergraduate enhancement, a little over \$1,000,000 going to the enhancement of two-year institutions, and a quarter million aimed at the increase of diversity in graduate programs. Perennial booby-prize winner, the humanities, bags only \$182,000, while seeming big-timer engineering attracted only \$596,000. Institutional responses and suggestions for revision are being accepted, suggesting that adjustments may occur.

SLU Staffer Launches Blog on Retirement Crisis



Dayne Sherman

As public concern and public protest about state retirement plan revision continues to rise, so does the frequency of the spontaneous generation of internet-based activists. So it is that a new blogger, columnist, and activist has rolled over the cybernetic horizon. Dayne Sherman, a library and information science expert at South-eastern Louisiana University, has been drawing a big audience with his up-to-the-minute reports of the endless permutations in retirement-related legislation and his no-holds-barred approach to lobbying, campaigning, and crusading. Sherman’s online [blog](#) abounds in both links to source documents and reports of his own exploits at the state capitol. Sherman recently made a surprise appearance at an LSUnited-sponsored event, where he boggled the crowd with his predictions concerning future economic abuses of state employees, including his prophecy that post-retirement medical benefits would be next to come under attack.

MOVIE REVIEW: Young Adult (Jason Reitman, 2011)

By Carl Freedman

It is often said that fathers wish their sons to surpass them. If so, the veteran Hollywood filmmaker Ivan Reitman must be a happy man. He has directed a few creditable comedies over the decades—I myself have a real fondness for TWINS (1988), his science-fiction comedy with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito in the title roles—but nothing that even approaches, in quality, the closely observed, well-written, and character-rich black comedies of middle-class American life that his son Jason Reitman has directed in recent years. THANK YOU FOR SMOKING (2005) and UP IN THE AIR (2009) are both gems in their way, and a case can be made even for the lesser JUNO (2007). The younger Reitman's latest effort, YOUNG ADULT (2011), has gotten less attention than his earlier films but may well be the best of them all, the most subtle and complex exploration of human character. It is certainly one of the best movies of 2011 (the year, it might be noted, in which the elder Reitman brought out the unspeakably bad NO STRINGS ATTACHED).

The movie centers on one Mavis Gary, played by Charlize Theron in perhaps her best role since her shattering lead performance in Patty Jenkins's great film, MONSTER (2003). Once upon a time, Mavis was the most beautiful and popular girl in her small-town high school, the girl that every boy wanted and that every other girl envied. Now, at the age of 37, her looks have hardly faded at all, and she has enjoyed a certain success in life. She lives in her own condo in the big city (Minneapolis, to be specific) and writes for a once wildly popular series of young-adult novels (though the books she writes are published under the name of the series creator, and the series itself, its popularity waning, is coming to an end). But Mavis is almost completely alone: alcoholic, divorced, childless, and, except for her little dog, pretty much friendless as well (her cell phone rings mainly because an editor is nagging her about a deadline). She finds it easy enough to hook up with an attractive stranger for a night of boring sex. But real human contact eludes her, mostly, it seems, because other people don't much interest her.

Except, perhaps, for one particular other person. She determines to pay a visit to her home town so that she can reconnect with the handsome Buddy Slade (Patrick Wilson), her favorite high-school boyfriend and the man, she decides, that she was really meant to be with all along. True, Buddy is now married. True, he has a baby daughter. True, he appears, as Mavis discovers, to be perfectly happy as a husband and father. But surely Mavis can easily overcome these obstacles? Surely Buddy cannot be *truly* happy with anyone except her? Surely she has only to make her intentions clear to him, and he will eagerly follow her back to Minneapolis, where they can resume their relationship as if scarcely any time had passed since high school?

Needless to say, things do not go as planned. Buddy's happiness is quite genuine, and he has no desire to desert his family in order to run off with his usually drunk ex-girlfriend. Meanwhile, Buddy's wife Beth (Elizabeth Reaser) takes what Mavis must regard as the most insulting attitude possible toward the whole situation. Far from raging with sexual jealousy, Beth feels sorry for Mavis, and, against her husband's better judgment, even insists that Mavis be invited to a party at their home. You can probably guess how well that turns out.

Yet Mavis does make one real human connection while in town, maybe the closest of her life. Another old classmate, Matt Freehauf (the comedian Patton Oswalt), is short, chubby, and homely, and, while a senior in high school, was briefly famous as the victim of a hideous hate crime; several school jocks, believing him to be gay, viciously beat him with a crowbar, apparently intending to murder him though in fact "only" maiming him for life. Ironically, Matt is not actually gay at all. With double irony, Matt and Mavis, after meeting by sheer chance, form a friendship that resembles one between a gay man and a straight woman (they are once compared to Will and Grace). Though Matt is thoroughly heterosexual and has in fact ardently desired Mavis since high school (where their lockers happened to be next to one another, as he clearly remembers and she doesn't), he seems to take for granted that there is absolutely no chance that a man like him could wind up in bed with a woman like her. He thus has no motive to be anything but completely honest and straightforward with her; and his terrible history has helped to give him a shrewdly sardonic and realistic outlook on life. He tells her that her plan to steal Buddy is nuts, and, when she is once bragging about her high-school sexual conquests, Matt coolly but affectionately comments, "I never knew you were such a slut." Perhaps to her own surprise, Mavis comes not only to like him but also to depend on him emotionally. In a move that is somewhat selfish on her part but also somewhat sweet, she ultimately goes to bed with him after all.

The greatest interest of the film lies in our deepening understanding of Mavis. At first there appears to be nothing likeable about her. Rude, selfish, and amoral, she is in some ways almost less sympathetic than the sociopathic serial killer that Theron plays in MONSTER. For much of the film, Mavis seems a deeply unattractive person in every sense but the purely visual. As the movie unfolds, however, and especially as we come to see her through Matt's intelligent eyes, we gradually realize that Mavis is just another victim of the way human beings in our society get along—and fail to get along—with each other. After all, she did not set out to seduce Buddy and break up his marriage just for the fun of it, or to prove she could do it. She was desperately lonely, and wanted someone to love her. Who could blame her for that wish?

Of course, YOUNG ADULT is also a film about the long shadow that the high-school years may cast on later life. High school is a kind of dress rehearsal for the fully adult world but is in many ways sharply distinct from it. Being the most popular kid in one's high-school class can be a mixed blessing. It feels wonderful at the time—as it certainly did for Mavis—but, as with Mavis, having everything so easy in adolescence can leave one without the emotional skills needed to navigate the world at large; and—again as with Mavis—nothing that the real adult world has to offer may ever equal the remembered paradise of the 12th grade. As Matt (whose own 12th grade was the opposite of paradise) clearly sees, Mavis writes novels about and for high-school students because theirs is the only world she truly understands and loves.

As usual with Jason Reitman's films, YOUNG ADULT has no real resolution. Life just goes on, as it does in actuality. At film's end Mavis is returning with her dog to the big city. Maybe, after her disappointment with Buddy and her surprising closeness with Matt, she will learn a new maturity and wisdom. Maybe she will stop drinking. Maybe she will understand that developing her own capacity for loving is the best way to find someone who will love her. Maybe—but I wouldn't bet on it.

LIFESTYLE FEATURE

The Coffee Houses of Baton Rouge

The days of wine and roses—or, rather, the generation that prized the happy hour, the martini, and the turpentine aroma of Vermouth—are now joining the cast of Happy Days in the museum of milder times. In the dim days that we now experience here in the twilight of university funding and academic prestige, a darker beverage is becoming the rule of the day, and that none other than the bubbling boiled bean, coffee. (continued on page 5)

AAUP to Probe University of Louisiana System

Alarmed at a wave of policy revisions and faculty reductions, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) is following up its inquiry into faculty firings at Northwestern State University and Southeastern Louisiana University, with a **new probe** into the entire University of Louisiana System. AAUP investigator Michael Bérubé described the actions of the University of Louisiana System as "an unprecedented assault on faculty." On April 14th, in conjunction with the annual meeting of Louisiana AAUP chapters, AAUP President Cary Nelson delivered a fiery address in which he called for swift and firm action and for the closing down of the administrations or management entities that were behind the anti-faculty stampede. Links to the resulting investigative report will be inserted into future issues of the *Newsletter*.

Southern University Faculty Senate Elects New Slate of Faculty Governors

Although the number of faculty senates, legislatures, and councils around the state prevents the reporting of election results in every academic precinct, the crisis at Southern University makes its elections especially worthy of coverage. At the top of the ticket are uncontested elections for President, Vice-President, and Treasurer, respectively. Heading for the top spot is perennial governance contributor Thomas Miller, who will be assisted by the more-than-perennial Sudhir Trivedi, who will step down as President but return to the lists in the position that is but one heartbeat away from the presidency. Anthony Igiede has stood for election as Treasurer, with the loquacious Diola Bagayoko and Osman Kandara still running neck-and-neck for the Parliamentarian post. Best wishes go out to these colleagues who are fighting the best of fights under the worst of conditions.

LSU Web Masters Launch New Online Calendar

A few years ago, the *Newsletter* raised eyebrows and probably also blew out a few screens with a list of the ten worst web sites offered by units in the LSU A&M campus. Historians know that reform occurs slowly; at long last, we are seeing improvements in LSU's web presence, the latest of which is a dazzling new rearrangement of the LSU online calendar. Announced by communications leader Melissa Foley, the new calendar features easily viewed advertisements, box-style summaries of events, and utilities allowing the sharing or downloading of information. Comparing this wondrous new calendar to its predecessor is like comparing San Francisco sourdough to Bunny Loaf. Congratulations to Melissa and her team for an improvement that will serve the entire state.



LIFESTYLE (continued)

The first great wave of coffee colonization occurred in Louisiana in the early 1990s, when those who had been content to refresh themselves by drinking in nature's sunshine suddenly discovered the neo-Enlightenment pleasure of sipping cups of highly-priced, non-intoxicating but mildly stimulating beverages in medium-sized public environments. Since that time, the role of the coffee house has gradually changed from a venue in which social groups would congregate to talk about the church Easter pageant or the neighborhood beautification project either to a source for free internet for those whose modest stipends have subsidized that all-important possession, the laptop, or to the preferred venue for the doing of academic (and related political) business with varying degrees of visibility or privacy. Over the past twenty years of coffee ascendancy, the coffee houses have defined differing social functions for differing times of day so as to extend their market share across the clock as well as across clientele. Morning brings the secretary or the administrative assistant for a quick fortification; mid-morning brings in the second- and third-tier of the administration for the doing of deals; mid-day caters to those who seek a quick meal, imagining that a ham-and-cheese croissant is the way to lose weight or to increase energy; afternoon brings dissident groups and their planning sessions; late afternoon is allocated to those who must face some hurdle, whether a wretched reception of a long class, in the night; and after 6:00 pm, the great diversity of the world arrives, there to show that variety is not always the spice of life.

First in nearly everyone's mind when thinking of quick boutique coffee is the omnipresent Starbucks. Starbucks, like all chain food vendors, provides its customer with the happy illusion of reliability and dependability. That perverse ideal of predictability is seldom borne out by experience. The last several Starbucks openings in Louisiana have clearly shown that this chameleon chain knows well how to identify the character of an area and to tweak its offerings to those variations. In Baton Rouge, for example, the hottest new Starbucks location is the fresh and light offering adjacent to FedEx Kinko's at the coffee-saturated corner of Perkins and Bluebonnet ("coffee-saturated" because there are no less than four coffee spots always in view at that corner). In this modern venue, which looks to be just one notch or two above an ideal Ikea installation, the sipper can enjoy a wrap-around view and even al fresco dining that permits the socially acute guzzler always to see who is coming and going (and, with that, to decide whether to lie low or to engage, your *Newsletter* editor having noticed several disappearing acts when a coffee-bogey flies in the door). The best of the best, not only of academe but among retired or plain old outraged administration, can be seen hovering around this venue, which, despite its reputation as just another chain outlet, has acquired a certain suburban cachet. This most with-it of Starbucks locations contrasts with the other possible venues, some of which are freestanding and some of which are co-located with better or worse shops, including Barnes and Noble. The freestanding location on Corporate Boulevard seems never to have acquired an identity to rival its counterpart in the grand Barnes and Noble reading emporiums, but the truth is that it often offers better cake than the over-formatted bookstore sites. Those bookstore locations all too often abound not with baskets of pastries but with plain old basket cases (who, admittedly, are more colorful than the bookcases). The quality control in the bookstore locations varies, yielding hyper-sweet cake and cappuccinos that are more foam than brew. Occasionally, a Starbucks location runs completely off the rails, as has happened at the far-away outpost in front of Home Depot at Interstate-10 exit 166, where staff members sporting extravagant electronic headgear with advanced communications devices constantly chatter and gyrate in futuristic ways but with very little productivity other than the amazement of customers.

Perennially second among the chain coffee houses is CC's, which continues to offer a reasonable array of coffees but which has, in an effort to fend off Starbucks, dipped too far into hyper-sweet iced drinks and flavored coffees. Along with this, the 1990s nostalgic decor, a sort of upgraded Cracker Barrel environment, is not aging all that well. CC's continues to offer some of the best-flavored coffee and to make a favorable impression on the local economy, but it has become somewhat predictable and over-formatted. To its credit, it continues to prize genuine porcelain cups and to deliver traditional beverages that evidence both superior flavor and presentation. The CC's location at the aforementioned intersection of Bluebonnet and Perkins has become a favorite spot for off-campus meetings of the kind where academic policy is contrived. Look for your favorite big-timer there at odd hours.



One of the most remarkable aspects of the efflorescence of coffee houses in Baton Rouge is the continued difficulty in understanding traditional coffee customs and, with that, of finding persons skilled in the making of proper cake and pastry that is also available and fresh at the right time of the day. Without a doubt, the king of coffee houses in Baton Rouge remains the legendary Highland Coffees, just north of the campus, where almost every thinking person who has passed through Baton Rouge has visited and where the ghosts of former tigers rise up with every blast of steam from the espresso machines. The incomparable atmosphere of Highland Coffees has been impaired a bit by the invasion of notebook computers and, with that, the emergence of the single-person-with-computer table, but the cultural momentum of this venue keeps it at the head of the coffee queue. Unfortunately, the selection of cake at Highland Coffees seems to be declining, with such European classics as Linzer Torte vanishing from the latest revamp of menu (it is no wonder that the new chalkboard menu is printed in blue, for that marquee is grieving the diminution of pastry excellence). Highland Coffees continues to be unparalleled in its offering of traditional espresso-oriented cups and in its continuing commitment to the provision of bulk tea and other brewing supplies. Admittedly, some of its American-style, geographically-denominated treats, including its German chocolate cake and its New York cheesecake, will delight even the most discerning palate. Larger slices, however, might be in order.

The ups-and-downs of Highland Coffees suggest that coffee houses are always jiggling around in the search for a market niche. The latest coffee provider to make a bold move is PJ's of New Orleans, which has opened a new outlet north of the Baton Rouge campus in the CVS shopping center and which, thanks to its location beneath a hill, has joined that exclusive set of coffee houses that serve as covert meeting places for persons with top-level business to do. PJ's offers both reasonable cake—indeed, it even offers a wonderful slice-by-slice lunch quiche—and a near-guarantee of invisibility. It may not be the place to go if one wants to be seen doing allegedly covert business, but it is the best choice for those who seek a neutral ground where probing eyes are few. Remarkably, the PJ's location on Essen Lane evidences the same qualities. Despite its intensely urban, highway-connected siting, it nevertheless has become a favorite "safe house" for those who want to conduct negotiations or otherwise "talk about it" at a good distance from university campuses.

The simultaneously laudable and lamentable feature of the smaller, offbeat coffee venues spread around Baton Rouge is that they really are offbeat. They tend to lack the normalizing attributes that provide the substratum of greatness, with the result that both charming and off-putting attributes appear. (continued on page 6)

Ohio University Launches Faculty Governance Survey

Although the most immediate impact of faculty governance results from resolutions, legislation, and assorted proclamations, the long-term effects of faculty leadership often play themselves out along a circuitous route, as they influence actions on the national level and then subsequently adjust the mentality of administrators on local campuses: administrators who, like Charley McCarthy on Edgar Bergen's knee, seem to articulate their own ideas but who depend on national debates for guidance. For the last few decades, the power of faculties has been declining, but there are indications that the good old pendulum is beginning to swing in the good old other direction. Ohio University leads this new wave with its survey of faculty governance institutions on large campuses, a survey in which LSU is one of the earliest and most distinguished participants. The Ohio survey not only analyzes the structure of faculty governance around the nation's major institutions but also seeks to correlate that structure with its effects, with perception of those effects, with actual influence, and with the perceived integrity of administrators. A summary of the outcomes of the survey will be announced in a later edition of the *Newsletter*.

Expansion to Tiger Stadium Humorously Pitched at Board Meeting



To date, the *Newsletter* has been less than laudatory with regard to architecture on Louisiana's campuses—architecture which has been content to celebrate, again and again, the mixture of nostalgia, historical fantasy, and fascism that characterized the aesthetic idioms of the 1920s and 1930s. Fortunately, the humor for which the *Newsletter* has become infamous in some quarters of the administrative world has also kept open the faint smile of hope which, in turn, derives from the inevitability of happy surprise.

An effort at felicitous surprise mounted by that pair of expert strategists—Athletics engineer Joe Alleva and military turned fundraising genius General Ron Richard—has produced what appears to be an architectural *coup* born of a humorous surprise attack. Seeking approval of a gigantic addition to the south end zone of Tiger Stadium, Alleva and Richard turned up at the April LSU Board of Supervisors meeting with what could be described as a cartoon rendering of a \$100,000,000.00 expansion project. Happily, the aforementioned cheerful cartoon represents what appears to be a modern glass tower built of reflective silicon materials (yielding perhaps the first silicon-enhanced stadium). With this embrace of the international style, LSU architecture moves forward from the Mussolini mode of Huey Long times into at least the 1970s and possibly the 1980s. Admittedly, mixing the Disney delusion that is the present Tiger Stadium with what looks like a byproduct of a mediocre day in the I. M. Pei's household will yield a pleasantly composite architectural melange—the architectural equivalent of those deconstructed Caesar salads that one sees on Food Network competitions. Thank goodness that the Supervisors only had a chance to look at the ghostly silhouette of a stadium yet-to-come and thank goodness they were in such a bad mood on that regicidal day that they surprised themselves into modernity.

LIFESTYLE (continued)

The granddaddy of coffee percolators, Coffee Call, joins with the new if remote Rue Beignet (way out on Petroleum Boulevard, near Ruffino's) in concentrating exclusively on beignets, a taste that arises now and then but that seldom sustains day-to-day interest. The trouble with both these venues is that they continue to live in the coffee past, dispensing pre-mixed coffee and café au lait from hotel-style urns rather than delivering artful liquid compositions directly from the hand of the Barista. Coffee call presents the most luscious beignets and showcases the old-timey mannerisms of its personnel, but the dining area is saturated with both the smell and and feel of powdered sugar, making it a sticky visit at best and turning one's pants into human-connected post-its. Rue Beignet, out in a new strip mall on the far end of town, is far cleaner but far less atmospheric. Neither venue seems to have extended its appeal much past the morning hours. Similarly stuck in the one-note mode is the forlorn Brew Ha Ha at the top of Jefferson Highway, where most of the baked offerings emerge, humidified, from plastic wrap cocoons and where the primary focus seems to be the comical shop name. A visit to Brew Ha Ha culminated in the plating of a cold chocolate chip cookie in which the chilled chips had developed an unpleasant consistency and chilly mouth-feel that only amplified the excessive sweetness of a poorly executed cookie. The one-note approach also seems to be creeping in at the two local La Madeleine shops, where the cakes and pastries no longer seem to originate on-site or even locally and where the problem of texture has yet to be addressed. One recent visit led to a Sacher Torte that tasted and, worse, felt exactly like an American chocolate cake, the baker having apparently forgotten the distinctions between varieties of layers and having mixed up a sponge and batter decoction with a genuine genoise. La Madeleine may have seemed novel around 1992, but it has some way to go to revive the freshness that once made it the favorite coffee stop. La Madeleine seems to be going the usual way with American shops by replacing quality and finesse with quantity, offering giant coffee bowls in an exaggerated French style but veering away from concentration of flavor in hard-hitting but petite doses.

Old-timers are probably happy with the revival of the old original Perks location in the form of Garden District Coffees. Ap-
plause should be doled out cautiously. Although the venue offers a certain in-group appeal—the place abounds with self-approving upper-middle-class and often retired geniuses who are proud of their ability to look at arts posters while quaffing warm beverages—the cakes here are as American as apple pie and about as cakey as pie, too. Garden District Coffees seems to think that a huge load of greasy American buttercream atop, under, and around sweet cake layers is a good thing, but the result is oral fatigue rather than eating pleasure. The coffee at Garden District is tasty and well-rendered, although there is little in the way of adventurousness, there being, for example, no Macchiato on the menu. Garden District has potential but a thoughtful restaurant consultant would be needed to maximize that capacity.

One should never forget the spots on the LSU campus, especially the Atrium Café in the School of Art and Design. That café was at one point a favorite secret meeting point for the conducting of covert policymaking, but so many folks got that idea that the espionage-free venue shifted over to the new PJ's. Nevertheless, the Atrium Café abides in a genuine arts environment where the architecture is not out-of-date—not quite yet—and where airiness and good company abound owing to refreshingly open seating arrangements. The Middleton Library, too, with its scaled-down CC's location is not the worst spot for finding out what is afoot on campus, although its food and cake selections are nothing less than miserable. The gully in the LSU Student Union that includes Einstein's Bagels and a small Starbucks outlet in the bookstore likewise proves inviting, at least if one happens to be a bear looking for a dark, enclosed place to hibernate and needing a chug of coffee and maybe a morsel of muffin to stay awake until finding the right cave!

Executive Searches Misfire at LSU amidst Invisible Exhibitions

Whether or not extra money would help the academy is called into question by the crazy trajectory of the latest set of already-funded executive searches at the agricultural and mechanical campus. Following a harbinger moment when the search for the Chief Information Officer was suspended owing to anxiety in the candidate pool about the future of LSU and the stability of elements within the administration, hopes again rose with the announcement of the selection of a Provost whose reputation is significantly more good than bad and who should sail into town on a fresh wind. The future of LSU's executive hiring soon came into question, however, when a search for the Executive Director of the Museum of Art that had previously been most widely publicized as a forthcoming event in the HRM Newsletter—a search which had, admittedly, been posted in the System-wide employment database, alongside multiple dozens of facilities maintenance and air-conditioning repair jobs, but which had made no noise on the campus—was announced as a completed appointment. Offering no hint as to the search process used to select an officer who represents a major university to the public and even to cultural experts and connoisseurs, the web-based [announcement](#) reports that “LSU has named” the winning candidate to the post. In that announcement, a familiar propaganda technique—moving away from individual agents and toward abstractions—helps to gloss over the question of agency. When the Office of Academic Affairs was asked for a description of the search process and an indication as to why faculty members had not been apprised of the membership of the committee, faculty governance officers were advised that the search had been “conceived” before the requirement for consultation concerning committees for all searches at Dean level or above had been agreed upon. Here chronology becomes murky, for the principal actions of the search seem to have taken place long after the requirement took affect. The LSU Faculty Senate has requested and obtained a follow-on briefing from LSU HRM in an attempt to unriddle this mystery. Hints are already surfacing. A careful internet search reveals that the LSU Foundation is conducting a private search for an associate director of development. So, it seems, the donors are exerting considerable influence on who works within a museum, a state of affairs that, once again, threatens academic freedom (does anyone believe that the Flagship Coalition is going to encourage an exhibition on the artistic abuses of outdoor advertising?).

In another search, the first-person plural came in handy to sand away the details of the selection process. In an announcement concerning the status of the search for LSU's Vice-Chancellor for the Office of Research and Economic Development, LSU's Provost announced that “we have decided to extend the search through the next academic year” and that a long-time confidante will remain in the office. The “we” in this sentence would surely qualify for the “unclear referent” remark on a freshman paper and is surely among the more singular plural pronouns deployed to date.

This was all topped off by an email that found its way into the *Newsletter* office reporting that only one applicant had entered the pool for the Sea Grant directorship, a statewide appointment that was mysteriously limited to the LSU on-campus pool, allegedly on financial grounds (although, last time I heard, folks made less money down at near-nautical Nicholls than up at the Red Stick).

These are indeed crazy days at LSU.

LSUS Releases Chronology of Statewide Program to Curtail Success at LSUS Over Last 6 Years

In the hot rhetoric relating to the recalibration of higher education in north Louisiana, fiction has usually trumped fact as the Shreveport-Bossier Initiative has sided with assorted interest groups in alleging that LSU in Shreveport has made no progress and therefore ought to be consolidated with some other institutions (never mind the logic here, which is tantamount to suggesting that it might be a good idea to fuse the Super Bowl-winning New Orleans Saints with a Pop Warner kiddie team so as to produce a victor in the teenage league). Amplified by the Board of Regents, which has an interest in befuddling educational arrangements until it can emerge as a “superboard,” the enemies of Shreveport independence seldom cite facts, preferring windy prophecies about the future of Youree Drive. Now hard-driving LSUS Chancellor Vincent Marsala and his team of Red River Policy Pilots have produced a chronology of events relating to the definition and implementation of the LSUS role, scope, and mission statement, a document that shows no less than six years of assiduous effort by statewide bodies to keep LSUS within bounds and to prevent updating. This revealing and thoroughly documented timeline is now available [online](#).

Ad in March Edition of The Coffee News Reveals Downside to Overpublicizing LSU Sports

Common wisdom holds that, whether or not they generate profits or incur losses, athletic programs always generate good press and good feeling among the people, including those who might choose to enroll in an athletically well-endowed institution. Those who inhabit coffee houses or who otherwise deal in the secret conversations that write the novel of academic administration have lately seen evidence to the contrary in an advertisement that ran in the March 26th issue of *The Coffee News*, a giveaway poop sheet that appears in the vestibule of almost every café or bistro where Ph.D.s and Ed.D.s hang out. That amusing publication features an advertisement from an online boutique coffee vendor whose unrestrained comments show that the general public is quick to catch on to the hidden conflicts within the athletic department. Would that our university media departments would recognize that putting too much enamel on a story deflects praise rather than reflects glory.



New Feature: Joke of the Month

Given the misery of these times in higher education, a bit of humor is helpful now and then. The *Newsletter* is thus introducing a new feature, “The Joke of the Month.” The joke for this month: Question: What's the difference between a ghost and a sailor with a sprained ankle? Answer: One's a hob goblin and the other's a gob hobblin'.

LSU Monument Unceremoniously Destroyed to Make Room for Drilling Rig

Last year, the *Newsletter* reported on the sudden appearance of a double monument to Tiger Spirit in north Louisiana, along Interstate 49, near milepost 184, in the vicinity of the Jindal-sounding town of Stonewall. That double monument featured a veterans'-style giant flagpole displaying the LSU banner alongside a billboard vowing eternal fealty to the campus of stately oaks and broad magnolias. A bit further south, the second half of the monument featured a massive sound cordon painted with a collage of a mural depicting great moments in LSU sports history. Sad to say, LSU has once again not weathered the storm of prosperity all that well. When the *Newsletter* last passed by this apparitional memorial, a rig extracting underground wealth had been erected behind the mural-festooned sound barrier. Half the mural had been shattered and thrown to the ground by rampaging construction equipment. Clever interpreters, however, realize that this apparent desecration of a Tiger holy spot is only a far more clever allegory of what the governor and the Flagship Coalition plan to do with faculty prerogatives.



GOVERNOR PLANS TO TAX HIGHER ED RETIREMENT

Legislation now being considered:

- **Continues taxing employers to pay down the unfunded accrued liability (UAL), incurred by years of legislative mismanagement**
- **Raises faculty contributions to the teachers' retirement system (TRSL) from 8% to 11%, a 3% tax on faculty**
- **Increases TRSL retirement age to 67**
- **Reduces TRSL benefits**
- **Continues inadequate state contribution to the optional retirement plan (ORP), well below that of regional peers.**

Compare:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| ➤ LSU—6.97% | ➤ U of Tennessee—10% |
| ➤ Mississippi State—10.3% | ➤ U of Georgia—9.24% |

And, unlike LSU, these comparison schools participate in Social Security.

**Alone, We Have No Vote, No Voice
FIGHT BACK
JOIN LSUUnited NOW**

**CONTACT: LSUUnited through Pat McGee (pmcgee1@cox.net) or
LAE through Michael Walker-Jones (mwalker-jones@lae.org)**

Humanities and Social Sciences Senate Passes Resolution of Support for LSUUnited

Motivated by the courage of the LSU Faculty Senate, which passed a resolution calling for support of the efforts of LSUUnited as it attempts to organize and to provide leverage for the faculty, the LSU College of Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty Senate (the college policy committee for this college) has passed a resolution concurring in support of the fledgling union. HSS College Faculty Senate 2012-1, entitled "Support for Faculty Senate Resolution 11-11: 'Call to Support and Join LSUUnited,'" affirms that "the HSS Faculty Senate is concerned about the welfare of the College faculty" and "believe[s] that] collective bargaining might provide one way to improve," hence "encourage[s] all HSS faculty to support and join LSUUnited."

Tip of the Month: Woodchuck Cider



Anyone who has visited the German-speaking world knows of the ancient dialogue between the beer cultures and the wine cultures within that distinguished array of Teutonized nations, kingdoms, and duchies. Trouble is, the simple beer-wine dichotomy bypasses what, until recent decades, was one of the world's mostly widely-quaffed beverages: apple cider, a beverage that, in its fermented form, is often poorly described by the adjective "hard" despite its mellifluous softness as it caresses the palate. Now rivaling its English models—beverages with masculine-sounding brand names like "Strongbow" and "Woodpecker"—the gently-denominated "Woodchuck" cider company from ever-woody Vermont offers a compact and yet astounding range of specialist apple ales, whether the dark and pomiferous 802 vintage or the varietal Granny Smith guzzle or even a few ancient reserve bottles characterized by classic austerity. The best news is that no less than our own Chimes Restaurant, the legendary pub just outside the north gates of LSU as well as in assorted suburban locations, offers this sophisticatedly rural libation on draft and in genuine English pint glasses, all to ravishing effect. Bottled versions of the brew are widely available in such upscale markets as Calandro's, Calvin's, and The Fresh Market.

Correction

In the March 31st issue of the *Newsletter*, the article on former presidential candidate Rick Santorum's visit to Alex Box stadium mentioned that someone among the "top brass" at LSU must have authorized or at least known about the appearance. While that is clearly the case—otherwise, there must have been an enormous and surprising security breach at a highly visible LSU facility—the *Newsletter* does not know who the responsible party might be and has not identified any particular party in the LSU administration as the responsible party.

Spicing Ecclesiastical Gumbo

In *Spicing Ecclesiastical Gumbo*, William L. Greene follows the life of Napoleon Joseph Perche, Third Archbishop of New Orleans from his birth in Angers, France to his death in 1883. Greene is a retired priest of the Baton Rouge Catholic Diocese turned author and historian. *Spicing Ecclesiastical Gumbo* marks Greene's third book on the history of the church in Louisiana. Copies can be ordered from [amazon](http://amazon.com).

Graphic Editorial Cartoon

A Shakespeare Revival Opens in Baton Rouge



Published by [The LSU Faculty Senate](#)

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