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Faculty Senate Newsletter, April 2014

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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LSU FACULTY SENATE

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Monthly Newsletter

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President's Welcome



If there were ever any doubt that the favorite virtue of higher education leadership is that of unanimity, skeptics would need to look no further than the apparent administrative lovefest that accompanied the announcement of the confidently-denominated WISE plan (the "Workforce and Innovation for a Stronger Economy" blueprint), a loosely defined array of proposals and prophecies that center around

the currently pending [HB1033](#), sponsored by Lake Charles power broker Charles "Chuck" Kleckley.

Wisdom might come at no charge other than that of study and experience, but the WISE plan strikes a hard bargain with academe: the ex nihilo delivery of \$40,000,000.00 in exchange for measuring university merit by what HB1033 blithely calls "degree and certificate production" in "high demand fields" allegedly pertinent to the "state's future workforce and innovation needs." No "degree" or "certificate" is required to see that the WISE program aims, if nothing else, to change the tone and the missions of universities by prioritizing vocation-specific preparation over wide-ranging, altruistic teaching and research.

What is perversely impressive about the WISE initiative and the happy-puppy-like response to it is that the stakes are so very, very low. Setting aside the question of where the \$40M was found and overlooking the apparitional quality of a plan that emerged without any publicly accessible discussion, the economic impact on university budgets will barely push the indicator needle. \$40M for three dozen Louisiana campuses, all of which will surely scramble for these dollars, will start little more than a stampede. At best, it will fund new careers for thirty or so "Associate Vice-Chancellors for WISE." Yet, despite realizing that a very small carrot had replaced the broken stick of a declining gubernatorial regime, higher education leadership rushed to the celebrations (and into group photographs with all the key players, including the Governor).

Clever leaders, admittedly, found ways to tweak and finesse the lowbid buyout offer that is WISE. The buoyantly strategic leadership of the University of Louisiana System unfurled a scroll of pro-WISE ovations from its [nine campus Presidents](#), thus showing that the plan could be interpreted as applicable to nearly any initiative. ULS officialdom then began publicly affirming the value of the liberal arts. Southern University leadership opined that the WISE plan was fine and dandy but should be thoroughly revised so as to encourage smaller institutions. All of these carefully worded proclamations ingeniously endorsed the WISE plan while opening the possibility of its dilution and dissipation. Words questioning the fundamental premises of the WISE plan, however, remained innumerable, the count being zero.

Faculty would do well to review and to speak out concerning the WISE plan and its attendant legislation. The proposed WISE management arrangements will inhibit faculty as well as public access to policy decision-making that will affect curricula. The WISE Board will operate as a select committee hidden within the Board of Regents. Anyone acquainted with the Regents' approach to information distribution will understand that announcements concerning and access to WISE Board meetings will disappear behind a permanently outdated web page and a retracted public relations department. Comprised of system heads and three state economic and workforce development officials with no faculty, community, or student representation, the proposed WISE Board is at best exclusionary and at worst a machine by which a handful of state employees can quietly intimidate institutional leaders. The WISE bill anoints those curricula that produce workers in four- or five-star fields as determined by the Louisiana Workforce Commission, a gubernatorial prefecture which lacks any longterm record for predicting job prospects, let alone promoting workers' rights. The four- and five-star ranking nomenclature, borrowed from investment ranking services such as S&P or Morningstar, fits awkwardly with discussions of human beings. Occupations that concern themselves with freedom of thought, basic research, or selfless service fall beneath this heaven of good fortune. Speaking of heaven, the calling of pastor doesn't make it into the materialist galaxy of stellar jobs.

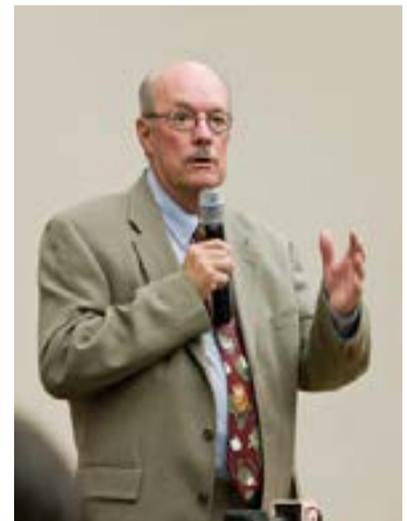
What is most curious about the WISE phenomenon is that it may well increase faculty sympathy for university administrations. The highly talented but marginally neurotic way in which the top education managers tried and continue to try to massage the WISE bill—to say, in effect, "yes, we'll take the money, but we'll find some way to tie up the attached strings in the tangled rhetoric of the academic diversity so that the program will go nowhere except into the bank"—may help faculty to recognize that administrations are just as beatdown as are rank-and-file educators, although, perhaps, the top dogs are a bit better for taking the abuse.

ADMINISTRATIVE RAISE MACHINE STARTING TO ROLL AGAIN

After a brief nod to the spirit if not the fact of austerity, the LSU administrative raise machine is again beginning to roll. In a year during which faculty received raises that were billed as 4% increases but that seldom came anywhere near that increment and in a year in which years of legislative neglect left faculty barely hoping for a retirement plan that would approach bare compliance with Social Security exemption rules, a 19% increase has gone to the mono member LSU legislative delegation, with \$15K and \$18.7K increases going to rising underdean personnel. Some administrators, admittedly, started on the low end, with the new LSUS leader bagging \$240K, which is modest by contemporary measures. That sum, however, was dwarfed by the \$362K that went to the latest assistant football coach (perhaps some regard carrying a leather balloon through muscular traffic a key skill in the workforce development push).

NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT ON HIGHER EDUCATION PENSION REFORM

Viewers of the American Heroes Channel hit series *Codes and Conspiracies* will find no surprise in the discovery that NASH, the National Association of System Heads, manages the flow of information to the people that it serves through a web site that can only be explored with a login and a password. Comprised of the top executives of major university systems, NASH is the most exclusive of clubs for putatively public officials. Of course, not every secret society indulges in hidden unspeakable acts; occasionally those who haunt the shadows try to do something helpful. So it is that NASH has announced its intention to conduct a national study of retirement plans for higher education professionals. The study seeks to analyze the manner in which such pension plans are funded; the types of programs offered; and the relation of those plans to postretirement health benefits. The roving eye of the web wanderer cannot help but be amazed to note the heavy representation of Louisiana officialdom in NASH; included on its ten member board are no less than University of Louisiana System President Sandra Woodley and former LSU Chancellor, now [Colorado State University System Chancellor Michael Martin](#). Their Louisiana experience has surely schooled these two admirably outgoing insiders in the sad science of deficient retirement plans. The *Newsletter* has great hopes that these vigorous administrators will drive the NASH study to a quick and revelatory completion.



Mike Martin returns to retirement plan action.

NEW ORLEANS MEDICAL CAMPUS OFFERS NEWSLETTER EXCERPTS

The *Newsletter* staff is delighted to learn that the medical campus in New Orleans, LSUHSCNO, is posting excerpts from the *Newsletter* on its own Faculty Senate web site. The LSUHSC colleagues are especially interested in retirement issues. Beautifully displayed, the excerpts and other information from the [LSU Faculty Senate web site](#) can be view [online](#). Thanks to our LSUHSC colleagues.

Higher Education Headliner

MaryAnn Coleman, President and CEO at LAICU

By Daniel Board and Emily Ward

This month the Newsletter is pleased to present MaryAnn Coleman, President and CEO of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU). Originally from Ohio, she attended school in Pennsylvania for her Bachelor's and ended up moving to Louisiana in 1974. LAICU is composed of ten private schools in LA such as Tulane, Xavier, and Dillard Universities.

All ten of these institutions are independent, however; as President, Coleman serves as their collective representative and voice. She works closely with the legislature and Board of Regents to build collaboration and find ways to make sure the private colleges have a seat at the table. MaryAnn is an advocate for physically being present for legislative meetings as it often leads to questions from others on how LAICU can help with different projects. "When somebody has a question for LAICU, if I don't know the answer I probably know someone who does."

Private schools do not have to be a part of LAICU and so it's also part of Coleman's job to make signing up beneficial for them. The best way to do this is by helping increase the number of attending students, both residential and from out of town. MaryAnn informed us of just how important this task is, "The 1980's oil bust caused a lot of people to leave Louisiana. So we're missing a whole generation of kids. Those people left the state, or their parents left the state and they grew up somewhere else. Now, their kids aren't here so we have a net loss in migration. A loss of young people. We've missed that whole generation and so it's important to keep the ones we have." This is the focus of Coleman's networking and teamwork. She says one of the most important projects undertaken was successfully mandating that students be able to redeem their TOPS financial aid at a private institution. Authorizing this meant students now had options if LSU wasn't the right fit for them, and these options kept them in state.

The total enrollment of all ten private schools is about 30,000 students, 10,000 of which are LA residents. Of those residential students, on average 4,000 are TOPS scholars. MaryAnn happily notes, "...this says to me they might have left the state after deciding not to attend LSU..." which shows just how successful that mandate has been. When taking into account there's only a 20% chance of a student returning once he/she has left the state, it's easy to see why young people are such a coveted asset. In an effort to retain as many students as possible, private schools try to financially assist when possible. Coleman says some will even match TOPS aid dollar for dollar, and that each year the ten schools give a massive \$233 million in aid.

Although private and public institutions might not see eye to eye on everything, they still work together and benefit from it. A private school is not bound by the same set of rules as a public and can speak up for them when defending higher education in the state as a whole. Public schools can create financial incentives to attract professors to private institutions. Schools like Centenary, Xavier, etc. serve as a public resource by working with TOPS and providing faith-based educational options for students of Methodist, Catholic, and many other religions. MaryAnn notes that our private schools are so capable because they are treated equally with public institutions, "...this is unique - there is no other program in all the states like it." This especially important when it comes to divvying up state educational funds: for research, imminent scholars, academic enhancement and the recruitment of graduate students. Seeing the state treat private schools like this is one of Coleman's favorite parts of the job because it really allows her and the institutions to make real strides in bettering Louisiana higher education.



MaryAnn Coleman, "If I don't know the answer to your question [about LAICU], I probably know someone who does."

LA TECH FACULTY ASSESS SENATE

One of the challenges for as well as strengths of faculty activists is the persistence of faculty governance institutions. Enduring customs, rules, and habits lend stability to campuses but also lag behind the maneuvering and adaptation that characterizes the modern administration of a complex university. Often enough, large committees or ponderous procedures slow faculty action until the terrible words "too late" resonate from faculty senate chambers. Under the stewardship of Professor Andy Cline, the Louisiana Tech faculty governance apparatus is conducting a study of Senates around Louisiana in an attempt to update and possibly revamp its operations. A slate of four key questions has made its way to faculty leaders around the state. Congratulations to Andy Cline for his leadership in this innovative enterprise.



Andy Cline

FACULTY INPUT ON BOOK-STORE SENDS SALES SOARING

Among mainstream experts in auxiliary services, the common wisdom holds that faculty members understand little about merchandising and less about the economic function of contracted services. Thanks to the visionary outreach of LSU A&M Auxiliary Services Director Margot Carroll, that myth of academic ineptitude has been busted. Outreach-affirming Carroll partnered with the LSU A&M Faculty Senate to create a "Bookstore Committee" by way of improving that important campus venue. According to Barnes and Noble at LSU manager Paul Stevenson, heeding faculty input led to a dramatic increase in book adoption rates, which soared to 97%. Similarly, book retention rates—books kept, rather than returned or exchanged, after purchase—sailed up to 42%, a very high figure by industry benchmarks. Congratulations to the four faculty members of the Bookstore Committee (Jon Cogburn; Lillian BridwellBowles; John DiTusa; Margaret Reams) for their contribution to this improvement in the cocurricular environment. We await your next triumphs!



Gravity(Alfonso Cuarón, 2013), Reviewed by Carl Freedman (2014)

The Academy Awards seldom reveal much interesting about cinema, but—just as, proverbially, a broken clock is exactly correct twice a day—occasionally a glance at the Oscars will provide some useful clues for thinking about a movie. At least quantitatively, GRAVITY was the big winner at the 86th Academy Awards, taking seven of the big prizes. No other film released in 2013 even came close; the nearest runners-up were 12 YEARS A SLAVE (Steve McQueen) and DALLAS BUYERS CLUB (Jean-Marc Vallée), which won three awards each. Except, however, for the odd exception of Cuarón's Best Director Oscar, all the awards given to GRAVITY recognized the more technical aspects of filmmaking: Best Visual Effects, Best Film Editing, Best Cinematography, Best Sound Mixing, Best Sound Editing, and Best Original Score. The film was not even nominated for Best Writing, and, though previously believed by many to be the frontrunner for Best Picture, lost in that category to 12 YEARS A SLAVE. Sandra Bullock, who plays the lead (and one of only two actual characters in the film), was nominated for Best Actress—astoundingly, in my view, since her histrionic talents have never seemed to me anything but extremely modest—but, to nobody's surprise, her performance lost to Cate Blanchett's brilliant turn as an updated (and de-Southernized) version of Tennessee Williams's Blanche DuBois in Woody Allen's BLUE JASMINE.

That Cuarón should be judged more impressive for the technical, especially the visual, aspects of filmmaking than for the latter's narrative and dramatic components is, of course, no great surprise. In CHILDREN OF MEN (2006), probably his most widely discussed film prior to GRAVITY, the science-fiction story is quite banal—a platitudinous recycling of motifs that have been better treated innumerable times elsewhere—but some of the long takes of the post-apocalyptic environment are quite stunning. In GRAVITY, however, this kind of discrepancy reaches an extreme seldom, or perhaps never, equaled before.

The plot, such as it is, of the new film is extremely simple. A group of NASA astronauts has flown a space shuttle up to orbital altitude in order to perform some fairly routine work on the Hubble telescope. While they are going about their task, the Russians (those nasty Russians!) unexpectedly launch a missile to destroy one of their own spy satellites. The resulting explosions send debris hurtling around at tens of thousands of miles per hour, and the harm to the Americans and their vehicle is catastrophic. The only immediate survivors are Matt Kowalski (George Clooney), the mission commander, and a novice astronaut, Dr. Ryan Stone (Bullock). Their shuttle wrecked, the two of them make their way to the International Space Station in order to pick up a Russian shuttle and fly it back down to earth. But the Russian shuttle turns out to have been too badly damaged for that, and it is necessary to go further, to a Chinese station. Matt succumbs along the way, deliberately sacrificing himself so that Ryan may have a chance to survive; and she does indeed manage to pilot a Chinese shuttle safely to earth.

It is hard to know where to begin discussing all the absurdities and clichés in the film's very shoddy attempts at story and characterization. One might start by asking what Ryan Stone is doing up there in the first place. She is a medical doctor—evidently both a research physician and a clinical practitioner—but we see her working at an engineering task that appears to require no medical knowledge whatever. Did Cuarón suppose that audiences could accept a woman in the caretaking profession of medicine more readily than they could accept a female engineer? Perhaps so, for his film is nothing if not tedious and conventional in its enforcement of traditional gender platitudes. Ryan is a scared, vulnerable—though girlishly plucky—newbie who virtually cries out for experienced masculine protection. That, of course, is exactly what the equally one-dimensional Matt provides. Curiously named after perhaps the most famous macho man in American literature—the rapist Stanley Kowalski in A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE—Matt is the all too predictably cool, courageous, sardonic veteran of space travel: and with a heart of gold, naturally. More than once we are informed that his experience of walking in space is more extensive than that of any other individual, save a single Russian cosmonaut whose record Matt longs to break. There is some attempt to give Ryan, at least, a certain psychological depth through a back-story about the death of her four-year-old daughter, who died in a meaningless freak accident (she tripped and fell while playing and fatally hit her head). With better writing (the script is credited to Cuarón and his son Jónas, though Clooney is said to have had a hand in it as well), and with better acting on Bullock's part, this strategy might have worked. As things are, all the back-story really contributes is an unpleasant note of mawkishness at several points in the film.

It is also worth noting some of the strange scientific implausibilities that disfigure the film (and we need not count what one of the crew of SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE described as the extreme improbability that George Clooney would ever speak to a woman his own age). True enough, GRAVITY is a fiction film, not a science lesson. Still, since it seems in many ways—notably its brilliantly precise visuals, about which I will have more to say presently—to encourage the viewer to take a real interest in space science, it is annoying how often the film goes out of its way to insult the intelligence of those who actually do so. Matt's end comes when, tethered to Ryan, he drifts away from her and the ISS; rather than drag her with him, he undoes the cord that binds them. But of course there would actually be no force causing Matt to drift away, and the gentlest tug on Ryan's part would have returned him to safety. Then too, the Hubble and the ISS seem to be in roughly the same orbital altitude, though the latter is actually 120 miles closer to earth. Finally, in this supposedly zero-gravity environment, where does the gravity come from that causes Sandra Bullock's hair to lie flat on her head? Real scientists have noted these and many other absurdities, and I will not prolong the list. I will, however, mention what seems to me the worst implausibility of all, one I have not seen discussed before. Ryan's Chinese shuttle seems to plunge randomly toward earth, and it lands in the ocean—which makes good sense, since three quarters of our planet's surface are covered with water. But what is the chance that it would land, as it does, within quick and easy swimming distance not only of land but of a smooth, inviting beach? Very close to zero, I should think. Cuarón seems not to have realized that he would have had a far more interesting and tragically resonant narrative if Ryan had survived the exotic and all but overwhelming dangers of outer space only to drown in the ocean as people have been doing for millennia.

(Continued on Page 4)

LAYZELL CHARGES AHEAD IN DEFICIT DIALOGUE

One of the best executive searches of the year was that for the Vice-President of Finance and Administration at the LSU System. All evidence indicates that the A-King boarded the transparency A-train and allowed the academic princes, dukes, knights, and even a few serfs to participate in the search. The resulting fair verdict issued in two superb finalists and the eventual appointment, by common consent, of the amiable as well as expert Dan Layzell. Layzell has already proved his worth through a bold and unprecedented step: a daringly innovative request for a statewide dialogue with faculty leaders from the campuses in his system. Layzell's farreaching, ninety minute conversation, enabled in part by advanced communications technology, not only yanked the mysterious budgeting process out of the closet but also led to a variety of suggestions that will accelerate improvement and invention. Let us hope that Layzell's counterparts in the other systems learn that a courageous outreach winds friends, yields ideas, and advances careers.



LSU FAS VP Dan Layzell

A&M STATS DEBUNK LEGISLATIVE CRITICISM

For the last several years, legislators critical of higher education have alleged poor performance by Louisiana universities with respect to the retention and graduation rates. Institutions, the harsh refrain goes, need externally imposed reforms and procrustean mandates in order to push more students through the baccalaureate pipeline. Now, that vigorous defender of the kudzucovered walls, Paul Ivey, Executive Director of LSU's University College, has unleashed a splendidly designed report—indeed, has offered up one of the best examples of graphic design in the history of university pamphleteering—that, through a rich selection of data, shows that Louisiana is doing better than most states. The data in Ivey's 2012—2013 Annual Report, for example, indicate that LSU A&M has a higher (66.9%) six-year graduation than comparable institutions nationwide and that the third-semester retention rate matches up with that of national peers. Although the likeable Ivey limits his study to the big bad old A&M campus, chances are the studies comparing Louisiana campuses with peer institutions would show that Louisiana faculty have been doing a whole lot more with a whole lot less for a very long time.

*From everyone here at the Newsletter,
We hope you have a great Spring Break!*

MOVIE REVIEW (continued)

The flaws in *GRAVITY* are sufficiently abundant that even a very partial account of them can easily make it sound like an essentially worthless film that deserves nobody's time or money. But that is not, in truth, the case at all. For *GRAVITY* fairly won some of its Oscars, most especially those for Best Visual Effects and Best Cinematography. Not since Stanley Kubrick's *2001* (1968), which set the gold standard in this regard, has any film, to my knowledge, conveyed such a strong and subtle sense of what travel beyond the earth's atmosphere might look and (at least on the visual level) feel like. The opening shot of the film offers a beautiful blue image of earth as seen from orbital altitude, with our home planet filling about two thirds of the frame. Since all the action of the film takes place only a few hundred miles above sea level, Cuarón has many occasions for shots of this sort, with the inviting blues and greens of earth—the colors that indicate water, air, and life—looming so large on screen that the planet seems much more accessible than it actually is. One almost gets the feeling that it would be possible to jump safely down to home; but this illusion, which corresponds, of course, to exactly what Matt and Ryan would dearly love to do, is always accompanied by the cruel simultaneous knowledge that such a thing is impossible.

At the same time, the film also offers many shots oriented in just the opposite direction—not towards the soft pastel colors of home but towards the stark and practically endless black night of outer space. Here, especially, we see (as in *2001*) exquisite simulations of humans operating in zero gravity (one might say that the title of Cuarón's film names a central "character" that is conspicuous by its absence), with the intriguing mixture of gracefulness and awkwardness that results when human bodies move in an environment radically different from that in which they were designed to operate. The overriding feeling, however, is a kind of sublime Burkean terror that no merely earthly prospect could ever produce. We see the overwhelming blackness of deep space, and feel an absolute zero of human loneliness in this vastness between worlds where—except in the most limited, temporary, and precarious of ways—human life is simply out of the question. Some have objected to the Best Cinematography Oscar on the reasonable-sounding grounds that the film, as a matter of fact, contains very little cinematography; indeed, there are many shots where only the faces of Clooney and Bullock, or the face of Bullock alone, appear to be the product of actual photography. Everything else is digital imagery generated by computer. But this objection seems to me misplaced. The technology of filmmaking is always developing, and CGI, though it is not cinematography in the strict sense, is, increasingly, the legitimate successor to cinematography in creating the visual dimension of cinema. Much has changed since the German philosopher of film Siegfried Krakauer called cinema "the redemption of physical reality." There is, of course, plenty of room for debate about the relative merits of the older and the newer techniques. But there are few, if any, films that can better sustain arguments for the artistic power of CGI than *GRAVITY*.

The visual gorgeousness of *GRAVITY* makes it worth multiple viewings. My advice is to avoid your local movie theatre as far as this film is concerned, and instead to watch it with a Blu-ray disk on your big-screen television set—and with the sound muted. You will, it is true, thereby miss some sound effects that are very much worth hearing. But that loss will be more than compensated for by the fact that you will also avoid the frequently annoying and distracting original music by Steven Price (the choral sections are especially bad); the irritating chatter of Bullock and Clooney; the ridiculous irruptions of country songs (evidently Matt's choice in music); and, above all, most of Cuarón's hopelessly inept attempts at plot and character. What you will receive is the unforgettable visual sense of having actually been in outer space.

—Carl Freedman

ADVOCATE COURT CASE CONTINUES INTO NEW REGIME.

Both faculty members and citizens statewide rejoice in the decision by the Baton Rouge newspaper, *The Advocate*, to proceed with its lawsuit concerning the concealment of the names of candidates in the 2013 search for an LSU System President. During the time that the case has lain dormant, ownership of *The Advocate* has changed, leading to fears that the new proprietors might quietly stand down from a suit that centers on the duty of a university to dispense information to its citizenry. Appropriately enough, April Fools Day was the date for the hearing, in the Court of Appeals, of renewed arguments in the case. Arguments for LSU (but against free access to public information) were presented by Jimmy Faircloth, who, in his former incarnation as a University of Louisiana Supervisor, voted to diminish faculty tenure rights, and who, after serving as Bobby Jindal's Executive Counsel, received over \$1,000,000.00 in no-bid contracts from state sources. The case is in process and is expected to continue for some time, doubtless at continuing expense to LSU. See all the details in the [Advocate story](#).

#FIXLSU: NEW UNDERGROUND BLOG

A remarkable feature of conspiracies of silence is that, on our loud world, they are difficult to maintain. Now, from the cellars of theanship School of Journalism, comes a rambunctious new online venue through which the average Joe or Jane can publicize thoughts about the wouldbe Flagship University and its operations. Dubbed "#fixLSU," the blog, which remains scanty visàvis its origin story, emerges from [The Create Lab](#), which also aspires to restore better communitybased news coverage to New Orleans.

New blog pops up at LSU.



SATISFACTION SURVEY ROCKS RAGIN' CAJUNS

It appears that fury at athletic opponents is not the only source of ire among the denizens of the University of Louisiana in Lafayette. Investigative reporters at news outlet KATC have excavated the results of a faculty survey conducted by "ModernThink" that reveals widespread dissatisfaction with regard to key governance and communications concerns. Drawing the lowest marks among the many indicators assessed were policies; shared governance; communication; and respect and appreciation. Composite scores for ULL on fifteen indices fell beneath two other national benchmark indices in every category. Especially noteworthy on the colorcoded survey report: the deep division of opinion between faculty and administration. On a spectrum ranging from pale peach (poor) to midnight blue (excellent), administrators ranked almost every aspect of ULL life deep into the batman spectrum while faculty remained among the overripe stone fruit, only occasional drifting into ver faint sky blue. The survey is available for inspection [online](#) as is the [KATC report](#).

SELU Litigators Come Up Shorter Than Napoleon

Advocates for tenure and job stability reached for their snifters of Courvoisier when *The Lion's Roar*, the vociferously titled campus newspaper of Southeastern Louisiana University, announced that two of the three dismissed professors who had faced dismissal following the shutdown of the SELU French Department had settled their case over their [hasty and irregular sacking](#). Although details of the settlement remained behind drawn curtains, comments by university counsel indicated that the settlement emerged from concerns about the cost of litigation, not to mention the cost of bad publicity such as that which appeared in the national educators' newspaper, [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#). Although the attack on foreign language education in Louisiana public universities shows no sign of abating, it is possible that SELU will learn that the costs for unjustly breaking its agreements with faculty members can be high.



Lions drop coins in dismissal flap.

LSU COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AIMS HIGH, CHANGES DEBATE

Discussion of workforce development in Louisiana continues to look down rather than up the economic ladder. As one prominent university official who spoke on condition of anonymity put it, the much-bruited WISE plan aims to train students to do one task: drill oil, drill oil, drill oil. Missing from the debate about the vocational readiness of college graduates are accolades for altruistic occupations such as those that address social, educational, and cultural needs and those crowning the pyramid of inquiry and innovation. Going straight to the top of that neglected pyramid is that one-man all-seeing eye, Richard Koubek, Dean of the LSU A&M College of engineering, who slyly yet generously dedicated the Engineering Dean's Distinguished Lecture event for this year to the topic of preparing students to enter the space exploration work force. Visionary Koubek invited Lockheed-Martin Vice-President Wanda Sigur to acquaint students with the exciting as well as lucrative careers available in the space industry and succeeded in reintroducing questions about quality of life and about intellectual rewards into the otherwise proletarian debate about jobs. Sigur, for her part, offered up dazzling videos of current rocketry projects as well as clear accounts of her rise up the corporate and research ladder. Also aboard Koubek's version of the Enterprise—his attempt to turn scratching for oil into pushing to the final frontier—was no less than the driver of JPL's Mars Rover Curiosity, an unprepossessing gent from Houma who has brought renown to Louisiana by flying as far away from it as science presently allows! Applause to LSU's College of Engineering for aiming high.



Lockheed VP Wanda Sigur and LSU Engineering Dean Rick Koubek: Developing the next generation of space explorers.

FUNDING FORMULA BILLS BEING OVERLOOKED

With good reason, the lion's share of faculty energies have gone, during the current legislative session, to the monitoring of HB6, the proposal to set a minimum floor for the "normal cost" (the portion of the employer's contribution reaching faculty accounts) for the Optional Retirement Plan ("ORP"). At least four other bills on two topics merit continuing faculty surveillance. Unfortunately, the legislative delegations for the four higher education systems have remain bewilderingly quiet with respect to these legislative campaigns.

Two of the bills, [SB177](#) and [SB337](#), emanate from Senator Conrad Appel, who has repeatedly demonstrated his opposition to faculty involvement in university governance. Appel's pair of bills address the statewide higher education funding formula, an admittedly damaged mechanism for the distribution of monies to colleges and universities. Unfortunately, and despite the urgent need for a thoughtful updating of the formula, Appel's workforcedriven bills create mechanisms to tilt the distribution of wealth toward institutions that train students for highdemand job fields. Although they set no procedure for determining what an educated workforce might be other than anecdotal review of current employment needs in Louisiana's raw materials economy, Appel's bill creates mechanisms by which to enrich compliant colleges and to impoverish those that follow more general curricula. Included in the measures are instructions on the creation of committees comprised largely of industrialists. There is only a minimal mandate to consult with faculty and no indication that qualified persons would enjoy voting rights on these important bodies.

Two other bills, [HB588](#) and [HB696](#), flow from the quill of former tennis coach, now educational theorist Steve Carter. Like Appel, Carter addresses a pressing problem, the lack of qualifications of members of higher education management boards ("the Supervisors"). Unfortunately, Carter understands qualifications to be those acquired during service as the CEO of a financial institution. His legislation contains no indication that academic credentials would provide qualifications or that faculty members might make their way onto the boards. Curiously, given the distribution of vocations in the current management boards, Carter's legislation undo itself by ensuring that the same tribe that now claims board seats would continue to hold them, thus reinforcing the very problem that the proposed legislation allegedly addresses.



Representative and former tennis coach Steve Carter.

MCNEESE TO DEBUT RADIO STATION

With the possible exception of homegrown offerings such as WRKF's popular *The Jim Engster Show*, public radio in Louisiana has long suffered from over formatting: from too many shows downloaded from too many faraway over-professionalized sources. Listeners occasionally wonder why a radio station is required to hear canned programming produced by vendors who are all too eager to release their podcasts on the open Internet. Those hungry for the unpredictability and variety of genuinely local programming will see their dreams realized with the ignition, in May, of KBYS, the new public, community, and university radio station for Louisiana. Pledging to open the airwaves to the full range of southwest Louisiana culture and eager to fill the niche left open by stations needing to please large numbers of donors, KBYS has already begun accumulating a library of innovative local programming, including a faculty spotlight feature that draws attention to contributors on the McNeese professional staff. KBYS, may your waves continue to propagate!



KBYS McNeese Radio Logo.

OFF THE SHELF:
Library Explorations with Tom Diamond

OPEN ACCESS

by Tom Diamond, LSU Libraries

The open access (OA) movement focuses on opening doors to the world's rich body of research, including federally-funded research. With OA, people working in industries, private organizations, and governments are given an opportunity to access these resources without having to enter into subscriptions. Unlocking and using this knowledge can lead to new ways of thinking about and solving problems, new product developments, creating public policies, and making policy decisions. An expanded ability to use knowledge and engage in robust public discussions benefits society.

Presently, subscription-based journals continue to be a major resource where scholars publish their works and are recognized by their peers. These are authoritative sources to communicate research results with fellow colleagues. However, the major global journal publishers are responding to the need to create open access journals, providing avenues for scholars to publish their works, and meeting research and institutional funder publishing mandates. Like subscription-based journals, these journals are value-added products that incorporate editing and are peer-reviewed. Quality is built into each product. Let's briefly review a sampling of these OA products:

American Chemical Society. ACS offers four OA options: ACS Central Science (free to both readers and authors), ACS Editors' Choice (free access to articles selected by the editors of ACS journals), ACS Author Rewards (OA credits issued for articles published during 2014; the credits can be applied toward publishing in an ACS open access journal); and ACS AuthorChoice (an expanded program to help authors meet funder open access requirements, including expanded options for Creative Commons licenses).

BioMed Central and SpringerOpen. The combined open access offerings now total 425 publications. BioMed Central focuses on the life and health sciences. SpringerOpen journals focus on a broad spectrum of disciplines including engineering, mathematics, physics, and astronomy.

Elsevier. Elsevier currently offers over 90 OA publications in the sciences. **SageOPEN.** This OA "megajournal" journal focuses on the "full spectrum of the social and behavioral sciences." This includes anthropology, political science, psychology, and a general category for the humanities.

Next month, I will report on recent OA activities taking place in Europe and the United States.

Do you have any questions about open access journals? Please contact Tom Diamond, Head of

Collection Development and Open Access Initiatives, at notted@lsu.edu.

TIP OF THE MONTH: MELTONIAN SHOE POLISH

With the drift toward fitness shoes and other footwear with fabric uppers, shoe shining supplies have become elusive. Bigbox stores and grocery outlets such as Target, Walmart, or Albertsons offer only dumbed-down polishes such as the brush-on version of Kiwi shoe creams. Although its name appeals to animal lovers, Kiwi, even in its original form, is poorly packaged and tends to dry out. The answer for those seeking a starry shine is the Meltonian line of shoe polishes. Meltonian provides almost every color that a shoe fancier might need, from traditional hues such as oxblood and cordovan through standard black and on to an assortment of fashion colors. Better, Meltonian never sits on the shoe like paint on a wall. It enhances the extant color of the shoe and then, like a good butler slipping champagne to guests and then retreating to the pantry, disappears from view. Carefully packaged in glass tubs with airtight screw-on lids, Meltonian shoe care products are usually available only from shoe repair and specialty shoe shops.



Meltonian Shoe Polish

CALISTHENIC COWBOYS ILLUMINATE MCNEESE

Architects at McNeese have recognized the need to improve students' physical fitness while also maintaining alertness during lessons. It seems that, in many Cowboy classrooms, motion sensors shut down lights when activity level falls below a critical threshold. Often enough mesmerized by lectures, students sit too still for these miniature engines of automation, with the result that classrooms routinely go dark as professors proceed in their lectures. Both students and faculty have now learned that the solution to this problem, especially in the high contrast environment of night classes, is intermittent handwaving, gesticulation, and even jaunting about the classroom at regular intervals. It seems that funandfitness guru Richard Simmons's idea of "Sweatin' to the Oldies" pertains as much to the study of the 450-year-old Shakespeare as to the gymnasium floor.

REGENTS CHOOSE RIGHT FIRM EVEN IF IN WRONG WAY

Those experienced in administrative job searches know that the ten or so executive search firms that dominate the academic market have very different characters. Some are willing to do their master's bidding at any cost (or price), as is consequentially evidenced by the vast sums expended by LSU in its court battles over secrecy in its recent presidential search; other firms maintain high standards of probity. In one of the more gratifying turns of Louisiana history, the Board of Regents managed to find the right search firm for the upcoming search for a Commissioner of Higher Education even despite having done so in the usual wrong way, through inaccessible deliberations by an in-house committee comprised of the most aggressive Board members. Fortunately, the firm selected, [AGB Search](#), headed by the amiable and urbane [Jamie Ferrare](#), specializes in the maintenance of standards developed through its parent organization, AGB, the Association of Governing Boards. Especially worthy of note is that AGB Search auditioned for the assignment to find the LSU President/Chancellor but got the boot from those looking for more tractable helpers. There is reason for cautious optimism that the AGB managed search for a Commissioner will be, if not altogether in keeping with the highest principles of a democratic society, at least productive of quality candidates.



AGB may help the problematic Regents



WHO WE ARE:

AN ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION FORMED TO SERVE THE FACULTY AND GRADUATE ASSISTANTS OF LSU

WHAT WE DO:

- Inform YOU on employment issues
- Bring YOUR concerns to the LSU administration, the legislature, and the general public

OUR GOALS:

- Regular Raises for faculty
- Job Security—including three-year "rolling" contracts for senior Instructors
- Benefits Improvement and Protection

JOB SECURITY:

- Address concerns and issues with the administration and oversight boards

FAIR PAY:

- Develop a clear means of negotiating pay systems that are equitable, justly applied, and transparent

BENEFIT PROTECTIONS:

- Protect and improve benefits in health insurance, retirement, employer contribution rates, and faculty options

A VOICE ON THE JOB:

- Establish policies, procedures, and protocols for better decision making in the work environment

SHARED GOVERNANCE:

- Engage in collective advocacy and exercise our historical right of self-determination

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CONTACT: Mike Russo
6923louis@gmail.com

LIFESTYLE FEATURE: FITTING OUT AN OFFICE

Vacillations in approaches to higher education administration bring with them vacillations in office arrangements. Only a few decades ago, the great engines of university leadership opined that consolidation would make the future more efficient. The enclaves and duchies of the profession—the centers, institutes, programs, and initiatives—collapsed back into departments; their vacated chambers slipped away into larger jurisdictions. Today, interdisciplinarity and the assorted startups that go with it—the centers, institutes, programs, and initiatives that previously surrendered to the academic equivalent of holding companies—have returned to fashion. The result is an inadvertent but welcome opportunity to renew, if not the structures in which offices abide, then at least the accouterments and supplies that facilitate office tasks. The reintroduction of small offices ruled by a new wave of prefects assigned to new colonies in the research and administrative empire necessitates the selection of new furnishings, equipment, and paraphernalia. Although the high-tech end of the office refurbishing spectrum—the selection of computers or other data management devices and software—is well above the pay grade of the humble Newsletter staff, the lesser components of the twenty-first century office are well within the judgment capacities of our lifestyle-feature staff. What, then, are the best choices for someone presented with a new minidominion?

Both bureau and bureaucracy derive from old French words for desks and their coverings. The first stop for any aspiring leader aiming to outfit his or her 300 square feet of space is therefore the desk department. Economy may prompt thrifty Directors to peruse the dungeons of the state surplus shop, but, alas, the heavy, obsolete, and storage-oriented furniture left over from the early days of Louisiana higher education fits poorly with the needs of the electronic information age. Those who are planning to use computational devices and peripherals and who need no drawers or cabinets would do well to look at more modern providers such as Wayfair, Hive Modern, or Blu Dot. Although these design-intensive vendors probe the upper end of pricing and although buying anything costing more than \$1,000.00 on a state budget line can lead to hassles with purchasing managers, the aforementioned merchants offer a surprising array of splendid lowcost opportunities. Consider, for example, the brightly colored \$700.00 "Desk 51" or the glasstopped "Eurostyle Z" desk. These and many other clean and efficient desk designs not only allow for abundant flexible working space but take the heaviness away from the dark cells in public buildings.



Desk 51 from Blu Dot.

Once the desk is in place, action can begin! The first step toward endorsing an action being the possession of a proper writing implement, pens and pencils are a must. Although connoisseurs in the Newsletter office confess a fondness for fountain pens, the convenience and regularity afforded by a gel writer has driven the bladder and the nib deep into history. Among the numerous competitors for the custom of scribblers, the Pilot Precise V5 pen, with its combination of sharpness, range of color options, and regularity of flow, continues to lead the pen pack. Make sure, however, to read packaging carefully so as to get the original; the thinner and newer V7 version tends to scratch, skip, and run dry. Similarly, not all pencils are alike. Many present inferior, brittle pencil leads of cracking wood. Newsletter teting has revealed the Ticonderoga, billed as "the world's best pencil," to be just that. Characterized by moderately soft lead and by wood with an adequate moisture content, the Ticonderoga pencil lasts longer than its competitors and delivers a more sure, dark, and robust line.



X-Acto leads in pencil sharpener design.

Once pencils are in hand, pencil sharpeners come into focus. Although the old-fashioned, wall-mounted crank sharpener might seem like an economy choice, the conflicting forces at play—torque, pressure, gyroscopic effect—ensure considerable pencil breakage costs. Bite the bullet and go the electric route. Here, however, dangers abound. Vertical models in which the pencil is pointed toward the center of the earth easily become unstable, fly away, and scatter shavings hither and yon. Batter-powered models drain their power sources quickly, often leaving their post in the midst of a sharpening process. In recent years, blade maker X-Acto has taken the lead in quality electric pencil sharpeners, with Stanley-Bostitch coming up close in the place position. Imposters abound. Especially commendable is a creative new design, the X-Acto ProX, which sports a neat postBauhaus form, comes in a variety of hues, and includes not only autostop but a multi-insert grid that allows for a host of pencil sizes. Cheap sharpeners often lack braces to keep the pencil aligned and seldom offer autostop features.

Another unsung hero of the office assemblage is the electric stapler, which is especially useful for those assembling inventories of pamphlets or handouts. In recent years, stapling has moved in two directions: the standard stapler, suitable for the vast majority of uses, has been supplemented by the extra-large stapler, which delivers a firmer knock to the staple and which can reach down into paper depths of up to fiveeighths of an inch. Although Swingline has long been synonymous with stapling, stapling renegade Stanley-Bostitch has outpaced its designers, at least in the superstapler category. Its B8 HeavyDuty Impulse Drive stapler, a great favorite in the Newsletter office, could seemingly hammer through an old-fashioned telephone book. Be careful, however, in selection of staples; some knockoff heavyduty staples from unscrupulous importers fit neither the Stanley Bostitch nor any other heavyduty stapling device. Among the ordinary staplers, Stanley-Bostitch again leads the pack, even despite adverse reviews from online customers who seem to have unreasonable expectations for a sportlevel stapler. Stanley Bostitch staplers present a cleaner design line and a more reliable punch than do those of competitors such as Swingline and Optima.

LSU IT GOES LOCALLY GLOBAL

For several years, the LSU A&M campus has maintained two parallel wireless services: "LSU Secure," a standard inhouse wireless network, and LSU's branch of "Eduroam," a global network of academic wireless Internet systems found at a great many, albeit not yet the majority, of campuses in the developed world. By transitioning to Eduroam, LSU IT Services will accustom its users to a system through which they can find logon opportunities on a great many campuses worldwide. Farewell, hours spent sitting in the Starbucks in Klagenfurt, hello, comfortable chair in the Padua library! It is to be hoped that the example set by Brian Nichols, Sheri Thompson, Pam Nicolle, and the LSU A&M IT team will spread throughout Louisiana higher education, where colleagues would welcome the chance to access the Internet on any of our three dozen campuses.



Eduroam comes to LSU.

GLOBALPURPLE POSSIBILITIES EXPLORED IN TIGERTOWN

Fashion choices always tell "the story." A link between the mind, body, and world, attire explains how its wearer wishes to interact with his or her colleagues and surroundings. During job auditions and in the early days of a regime, insecurity and the desire to be seen to fit in always lead to overly declarative fashion statements. With the unnerving, rapid turnover in the top layers of LSU and LSU System administration has come an intensifying of purple hues, with highly, even ridiculously declarative purple shirts, purple ties, and presumably purple undergarments pervading Boyd Hall and the LSU System building. An increasing sense of comfort and confidence, however, seems in the offing if not quite in full development. King Alexander, for example, was spotted, at his post accreditation thank-you after-party, sporting a tie in which both the purple and gold tones had gone a tasteful pastel route. Numerous co-workers in the upper reaches of the Tiger university have even ventured outside the routine purple-and-gold look. What a relief!



A broadening range of purples in the Tiger administration.



"A G Answers" is your premier source of human resources management advice. LSU HRM Chief A. G. Monaco addresses *Newsletter* readers' questions about HRM and "employees' lives" in general. Have a pressing HRM issue for A G to address? Please send your queries to encope@LSU.edu.



A G Monaco

Dear A G,

Not only am I an avid reader of your column, I'm also something of a benefits zealot (with a special attachment to insurance). Indeed, I think that I'm some kind of risk management addict. My big problem right now is that I'm spending way too much on policies of one kind or another. Through my university benefits office, I subscribe not only to the usual medical plan, but also buy dental insurance; vision insurance; disability insurance; and long-term care insurance. Although it's not a university matter, I also buy, from private vendors, umbrella liability insurance; full-value new-car replacement riders; flood insurance (despite living on a hill 200 miles from the sea); zero-deductible homeowners insurance; and, in sum, just about every kind of policy that can be underwritten. I'm smart enough to figure out that this isn't quite the right strategy but I'm also naïve. Whenever an insurer (or, worse, a pamphlet) describes a risk and then shows pictures of happy people who buy policies, I first get scared and then I get tempted and grab for my wallet. A G, is there any way to figure out which risks are really worth insuring? I'm not a statistician and I can't find any information to help me make decision. Can you help me pare down my insurance costs? Otherwise, I think I'm headed into a twelve-step risk-aversion therapy program!

Thanks so much,

CASPER in MANSFIELD.

Dear Casper,

I do not know if I have the answer you seek to help you reduce your desire to purchase insurance but I can tell you that being "over-insured" is as much an economic mistake as being "under-insured." The money you spend on insurance that you have virtually no chance of collecting on is an opportunity that is lost. We need to mitigate risk but we should not spend ourselves into a corner trying to eliminate risk. A life without risk cannot be found.

Appropriate benefit coverage and insurance coverage in particular are moving targets. The fact that LSU or the State provides you with solid, reasonably priced primary health insurance reduces a great deal of risk. As you age or your family configuration changes your benefit and insurance coverage needs to "ebb and flow" to reflect those changes. Once your children have matured and are self-supporting do you really need all that supplemental life insurance? Probably not, and in some ways you could be doing yourself and your family more good placing those high premiums in strong investment vehicles rather than term insurance. Each of us needs to carefully make decisions about how much insurance we need and each of us due to different family situations and different emotional foundations will find that we have different tolerances for risk.

Let's look at three supplementary insurance products you might buy and here is my opinion about what I would do-

Cancer Insurance -- While three in 10 Americans will get cancer over a lifetime, seven in 10 will not. In any one year, only one American in 250 will get cancer. If you already have cancer they will not sell you the policy. So regardless of what the "TV duck" says the odds are strongly against you receiving any benefits from a cancer policy and in many cases your primary health insurance plan will already cover most of your expenses related to treatment. I won't spend an extra \$40-150 dollars per month on this coverage. By investing \$100.00 per month for next 20 years in a mutual fund I could achieve a balance of close to \$45,000.00. In the event I get cancer that money could be used to cover items not handled by my primary health insurance plan or if I never get cancer I can spend it on something more pleasant. Have you ever eaten a fried artichoke while drinking Montepulciano de abruzzo in the Jewish Ghetto in Rome? Talk about "peace of mind."

Long-term care insurance-- Rich people and poor people don't need long-term-care insurance. Poor people can turn to Medicaid. Rich people can self-insure. So as usual the pressure to make the right decision falls on those of us in the middle. The answer is not obvious. The value of long-term-care insurance products is hard to decipher. First, the benefits are usually not adjusted for inflation, so it's not clear how much of your actual long-term-care costs they will end up covering. Additionally, most policies have limits on the number of years covered; so, it would be possible for people with dementia to outlive their coverage. And, finally, the premium structure is a real problem to assess. Insurance companies will raise the premiums when interest rates go down. So then I am faced with the choice of either paying more in the form of much higher premiums or not paying premiums and losing the coverage.

In my case if I were to insure my wife and I with a decent long-term care plan (By the way - most insurance companies just won't sell the product.) it is going to cost me between 300-500 dollars per month in premiums. This type of coverage could cost us close to \$100,000.00 dollars over the next 20 years and provide coverage worth less than \$33,000.00 per year. Assuming dementia does not set in until I am in my mid to late 70's, (my wife claims I have it now), and I meet my family average for a lifespan my benefit collection might only be likely for 3 years.

I would choose to consider this instead... If I took \$500.00 per month and placed it in a 403b account for 20 years (assuming normal historical returns) I should have a balance of about \$228,000.00. Considering the tax shelter aspects of that investment vehicle I would have only invested about \$86,000.00 to be self-insured at a higher level than the aforementioned insurance plan could provide. If I end up not using the funds for long-term care then I have an estate to leave behind. That would mean that when I die my wife can fly to Buenos Aires , meet a much younger man, and dance the tango in my memory at the Café Tortoni.

(Continued on Page 10)

BOARD BESTS HELICARNASSUS

In the hundreds if not thousands of pages comprising the minutes of the LSU Board of supervisors meeting, readers eager not only to live but also to pan for gold can always find a few brown nuggets. Those wondering why facilities at Louisiana universities often lag far behind the architectural avantgarde can find the reason in gems of supervisorial of prose such as "the selection of the designer was made by the Tiger Athletic Foundation and the construction company selected will be through a negotiated contract between The Tiger Athletic Foundation and the contractor." Translation: In its quest for a design for the new LSU gymnastics practice facility, the Tiger Athletic Foundation extended its search as far as Government Street, where the reliably mawkish designs of local firm Grace and Hebert were awaiting clients committed to unoriginality and repetition. Looking somewhat like a blend of the budget wing at the Forest Lawn mausoleum and a 1960s Civil Defense bunker, this forthcoming monstrosity offers a case study in the perpetual recycling of the autocracy-inspired architecture of the 1930s. Have none of the LSU Supervisors heard of Norman Foster, Frank Gehry, or Daniel Libeskind?



Design for gymnastics practice facility stumbles rather than

MCNEESE PREZ WILLIAMS STRENGTHENS COWBOY TRADITION—AND FUTURE

Featured in the March minutes of the University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors meeting is an example of true grit yielding genuine pay dirt. Recognizing the value of the spur, the bridle, and the rope, McNeese State University President Philip Williams endorsed a proposal for a self-imposed student fee of \$4.50 per semester to support the charming **McNeese Rodeo**. Kudos to President Williams for affirming the value of one of the greatest traditions of the American west and for ensuring that McNeese will continue to triumph in an endeavor that blends artistry, physical fitness, and agricultural productivity—and that, unlike football, is open to all genders.



A bright future for Rodeo in Lake Charles.

AG Answers (Continued)

Buying a extra year of warranty on your home electronics -

I think about it this way.... if before I get the product out of the box I have to worry about what happens when it breaks I probably do not need the anxiety that owning such a product brings with it. Spending an additional 59 bucks for warranty extensions on every electronic device in my home might bring some good feelings but it is not the only way to achieve comfort. I don't buy the extra warranty –in fact I intend to stick with that old tube TV and forget about buying a 60inch flat screen. Do you really want to see the toupee on that weatherman on WBRZ in high definition? Well, I do not. Do you really need that new super-duper cell phone with a GPS. Well I can hear Kevin Cope on my six-year-old flip-phone just fine. I will use the money saved on buying those devices and their extended warranties to take a trip and let someone else navigate me to a place others have only seen on TV or on that tiny screen on their phone. Smart phone versus Tequila on the beach in Cozumel – that is no contest.

Now my way is certainly not the way for everyone. Risk tolerance is a personal non-rational matter and we all express our tolerances in different ways. Still we must remember that “peace of mind” is not free. Actually over a period of years we find that it can be quite expensive. So regardless of the immediate price of that extra insurance policy we have to consider the long-term costs versus the potential for a payout. Using rational economic thought to assess the long-term cost of insurance and comparing that cost to opportunities for self-insurance is something we should all do. Whatever decision we end up making is a good one as long as we are happy with it.

Now I need to go back and rethink that idea of leaving money for the wife to go to Argentina.....

Lifestyle Feature Continued

Those who want to get serious about sizing documents will want to add an old-fashioned paper cutter to their office array. Paper cutters come in a variety of styles, the most common being rotary and guillotine. Although the rotary cutters present fewer storage problems—a paper cutter is not exactly easy to tuck under a desk or hide away in a corner—nothing beats a genuine guillotine-style slicer, with its long, swinging, descending blade, for a clean and exact cut. Most guillotine style cutters include measurement markings in the cutting board so as to ensure an exact slice every time. Such cutters are not cheap, with \$250.00 being the entry level, but, then, spoiled copies and ripped papers bring replacement costs. Online marketer [Uline](#) offers a nice twentyfour inch cutter that will fulfill most papercutting dreams. Of course, those who want to bottom-end it can always look for a pair of scissors rather than for a chopping block, but, even still, a pair of quality if costly shears such as those marketed by Finnish scissor designer [Fiskars](#) will more than repay their extra cost in pleasurable as well as successful usage.

Those who practice professional-level papercutting occasionally make mistakes. Always handy in an office is a good roll of tape and a sturdy tape dispenser. Essential to look for in a good dispenser is a weighted bottom or body and a nonskid base (which, together, prevent the dispenser from sliding when the tape is pulled). For years, tape dispenser enthusiasts have valued discretion, creating low-key designs in neutral colors. Now puckish [Poppin](#) has released a veritable rainbow of nicelywaited, contemporary (neoLegostyle) tape dispensers in brilliant, mostly secondary colors such as purple, lime and orange. At the top end at \$12.00 list, the Poppin dispensers tape might affix an invoice to your desk as well as a memo to a folder, but they send a signal that an office is aspiring.



Poppin tape dispenser in purple.

Highly visible in nearly every office is the printer, which is often collated with a scanner or FAX machine. The range of printers is vast and the pricing of these devices unpredictable, but the *Newsletter* staff has found that Lexmark machines garner the top ratings in every category. For one, Lexmark software works seamlessly with the vast majority of computers and systems. Unlike HP and Canon printer software, which predictably jars with devices from other manufacturers, Lexmark software defines the cybernetic jurisdiction of the printer and leaves it at that. Replacement of cartridges is also straightforward and painless, never requiring the wrestling match that usually emerges from an HP cartridge replacement operation. Lexmark color printers also have the advantage of convenient, often side access to toner cartridges. Rectangular, those cartridges are easy to grasp and exchange. Printer selection is largely a matter of need, especially of expected printer volume, but for all-around office applications, it is hard to beat the cleanly designed, compact and yet highcapacity Lexmark MS410dn.

Once the desk abounds in equipment, shelving may be required. Here one stop is sufficient. [CB2](#), the loft-oriented spinoff from home furnishing giant Crate and Barrel, offers an astounding array of industrial-chic shelving that will make your office sing with color and hum with efficiency. Look for their lobstered steel trolleys, shelves, bookcases, and all around storage devices. And send that Steelcase behemoth to the recycling bin! The aforementioned are but a few of the items that may enhance the emerging office.

Office product design has made immense progress as electronic record keeping has cleared space of clutter and thereby opened options. Browse your office implements offerings and experience the delight!

CLCU MEETING CLEARS HIGH BAR

During the last days of his distinguished term of service to Louisiana higher education, Commissioner Jim Purcell, who proved to be a great friend to faculty, along with Emily Saleh and other members of the Regents' staff produced a masterpiece of public dialogue, the 2014 meeting of the CLCU (the *Conference of Louisiana Colleges and Universities*). A venue in which the top-ranking leaders of both public and private Louisiana higher education institutions gather to



CLCU

discuss the large issues facing educators, the CLCU had become a bit hidebound until clever Purcell, recognizing that there were many ways to skin a cat, began shearing a few manes and, in general, loosening up as well as intensifying the dialogue. Convening in the freshly renovated Renaissance Hotel in Baton Rouge, Purcell's masterpiece of a meeting not only drew a large and prestigious crowd, but explored a vast range of topics that ranged from the future of the liberal arts to the technology required for pedagogical innovation. Taking “roots, branches, and regeneration” as its theme, the conference quickly rose above mere weed-trimming in order to think about the future of the future. Especially valuable was the “political trends” panel, in which three participants—ULL's Pearson Cross; LSU's Kirby Goidel; and ULM's Joshua Stockley—discussed the devastating consequences of budget cuts while also shedding the reassuring light of truth on a dark situation, providing budget numbers, forecasts, and trajectories that might elude amateur controversialists.



ULL President Joe Savoie introduces the political trends panel at CLCU.

An advertisement for the Faculty in Residence program. The top half of the ad shows a photograph of a large, classical-style building with a prominent archway. Below the photo, the text reads 'FACULTY IN-RESIDENCE' in large, bold, purple letters. Underneath that, in smaller purple text, it says 'ENGAGING FACULTY • IMPACTING STUDENTS'. The bottom half of the ad is a dark purple box with white text. It says 'Become a Faculty-in-Residence and experience a new collaboration of student life and academia.' followed by 'Learn more about the position available, qualifications, and job expectations at www.lsu.edu/housing.' On the right side of this box, there is a yellow arrow pointing right with the text 'APPLY NOW APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE APRIL 14-30, 2014'. At the bottom right of the box, it says 'Residential Life'.

FRIENDS OF LOUISIANA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY FOUNDATION



HELP BUILD A **NEW NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM** FOR LOUISIANA

Friends of Louisiana Museum of Natural History Goals

- Showcase** the natural and cultural heritage of Louisiana
- Support of research** into natural history and biodiversity
- Preserve priceless collections** such as world class bird and archeology collections
- Develop interactive, multimedia educational exhibits** for all ages
- Develop an outstanding "green" museum building** as a destination for visitors and a boost to the Louisiana economy

Check out the report on our website entitled
 "Development of a New Natural History Museum Building for Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge."

www.friends-louisiana-museum-of-natural-history.org

Museum Examples:

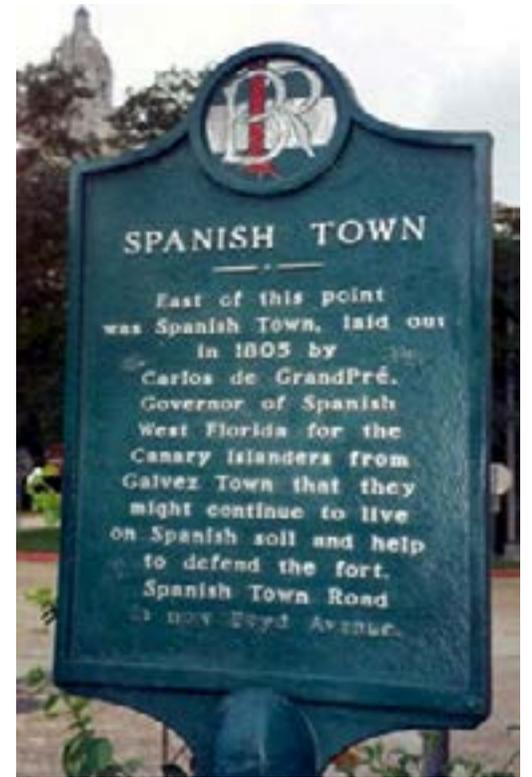
- Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History - <http://www.snomnh.ou.edu/>
- Natural History Museum of Utah - <http://nhmu.utah.edu/>
- Florida Museum of Natural History - <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/>



www.facebook.com/FriendsOfLouisianaNaturalHistoryMuseum?filter=3



Spanish Town History Walking Tour



Saturday, May 3, 9:15 a.m.

Learn about the Spanish Town neighborhood, including its historical significance and colorful architecture.

Tours begin at 9:15 a.m. at the Capitol Park Museum. Patrons are advised to dress comfortably. During inclement weather, walks will be moved to the multi-purpose room for an informative talk including modern and historic images. Tours generally last 60 to 90 minutes. They are free and open to the public and leave from the Museum lobby.

The Capitol Park Museum is located at 660 N. Fourth St., Baton Rouge.

The museum is wheelchair accessible. For more information, visit www.crt.state.la.us/museum.



ENDOW AN OAK

www.lsufoundation.org/oaks



Quad Oaks \$50,000 gift

Campus Oaks \$4,000 gift



The Oaks at LSU

The roughly 1,200 oak trees on LSU's campus are as much a part of the university as are its students, faculty, staff and historic buildings. Steele Burden, LSU's landscaper from 1932 through 1970, planted many of LSU's live oak trees, which have been valued at \$50 million.

Endow an Oak Program

The Endow an Oak program was introduced in 1993 to improve the poor health of many of LSU's oaks, for which declining care was an unfortunate consequence of budget limitations. Endow an Oak has successfully garnered critical funds to support the care and maintenance of LSU's most treasured natural "residents." LSU also provides funding, but the needs far exceed these funds as the oak trees mature and as more trees are planted.

Gifts of any amount may be made to support the general care and maintenance of LSU's oaks, and specific trees can be endowed for the gift amounts indicated at left. Fifty percent of each gift builds the oak endowment, and the other half is placed into an operation account that can be used immediately by LSU's arbor management team. A tree may be named for a donor or in memory or in honor of someone.

Published by [The LSU Faculty Senate](#)

Questions? Comments? Email: dboard2@lsu.edu or wardee@miamioh.edu

