

9-2010

## Faculty Senate Newsletter, September 2010

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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### *President's Message*

The cloudy, demoralizing times in which we now work diminish interest even in silver linings, especially given that a shower of gold is what our University most needs. Nevertheless, the ensemble of crises that now bugles us into action provides an occasion for empirical as well as speculative consideration of shibboleths about the academic workplace. One easy observation is that the University continues to function and to do good work through the good efforts and intentions of good workers. Some may ask whether the Faculty Senate Monthly Newsletter ought only to focus on the higher education funding crisis, but the abundance of stories

that have accumulated during the summer publication hiatus demonstrates, empirically, that our institution enjoys an abundance of momentum. That momentum may occasionally dwindle owing to lack of energy in the form of rewards, but the great intellectual machine of our great University cannot be stopped merely by the posturing of a not-so-great governor or the antics of a legislature. The Newsletter serves, even in its whimsical moments, as a measure of how much the University has going for it even when wrenches fall into its cogs.

Another question that is being asked empirically (albeit not consciously) is that of the origins of the leadership caste. For decades, LSU has pursued two dichotomous courses with regard to the appointment of personnel at all levels. The University either rushes into a frantic national search for the allegedly very best candidates or it exercises its patronage prerogatives by recruiting the friendly (if pleading) kid next door. A survey of the University today shows that the institution is run by a mix of interim appointments, internal promotions, regional experts, and a very few nationally-recruited migrant administrators. When the demand on leadership talent is greatest, it seems, experience with the local culture and knowledge of institutional history are proving as effective as overpriced hybrids cultivated in the hothouse of executive search firms. Granted, the present regime is making its share of mistakes, but there is no missing the fact that, when the going gets tough, those who get going are the long-term stakeholders in the institution. The present experience proves that there are a wide range of searches—not just national or next-door—and that talent can be found at home, in the LSU System schools, across the state, and maybe even in Arkansas.

Another shibboleth being challenged by present economic circumstances is that academic salaries are or should be set by the marketplace. The administrations of both LSU and the LSU System have wisely informed the media masters that severe budget cuts will drive away faculty members. Experience, however, indicates that comparatively few colleagues have emigrated from Tigertown. The nationwide recession has all but eliminated the "marketplace" in the majority of disciplines. Some disciplines that are indispensable to the mission of the University never had a marketplace, if only because numbers of their practitioners are thin in even the most prestigious institutions. The fact that university "lines" exist for certain low-visibility specialties shows that, whatever salary levels may be, society not only values those enterprises but has made a de facto covenant with their practitioners, agreeing that those who undertake the demanding study and rigorous lifestyle that leads to expertise will receive reasonable compensation under reasonable working conditions. The various explorations of the topic of faculty contracts, work rules, tenure, and compensation that are now occurring around campus indicate that colleagues are eager to rediscover and, with luck, enforce a covenant that was also made for the benefit of Louisiana and all its posterity.

With all good wishes,

Kevin L. Cope, Faculty Senate President

### **University of Louisiana System Attempts to Rewrite Contracts**

In one of the most provocative and dangerous actions of the summer, the University of Louisiana System, which manages eight campuses, including Louisiana Tech, McNeese, Southeastern, and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, attempted a unilateral rewrite of contracts for teaching and researching personnel. With minimal, indeed almost undetectable notice, University of Louisiana System head Randy Moffett and his Board of Supervisors proposed to make "reduction" and "exigency" interchangeable terms. That seemingly minor change in vocabulary would have allowed quick elimination of programs. University of Louisiana officials also called for ninety-day rather than one-year warning periods for tenured faculty, as well as for a redefinition of tenure. At the request of University of Louisiana faculty leadership, and due to concern this aggressive move might set a precedent for other Louisiana education systems, the LSU System Council of Faculty Advisors passed a resolution expressing concurrence with the University of Louisiana faculty leadership. That resolution demands that the University of Louisiana management board bargain in good faith with its faculty leadership and reminds University of Louisiana System officials that the goal of improving universities with respect to nationally recognized standards requires behavior respectful of academic traditions as well as of the rule of law. This resolution has now garnered attention in several newspapers, including *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and has resulted in the "deferring" of contract rewrite plans. Developments may be followed on the [Faculty Senate News Page](#).



### **National Response to Budget Cuts Now Online**

Although the LSU System web site will never win either the "ease of navigation" or "most beautiful design" awards, the web entity has shown a surprising degree of public spiritedness during the summer season. Those interested in viewing the nationwide response to cuts in a variety of programs may peruse a vast scroll of support and protest letters on a [dedicated web page promulgated by the System](#). Curiously, the System office has classified the letters as either in defense of the "MLIS" and "Classics" program, but each of the five available, chronologically organized files contains letters on a wide variety of proposed budget reductions and program or institute reductions.

### **Six Digit Salaries Summer Slam and Window Dunk Jam**

Five raises to six figure salaries sweetened the summer for four assistant coaches and one coach in a non-revenue sport. One raise will promote "stability in recruiting efforts" for coaches (presumably to counterbalance the instability of the foreign language program); another will render the recipient "the highest paid coach in the SEC West," presumably to counteract the lagging status of LSU salaries vis à vis SREB averages. Full details are available on [page ten of the July Board of Supervisors' Minutes](#).

On the other hand, the folks down on the lower deck of the LSU campus have figured out how to throw money in rather than out of the window. During the first phase of the campaign to preserve Tiger Stadium, Louisiana's amalgamative tribute to the historically nostalgic architectural tag team of Huey Long and Benito Mussolini, glassy eyed Tiger fans are invited to toss in \$2,000.00 to sponsor a window.

### **Deepwater Horizon Cleanup Sets Salaries in Perspective**

Tired of grading papers? This past summer, ExxonMobil, acting as a contractor for BP, was offering a salary of \$16.00 per hour on a presumed 84 hour work week plus \$25.00 per diem every day of the week. That extrapolates to an annual salary of around \$78,988.00. Considering that the LSU Reveille estimates that the average compensation for professional, academic employees at LSU tallies up to approximately \$66,712.00, and when we note that ExxonMobil was also offering free food, we see where priorities lie in our great state.

### **Design for Living by Noel Coward** Directed by George Judy

September 22 October 10, 2010

9/22 (PWYC), 9/23(Preview), 9/24 (Opening), 9/28, 9/29, 9/30, 10/1, 10/6, 10/7, 10/8, 10/9 at 7:30 p.m. Sunday 9/26, 10/3, 10/10 at 2:00 p.m.

Shaver Theatre

(See full details on page 3)

## ADMINISTRATOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### Ken Krogstad, Plan Administrator, LSU System

For Ken Krogstad, Health Care in Louisiana is more than a business. It is also a tradition. Krogstad notes, for instance, that Louisiana is the only state that still has a state wide charity system. "All other states have done away with this," he says.

Krogstad, LSU System Plan Administrator since 2005, has had twenty years to get to know the state's health care industry. Since coming to Louisiana in the late eighties to lead Blue Cross and Blue Shield out of financial trouble, Krogstad has devoted much of his energy to serving the health care community across the state. He has acted as health care counsel to the state legislature, put together HMOs, and represented the Louisiana Department of Health Insurance, as well as numerous hospitals and physicians. In addition, Krogstad holds a law degree and maintains a private health care law practice. Yet, despite his extensive knowledge, Krogstad does not shy away from pointing out that the industry is constantly evolving. "I know less and less about more and more each day," he jokes.

Krogstad's responsibilities as Plan Administrator are vast. He is virtually responsible for all employee benefits in the LSU System, including all insurance plans, long term care and disability, as well as flexible spending and the 403b employee investment plan. Apart from ensuring each plan is running on all cylinders on a daily basis, no mean feat, Krogstad also con-



stantly works at keeping costs to system employees to a minimum while providing top quality coverage. Krogstad explains, for instance, that the system's health insurance plan, LSU First, has had total premium increases over the past four years of approximately 6%, with no premium increases for the last two years. This, Krogstad explains, is exceptional, given that premium rates have routinely reached doubled digit figures over the last four to five years, as well as a nationwide trend to shift the burden of these increases onto employees. Krogstad takes some pride in knowing that the LSU System has not followed suit and continues to put its employees first: "When you consider what everyone else is doing," he comments, "we're going north, the opposite direction, to protect our employees and LSU First."

Krogstad has also exerted considerable effort to improve the system's other insurance plans. He notes, for instance, that although employees shoulder 100% of the cost for life insurance, LSU was able to secure a plan

that not only lowered premiums but that also guarantees coverage up to five times each employee's salary. With a wife and three children of his own, two of whom attend LSU, Krogstad understands how changes like these will directly benefit employees. Speaking about people who have shared their experiences with him, Krogstad states that employees who require significant surgery can be at peace knowing that their loved ones are provided for. "Employees feel it," he observes.

**"we're going north, the opposite direction, to protect our employees and LSU First."**

Despite the strides forward the LSU System has taken in health care, Krogstad acknowledges that challenges lay ahead. Given continued state wide financial short falls, Krogstad worries that traditional aspects of the health care industry in Louisiana, such as its charity system, are in jeopardy. For Krogstad, the state's people, whom he describes as its "most endearing aspect," and its traditions are what set Louisiana apart from the rest of the country. "We have to figure out how to preserve it," he declares.

## Deceptive Handling Of Benefits Plans Scrutinized

The Faculty Senate Benefits Advisory Committee continues to work sedulously on the scandalous problems surrounding the retirement plan. Over the summer, Faculty Senate President Kevin L. Cope initiated an inquiry as to why Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) members had not been advised of the then upcoming election for the one member of the Teachers Retirement System of Louisiana (TRSL) Board of Directors who is consecrated to higher education. TRSL Director Maureen Westgard, who has consistently resisted all efforts to better faculty retirement plans, deferred Cope's letter to the TRSL attorney, who declared that ORP participants have no vote in TRSL elections despite the fact that TRSL manages their resources. In another preemptive action, TRSL ordered a reduction in the number of ORP vendors. TRSL asserted that this reduction, which occurred without consulting either ORP vendors or pertinent campus and faculty officials, was done to simplify the plan for bumbling professors who might be confused by too many choices. TRSL further boasted that only the best options were provided, but no evidence for this claim has been provided. The LSU Benefits Advisory Committee is preparing another legal action plan that should be ready by the next newsletter.

The Faculty Senate has also received several reports of incompetence on the part of ORP plan representatives. Complaints include inaccessibility, slow response time, inadequate training, refusal to provide basic guidance in navigating and choosing among plans, deceptive advertising, pushing of investment vehicles more profitable to the vendor than to the plan member, and garden variety rudeness.

The TRSL took another volley of flak when the Kellogg School of Management released a study indicating that its traditional, defined benefit retirement program is also in trouble and could become insolvent by 2018. This, added to the fact that \$10,000,000.00 of the current LSU budget crisis is attributable to an unfunded mandate to contribute to TRSL's rapidly expanding, unfunded accrued liability.

In other benefits related action, the Faculty Senate President, along with Vice Chancellor Eric Monday and a host of Human Resources Management (HRM) officials, have held a summit conference with LSU System Benefits Czar Kenneth Krogstad to discuss the decision by the statewide Office of Group Benefits (OGB) to comply strictly and only with the letter of Obamacare medical insurance rules and to ignore the spirit and recommendations of the new insurance reforms. Given the choice as to whether to allow those adult children of policy participants who are both in college and also between the ages of twenty one and twenty six to remain on their parents' policies or whether to give those promising children the old heave ho, OGB selected the gangplank option. It will only add those children to policies when required by law to do so, in July of 2011. OGB will not allow LSU to establish easier eligibility requirements for its employees, owing to a perverse commitment to egalitarianism in which everyone in the state must sink to the same level, even if an institution (continued on page 3)

## Supervisors Nix Campus Reorganization Plan

At its summer recess meeting on June 4, the LSU System Board of Supervisors dealt what appears to be the final blow to the LSU campus reorganization plan. The Supervisors sent back for extended reconsideration a plan to move the Department of Economics and the Public Administration Institute to the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, warning that fragmentary schemes and other piecemeal plans were unacceptable. Reorganization as a consequence of budget cuts remains possible, but the wise Supervisors will only consider plans that take the long view and that arise from completed homework.

## Email Privacy Scare at UNO

Faculty at the University of New Orleans went into red alert last week owing to a report that the LSU System had increased computer security and intended to scan emails. LSU System General Counsel Ray Lamonica, seldom an entrant in the subtlety derby, tried to cool down surly faculty with the tepid assurance that the LSU System only wanted to ensure compliance with the archiving requirements of state public records laws. Few will be comforted by the suggestion that the state will ensure privacy, but LSU campus faculty may be reassured by the IT privacy policy, PSB06.25, developed under the leadership of Faculty Senate Vice President Pratul Ajmera. The "Ajmera Policy" establishes firm and rigorous rules and procedures regarding those few occasions when email and other computer materials may be accessed. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee intends to export this policy to other LSU and Louisiana campuses as an example of proper IT governance.



Pratul Ajmera, Faculty Senate Vice President and McDermott International Professor and Marvin Rex Clemons Professor

## CIO Voss Codirects Video for Educause

IT fans will want to catch the latest video clip starring Chief Information Officer Brian Voss. Slated to be presented at the prestigious EDUCAUSE convention, Voss and his counterpart at the University of Indiana have produced a better than professional introductory sequence that includes an incendiary moment and a sequence on the affirmative use of the plunger that combines the computerized Star Trek holodeck with James Bond's futuristic technology and with lower end workforce development. Catch the action [here](#):



## Stopping the Tenure Clock

Cooperation between faculty governance and administration reached another high water mark this summer with the creation of a "stop the tenure clock" procedure for junior faculty who take on parental or other life changing or life encumbering responsibilities. The details appear as a procedural note to the PS-36 documents.

## Benefits Plans Scrutinized (continued)

participant wishes to do better for its people.

Although it is unlikely that this problem will be resolved before the upcoming year expires, the Faculty Senate is nevertheless making a two pronged response to this latest outrage. First, Emeritus Vice-Provost Frank Cartledge is introducing a resolution in the Faculty Senate addressing this problem. Second, LSU campus and faculty governance officials continue to work with the LSU System on the possibility of a freestanding benefits program that is not subordinated to a statewide agency. As the Faculty Senate continues to discover, the deficiencies in our benefits package often arise from our subjugation to statewide agencies over which higher education participants can exert little control. The exit requirements with regard to OGB are extravagant and require a significant swap of capital, but some units in state government have already defected from OGB, thus proving the possibility of same.

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### GUEST COLUMN

#### Luigi Marzilli, Member of Senate Fringe Benefit Committee and Prof. of Chemistry

During the spring, LSU offered Long-Term Care Insurance (LTCI) without medical underwriting to current employees. New employees can sign up and should receive information in their orientation. The premium, which depends on age, must be paid even after retirement to keep the LTCI in force. LTCI covers costs of care needed for people with diminished capacity. Normally, this care is needed by people over 75 or 80, but younger people also can be covered as the result of injury or illness. Note LTCI is different from long term disability insurance (meant to replace income, not to cover additional expenses for care). Also, LTCI is not healthcare insurance, which does not cover daily living expenses.

From two presentations at LSU about LTCI I learned that even in a low cost state such as LA, a LTC facility can cost about \$50K per year with the typical stay around 3 years.

One has to allow for inflation. I decided to investigate LTCI. From my reading, I found that most advisors suggest: (1) begin LTCI in your fifties [this age range provides a balance between paying premiums for a long time (under 50) and chancing become too ill for coverage (over 60)]; and (2) do not buy LTCI if your assets are less than \$200K (Medicaid, not medicare, will pay for the care when assets are exhausted) or above \$2 million (some advisors recommend you self insure). Thus, someone with assets above \$200K and over 50 falls in the range for which LTCI makes the most sense. Select a financially strong company. Make sure you can pay premiums easily into your old age because a lapsed policy is equivalent to throwing the money away.

I decided to consider the highest plan LSU had with current benefits of \$48K per year and 5% simple inflation. The 6 year coverage plan costs about \$4K per year in my case (over 60). A 3 year plan is somewhat less costly. I have learned that the premium cost for years beyond 3 is incrementally not large because few need a nursing home for more than 3 years.

My wife would pay about the same amount so our yearly premium would be about \$8K.

Using 15 years from now as an example before either would need assistance, the total premium cost for each would be \$60K with the LSU plan. Five percent simple inflation would provide \$7K coverage per month or \$252K total for the three years typically needed. So \$60K might provide \$252K. Of course unless one meets criteria and has needs, one could also receive nothing. LSU LTCI allows the funds to be spent at home but only at a 50% rate. In this case, coverage would be extended for 12 years for the 6 year policy.

Uncertain of what to do, I checked several university web sites and found lower premiums for the same or similar plan as at LSU. In reading up on LTCI, I discovered that everyone with a particular plan must be charged the same premium in a given state unless you purchase through an organization (5% discount). I contacted the American Chemical Society. They sell LTCI from three providers. In all cases the premiums were much lower than the LSU plan. In addition if both my wife and I purchased LTCI with the same parameters, we would get a 30% discount on the already low premium. We could get a 35% discount to the premium allowed by law in LA. Another bonus, each of us could use the coverage of the other spouse, should one of us require more care. Also, all companies allowed 100% home care; not the 50% of the LSU plan. Thus we chose 5% compound inflation coverage and 4 years for each.

Our premium averages less than \$3K per year. In 15 years we would have each paid out about \$45K and be eligible for \$288K for three years. Compounding adds \$36K per year at 15 years and the advantage increases as time passes.

LSU plan Advantages: no medical underwriting (if you are a new employee or signed up during open enrollment; however for LTCI, medical underwriting is trivial if you are in reasonable health), payroll deduction (lost if you leave LSU; you need to arrange a separate policy I think), and a short elimination period (time you need to require care until coverage begins, a definite plus of the LSU plan). Disadvantages: high premium, no sharing with spouse, no inflation compounding, 50% home care, rating of company may not be strongest, and little flexibility in selecting options.

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### Commissioner Search Back in Commission

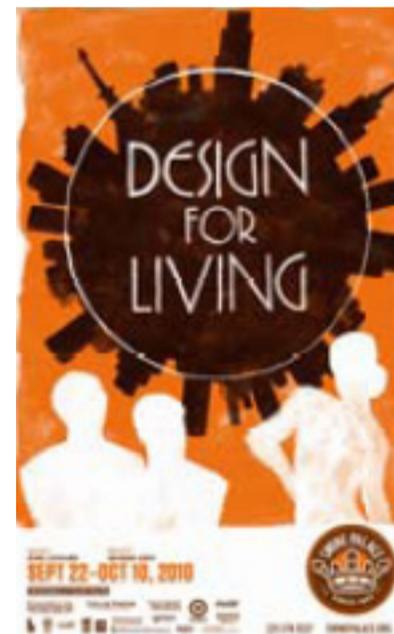
Surprising turns are not uncommon in the carousel of the Regents' office. No sooner had the legislature ejected the designated Interim Commissioner of Higher Education than the Regents formed an inner circle of its four most powerful members, who immediately re-hired the flattened candidate as a part-time consultant doing a full-time job. Surprise number two is that, chastened by these events, the new, "intermittent" rather than "interim" Commissioner, Thomas Layzell, is evidencing a keen awareness of the troubles of Louisiana higher education management as well as a willingness to heed and hobnob with faculty. Layzell will soon meet with a delegation of faculty leaders to discuss the continuing problem of the Regents' search, which the aforementioned junto of four Super Regents have tried to sequester from teaching and research professionals. Layzell also addressed the biannual meeting of the [Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates \(ALFS\)](#), taking questions for over an hour and demonstrating an unprecedented degree of engagement with rank and file faculty members.

### Coward's Design for Living Kicks Off 2010-11 Swine Palace Season!

Swine Palace opens its 2010-11 season with Noel Coward's "Design for Living," running September 22-October 10, 2010 at the Shaver Theatre in the Music & Dramatic Arts Building on LSU's campus. Based on Noel Coward's own life as a playwright and his relationship with Lynne Fontaine and Alfred Lunt, this 1930s comedy follows three glamorous Bohemians as they both pursue and repel each other in an ever-more-maddening love triangle. Gilda, Otto and Leo are artists. Gilda loves Otto and Leo. Otto and Leo both love her and are the best of friends. Gilda escapes this dangerous predicament for a secure marriage. But after a trip around the world, the temptations of her past turn up at her penthouse door. Noel Coward's "Design for Living" is a hilarious and sophisticated look at love, friendship, and the joys and perils of fame.

"Design for Living" begins its run with a Pay-What-You-Can Preview on Wednesday, Sept. 22nd, followed by a Sneak Preview, Thursday, Sept. 23rd with a ticket price of \$13. The production opens on Friday, Sept. 24th, and runs through Sunday, October 10th. Tickets are \$15 for students, \$19 for senior citizens and LSU faculty and staff, and \$28 for adults. Discounts are available in advance for groups of 10 or more.

Performances are at 7:30 p.m., Sept. 22-24th, and 28-30th, and October 1st, and October 6-9th. Sunday Matinees are at 2 p.m. on Sept. 26th, and October 3rd and 10th. School Matinee performances are on Tuesday, Sept., 28th, and Wednesday, October 6th, at 10:00 a.m.



Want to place an ad?

Contact us! (information available at end of newsletter)

### How to Join a Faculty Senate Committee

The Faculty Senate frequently needs altruistic colleagues to staff the important committees that allow the University to operate. Colleagues often ask how they may join Senate committees. Most appointments are managed through the Committee on Committees, chaired by the able Louay Mohammed ([louaym@lsu.edu](mailto:louaym@lsu.edu)). Most appointments occur in the spring semester (for the following academic year), but Louay maintains a list of willing helpers year round, and vacancies often occur. Feel free to write to the genial Louay to volunteer your services. A list of committees may be found [here](#).

## CHANCELLOR'S FORUM

### The Budget: Paying for a Great University

Chancellor Mike Martin spoke to a full house at the Shaver Theater on September 28. Tuesday's round table talk, billed as "The Budget: Paying for a Great University," marks the first in the year long series of Chancellor's Forums sponsored by The LSU Faculty Senate.

Martin faced a salvo of questions from round table participants comprising professors from several departments and a student representative. Questions covered a bevy of issues, including spending on new buildings, eliminating programs, sending termination of contract notices to instructors, and discontinuing the ROTC scholarship for room and board. Martin admitted that many of the financial challenges the university is facing have led to hard choices being made. Speaking about the impact eliminating foreign languages will have on LSU's commitment to diversity as outlined in the Flagship Agenda, Martin acknowledged, "the loss of foreign languages is a painful thing." Martin also noted that only some foreign language degrees would be cut and proposed that keeping programs which are top performers may be preferable to making unilateral cuts to all programs. "We must narrow our focus in many ways," Martin stated.

Martin also put the budget crisis in statewide and national context. Martin observed that financial shortfalls in Louisiana over the last several years have resulted in part from the accumulation of unforeseeable circumstances, including an economy gone soft, the Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill, and past hurricanes. "I have never faced a time as we face today with so much uncertainty," Martin commented. Yet Martin emphasized that further cuts to higher education in Louisiana would be catastrophic: "It would be major long term error," Martin warned. In addition, the Chancellor stressed that LSU continues to be the state's best performing institution and that it must market itself as an center of higher learning dedicated to academic excellence. "We must continue to make a positive case," Martin exhorted.

Several questions Martin was asked centered on how LSU could generate revenue. Answers ran the gambit from the practical to innovative. Martin suggested, for instance, that the university could rent out facilities for special events. Referring to Country Fest, which was held in Tiger Stadium last May, Martin quipped, "we learned that we can make a little bit of money by hosting a country western concert in the football stadium." Martin also cautioned that such fundraisers likely would not bring in large sums of money but that they could be significant. Martin also welcomed the suggestion that LSU offer online degrees and noted that institutions like the University of Wisconsin and Penn State already have successful online programs. "We're well behind the curve on this," Martin stated.

While the Chancellor kept a level head throughout the talk, he did not hide the fact that some questions remain unanswered. As he discussed proposed tuition increases, for instance, Martin poignantly asked, "Are we prepared to do that?" Tuition hikes may soon be a reality, however. Along these lines, Martin commented that LSU must become less dependent on state funding if it is to survive, noting that "many of the great universities in this country did this decades ago."



LSU Chancellor Mike Martin Fields Questions from Round Table Participants

### Faculty Senate Monthly Newsletter Blows Whistle on Plant

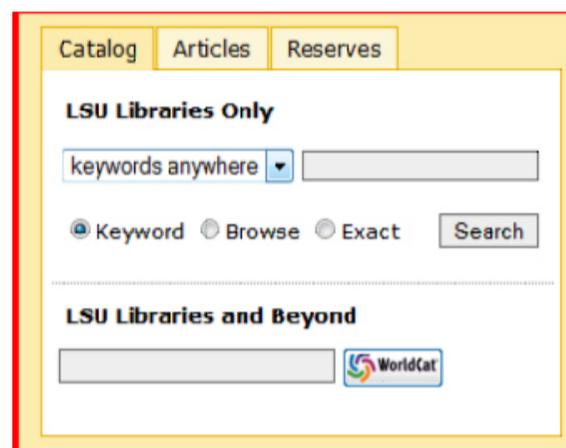
The Faculty Senate Monthly Newsletter has aced its first effort in investigative reporting by blowing the cover on the latest shady dealings on the periphery of higher education. The [March 31, 2010 issue of the Newsletter](#) raised questions concerning the settlement with Bernhard Mechanical Contractors, in which LSU forked over a cool ten million to settle a case concerning the allegedly money saving co generation plant. [The Times Picayune and other news outlets](#) report that political musclemen in the Louisiana legislature were pressuring both the Chancellor and the System President to settle the case in a way that would enrich a colleague Senator, a scheme that tough talking System President John Lombardi compared to a trip down Alice's rabbit hole. Thankfully, the minimal muscle rescue department will extort no fees for saving these two chief executives from the crawdad mafia downtown. Fortunately, any rapsallions caught in this mischief should be able to blow town quickly owing to the [discovery by the State Inspector General](#) that LSU is allowing hordes of airline tickets that could be transferred to others. The purchase of the tickets admittedly emerges from the seeking of "lowest logical airfares," but the lack of a ticket recycling system when travel budgets are imperiled remains puzzling.

### VC Keppler Recruits Larger than Expected Class

Demonstrating that a fair and honest search that includes both national and local candidates yields excellent results, outsider-made-insider Kurt Keppler, Vice Chancellor for Student Life and Enrollment Services, has built on the legacy of recruitment maven Mary Parker to deliver a freshman class 644 persons greater in number than expected. Keppler's and Parker's competence engendered population explosion is leading to the revitalization and reopening of Plattenbau-perfecting Kirby Smith Hall and to a new era in on campus life (as well as to a cornucopia of tuition money). Attention Boyd Hall inhabitants: Look at what the proper appreciation of out-of-the-box talent can yield!

### Changes to LSU Libraries Search Engine Implemented

Visitors to the LSU Libraries search page may have noticed that two dialogue boxes now await the searcher: one that allows a search of the LSU libraries and another that looks at "LSU Libraries and Beyond" via the WorldCat database. After months of exhortation from faculty governance officials, library catalogue managers have recognized that the LSU search results pages are somewhat less than navigable and contain bewildering location information that would hide holdings even from Romper Room's all seeing Magic Mirror. As usual, a lack of gold in Alberich's bag leads to low yield search utilities. The recourse to a WorldCat based search is by no means a final solution to the problems on the Library user interface, but it is surely a big step in the right direction and a somewhat overdue recognition of a serious problem.



### LOUIS Meltdown

Colleagues around the state are broiling about the possible de-funding of LOUIS, the Louisiana University Online Information Service, which serves as the omnibus vehicle for the databases provided to faculty, staff, and students through the Library and through IT Services. The decline of LOUIS is already adversely affecting faculty members. The Faculty Senate is taking two steps to deal with the LOUIS debacle. First, it is working with IT Services to obtain a more complete knowledge of the workings of LOUIS and, with that, the options that might be available in the various budget scenarios before us. Second, the Faculty Senate Executive committee has created a special ad hoc task force to probe the funding, administration, mission, and alternative futures of LOUIS. Before endorsing a course of action, faculty members will need to learn more about the comparative contributions of LSU and of the other campuses in the state and will need to evaluate the options most likely to produce a database menu appropriate for a major research and Flagship university.



Wonder what Tiger Mike is doing these days?

See page five for details of his latest branding efforts!

## Down Time Facilities on the Upswing

As its designation suggests, a “comprehensive research university” is an all purpose entity, the services of which encompass recreational and other needs of its constituents. The Faculty Senate Monthly Newsletter has consistently reported on developments in LSU’s auxiliary services by means of advocating for an enhancement in the quality of academic life. The newsletter is pleased to inform its readership that auxiliary services has taken two leisurely steps forward. The Union Theater has re-opened with refreshed, updated facilities, all the better to promote cultural life on the LSU campus. Comment on the renovation project and its architecture will be published in the October issue of the Newsletter. In addition, the LSU Faculty Club has revised and updated its basic menu. The insert list of daily specials continues, but the background selection has caught up with the Gordon Ramsay Mario Batali neo Julia generation. Old standbys such as the Faculty Club Sandwich have slipped into quiet retirement in the old lunches’ home; classics such as the Crawfish and Tasso Linguine have, for better or worse, entered the hall of culinary commemoration. In their place have come an armada of ciabatta based lunch offerings and a small but potent contingent of new main courses. Kudos to the Faculty Club for knowing when to hit the chopping block.



## Tiger Mike on Branding Expansion

Think that Mike the Tiger is only a football feature or clothing logo? Think again! Everybody’s favorite tiger is on a branding campaign that makes him an eligible cameo performer almost anywhere. Lately, Mike has popped up on hot sauce bottles and even on boat fenders, defending LSU fans not from offensive lineman but from, respectively, bland food and mean marinas. It may have seemed that the Flagship was sinking, but the new Mike boating paraphernalia will surely double as life preservers in a pinch.



## Early Academic Referral System Implemented

In another burst of innovation and intellectual entrepreneurship, CIO Brian Voss and his cyber team have unveiled EARS, the Early Academic Referral System. EARS operates within Moodle to issue alerts to relevant personnel when a student falls serious behind in work or slips more than one standard deviation beneath the grading norm. Faculty Senate officers were initially concerned that EARS could raise practical, economic, and private problems. On the practical side, thousands of students could be referred to a counseling staff that, owing to budget reductions, lacks the numbers for such an onslaught. On the ethical side, Senate officers expressed concerns about the release of student performance information to third parties and the potential use of performance information to monitor or chastise those instructors who might not promote graduation rates through generous grading. Fortunately CIO Voss has grasped and grappled with the problem and has put in place a rigorous system of checks and security limits, with the result that the Senate is satisfied with a utility that may help endangered students.

## HB1492 Scuttled

Near the end of the 2010 legislative session, proxies for the Governor made one last effort to combine higher education administration under one super board in the form of the Regents. Faculty governance officials throughout the state opposed this effort owing to its potential to move the locus of administrative power even further away from individual campuses and thereby further impair faculty prerogatives. LSU faculty governance mounted a [campaign against this measure](#) that culminated in its defeat.

## Louisiana Golf Course Expenditures Exorbitant

From the Cajun prairie land of western Louisiana comes the astounding news that the state has expended \$141,000,000.00 or more on golf courses. One of the budget scenarios currently being developed for the LSU campuses, which calls for a 23.8% cut in spending, comes in at just about that same number. Priorities?

## Early Retirement Incentives Under Consideration

Several colleagues have written to the Faculty Senate to ask why early retirement plans, which bode fair to reduce the LSU payroll in time of crisis, have once again cratered. The answer is found in state law, which forbids retirement incentives that exceed half the annual salary savings. That sum is usually inadequate to tempt employees save for those who already have other plans. The Faculty Senate has received a promising suggestion, which it is presently investigating, concerning the use of private funds from LSU’s fundraising foundations to underwrite buyouts on a one time basis. Additional remedies are sought. Colleagues who would like to suggest strategies to bypass the state early retirement incentive limits are invited to write to any member of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

## Center of Educational Statistics Gaff Denigrates LSU

The National Center of Educational Statistics, a branch of the United States Department of Education, has disrespected LSU once again. According to its “College Navigator” database, a college preparatory curriculum is not required to enroll in LSU.

## Football Lottery Brings Cheer in Midst of Budget Gloom

Even during the great bubonic plague in the fourteenth century, roughly 65% of the population survived. Similarly, the gloomiest times can include bright moments. Thanks to a new spirit of civic engagement in the Athletic Department, the Faculty Senate was again able to conduct a raffle for 100 football season tickets, most of which were won as ticket pairs. Odds in both the professors and the instructors raffles were approximately 2.8 to 1, which is a better wager than most any horse at Evangeline Downs. The Faculty Senate believes that the annual football ticket raffle is now firmly established as an LSU tradition. Abundant thanks go to Athletic Director Joe Alleva.

## Tip of the Month

The Newsletter staff highly recommends taking advantage of the numerous free recitals and concerts offered almost daily at the School of Music, LSU’s most neglected treasure. In a region that regards the last five minutes of the 1812 Overture as the pinnacle of experimental composition, the Music School is the last and greatest hope for those seeking to hear something other than Beethoven’s crashing climaxes or that last whisper of Torville and Dean, Bolero. Percussion concerts at the Music School are an especially mind blowing event, but no one yearning for the bass clef should miss “Octubafest.” The Music School offers an easy to use schedule [online](#).