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Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

LSU FACULTY SENATE

Monthly Newsletter

October 31, 2012



President's Welcome



"Diversity" is one of those words that can carry diverse meanings. As one story in this issue of the Newsletter reports, LSU A&M's diversity office is making a salutary move by the introduction, in its annual report, of numerous colorful icons representing the many diversities that the world has to offer. That modern, dispersed diversity contrasts

with the more centripetal sort that attracted attention earlier in Louisiana's history, when higher education institutions sought primarily and specifically to remedy past injustices through outreach to African-American student and faculty cadres.

The flexibility of the term "diversity" comes in handy when evaluating both the composition of and the actions of higher education management boards in Louisiana. The most recent example of extravagant homogeneity in these boards would be the abrupt, surprise decision by the LSU System Board of Supervisors to consolidate the offices of System President and flagship campus Chancellor, but there have been many other examples of apparently spontaneous uniformity, whether the quick and allegedly unanimous dilution of tenure guarantees by the University of Louisiana System management board or the exigency declaration by the Southern Supervisors. It is easy enough to critique these boards for their various and obvious if differently arranged racial and gender imbalances. It may be more urgent to note, however, the many other types of diversity that suffer amidst supervisor monoculture. For one, there is the question of age diversity, with youth and middle age being relegated to one very naive student member of each of the boards. For two, there is the issue of ideological diversity, with so many members of the current boards being appointed by one regime. Third in the list is vocational diversity, with most board members emerging from one or two walks of life. Extension of the idea of vocational diversity yields the forgotten fourth species of diversity, what might be called "estates diversity," after the medieval idea of the three estates (the governors, the clergy, and the laborers). Louisiana boards are woefully short on those who specialize in charity or cultural work, those who belong to the estate with moral rather than financial equity. All the foregoing diversity shortages contribute to the lack of the fifth species of diversity, the geographical. Different sorts of people are found in different places, but the narrow mold from which Supervisors are cast tends to limit the range of habitat in which they are found.

Louisiana is an old-fashioned place; history is highly gravitational. Our supervisors, trustees, regents, and other decision-makers behave the way they do because they are re-enacting, often unawares, the ideal of the privileged gentleman that rose into currency way back in the Renaissance. Authors of those bygone days suggested that a gentleman ought to know enough to evidence social fluency but not so much as to seem to have worked. In the upside-down world of trusteeship and its fraternal twin administration, too extensive a knowledge of anything indicates grubbiness. Being an expert means being a working person, even a faculty member, rather than a member of the genteel caste, which need do nothing in particular. Today, abstract job descriptions for the highest level of academic administration all but preclude any particular competence, focusing instead on generalities such as leadership demeanor or "deep commitments" (to x, y, or z). The cult of a gentleman who can string an arrow but not hit a target or who can banter but not say anything is alive and well among the airy ranks of management boards.

Attempts by system boards to upend the structure of higher education are, at best, premature. Boards should first begin to think about themselves, what they do, how they function, and what it means to be a "supervisor." After all, "supervise" means to watch over, which means both to pay attention and to care. That elevated and elevating posture is one that the various place-holders in higher education need to practice.

Moodle Gradebook Rounds Up

For years now, economy course management software has demonstrated that price is an inverse object, i.e., if it's easy and economical to get, there must be some catch. Now, thanks to the intervention of two Nichols who add up to a whole lot more than a dime, digital divas Brian Nichols and Pam Nicolle, the Moodle gradebook has undergone a partial facelift. Although the foundational software remains its monstrous if cheap self, Nichols and Nicolle have produced an easygoing basic template that can be activated by drop-down menus and that is accompanied by plain-language instructions. The combination of the basic template and the menu options should suffice for the vast majority of grading assignments, thereby bypassing thousands of hours of instruction. Immense thanks are due to Brian and Pam for this overdue but laudable enhancement.



Phoenix Crashes and Burns

Visitors to meetings of any of Louisiana's higher education management boards have heard a steady stream of panegyric discourse with regard to online education. Most recently, Chronicle of Higher Education reporter Jeff Selingo persuaded the quickly-consenting LSU Board of Supervisors that online education will soon transform the landscape of American education (the choice of "American" as an adjective for an educational medium that allegedly spans the globe remains puzzling). In the midst of these anticipations of unlimited revenue streams, Marketwatch, a business news service, reports that share value for the Apollo Group, which owns the ever-resurrecting online super-provider University of Phoenix, has dropped 63% during the last year owing to government pressure for accountability. Phoenix, with its gigantic advertising apparatus, has apparently not overcome the Malthusian fallacy or "bubble" factor, forgetting about the finite extent of the academic market and then crashing into economic reality. The question then arises whether university "PR" departments in Thibodaux, Eunice, or Monroe will rise to the occasion when even a Phoenix falls—and whether online education is the El Dorado that would-be educational conquistadors fancy it to be.

Costs of LSU Party Purge Mounting

Everyone knows that the foundations that support the extra activities of Louisiana's education try to remain somewhat out-of-view for good reason. Given the regulatory environment in our state, there is a place for funds that can be mobilized without undue restrictions (for example, the provision of a glass of wine at a reception in a state where temperance is surely pervasive). The "down" side of this otherwise genial sequestration is the difficulty in estimating costs and in identifying the hands on the spigots from which these blessings flow. Best estimates of the amount that the LSU Foundation has pumped into the post-Lombardi reconfiguration of the LSU System range between \$300,000.00 and \$400,000.00: circa \$200,000.00 for the search firm; two studies with high-profile consultants from the Association of Governing Boards; and an indeterminate amount of funding for studies related to the dismantling of the LSU health care network. Worthy of note also is the presence on the LSU Foundation Board of multiple Flagship Coalition members who have already pushed the "One LSU" (now "New LSU") campaign even before obtaining the preciously priced and putatively objective "studies."



HIGHER EDUCATION HEADLINER

Warren Waggenpack, Associate Dean in the College of Engineering

The month of October brought more good news for LSU on the recruitment and retention front, as the university's graduation rate has reached an all-time high. One of the many colleges contributing to this milestone is the College of Engineering, which boasts an impressive enrollment of 3,058 students for 2012. If you were to ask the faculty, staff, and students in the College of Engineering for the secret to their success, they might hit you with three impressive Cs: collaboration, cooperation, and creativity. These themes are ever-present in the discourse of Dr. Warren Waggenpack, Associate Dean in the College of Engineering.

The Associate Dean position places Dr. Waggenpack exactly where he wants to be: in the midst of students with a passion for engineering. Although he also welcomes the opportunity to teach, an administrative role offers greater interaction with the students whose lives he hopes to touch. As the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, he says, "I've found that I can make a difference, a little bit bigger difference, in more students' lives by being able to do more of the administrative things." This sentiment is echoed by Mimi LaValle, Director of Communications for the College. In her eyes, Dr. Waggenpack and the rest of the College's Student Services department are fortunate. "Everyone in Student Services," she explains, "gets the opportunity to have personal connections and see and experience the great LSU students we have."

Still, Waggenpack says, the classroom has its advantages. His favorite part of the job "... is when you finally see students catching on." After teaching a two-semester Capstone Design sequence for five years and consistently stepping in at students' request, the E.S. 'Ned' Adler Professor has been involved in more than forty senior projects. Waggenpack, or Dr. Wagg as some call him, speaks enthusiastically about his students' work, particularly two recent endeavors. In one project, students are hard at work on a second generation deep sea oil exploration exhibit, called SEATIGER ROV. In another, two groups are actively preparing to enter a Disney Imagineering competition. Ever seeking opportunities to form ties on campus, Dr. Waggenpack routinely orchestrates collaboration with other academic departments. For the aforementioned projects, students have partnered with their counterparts in the graphic design capstone class for the development of marketing layouts and artwork.

Waggenpack hopes students will recognize that these efforts are not for naught. After twenty-five years at LSU, he has observed the advantages of relationships with his immediate colleagues as well as with those from beyond his usual reach. Waggenpack consistently insists that he could not achieve so much without a large support system in Student Services and the College of Engineering as a whole. "I have a lot of really good people who work with me ... I am a figurehead on a really good team," he explains. From the Student Services staff and faculty liaisons, to the instructors and graduate assistants and everyone in between, Waggenpack says, "I talk to them every day, and tell them thank you. ... Every single one of them makes a difference." Together, he notes, "We touch a large number of students in many, many different ways."

With such a great team behind him, it is easy to see why Waggenpack takes pride in his position. "I enjoy coming to work every day," he says, and it is no surprise that he does. In his case, LSU relations are a family affair. For most people, growing up in Baton Rouge would be the perfect incentive to attend school here, but Dr. Wagg had even more reason. "I grew up just across the lake from LSU. I have three brothers and three sisters who all have a degree from LSU, and my father graduated from LSU after he finished World War II. I've been associated with LSU for quite some time." Obtaining bachelor's and master's degrees from the university was a no brainer. "You get a lot of return on investment for what you do at the bachelor's and master's level at LSU," he expresses. It was his love for the school, however, that drew him back after heading to Purdue University's School of Mechanical Engineering for his doctoral studies.

Engineering and school related projects abound for Dr. Waggenpack, who has been active in organizations such as the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the Association for Computing Machinery's Special Interest Group on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques (ACM SIGGRAPH). A greater amount of his attention, however, is focused on bringing initiatives to his students. Recent programs include mentorships, international internships through Encounter Engineering in Europe (E3), and the new Engineering Residential College. These opportunities are crucial to the development of students into professionals because "You can't cram everything into class and get people out in four years." Outreach efforts are also a huge consideration, with social media and traditional means being used to push what the College has to offer. Thanks to programs such as the "Geaux Engineering" campaign, the Diversity Ambassadors, and community Peer Mentors, the College of Engineering is in the top 8% in the nation for undergraduate enrollment and the conferment of degrees.

When considering how the College of Engineering has reached its many accomplishments, Waggenpack returns to the advantages of the LSU community. "We have very good working relationships with a lot of folks all across campus," he says. "That's how LSU thrives in spite of the challenges we face. We're migrating away from a dependence on state funding. There are a lot more initiatives; we look for creative ways to go after additional resources, to try and provide what we know is necessary. And we've been successful because we have a very good team."

When it comes to the faculty, staff, and students in the College of Engineering, "We have people making a difference."

Former UNO Provost Joe King Pops Up In New Tiger Stripes

The world is full of good administrators who sometimes get a bad taint or a raw deal from the few bad apples in the management barrel. One of those good guys is Joe King, the well-meaning former interim Provost at the University of New Orleans, who has popped up in a new set of tiger stripes not as an LSU zealot but as the new Provost of the satellite campus of Auburn University in Montgomery, Alabama. Congratulations to Joe, a blazing beam of high energy that has successfully shot out of the would-be black hole of Louisiana higher education.



Joe King, New Auburn-Montgomery Provost

Buzzing Bill

The whole hive at LSU A&M is humming about A. G. Monaco's new info sheet, the monthly "Benefits Buzz." In a burst of creativity and cerebral whimsy and, as usual, while running fifty paces ahead of ordinary mortals, A. G. has devised a honey-themed layout that shimmers with energy and that bodes to bring sweetness and light to all. Most delightful of all is the subtle inclusion of long-time faculty activist and former LSU A&M Faculty Senate President William "Bill" Daly in the masthead for this admirable publication, where he smiles from a golden six-sided cell. Bravo to Bill for joining the buzzers!



Why Go 3D When D2 Will Suffice?

Considerable attention has focused on the extravagant compensation packages offered to Division One athletic coaches, but followers of management board minutes know that what used to be called "division two" can provide a decent enough living. At its October 23rd meeting, the University of Louisiana System validated a raft of coaching contract extensions at three of its campuses (McNeese, Northwestern, and UNO). Leading the pack among the D2 coaches was McNeese's football coach, Bernard "Matt" Viator, bagging \$109,500.00 for the next three years along with the opportunity for post-season incentives up to \$20,500.00 and an assortment of revenue opportunities, including the right to operate football camps for youngsters. For comparison, Viator's salary falls in the range of full professors in the Business college at McNeese and of Deans in the non-technical disciplines.

Colorado: The Presidential Preserve

Followers of higher education recall that former LSU A&M Chancellor Michael Martin drifted uphill into greener alpine pastures as President of the Colorado State System after his downstream ride in the not-so-wild waters of Louisiana educational politics. Now another Colorado president has found safe haven in academic administration: Colorado Robertson, the feed-cap-sporting former LSU Student Government President, has surfaced as an analyst in LSU Risk Management. Even in the troubled economy of our time, it appears that affiliation with Student Government is not the riskiest alliance.

Association of Governing Boards Release External Influences Statement

The last issue of the Newsletter reported that AGB, the Association of Governing Boards, an influential consulting firm in Washington that specializes in the bettering of higher education management boards, was preparing a statement on external influences on universities and colleges, whether those exerted by politicians, donors, boosters, or coalitions. That salutary report, which should be mandatory reading for every educator or policymaker in Louisiana, has now appeared. The report is available in its complete form [online](#) or as an abbreviated [executive summary](#). The recurring theme: the need for independence of governing boards and personnel from outside influences and especially the need to "ensure that philanthropy does not inappropriately influence institutional independence and autonomy."

OGB Money Drain Sends Scholars Scrambling For Scripts

University personnel who belong to the “LSU First” policy (which is, alas, available only to LSU System members) and who require “maintenance” medication (medicine taken routinely over a long term) scrambled for their scripts when an announcement came down the email pike that recurring medications would henceforth arrive in hot Louisiana mailboxes rather than flying out of Rite-Aid windows. Plan participants feared that generic drugs left in parched pigeon-holes and originating with dubious manufacturers would replace legitimate Aesculapian elixirs. Faced with an onslaught of inquiries, responsive LSU System management softened the edict, allowing plan members to elect mail or storefront delivery for the next year. A probe of the matter with the help of very cooperative insiders revealed more of the story. An obscure but devastating state law forbids LSU from charging premiums beyond those assessed by the Office of Group Benefits (“OGB”) for its plans. Owing to good management, OGB has piled up over a half-billion dollars of reserve funds, an appealing target for a state hungry for revenue. At the behest of the governor’s office, OGB lowered its premiums beneath the cost of its plans, thereby relieving the state support burden by drawing down the aforementioned reserves and thereby also rendering OGB an even easier acquisition for a private firm, per the governor’s drive to privatize this most excellent of state agencies. The reduction in OGB premiums subsequently forced LSU to restrict its premium increase, which, in turn, required either raising policy deductibles, decreasing contributions to health resource accounts, or modifying the prescription plan. Blame and credit should be assigned where due; LSU System officials merit praise for making the best of a bad situation induced by state re-channeling of OGB reserve. Oh, yes—those reserves arose from member (employee) contributions.

Coda to this story: Governor Jindal ran into an unexpected roadblock when, on October 17th, the vote in the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget to privatize OGB was delayed for an unspecified period owing to a shortage of votes. There is a long-awaited if minor victory for higher education.

SEC Symposium Sluices Sustainable Resources to Energy Sector

The powerful Southeastern Conference, the über-management system for the highly profitable collegiate sports industry of the southeast quadrant, is once again attempting to polish its academic image with a glitzy conference, “The Inaugural SEC Symposium,” on the campus of the University of Georgia. Part of a new meta-university dubbed “SEC U,” presumably pronounced “seek you,” this attention-grabbing event is doing just about everything other than seeking you unless you happen to represent a high-revenue-producing discipline. Allegedly on the theme of sustainable energy sources in the southeast, the conference will feature high-carbon-footprint presentations by an assortment of flown-in speakers as well as, admittedly, by an assembly of tech-savvy professors who are, in effect, offering up free advice to those in the high-profit energy business. No evidence of the “sustainability” of the liberal arts, music, fine arts, or any other form of cultural capital is to be found on a program that fits the quirky form of capitalist political correctness characterized in Louisiana by the term “workforce development.” Given that the SEC refused to fund even one regional meeting per year of SEC faculty governance leaders, the meaning of “sustainability”—sustaining the SEC without criticism and sustaining the drive toward polytechnics rather than comprehensive universities—is easy to ascertain.

Two Big “L”s Age Well Together

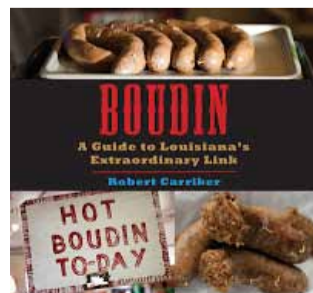
Overcoming the embarrassment of an abortive call for applications for the presidency of the University of Louisiana System—a call that yielded only nine applicants, many of whom were most noted for their ability to imagine a future—the University of Louisiana System has tapped long-time academic CEO and entrance exam mogul Tom Layzell to steward the University of Louisiana System during its interregnum. Layzell, who managed to keep the Board of Regents on track after having been repeatedly “dissed” by the Louisiana State legislature, has restored an air of calm and collegiality to a perpetually troubled System office. Recruitment of “The Big L” to head “the Big L,” of course, reflects what might be called the geriatric obsession of Louisiana higher education—of a state government regime that fears the energy and ideas of younger people and that routinely looks back rather than forward. Admittedly, however, few could be better for the stewardship job than the genial Layzell. University of Louisiana officials—the Jindal-appointed supervisors—have announced an intention to hire a search firm, which will be charged with delivering a small parcel of finalist presidential candidates in the middle of November. According to current plans, those candidates will be interviewed between November 13th and 15th, with one of them getting the nod and the contract on the very same day. Such an arrangement leaves little time or opportunity for student, faculty, and public comment, unless that small subset of the public that can race to an airport hotel room, where such interviews usually occur, in the middle of the work week counts as a fair cross-section of all the constituencies contributing to Louisiana academe.



Tom Layzell

Tip of the Month: Boudin Book Extraordinaire

At the very moment when we all thought that the last food book might have been written and that we might never read or any more etouffée-associated inventions by Emeril, along comes both one of the greatest novelties as well as greatest delights of the publishing year. An ideal Christmas gift for those seeking substantial refection during the chilly months, Robert Carriker’s new *Boudin: A Guide to Louisiana’s Extraordinary Link* has rolled off the University of Louisiana presses with the same panache as that in evidence when one of these regional sausages shoots out of its steamer. A combined history of regional cuisine, travelogue, photographic essay, restaurant review, Carriker’s creation escorts readers into the spicy and shabbily colorful world of south-central Louisiana’s sausage stashes. Anyone who has visits campuses between LSUA, LSUE, and ULL, the academic vertices of Carriker’s tasty triangle, will surely delight in as well as learn from this amazing tour of the best of the Wurst. Available from Amazon.com for only \$15.00, this dinner- and coffee-table tome is a “must buy.”



Boudin Book

LSU Implements Grade Exclusion Policy

In a landmark of faculty, student, and administrative cooperation, LSU has overcome formidable bureaucratic hurdles and has scored a bull’s-eye in the retention tournament by promulgating a new “grade exclusion” policy. When a little bit of onomastic enhancement re-dressed the “repeat-delete” option as what sounds like a move toward a gated community, the new policy soared in public opinion and passed through the approval process without a hitch. Ovations to LSU Vice-Provost Gil Reeve for Florsheim-quality boots-on-the-ground work.



LSU Vice-Provost Gil Reeve

Whole Foods Pushes the Linguistic Limits

In an earlier issue of the Newsletter, readers enjoyed a review of Baton Rouge’s food supply, including the various and sundry specialty grocery stores. As a special supplement to that effort, the Newsletter reports that Whole Foods has taken food-related language beyond even the extensive frontiers of academic discourse. The new three-serving brownie packages that make these treats more amenable to dieting colleagues feature a shield declaring the components to be “100% REAL INGREDIENTS.” It appears that secularists have won: there are no unreal or supernatural elements being served on the Whole Foods periodic table.

Meanwhile, elsewhere on the academic-culinary front line, a letter sent to the Monroe News Star and subsequently re-released in the LSU System Media Sweep attacks “Satan’s primary strongholds” in “so-called” higher education and scourges academics for allegedly refusing “to believe in the Jesus that created aged wine from water.” We can only credit culinary education of the sort that might emanate from the hospitality program at Nicholls State for the suggestion that the produce of the miracle at Cana should be aged wine. No Gallo for the prophets, please.

LSU Diversity Reclaims Europe, Shows Increase In Faculty Internationalism

Heeding criticism in past issues of the Newsletter, LSU’s Equity, Diversity, and Community Outreach Department has introduced a highly visible icon to illustrate that diversity really can be diverse and that international origins can ennoble an institution. The inner back cover of the latest annual report on diversity introduces a green icon—in the color of “go,” as in “go ahead and go for it”—that emblemizes the 3% of the student body who hail from international origins. Also mentioned are the 4.2% of faculty members who hail from foreign shores. Admittedly, those numbers are small, but the recognition that internationalism merits as much attention as do other forms of diversity is a step forward (even if it still isn’t very easy being green).



Diversity: It’s Getting Easier to be Green

HOMELAND (Showtime, 2011-present)

Last spring I commented in this space that many of the better movies being made in the US these days are first shown not at the suburban multiplexes, nor even at film festivals for devoted cinephiles, but on the premium cable television channels. It is equally true that these channels also feature a number of TV series that compare favorably with American film today, displaying a level of creativity that was rarely seen on American television screens until the current generation. Twenty or more years ago, the most talented screenwriters, directors, and producers in the US generally either worked in cinema or aspired to do so; but their successors might well decline offers from the movie studios in order to practice their crafts at HBO or Showtime.

Accordingly, this month I will write a TV rather than a movie review. Among current offerings, there are few better examples of the excellence to be found on cable TV than *Homeland*, created by Howard Gordon and Alex Gansa and now in its second 12-episode season. The show is about America's "global war on terror," which is handled with remarkable subtlety. The baseline moral principle of the series seems to be that torture and the deliberate killing of civilians are inexcusably evil. Since *Homeland* clearly shows that both these evils are perpetrated both by al-Qaeda and by US forces, application of this fundamental principle to actual narratives of the war on terror results in complex conundrums, dilemmas, and gray areas that one could scarcely predict from the fact that Gordon and Gansa were both writers for Fox Television's one-dimensionally sadistic and xenophobic series about the war on terror, *24* (2001-2010). It has, indeed, been suggested that Gordon and Gansa made *Homeland* at least partly as a kind of atonement for *24*.

The narrative lines of *Homeland* are highly inventive, featuring unexpected twists and turns and apparent resolutions that turn out to open up more questions than they settle. Yet even more of the richness of the series inheres in its three major characters, each played by one of the best working actors we have. The protagonist is Carrie Mathison (Claire Danes), an analyst and operative for the CIA who is utterly brilliant—she can see complex connections that elude her colleagues—but also psychologically unstable; she suffers from bipolar disorder. Carrie is absolutely devoted to her job, her private life ranging from unsatisfying to nonexistent. Her antagonist (but also sometime lover) is Nick Brody (Damian Lewis), a Marine sergeant just returned from eight years of captivity in the Middle East. With looks that could grace a recruiting poster and an equally attractive family, Brody (as everyone, even his wife, calls him) is almost immediately made into an all-American public hero and even a candidate for political office. But Carrie suspects from the beginning that he was "turned" by al-Qaeda and is plotting an attack on US soil. She's basically right, of course, though the whole truth is of more labyrinthine complexity than even she can readily grasp. Finally, there is the most important secondary character, Saul Berenson (the incomparable Mandy Patinkin), a high official of the CIA who over the years has served as Carrie's mentor, friend, and protector; their relationship is mainly of the father-daughter sort, though there are occasional hints of sexual electricity between them too. Saul is the real moral and intellectual center of the series. Determined to destroy al-Qaeda, he nonetheless refuses to cross certain lines—not only for purely ethical reasons but also because, as a veteran intelligence professional, he knows how stupid and counter-productive things like "enhanced interrogation" really are.

Indeed, much of the series is about interrogation in one way or another. The guiding principle is the one that Saul and his real-life counterparts have always insisted upon: that, contrary to what the Dick Cheney types (who are often parodied in *Homeland*) may think, the real key to successful interrogation is not physical torment but the establishment of a genuine human relationship between interrogatee and interrogator. One of the most fascinating examples is shown in flashbacks of Brody's Middle Eastern captivity. After long periods of torture and deprivation during which he has refused to be broken, Brody is received personally by the al-Qaeda leader Abu Nazir (Navid Negahban), who speaks softly to him and provides him with a hot bath, clean clothes, and delicious food. Then Nazir takes one huge step further. He tells Brody that he wants his young son Issa (Rohan Chand) to learn English and that Brody is to become Issa's tutor; the two will be spending long hours with just the two of them together. This may seem like a risky parental move on Nazir's part; but he has judged his man well. Brody, a father himself, comes to love Issa like his own son, and, through Issa, to love Nazir and the religion of Islam. The recruiting-poster Marine is soon turned—though in ways more complicated than one may at first think.

Interrogation can also include sex. Carrie and Brody spend a hot weekend together, during which the CIA woman and the military man (who, since his homecoming, has been unable to re-establish a proper physical relationship with his wife) go at it with the verve and enthusiasm of any honeymooning young couple. When Brody learns of Carrie's suspicions, he naturally assumes that her apparent interest in him was purely professional and instrumental. Once again, though, matters are more complex. For one thing, Carrie (whose analytical genius is matched by her sexy bearing and sizzling good looks) is rather promiscuous during her relatively scarce free time—she sometimes picks up strangers in bars—and she clearly finds a sexual thrill in getting naked with a man whom she believes to be working for al-Qaeda. But then too, it's extremely difficult for one secret agent to be genuinely close to another. Saul is Carrie's only real friend at the CIA, and early in the series she jeopardizes even that friendship. Part of Carrie's attraction to Brody may be that, in the absence of true friendship or true love, a true enemy can provide the best opportunity for emotional as well as physical intimacy.

Homeland is not, perhaps, a perfect series: it sometimes seems a bit uncertain as to exactly what kind of show it wants to be. The best fictional representations of espionage tend to be those that realistically stress the humdrum bureaucratic routine of the spy business and indulge in a minimum of sensation and derring-do. The novels of John le Carré and the film and television adaptations of them constitute probably the most prominent example here—though mention should also be made of Graham Greene's masterpiece *The Human Factor* (1978) and Otto Preminger's 1979 film based on it, and also of Robert De Niro's brilliant CIA film, *The Good Shepherd* (2006). But a very different and nearly antithetical model is provided by John Frankenheimer's extraordinary 1962 movie *The Manchurian Candidate*: a film that, in plot, is clearly the chief precursor-text of *Homeland*, and that is unabashed and virtually hysterical in its wild co-incidences, implausible turns, and general unreality. *Homeland* veers sometimes in the one direction and sometimes in the other, and you might say that it ultimately falls between the two stools. On the other hand, you might, I suppose, say that it strikes a nice balance between two all but irreconcilable models. What you are extremely unlikely to say after watching *Homeland* is that you have not been entertained.

—Carl Freedman

No More Waiting at the Midnight Hour

Recent years have brought an expansion in the number of faculty teaching courses during the late afternoon and evening hours. One result has been the resurgence of "cruising" among faculty who long ago left their low-rider gear in the garage: "cruising," that is, for parking spaces near academic buildings. Especially on the LSU campus, competition for parking after 4:00 pm began to resemble a late quarter in a round of roller derby, with even your *Newsletter* editor being seared by the oncoming headlights of a Hummer headed for his vacated slot. Thanks to cooperation from traffic and safety czars Gary Graham and Brian Nichols, the LSU campus offers gate-controlled parking for faculty members at the "C5" lot adjoining the historic LSU quadrangle. Gates remain down and supervised until 7:00 pm, allowing faculty members to start their night-time day without entering the Indianapolis 500. Gentlemen and gentle-ladies, start not your engines, but your classes!



C5 Lot

Civil Service Ices Employees

Fears of public expression of dissent have reached a level adequate to trigger an alarm from the Louisiana State Civil Service Director, Shannon S. Templet. On September 14, Templet released General Circular Number 2012-024 on the chilling topic of "prohibited political activity." Presented as a reminder, the memorandum warns civil service employees against the display of political signs in yards, the use of bumper stickers, and that most egregious of offenses, "liking" a candidate on Facebook. Although it is not uncommon to prohibit political activity in the workplace, this extension of authority to private residences and extra-curricular venues will surely send civil liberties enthusiasts into conniptions.

Hourly Billing Rate for the Good Shepherd

In its September issue, the *Newsletter* mused on the contrast between the letter-to-the-editor in which the LSU System Executive Vice-President for Health Care and Medical Medical Education Redesign Frank Opelka offered up a prayer to the non-denominational Almighty asking that the heaven "watch over the actions of the governor on behalf of the children, the less fortunate, the needy, and the handicapped" while keeping our leaders walking "the Christian way", and the ease with which Opelka became not his brother's keeper but his brother's replacement when the gentle Fred Cerise was ejected for showing restraint in decimating the charity hospital system. The personnel actions for the September meeting of the LSU System management board show that service to the Good Shepherd involves a high billing rate, with Dr. Opelka bagging an annual stipend of \$409,556.00 for an 80% effort. If "80% effort" translates to thirty-two hours per week, walking the straight-and-narrow path commands an hourly reimbursement rate of \$246.00. No wonder the old hymn recommends "just a closer walk with thee."



Colorful Health Care

Lifestyle Feature: North of the Border, or, Mexican Cuisine in Baton Rouge

For reasons unknown to man, beast, or bean, some ethnic cuisines have fared better in Baton Rouge than have others. Few would have expected the boom in Mediterranean delicacies represented by Albasha, Roman's, Arzi's, and Serops, but equally few would have anticipated that, in a state only a short distance from the Latin sphere of influence, Mexican food would experience such a slow start. To this day, south Louisiana lacks a truly world-class Mexican bistro and remains woefully short on informal eateries where one can pick up a taco or chalupa abounding in bright and bursting freshness and flavor. Nevertheless, the infusion of Mexican and Central American populations, especially during the post-Katrina rebuilding period, has provided a base of customers for this inviting cuisine and has stimulated experimentation in both the traditional and the Tex-Mex versions of southerly sustenance. Discriminating readers of the *Newsletter* want to know where to go when dining à la sombrero, so let us, as online merchants say, check availability.

Least familiar to Baton Rougeans are the taquerias and similar, often pop-up, eateries that often cater to genuinely Mexican and Central American diners. Entering these establishments can be an exciting or perhaps slightly intimidating experience.



Carlos Mexican Restaurant

A foreign "feel" compounded by the presence of adjacent shops vending Mexican groceries can make the non-Mexican visitor feel slightly out of place, although many will find such an adventure refreshingly intercultural. The taquerias have yet to adapt to northern expectations with regard to service, with the result that what the proprietors probably regard as polite and low-key service may appear gruff and tone-deaf. Nevertheless, at least two taquerias attain excellence. Situated at the top, northern end of Siegen, in a strip mall across the street from Jim's Firearms, La Tiendita delivers consistently hearty and flavor-abundant Mexican dishes with a kind of understated confidence, for example by walking up and

unceremoniously dumping on the table one of the most delicious burritos in town. Lack of proper utensils and truly searing fluorescent lighting should not distract from an inexpensive feast that will tickle the taste buds, nourish the soul as well as body, and reveal regional flavors, even if the main course arrives in a basket more appropriate to a 1950s Iowa drive-in. Further south on Siegen, the appetitive will find the name-changing Mi Pueblito or La Mexicana (both names come and go, and the streetside sign has been turned upside-down!). Mi Pueblito once operated a larger restaurant on Jones Creek Road but has since downscaled into a strip mall even while enlarging its menu and preserving its unique ensemble of no less than three salsas that come gratis with every meal. Here one can enjoy true Mexican main courses such as carnitas or arroz con pollo and can enjoy Mexican beverages such as horchas or Mexican-bottled soft drinks. Possibly also worthy of an occasional visit is the smorgasbord El Nagey, operated by Central American personnel who at one time specialized in oriental cuisine but who are now famous for their extravagantly costumed ambassadors who stand on busy street corners appared like the worst but admittedly most laughable Mexican stereotypes imaginable, hailing customer from the raging road.

At the opposite end of the spectrum from the earth, near-aboriginal taquerias are the hyper-refined concept restaurants. Among the least desirable is the new Fuzzy's Taco Shop, near Burbank and Lee, which specializes in nothing so much as flavor homogenization. Far more creative are the fusion Mexican-Cajun offerings, whether the whimsically ornamented Taco Boudreaux, a mixed Mexican-LaFourchian shack on Sherwood Forest Drive, which inserts Cajunized fish into Mexican formats, or the somewhat less enticing and old-school Mestizo, which has somehow never caught the Baton Rouge imagination despite its appeal to the local heritage. Also belonging to the over-conceptualized set would be La Carreta, which might be best characterized as an after-five margarita outlet, and Coyote Blues, a Disneyesque environment that specializes in overloaded but under-flavored plates and that seems to be just one step out of an episode of Zorro.

Some of the long-runners among the pseudo-Mexican-restaurant tribe—"pseudo," because it is not clear whether they have any Mexican heritage or even kitchen staff—manage to rise above their pale origins and to strike an interesting note if not a full chord. For many years, Las Palmas, which, of all things, began with Arabian owners, offered the closest approximation of the American southwestern version of Mexican fare to be found in Baton Rouge. Day in and day out, Las Palmas continues to sustain its loyal clientele, presenting decent if unimaginative renderings of the canonical Mexican dishes and combination plates. Up on Government Street, not too far from Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church, Superior Grill pumps out thousands of tasty but not especially startling plates, making enough use of tomato and cilantro to pass as sort of near-Tijuanan while packing in its main clientele: lunching businessmen looking for the big meal that eludes them in a health-conscious home or, in the evening, singles on the prowl and other persons seeking action under the piñatas.



El Rio Grande

For the unattached, Mi Padres, at Perkins and Bluebonnet, is also an apt choice, although its relentlessly masculine atmosphere may overwhelm some and its wholehearted commitment to seared meat takes it off the vegan circuit. Indeed, Mi Padres is a trans-gendered restaurant, having evolved out of the somewhat stereotyping Mamacita's Cantina of the 1980s. Probably the most appealing of the long-running not-really-ethnic outlets is Serrano's, the venture of a former LSU A&M student, which sits just outside the north gates of the LSU A&M campus and which offers tasty if mild and uninventive fare and which, with its patio, makes for a nice luncheon during the temperate weather. The verdict is yet to come in on the new Caliente, at Nicholson and Brightside, in a building that has covered the ethnic spectrum, from the Italian cuisine of

Portobello's to the tiger bait of The Blind Tiger Bar and Grill. (continued on page 6)

Battle of the Billboards on the Byway

Past issues of the Newsletter have reported the peculiar mix of public relations and poaching that has led to campuses positioning student-recruiting billboards within fleas' leaps of rival campuses. To date, these efforts to abscond with students have drawn battle lines at the System level, with, for example, the then-LSU campus, UNO, sneaking a recruiting billboard into the territory of the University of Louisiana's McNeese State. Now the often-overlooked but never recumbent ULM (University of Louisiana in Monroe) has upped the stakes by slapping a billboard just off Interstate 10, along the frontage road abutting exit 101, which just happens to be a key access point for another University of Louisiana System campus, the University of Louisiana in Lafayette. Urging the Ragin' Cajuns to "Discover ULM," the billboard seems to evoke the spirit of exploration that brought us Iberville and Bienville—and perhaps to grant Acadiana its northernmost extension.



Nunez, LSUE Lead Architecture Push, LSU Ikea-Izes

Despite its reputation for rural conservatism and in defiance of the notion that the A&M campus leads in every department, the latest advance in campus architecture in Louisiana has emerged from LSU in Eunice, where the new Community Education Building breaks with (bad) Louisiana traditions, jettisons the shabby grandiosity of Huey Long's imitations of Albert Speer's odious monumentalism, and presents to the eager community a peppy building that seems to point upward (and maybe also onward) even while its extended arms embrace a republic of soon-to-be-lettered learners. Capacious and solid yet light and optimistic, uninhibited by the totalizing idioms of LSU A&M buildings, Nunez's vigorous new edifice sets a new standard for learning environments. Meanwhile, LSU A&M is managing, in happy imitation, to crawl out of its own dark ages, approving a façade plan for the Emerge Center for Communication, Behavior, and Development down on the chronically underdeveloped South Campus. Festooned with brightly colored panels and celebrating those cool greys—rather, mockingbird hues—that so aptly set off bright panels, the design, which appears beginning on page eighty in the LSU System minutes for the [October Board meeting](#), brings LSU up at least to the architectural level of Disneyland in 1965 and pays homage to Ikea, with its deft deployment of color squawks and its enthusiastic confidence in the better half of the proletariat. Congratulations to all for liberating the architectural imagination!

Pilfering Peak Proves Police PR

When the LSU campus police (LSUPD) released its annual report on criminal activity on the LSU A&M campus, heads turned at an apparent gigantic spike in the number of robberies on the Baton Rouge mega-campus. Cooperative input from Captain Lalonde of the LSUPD, however, revealed that the alarming data peak may result from a combination of improved record-keeping and the influence of LSU's catchy "see something, say something" campaign, which encourages crimestoppers to report suspicious activity on a hassle-free basis. The apparent increase in crime may, in fact, indicate an increase in police efficiency.

LIFESTYLE (continued)

The most unexpected Iberian-colonial culinary zone is that of blight northeast Baton Rouge, where three new entrants are carving out their respective niches. The September *Newsletter* highlighted El Rancho, near Sherwood and Florida, noting its jolly polychrome furnishings and inventive use of oversized Mexican prayer and other trading cards as laminated table covers (imagine the bleeding St. Sebastian holding your guacamole with his free hand!). El Rancho has some good dishes—its chimichanga is light yet rich, its pico de gallo eruptive with flavor, its queso sauce relentlessly satisfying—but it also has some failures, including poor plating (for example, heavy blobs of guacamole in dull brown bowls) and occasionally gruff service that may arise from cultural misprisions. The great find of 2012



Taco Boudreaux

is the age-old El Rio Grande, on Airline north of Florida, an architecturally staggering combination of a first-floor color-saturated cantina and an old A-frame house from way back when. One family, however, has operated this diamond in the rough for over fifty years, perfecting a true-blue American-Mexican cuisine of exactly the kind that will satisfy that unexpected taco or enchilada craving. El Rio Grande has yet to catch up with the diversification of menus. It is in love with its spiced ground beef filling, which is far and away the most common

item on the menu, but is somewhat behind the curve with respect to poultry, fajita beef, and fish. Nevertheless, the food is lovingly prepared, hits the very center of its idiom, and creates an enjoyable experience in its unexpected setting. All things considered, it is likely the best of Baton Rouge. Rounding out the northeast assembly is the resurrected Carlos Mexican Restaurant, tucked into an improbable curve in a frontage road attached to the Airline-Florida exchange. Of all the Mexican eateries in town, Carlos's may come closest to true Mexican flavor, owing in large measure to the use of Mexican cheeses, which add extra flavor dimensions to highly profiled compositions.

Carlos occasionally slips; he seems, for example, to have adulterated his guacamole with mayonnaise in an effort to create a guacamole dressing

that is somewhat less than felicitous on the tongue. Carlos, fortunately, offers a small but diverse and well-organized menu that will leave the diner convinced that he or she has had a Mexican meal, even if Carlos's dim lighting makes it very hard to see his fine fare.

Some restaurants in the Mexican melange earn an "E" for effort if not excellence. Casa Maria has managed to hold to its foundation for years if not decades, going nowhere but thereby not going down the drain. Marina's, up on Bennington, carries on as a paean to the perdurability of its diminutive owner, who is ready to make a break but seems somehow lost on a sidestreet. And let us not forget the revived El Mexicano, in the Hammond-Aire shopping center, which offers tasty foods and well-composed plates in a cheerfully painted slot (a former D'Angelo's) but which can't quite seem to overcome a certain coldness or vacuousness in atmosphere.

Mexican menudo remains in-process in Baton Rouge. Careful menu perusal and matching of venue to mood or even to time-of-day can still produce a tiptoe, not through the tulips but across the land of tequila.



Taco Boudreaux



Taco Boudreaux

"A G Answers"

"The editorial staff of the Faculty Senate Monthly Newsletter is delighted to introduce a new column, "A G Answers," featuring that tireless champion of employee advancement, LSU HRM Chief A. G. Monaco. As is well known to all those who have had the pleasure of his conversation, A G takes the widest of all perspective with regard to the improvement of employees' lives. In this column, he will reply to questions posed by Newsletter readers. Although naturally inclined to address "HRM" issues, A G will gladly offer advice and direction on almost any topic that comes under the heading of "employees' lives." If you would like to pose a question to A G for answering in an upcoming issue, please send your queries to encope@LSU.edu."

Dear AG,

"I'm an expert in my field but I'm afraid I'm a plain old imbecile in economics. I've got big but not huge resources in my retirement fund and I've got maybe ten to fifteen more years in my working life. The online guidance that my pension fund vendor offers looks more like an advertisement than an evaluation. How can I figure out what my retirement benefit will be and how long I need to work?"— Retirement Rookie

Dear Rookie,

Being asked this question reminds me of the quote from Erasmus, "in the land of the blind the one-eyed man is king." I myself have been struggling with my own retirement planning.

Since the market tumble of 2007-2008, most of us have become alarmed by the performance of our retirement accounts. Even those of us with defined benefit plans have recognized that those guaranteed pay-outs may end up smaller than we originally thought. In addition the previous assumption of wealth acquisition through continually increasing home values has for the most part been disproven.

For those of us who are public employees in higher education we received a "double hit" during the last four years - salary growth has stalled and our market based pension accounts have declined in value. (continued on page 7)



A G Monaco



Thomas Miller (Southern) and Chad Gothreaux (LSU) Confer in Alexandria

Accreditation Sage Sullivan Stages Blitz Visit

Few operations strike more terror into the administrative heart than does the process of accreditation, there being so many faults in any university and so many opportunities, in times of financial crisis, to go wrong. Accreditation followers—a small but surly tribe—took immediate note when accreditation expert Margaret Sullivan turned up on the LSU campus under the squiring of accreditation go-to guy Gil Reeve. Whirling around the campus on a one-day blow-it-all-open tour, Sullivan vowed to tell the truth and therefore make herself indispensably detested. The likeable and energetic Sullivan, whose unabashed truthfulness both amazes and fascinates the LSU A&M administration, recently found herself swept into the role of a Chancellor at a failing Florida institution, where she effected a speedy and favorable reversal of trajectory. See Sullivan's latest video on [Youtube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...).

Autumn Alexandria Summit Smashes System Barriers-

The last weekend in September brought cavalcades of colleagues to the latest "Alexandria Summit," the innovative meeting of persons from all campuses and indeed all walks of life who are committed to faculty governance. For the first time in the two-year history of these summits, representatives from all four higher-education systems—the LSU System, the University of Louisiana System, the LCTCS, and the Southern University System—participated in this gathering, with a notable surge in attendance by colleagues from the community colleges. Attendees heard from a vast variety of generous colleagues such as Paul Sylvester of ULM, who discoursed on techniques for increasing participation in faculty governance by colleagues in the STEM disciplines; Thomas Miller, who reported on the turmoil at Southern University; Michael Russo, who updated frustrated faculty on the unionization movement in Louisiana universities; Hugh Wilson, of Grambling University, who proposed new models for the survival and extension of HBCUs; and the team of Elisabeth Elder (LSUA) and James Robinson (LSLUE), who wowed the audience with a data-rich investigation of the interactions of two- and four-year schools in our great state. The meeting issued in the formation of a committee to investigate, both empirically and at the level of policy, compensation in Louisiana's colleges and universities—a panel, again, involving colleagues from every university system. The next Alexandria Summit, which will be open to all, is slated for December 1st on the campus of LSUA.



ASK A G (continued)

RETIREMENT PLANNING

Your dissatisfaction with vendor websites may have to do with their use of broad assumptions that may or may not fit your individual needs.

In my opinion broadly designed suggestions for retirement planning are not helpful. Your life expectancy, the presence of a partner, that partner's life expectancy, their income and your health and lifestyle all involve adjustments to retirement savings and post retirement spending. It is the most personal of financial decisions and has a result requires individual approaches.

Saying that - here are some broad suggestions –

A. Save more money now by consuming less.

Now that is far easier said than done. Since the last time you got a raise at LSU the price of a gallon of gasoline has risen 39% at the pump and coffee prices are now 22% higher in the supermarket. To tell someone that has gone this long without a raise to save more money is really telling someone to accept deprivation.

B. Reduce your retirement expectations.

In the 1980's a retirement income of 60% of your working income was viewed as a very good pension. Now the average person is told to save for 80%. Of course the expectation in 1982 was that the value of your home would grow by approximately 4-7% per year. The concept of retaining wealth through the value of your home is all but laughed at these days and so the percentage of your retirement assets that your pension fund must now represent has grown dramatically.

SO WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

The best I can come up with is for you to retire at a later age. If you say that you have ten to 15 years left in your career then try to accept at least 15 years and not merely 10 more years of work. Since 2007 the age of 68 has become the new age 65. Average retirement dates have been pushed further into the future for many Americans. Within a decade, the normal expected retirement age will likely be between ages 70-72.

Working longer is one way to add to your retirement coffers, but it is also effective in insuring that you will not run out of money due to longer life expectancies. The best way to guarantee you have money in your account at 88 is to work until 70. The extra years will give both the economy and your retirement account more time to rebound.

Yeah I know.... It is not likely that such advice will result in me being declared the next Warren Buffett - but it is realistic advice.

CALCULATING RETIREMENT NEEDS

To help calculate how much you need we can recommend some on-line calculators that are not focused on pushing you toward investment products. I have found three particular retirement calculators to be especially worthwhile. These calculators require you to consider things like life expectancy and whether or not you intend to maintain your spending patterns or perhaps alter them during your retirement. Importantly they work just as well for folks in a defined benefit plan as they would for people in the ORP.

[The MSN Retirement Calculator](#)

[The AAUP Calculator](#)

[The TIAA-Cref Calculator](#)

SOME PROGRAMS TO CONSIDER

For those who believe they can save more for retirement - LSU does offer supplemental retirement accounts with the basic rule being that you can make a pre-tax contribution of up to \$17,500 if under age 50, or up to \$23,000 if over age 50. You can of course open accounts with much lower contributions and even a pre-tax savings of only \$50.00 per month (it would only reduce take home by about \$37.00) can provide a nice extra cushion against expenses if allowed to grow over several decades.

The Benefit Office in HRM has been working with all of the ORP/403b vendors to band together to help increase the financial knowledge of the LSU community. On November 14th a program will be offered on Financial Planning for Women in which most of the vendors will be present. Later sessions on retirement and financial planning that are less gender specific will be offered throughout the Spring. Our hope in HRM is that by having the vendors work together to increase the overall financial knowledge of the community all employee groups will become better informed and more aggressive in their retirement planning. The obvious pay-off to the vendors will be greater participation in 403b plans and for employees by being more informed they are far more likely to make good investment choices.

PENSION UPDATE

During the Spring Semester and throughout the Summer and Fall administrators and faculty representatives have been meeting and discussing the challenges presented by the current pension design and the manner in which the University is inexplicably assessed charges for an unfunded accrued liability for ORP participants.

If you are like the majority of faculty, you are enrolled in the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP). You make a pre-tax contribution of 8.0% minus an 'administrative' fee (0.05%) and LSU as directed makes a 'matching' employer contribution that has generally ranged between 6% to 7% (currently it is 5.6852%) of your salary. Combine the two contributions (employee + LSU) and you have the total percentage 'transferred to carrier' which is just a fancy way of saying it is depositing into the retirement account with the ORP provider. The amount transferred to carrier varies each year (historically ranging between 14 to 15%). Regrettably, this year's total percentage being transferred to carrier is new historical low of 13.6352%. Even though the employee's share is set at 8% and is constant, the employer contribution varies year to year. And, this variation in the employer contribution has been trending downward. Why you ask? Simple, the current system mandates (hence the term, "unfunded mandate") that LSU pays for each employee a percentage share of the Unfunded Accrued Liability (UAL) costs associated with the retirement system's pension debt. LSU is required to pay this UAL cost even for employees enrolled in the ORP program. The unfairness of that point is that by definition, an ORP member has no corresponding UAL cost.

(continued on page 8)

Collaborating to Make Moodle Better

The Moodle Gradebook feature has proven challenging for many faculty members to master. While Information Technology Services (ITS) provides one-on-one assistance to faculty through its Faculty Technology Center, many faculty members want to be able to utilize the gradebook on their own. The Faculty Senate and Information Technology Services joined forces to enable faculty to do just that.

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee approached ITS in Fall 2011 with their desire to make the gradebook easier for faculty to use. These conversations led to the concept of a gradebook builder. ITS's Robert Russo produced a proof of concept and demonstrated an early version of the gradebook builder template in May 2012. While the release of Moodle 2 postponed progress on this new feature through the summer, additional collaborations took place in the early fall to ready the gradebook builder's release.

"I am thrilled that we are working alongside faculty to improve their experience," says Brian Nichols, interim chief information officer.

The new Gradebook Builder enables faculty to set up their gradebooks for each course via an easy-to-use template. Faculty may follow the step-by-step instructions for this new feature on GROK at <http://moodle2.grok.lsu.edu/Article.aspx?articleId=16677>.

MOODLE
COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

**JOIN
LSUNITED TODAY**

WHO WE ARE:

LSUUnited is the higher education organizing committee of the Louisiana State University faculty and is affiliated with the Louisiana Association of Educators (LAE), the largest and most influential association of professional educators in the state, with more than 20,000 members.

OUR GOALS:

The Louisiana higher education community is at a crossroads, and LSUUnited is organizing to become a powerful voice for educators at Louisiana State University. We strive for a shared vision and collaborative governance for all faculty members.

- **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

LSUUnited
A Vital LSU! A Vital Community!

Need more info? Contact us at
LSUNITED@LIVE.COM
OR VISIT **LAE.ORG**



ASK A G (continued)

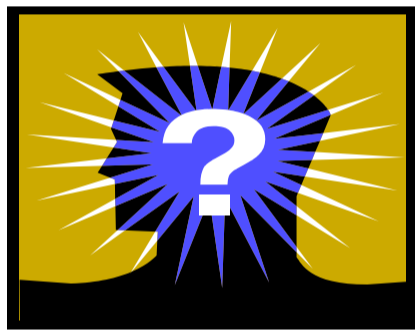
LSU has over 2,000 employees in the ORP program (which includes the majority of faculty) and is projected this year to pay a staggering \$27.6M in UAL costs for ORP enrolled members alone! LSU continues to pay large sums of money into TRSL that simply benefit employees of other educational entities.

While we are more than willing as a community to pay our share we face daunting financial challenges in part brought on by a pension system design that requires us to pay more than our share. As for TRSL charging an administrative fee, my opinion is that they should not be charging it. Again it is a way to pass on expense costs to a group that creates none.

As a standalone retirement program, the TRSL administered ORP program offers lower benefits than similar offerings at flagship universities in other states. When you look at the amount of money that LSU contributes to TRSL on behalf of ORP participants the sum exceeds or matches the most generous plans in higher education. The reality though is that only a modest portion of the money LSU pays on behalf of ORP participants sees its way to the accounts of those LSU employees. That's the hard truth and we all have an interest in seeing the current system adjusted and significantly altered. However, until that is achieved each of you must work to maximize the benefits of your present retirement plan. So, if you are like the faculty member who is posing the question with 10 to 15 working years left, I would highly advise you to contact your ORP financial advisor and schedule a one-on-one meeting to review your current account status and review options. If you have difficulty getting them to meet with you then please contact the benefits office in HRM and we will work to get them in contact with you.

For those of you in the TRSL defined benefit plan for higher education members, some of the mystery is removed in figuring out the benefit you will receive once you retire. The retirement benefit you will receive is the result of a formula based on these fundamental variables: years of service, retirement age, and final average compensation (FAC) calculation. Contacting TRSL directly to review your status is the surest way to go and compared to the task of the ORP member, is relatively less painful. Their webpage has proven effective in providing good information but once again if the service you receive from is not to your liking please call on HRM for our assistance.

That's the current reality we face regarding retirement benefits. The senior leadership has directed HRM to make pension evaluations and financial planning for retirement a focus of our service. Vice Chancellor Monday and others are firmly committed to achieving the creation of more viable options created for the faculty and staff of LSU when it comes to retirement. They clearly understand and see the necessity of getting away from the less competitive offerings we have today towards a retirement plan that truly allows us to recruit and retain the best and brightest.—A G



This Week at the Capitol Park Museum

Lunchtime Lagniappe

The New Louisiana State Flag

Wednesday, Oct. 31, 12 p.m.

Glen Duncan, co-designer of Louisiana's new state flag, discusses the history and meaning behind his design.

All programs begin at noon and are free and open to the public. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own lunch and may come and go as their schedules require. The Louisiana State Museum Friends will have refreshments available for a small donation.

Spanish Town Walking Tour

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

Learn about the Spanish Town neighborhood, its historic significance, and the colorful architecture

Tours begin at 9:15 a.m. at the Capitol Park Museum. Patrons are advised to dress comfortably. Walks may be cancelled for inclement weather. Tours generally last 60 to 90 minutes due to the number of guests and guest questions. All walks are free and open to the public and leave from the Museum lobby.



University College Seeks Nominations for Awards

GEORGE H. DEER DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARD

is presented to an instructor or assistant professor who regularly teaches courses in which University College students are enrolled. Nominations should be restricted to persons having taught University College students in three of the past four semesters including the semester in which the award is made.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION TEACHING ASSISTANT AWARD

is given in recognition of outstanding teaching ability and service to students. At the freshman level teaching assistants make up a significant portion of the instructional program. The nominations are limited to graduate teaching assistants.

CRITERIA FOR BOTH AWARDS:

Nominations should be made on the basis of excellence in teaching, genuine interest in students, outstanding relationships with colleagues, and demonstrated leadership in the promotion of improved instructional programs.

ADVISOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

is based on the national criteria of the National Academic Advising Association-NACADA. The award is designed to honor individuals who are making significant contributions to the improvement of academic advising and to disseminate information about these contributions to other professionals in the field. Only one nominee will be selected. The nominee selected from the campus will become LSU's Advisor of the Year and his/her name will be submitted as LSU's representative for national competition as National Advisor of the Year. Any individual serving as an academic advisor and employed by LSU may be nominated. The nominee need not be a NACADA member.

CRITERIA: Nominations will be evaluated on the evidence of effective advising qualities and practices that distinguish the nominee as an outstanding academic advisor.

NOMINATION PROCEDURE FOR ALL AWARDS LISTED ABOVE:

Nominations may be initiated by individual teaching assistants, faculty members, department chairs, staff members, and recognized organizations within the University. The nomination packet should include the nominee's resume, and letters of recommendation should include a letter from the applicant's department head. The supporting data must include criteria by which the nominee's competency and service to students are judged, and a statement from the nominee outlining his/her goals. An evaluation form, which should be used as a guide in preparing the nomination, is included in this packet. The Selection Committee uses this evaluation form in their deliberations.

Complete nomination packets can be found at www.uc.lsu.edu at Scholarships & Awards, or directly HERE.

Nominations for all awards should be submitted electronically no later January 4, 2013 to: Debra Blacher at dblache@lsu.edu.