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## Faculty Senate Newsletter, November 2013

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

# LSU FACULTY SENATE

Monthly Newsletter

November 5, 2013

## *President's Welcome*



Nearly fifty years ago, experts predicted that a chain of discount stores called "White Front" would eventually dominate American retailing in the way that other, currently struggling or now-defunct giants such as Sears, Montgomery Ward, May Company, and Macy's once achieved substantial, even monopolistic market shares. Maybe a blanched "White Front" could not really fade, but the meteoric coming and going of such dynasties reminds us that peak moments often immediately precede declines. With the advent of the wistful autumn season, campus conversation

inevitably turns to the sporty tail that seems to wag those universities that find themselves in economic dog days. With a kind of inverted confidence, even cynics assume that the intercollegiate sport gravy train will continue to roll forever. The story of economic dynasties, whether White Front or Apollo Group (owner of the University of Phoenix), suggests otherwise.

Despite all the hoopla that accompanies a Saturday in Tiger Stadium or in any other major college sports venue, the signs of erosion at the college-sports support base are already visible. For one, "college" or "intercollegiate" sports are no longer about cozy colleges, but, rather, about huge, powerful universities. Although it may seem a trivial point to anyone other than a grey-bearded historian, the loss of synchronization between an institution and its name or conception usually heralds its decline (consider how ever-struggling AT&T has tried to purge the semantics behind those "T"s). The college constituency at the base of the "intercollegiate" concept is no more, leaving the ladder without lower rungs. Similarly, the early conception of varsity athletics as a discourse of inclusion—as a venue where good kids could make it big or where even a modest fellow could score a touchdown—has been flipped to a discourse of exclusion. Intercollegiate sports today are open only to extravagantly overtrained and genetically lucky athletes. It is only a matter of time before that theme of exclusion seeps out and begins alienating paying fans. Then there is the "fan experience" problem: the hassle of parking, the time investment, and the easy availability of television coverage, all of which leaves stadia partially vacant, at least for "minor" games. Even the most legendary components of the Tiger game-day experience are fading. The legendary tailgates now feature largely catered or mediocre grocery-store food, the fans having lost their sense for an integrated cooking and playing experience. When institutions begin to decline, they move their outreach, step by step, down the ladder of social and economic class and caste. That is surely happening with big-time college sports, where even the pricey boxes are largely occupied not by the executives who rent them, but by rank-and-file employees who are being given a reward. The faubourg that surrounds the game would surely not qualify as a venue for the recruitment of students or professors.

These and many other dilutions of "college" sports indicate that the vector is pointing in a downscale direction. That may come as good news to those who think college sports to be out of control. If college sports are to survive, they will need to broaden their appeal. University leaders could begin by asking whether the sub-texts of a game—for example, the way in which the LSU Golden Girls are presented (or exploited)—fit with the mission of a great university. Experts could look at the declining quality of food service at Louisiana stadia, a phenomenon that sends a down-classing message. Careful administrators could make a contingency plan for the day, not too far off, when an aging former player, inspired by the recent NFL settlement, decides to sue over the consequences of past injuries. Activists could address the appalling lack of women in the highly-paid coaching positions, another phenomenon that, sooner or later, will generate a lawsuit. Most urgently, campus chiefs could do something about the astounding economic injustice by which not only big-time players, but also players for "rent-a-win" teams undergo heavy physical assaults despite receiving no compensation. These and many other remedies would not undo intercollegiate athletics but would, rather, ensure its survival by bringing it into harmony with contemporary social, economic, and moral norms.

American universities are unrivaled in the world for their unique—perhaps bizarre—success in creating multimillion-dollar co-curricular industries. The success of those industries has so dazzled their managers that the necessity for evolution has been overlooked. Those who enjoy sports and hope for them to continue as prominent parts of the educational process—as the means to the sound body in which the sound mind resides—hope that athletic departments around the nation can begin an updating process.

## LSU A&M LAUNCHES EXPERTS DATABASE

Efforts to keep track of the accomplishments of Louisiana faculty have come and gone over the years. Those seeking an expert, whether as a media commentator or for the advancement of a project, have frequently run up against the all-too-familiar brick wall. Now, LSU A&M is attempting to remedy this problem through the creation of the "LSU Researcher Database," a searchable array of information concerning the skills and ingenuities available from those aboard the flagship. Have a view of the [new offering](#).

## *Letter to the Editors*

Dear *Newsletter* Editors,

Thank you for writing the most informative, and also thankfully entertaining newsletter around! I can learn about the sartorial habits of my colleagues while also reading a great film review by Carl Freedman.

I was interested in reading your ranking of airports, having spent an inordinate amount of time in them over the past 20 years or so. The demise of free meals on the planes has resulted in some upgrades of the restaurants inside the airports themselves. There are three that I especially enjoy:

In the much-maligned Houston airport (IAH), [Le Grand Comptoir](#) (terminal C) is never crowded, serves a nice glass of wine, and reasonably priced and pleasant dishes. Even the fish is fresh and not overdone:

In the Atlanta airport, this is quite a [fancy restaurant](#), with a fancy bill at the end of the meal. You may think it is just a sushi bar when you go past, but the menu includes pork belly sliders ... so not for the vegans.

But my number one favorite is the [Encounter restaurant](#) at LAX – it is in what is called the "Theme" building, the space-age looking building in the center of the airport. I grew up in Westchester (literally at the airport – both houses I grew up in were taken by "eminent domain" to expand the airport) – and this restaurant used to be somewhat stuffy. It has been totally re-imagined as a 60s concoction – just go to this [website](#) and you will see what I mean.

Not to be missed!

Nancy Clark  
Dean, Honors College  
LSU A&M

# Higher Education Headliner

## Patrick H. Martin - Director of Finance and Administration Services

By Daniel Board and Emily Ward

In this issue of the Newsletter we are pleased to introduce Mr. Patrick Martin, a long-time supporter of our great university and Director of Finance and Administration Services (FAS). Born and raised in Baton Rouge, Mr. Martin has definitely earned his stripes. Growing up he lived with his parents in the much younger version of LSU's now affectionately named 'Old Nicholson Apartments,' and eventually attended the university across the street. Graduating with a focus in the political sciences and a background in classical civilization he moved to Washington D.C., but his tiger blood remained true and Patrick returned to begin and finish LSU Law: "I believe in purple and gold, just a little bit."

Post law school, Mr. Martin worked a few jobs ranging from prosecutor to working under Governor Mike Foster for four years, but an opportunity arose for work with LSU and he took it. This job, in System Services, served as a prelude to his current position where attention to detail is paramount, "I'm more kind of a free range problem solver – things that don't really fit in any other category, I really get involved with to help coordinate the activities of all other departments of FAS – HR, Facility Services, Procurement, Accounting, etc. – I kind of will take the lead in making sure nothing falls through the cracks, and it all comes together." If it's not directly related to the student or academics, FAS is probably involved in managing it, "...we're the support entity to all the student affair and academic folks to get their mission to the university done." This means in addition to maintaining the campus and policy administration on literature distribution, auxiliary services such as the Union, dining halls, and Copier Management Office also reside under FAS charge.

Although FAS handles many smaller scale operations for the campus, they also deal with a few larger ones, for example, the Nicholson Gateway Development Program. This aims to revitalize both the area where the old Alex Box Stadium resided and the very same Nicholson apartments Mr. Martin spent his early childhood in, "The University decided some time ago that we needed to put something else there...those apartments are long past the end of their useful life." Thus, consulting firms were sought to create a master plan and Patrick "coordinates a lot of the FAS reaction [to public planning] and I also work as a liaison between campus and the Board of Supervisors on the project." This involved many meetings where Mr. Martin helped mold the project into something that would benefit LSU the most, "...make sure we considered all the facets of what's important to this community." As of now, the master plan has been approved by the Board of Supervisors, and it aims to implement three relatively traditional residence halls in the area generally where the Nicholson apartments are now. In addition, between where those end and Skip Bertman Dr. a mixed-use development is in the works which will have retail stores on the first floor and apartment buildings available solely for students and faculty, "It's going to really be a neat project; it really is very exciting!"

While the master plan has been approved, there is still plenty of work to be done and Patrick will be returning to the Board in January or February to present the FAS recommendation about how to move forward and actually procure a developer who will be responsible for construction, planning, etc. Finding a master developer works really well for LSU because, "...they take over the financing, construction, specifics of the project and are responsible for actually moving and finding retail and tenants to move in there." This relieves unnecessary pressure from the University, "...we don't have the expertise to manage a shopping center – that's not what we do, that's not the business that we're in, and we definitely don't have the extra time." The details of how LSU will contract with the master developer are still being worked on but Mr. Martin knows he doesn't want the University taking any financial risk, "...we don't want to be in the position where there's a bad year and we're essentially subsidizing these commercial retail operations."

It is apparent projects and problems large and small fill the average day in Patrick's office. Coordinating the contributions of each department for a plan or preparing contracts so they are well-equipped to handle any contingency, Mr. Martin spends a lot of time editing papers, answering emails, and attending meetings. However, he stresses how important presentation of potential solutions can be, "Most of the projects I work on have to get approved by the Board of Supervisors –you're trying to find a way to package the work that a lot of people have done and present it in such a way that a board member who cares passionately about LSU but hasn't been greatly involved in all the details of the work can A – see that you've done a very thorough analysis and that you can conclude this project is in LSU's best interest and B – that member comes to share your opinion and gets as excited about it as we are." Despite the challenges, he seems happy where he works and cares deeply for improving the campus and quality of life. This was solidified when discussing the favorite part about his job, "Frankly just to be a part of the university, right here in the middle of campus and have that energy that comes from working with students and faculty on these things. I love LSU and to have the opportunity to work here and work on projects that are going to affect this campus and be here long after I'm gone is tremendously exciting."



Patrick H. Martin

"I love LSU and to have the opportunity to work here and work on projects that are going to affect this campus and be here long after I'm gone is tremendously exciting."

## TAT REPORT NO LONGER IN MISSING DOCUMENTS FILE

One skill in which Louisiana higher education management boards excel is that of the disappearing act. Not only do refractory administrators occasionally vanish, but documents now and then recede from view, even when they have been produced with great expense and fanfare. So it is with the report of the LSU Transition Advisory Team, which operated for a year or so during AY2012–2013, which included in its membership an array of industrial and political celebrities such as recovery expert General Russel Honoré, and which marshaled out an army of nearly 200 sub-committee members, consultants, faculty experts, students, and community leaders. Yet, despite the suggestion that the "TAT" would redeem LSU from its chronic doldrums, the report was received with a whimper rather than a bang. Submission of the report was quietly noted on the LSU Board of Supervisors agenda; a mumbled voice vote to accept it, along with an assortment of other, lesser reports was taken; high-ticket SSA Consultant Christel Slaughter, who organized the "transition" effort, was spotted at the back of the room but spoke not a word; and, like the awesome name of "John Lombardi," references to the report were never heard again. Now, thanks to a transparency effort by LSU System President King Alexander, the report has emerged on the [LSU System web site](#), although it is buried no less than three mouse clicks down in the [site tree](#). The report is also permanently posted on the ["text and report archive"](#) site of the LSU Faculty Senate web site. Although faculty governance officers have criticized the bizarre process by which the Transition Advisory Team report was assembled, the report itself has proved to be more honest and useful than anticipated. Especially laudable is the inclusion of nearly all of the material provided by the Academic Sub-Committee, where faculty governance participants played a greater role than in the other committees. The surprising honesty and excellence of the report may account for its puzzling de-emphasis. Highly-placed insiders report that top-level decision-makers were not at all happy about the representation of LSU's excruciatingly modest record with respect to fundraising and grants and contracts. Data on the loss of faculty also proved disconcerting to those who, in the words of the old show tune, would "put on a happy face." The Newsletter highly recommends reading the transition report so as to get not the full but a whole lot of the story from an unexpected source.



Transition Advisory Team  
Final Report to the LSU Board of Supervisors

TAT Final Report found.



# MONTHLY MOVIE REVIEW

**MUD**, By Carl Freedman (2013)

There currently seem to be quite a large number of unusually talented and interesting American filmmakers who are near the beginning of their careers and just starting to impress their names on the filmgoing public: more now, perhaps, than at any time in the past. I certainly can't claim familiarity with them all, but I strongly doubt there are many more noteworthy than Jeff Nichols, the 34-year-old writer-director from Little Rock, Arkansas. Like any artist of genuine achievement, Nichols has clearly learned from many predecessors. He has himself mentioned Mark Twain as an important influence, and reviewers have often compared him to the slightly older David Gordon Green, who is known for such films as *ALL THE REAL GIRLS* (2003) and *UNDERTOW* (2004), and with whom Nichols shares both a home town and an alma mater (the North Carolina School of the Arts). When I watch Nichols's movies, however, I find myself often thinking of two current directors much senior to him who are rarely discussed in the same breath: John Sayles and Werner Herzog. Like Sayles, Nichols has a strong feel for regional American culture and a deep sympathy for ordinary Americans struggling with economic and other circumstances that range from difficult to impossible—though, at least so far, he seems to lack Sayles's political sense that something could be done to improve the lot of people like his characters. Like Herzog, Nichols is fascinated by the most extreme challenges posed by both nature and society. With just three feature films to his credit, Nichols has already forged a style distinctively his own.

His first, *SHOTGUN STORIES* (2008), focuses on a feud between two white families in rural Arkansas—or, more precisely, between two branches of the same family. The most prominent characters are three brothers sired by an alcoholic father who deserted and repudiated his family after having demonstrated contemptuous indifference toward his progeny by naming them Son, Kid, and Boy. The father—who is never seen on screen or even named—later stopped drinking, professed a Christian conversion, remarried, and had another four sons with normal names and under somewhat more prosperous circumstances. After the father dies early in the film, his first three sons crash the funeral, where the eldest, Son (the excellent Michael Shannon, Nichols's favorite actor, who is perhaps most widely known for playing the weirdest character on HBO's *BOARDWALK EMPIRE*), delivers some perfectly calm but understandably bitter remarks. The other four sons are outraged by this disrespect to their dead father, and the feud ensues. Violence begets violence, though without ever spinning quite as completely out of control as the viewer probably expects. The violence is the occasion neither for mocking humor about "rednecks" (a term the film never uses) nor for cinematic "action" (despite the misleading title, very little violence is shown on screen). Violence is rather shown to be the default—but not inevitable—mode for those who lack the economic and educational resources often associated with more sophisticated forms of conflict resolution. Nichols presents his characters as deeply ignorant and deprived but by no means stupid (Son, especially, has quite considerable native intelligence) and not at all unworthy of the audience's sympathy.

Fine as *SHOTGUN STORIES* is, Nichols's second film, *TAKE SHELTER* (2011), is even better—and rather more Herzogian. It also differs from its predecessor in that, in *SHOTGUN STORIES*, Shannon is the single most important member of an ensemble cast, but here he utterly dominates the film—and gives one of the great performances of the decade. He plays Curtis, an intelligent, sympathetic construction worker in rural southern Ohio who lives in modest but sufficient circumstances with his very nice wife (expertly played by Jessica Chastain) and their sweet, hearing-impaired young daughter (Tova Stewart). Curtis begins to have terrifying dreams and to worry that harm will come to him and his family, whether by car crash, or by attacks by man or dog, or—most ominous and insistent of all—by the kind of terrible thunderstorms and tornadoes that are common in his part of the world. In response, he takes out a hefty home-equity loan and (without permission) "borrows" some heavy machinery from his work site in order to renovate the old storm shelter in his back yard. As Curtis himself suspects, he seems to be suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, the disease that long ago caused his mother to be institutionalized. Beyond his own psychological problems, however, looms the larger economic disorder of the Great Recession, in which even relatively secure working people may be just one mistake or one bit of bad luck away from financial disaster. Beyond even the anarchic economy looms the awesomely destructive power of nature itself; the film represents storm clouds with perhaps the most remarkable cinematography of its kind that I have ever seen. Nichols shows that it is not always easy to draw the lines that separate the psychic, the economic, and the meteorological; and such ambiguities are condensed in the final few shots of *TAKE SHELTER*, which can boast an ending of almost indescribable power and complexity.

*MUD*, though very good, is not quite so excellent a film as its predecessor, and seems to represent a decision on Nichols's part to move closer to the commercial mainstream. Here we have a more conventional narrative and two actors—Matthew McConaughey and Reese Witherspoon—of well-established Hollywood star power (Shannon appears but is relegated to a minor role). *MUD* is a Mississippi River coming-of-age film, and, more than either of Nichols's earlier pictures, makes clear his debt to Twain. If the river itself sometimes seems to owe as much to Herzog's Amazon in *AGUIRRE, THE WRATH OF GOD* (1972) as to Twain's Mississippi, it is completely clear that the two boys from whose viewpoint the film is constructed—Ellis (Tye Sheridan) and Neckbone (Jacob Lofland)—are lineal descendants of Huck Finn. Energetic and resourceful, Ellis and Neck are at home on (or by the banks of) the river, and feel comfortable in their intense male friendship; but they are also just beginning, in inevitably uncertain and awkward ways, to take an interest in girls. Their affection for and dependence on each other seems to derive, in part, from the fact that neither boy enjoys enough in the way of nurturing adult attention. Ellis's parents are about to separate. Though both mother and father sincerely love their son, they are pretty much absorbed in their own problems—not the least of which is that, when Ellis's mother moves into town as she plans to, a complex chain of legal circumstances will lead the state authorities to demolish the ramshackle houseboat where the family has been living. As for Neckbone, he never knew his parents, and lives with his amiable but somewhat reckless layabout of an uncle, Galen (Shannon, who dominates the screen during the very few minutes he appears).

(continued on page 4)

## LSU ORED RETREAT UPS THE ANTE

The chips were literally on the table (as a mid-morning snack) at LSU A&M Vice-Chancellor for Research and Economic Development K. T. Valsaraj's magnificent new annual "ORED" (Office of Research and Economic Development) retreat. Rusticated out to the Carter Plantation in strawberry-saturated Springfield, Louisiana—a plantation that, today, presents golf-course turf grass as its primary crop—the retreat provided participants with a full day of presentations from faculty, ORED officials, and assorted guest speakers. Among the worthwhile factoids that emerged: 60% of research is performed in academia; 75% of academic research is basic research; universities with medical schools receive ten times as much funding as do institutions lacking them; at LSU, the total number of proposals has fallen, in one year, from 1,396 to 1,182 (even despite Governor Jindal's faith that one can do less with more), largely owing to faculty attrition; average per capita funding for faculty members at LSU is \$238,000.00. Although disappointing news was also heard—those who question whether spending the day at a screen engaged in computer play is the highest good for humanity or is the proper goal of a university-educated person will wonder whether the idea of a new degree in digital game design is likely to lead to the improvement of society—and although the discussion of arts and humanities was limited to one optional session, fortifying the impression that Louisiana universities are polytechnics in disguise—there is no question that "K. T." is moving in the right direction and that his creation of a retreat in a "classy joint" is a step in the right direction.



Carter Plantation, Site of the ORED Retreat.

## LSU SUPES GET NEW IDENTITY

For years, the *Newsletter* has urged officialdom to take advantage of design expertise in Louisiana art and architecture schools. Although the source of the suggestion is unknown—highly placed but anonymous sources point to LSU Student Government President John Woodard—the LSU Supervisors have junked the clumsy old name plates that marred the half-moon-style desk in their meeting room and have replaced those tags, which gave the room the look of an auto parts store, with chic new blue plates graced with a modern font. Congratulations to the Supervisors for a move into the design future via a "blue plate special."

MOVIE REVIEW (continued)

It is therefore not surprising that the boys, especially Ellis, form a bond with Mud, a homeless man whom they come upon while exploring a tiny island in the middle of the Mississippi. Played by McConaughey in by far the best performance of his career, Mud is the film's most memorable creation. If Ellis and Neck recall Huck Finn, Mud somewhat corresponds to Huck's friend Jim—an adult in years who, because of his social circumstances, is excluded from the adult world. (None of the characters is high enough in the socio-economic hierarchy to seem much like the securely middle-class Tom Sawyer.) Mud thus deconstructs the binary opposition between adult and child, just as the boys, because of their position on the cusp of adolescence, deconstruct it in a different way; and the affinity among the three is, accordingly, not difficult to understand. Though obviously down on his luck, Mud also has a flair and a kind of negative charisma that makes him strangely attractive to the audience as well as to the boys.

It is not immediately obvious why Mud is living on an obscure island that boasts little to sustain human life. But it is easy enough to guess what we soon discover to be the truth: he is on the run from the law. Though there is nothing vicious about Mud (as Ellis senses from the start), he turns out to be wildly feckless and a bit of a pathological liar (as Neckbone senses from the start); and the twists and turns of the plot demonstrate that, despite his basically benign intentions, he can be a dangerous man to be around. The most interesting thing about him is probably his hopeless lifelong devotion to Juniper, the woman that he (falsely) describes as his girlfriend. Juniper is played by Witherspoon, here seeming not one bit like Elle Woods or June Carter Cash. Indeed, Nichols's film reminds us that Witherspoon has always been a talented actress, but that she has often been assigned roles that call less on her dramatic skills than on her capacity for almost incredibly perfect cuteness. Juniper is beautiful, as Mud insists, but not at all cute. She is fond of Mud rather as one might be fond of an affectionate, ungainly dog, but she certainly does not love him as the man with whom she wants to spend her life—though she has a habit of making even worse mistakes when it comes to choosing men.

I have not yet mentioned Sam Shepard, an old pro of an actor (and writer) who here plays an old pro of a—well, it's actually not clear exactly what Shepard's character, Tom Blankenship, is (though the name is taken from Twain's real-life model for Huck Finn). Suffice it to say that Tom is an apparently marginal character whom the film gradually reveals to be of greater and greater consequence. He plays a crucial role in the most thrilling moments of the ending, and there is something in Shepard's style that makes us feel we should have realized his importance from the beginning.

The American demographic on which Nichols focuses—obscure provincial white people whose socio-economic situation ranges from modest to desperately impoverished—is one in which Hollywood has little interest. On the comparatively rare occasions when such people do appear on the silver screen, it is usually to be ridiculed as stupid hicks, or sentimentalized as the salt of the earth, or demonized as violent bigots. Nichols avoids all these traps. His project is rather to understand his characters as struggling human beings, not without serious flaws, who are often sincerely trying to do the best they can under very difficult circumstances. In thus presenting them, Nichols, like any genuine artist, is writing part of the history of our times.

THREE-PRESIDENT SUMMIT DRAWS CROWD, PLAUDITS

Participants in the "Alexandria Summit" for faculty committed to higher education leadership enjoyed their most successful meeting to date at the very lee-side end of September. A crowd of nearly fifty colleagues from every higher-education system—LCTCS, LSU, University of Louisiana, Southern—gathered to parlay with a three-president panel composed of popular University of Louisiana System President Sandra Woodley, Southern University President Ronald Mason, and LCTCS President Joe May. For nearly two hours, colleagues and presidents bantered on almost every conceivable topic, from the use of faculty expertise in the management of institutions to salary improvement and on to the role of athletics and of adjunct faculty. Woodley, May, and Mason won kudos for their willingness to address issues honestly and openly in the relaxed environment offered by the Alexandria campus. After feasting on breakfasts and lunches organized by local arrangements manager Elisabeth Elder, participants also heard presentations on the Higher Education Revenue District by Barry Humphus; on the role of archives and specialty collections (and support units) in higher education by LSUS archives chief Laura McLemore; and a discussion of the decline of physics programs in HBCUs by Grambling State physicist Matthew Ware. The PowerPoint elements from both Humphus's and Ware's presentations are available on the "multimedia archive" page of the LSU Faculty Senate web site.

The next Alexandria Summit is schedule for December 14th on the campus of Louisiana State University in Alexandria. As always, the meeting will begin at 10:00. Featured guests will be no less than Commissioner of Higher Education Jim Purcell and LSU System President F. King Alexander. Reserve that date on your calendar, for everyone involved in the "three presidents" summit recognized that the Alexandria Summits are becoming the premier avenue for statewide faculty collaboration and statewide faculty input into higher educa-tion management and policy.



In order from left to right:  
Presidents Joe May, Ronald Mason, and  
Sandra Woodley

AP EXPERT ADVISES TRANSFER COUNCIL

Efforts to smooth the admission, articulation, and transfer processes have long been complicated by a bewildering profusion of customs concerning and attitudes about the Advanced Placement examinations administered by the [College Board](#), an organization that has lately become embroiled in controversies over the value of its examinations in comparison to the ACT. AP examinations allow incoming students to "place out" of assorted general education and entry-level courses, acquiring credit for academic time already served. In Louisiana, some schools confer credit for scores of three on a five-point scale while others require scores of four or five or even refuse to confer credit for any score at all. Members of the Statewide Articulation and Transfer Council confessed themselves unable to interpret College Board guidance, which simultaneously explains that AP scores are only indicators and should only confer credit and yet also assign letter grade equivalents to test scores. Across a statewide university system, students who earn credit at one institution may not be able to receive that same credit from their "target" transfer institution or use that credit for entry into selective senior colleges. To disperse the confusion, the College Board delegated Pamela Kerouac to visit with the aforementioned Council. Results were at best preliminary, with follow-up meetings to interpret the College Board interpretations being slated.

TRANSFER DEGREE NUMBERS MODEST BUT SOARING

The Board of Regents has released new numbers regarding the Louisiana [Transfer Degree](#), a program mandated by Act 209 of the 2009 Louisiana Legislature



Louisiana  
Transfer  
Degree

that allows students to transfer a sixty-hour block of credit into any Louisiana institution and also to qualify for admission to any college or university. The first year or two of the program were not characterized by abundance, with only two students completing the prescribed curriculum. As of late 2012, however, 204 students had completed the "LTD" program and 54 had enrolled in four-year institutions, no less than a 10,000% increase in program completers. Although the "LTD" remains obscure to most faculty members, it has great potential to stock classrooms with students, especially in liberal arts disciplines that may have trouble attracting new clientele.

DEFERRED MAINTENANCE CUT \$76M

Those who were hoping for an abatement in the "District 9" look of many campuses will need to continue their vigil. According to [The Advocate](#), Governor Bobby Jindal has snipped \$76,000,000.00 from the budget for deferred maintenance on Louisiana campuses: \$19,000,000.00 from each of the four systems. Estimates of extant campus-level deferred maintenance requests range from \$57,000,000.00 at Delgado Community College to a whopping \$277,000,000.00 across the Southern University System.



RETIREMENT SLASH MOBILIZES FACULTY, ADMINISTRATORS

T. S. Eliot opined that April is the cruelest month on the ground that it was habitually “breeding lilacs out of the dead land,” but participants in the retirement plans for Louisiana educators may regard October, on the opposite side of the calendar, as the most penurious time insofar as it indeed “gets blood out of a turnip.” That turnip is, of course, faculty retirement accounts, the employer contribution to which has been repeatedly cut over the last several years in order to pay the “UAL” (unfunded accrued liability), a multi-billion dollar encumbrance resulting from underfunding of pension plans. In early October, the Teachers Retirement System of Louisiana (“TRSL”) quietly released its annual [auditors report](#). Produced by outsourced auditors under contract to the state, the audit report is used to set the “normal cost” for the upcoming year. The latest auditor’s report recommends a whopping 29% reduction in the “normal cost,” from 5.15% to 3.66%, on top of the 10% cut from the previous year, which has been de facto annualized. At the same time, the employer “share” of the UAL is also rising to 22.7%. Thus, of the 26.3% that employers pay, only 3.66%, or 13.9% of the total—yes, that is “one-seventh”—will reach employees. Even with the addition of employees’ contributions, the higher education plan, which is already the worst in the nation, will sink to deeper into the abyss as well as fall far below plan levels for K–12 teachers, workers, and cafeteria servers. “Normal cost” contributions are in pre-tax dollars, whereas the raises recently given to select employees yield post-tax income; as a result, the 1½% reduction will all but erase even those few raises that were given to faculty. Fortunately, both the Board of Regents and some members of the management boards and System-level administrations recognize the severity, injustice, and adverse recruiting effects of this latest bit of skimming. Faculty governance officers have met with several influential parties in an attempt to find a solution, announcements concerning which will appear in upcoming Newsletter issues. That solution may involve faculty mobilization. Stand by.

COLUMNIST KIRYLO: EDDIE ROBINSON SMILES ON GRAMBLING FOOTBALL FLAP

One of the happiest trends in higher education leadership has been the emergence of the youthful and energetic James Kirylo as Faculty Senate President at Southeastern Louisiana University. Pioneering Kirylo has already upgraded the SELU Faculty Senate by adding guest speakers to his agendas and by taking on challenging issues such as state travel regulations. Most recently, Kirylo has joined fellow SELU faculty activist and blogger [Dayne Sherman](#) on column-writing circuit. Enrolling in a nation of football fans who looked on in astonishment when chagrined [Grambling State Football players boycotted their game against Jackson State](#), Kirylo capitalized on this unprecedented event by penning a column on the overall decay of support for Louisiana higher education. Applauding the activism of young athletes who refused to shower in moldy locker rooms, risk staphylococcus infections from shabby uniforms, and submit to long hours cramped up in state-approved transportation, columnist Kirylo draws an analogy between the crumbling of Grambling football and the deterioration of Louisiana’s higher-education infrastructure. Kirylo’s [column](#) for the online news service of Channel 17 in Hammond, Louisiana has already drawn a five-star review from fans.



James Kirylo

SHREVEPORT’S SALVATORE BLOGS, BURNS BLUE STREAK THROUGH GREEN ISSUES

One of the most frequent topics in the Newsletter is the inventiveness of LSU’s chemist Brian Salvatore, who has wowed otherwise placid academics with his solar installations, his zippy Tesla all-electric auto, and his leadership of programs promoting science education during childhood. Salvatore continues his blue streak of productivity with a series of editorials and blogs as well as further innovations with regard to green energy. In *The Monroe News Star*, Brian recently published a hard-hitting [editorial](#) in which he mentions the dreaded “t-word,” calling for an honest look at Louisiana’s taxation system and holding up as examples states in which investment in public resources has energized economic recoveries. Well aware that the problems of Louisiana higher education begin with the inadequate support of public schools and with the hostility toward education that emerges from a debilitated education system, Brian enhanced the “[Better Shreveport](#)” blog area with an open letter to the “Deputy Superintendent of Transformation for the Recovery School District in Caddo Parish,” an enthusiast for charter schools and a disciple of Education Superintendent John White. In his letter, Brian scourges the tendency to stigmatize students and teachers for the shortcomings of desperately underfunded schools.

A man of energy, Brian Salvatore intersperses his deeds in the arena of responsible citizenship with continued work on his renowned solar installation. Since our last story on Brian, he and his wife has purchased a “19-SEER heat pump” that has all but eliminated their use of natural gas. Brian’s old water heater is headed for the junk heap as he connects a tankless electric water heater to his solar array, an array that he expects to expand, come spring, to double its present size. Kudos to Brian who, owing to his savoir-faire, shows that it is indeed easy being green.



Brian Salvatore

A G ANSWER-MAN GOES HISTORICAL

Ingenious, erudite, and informative columnist A G Monaco, a regular *Newsletter* columnist and HRM expert, has expanded his practice of employment and benefit management into the scholarly domain. Prompted by a controversy in which the status of the Louisiana loyalty oath came into question, A G took his services into the historical realm, researching the long story of loyalty oaths all the way back to the Enlightenment and then all the way up to the present time. In his essay, “Loyalty Oaths: A Reminder from the Enlightenment,” A G shows his signature flexibility and his trademark immensity by covering a huge swath of intellectual terrain, canvassing his subject from the time of Benedict Arnold to the era of Spiro Agnew and Rob Blagojevich. Monaco’s astounding essay appears in volume 20 of *1650–1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era*.



Benedict Arnold, Signatory of a Loyalty Oath

LSUNITED RELEASES TRANSITION DOCUMENT

As reported in previous issues of the *Newsletter*, LSUnited, the emerging faculty bargaining unit at the LSU A&M campus, has concluded its affiliation with the Louisiana Association of Educators but has kept open the option of re-affiliating with that union after completing its membership drive. The new LSUnited has now issued a “Transition Document” that redefines the purpose and goals of this worthy organization. Included in the new mission statement are a statement of purpose that commits the group to informing faculty “about issues affecting terms of employments (salaries, benefits, contracts)” and to bringing those concerns to the attention of the “upper administration, the Louisiana state Legislature, and the general public.” Managing LSUnited during the current transition year will be [Treasurer Michael Russo](#) and [Secretary Anna Nardo](#). In order to accelerate membership growth, dues have been dramatically reduced to \$10.00 per annum (please see the LSUnited advertisement elsewhere in this issue)



## REGENTS TO LCTCS: KEEP THE ROOF ON

In the higher education annual capital outlay budget, the ratio of building, repair, and maintenance costs to available funds is roughly fifteen to one. Thus, on the average, a building or repair project will reach completion roughly fifteen years after submission, with some large projects, such as the recently redone Music and Dramatic Arts building at LSU A&M, running into multiple decades. Much can happen in the course of fifteen years, with the result that capital outlay priorities frequently change, indeed change with a frequency inversely related to the average repair cycle time. So it is that the Board of Regents recently authorized the Louisiana Community and Technical College System to keep the roof on even despite the upcoming ejection of System President Joe May, who is headed for the greener corrals of Dallas. Slated for new roofs are the Tech Campus of South Louisiana Community College and the Lamar Salter and Oakdale Campuses of Central Louisiana Technical Community. Also among the accelerated urgent repairs is a new electrical distribution system for the student union at Northwestern State University.

Friedman Student Union,  
Northwestern State University



## SELU-LSU SENATE EXCHANGE—AND VIDEO!

Creation of an “I–10/12 Faculty Governance Alliance” took another step forward owing to the visionary efforts of Southern Louisiana University Faculty Senate President James Kirylo, who invited LSU A&M Faculty Senate President Kevin L. Cope to speak at the October meeting of the SELU Faculty Senate. Cope discussed a set of fundamental issues that confront Louisiana faculty governance, described initiatives presently underway, and answered questions about topics ranging from travel policy to retirement plans. Specific deliverables were ordered, including a new two-campus committee aiming to deal, as a coalition, with the problems posed by statewide travel policy. Thanks to President Kirylo’s media outreach, the visit included an extended interview of Kevin Cope by Hammond Channel 17 investigative reporter Kenny Benitez, an [interview](#) that may be viewed online.

## LSU AUXILIARIES MOUNT NEW COMMITTEES, FARMERS MARKET

New LSU A&M Director of Auxiliary Services Margot Carroll has not only heard but has also implemented “the message.” That message: Both the overall productivity of a campus and the profitability of auxiliary services (dining, events, catering, student union management, vending machines) rise when high-value co- and extra-curricular offerings attract the full range of customers, whether students or community supporters. Carroll has responded brilliantly to Faculty Senate influence by creating two new committees and by organizing a catering “open house.” One committee, comprised of faculty, staff, and students, will address the character of and the challenges facing the gigantic Barnes and Noble Book Store on the LSU A&M campus; another committee will deal with matters relating to dining, catering, and food service. Improvements in food service have already begun with the aforementioned “catering open house,” which exposed event organizers to the new and rich menu that has replaced the previous jumble of selections in LSU dining and catering services. Even more remarkably, the energetic and victual-aware Carroll has instituted a “farmer’s market” that opens every Thursday from 11:00 am until 1:00 pm on the plaza in front of the Barnes and Noble location in Union Square on the LSU campus. Although the definition of “local” is stretched a bit—reportedly, food may come from anywhere within 200 miles—the fundamental idea is not only good, but great and tasty. Applause is due for this magnificent first step toward the culinary renovation of Louisiana’s campuses.

## GOVERNOR’S OFFICE NOT THE ONLY PROBLEMATIC FOURTH FLOOR

Among persons of a political bent, “the fourth floor” alludes to the problematic assembly that constitutes the Governor’s office and staff. This term is never used when something goes well; “the fourth floor” locution is invoked only when blaming the regime for some or other mistake or foul deed. Fortunately for the reputation of the state capitol, the aforementioned “fourth floor” is not the only fourth-level structure raising eyebrows these days. Wings 4G, 4J, and 4H of the hospital at LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport has been approved for renovation in the spring of 2011 with an initial budget of \$1,965,000.00. Then, in August 2012, bids that were no where near the architect’s estimate forced an increase in the budget to \$2,757,000.00. Now, in October of 2013, the Board of Supervisors approved another \$792,000.00 to cover the difference between the architect’s estimate and the actual minimum price and also conferred authority on LSU President F. King Alexander to approve up to another 20% in cost overruns. Fortunately, self-generated funds covered the mammoth cost overrun, but the episode points up the need to reform the system for the selection of architects, which, as one might suppose, is run not by grassroots level agencies and units, but by the aforementioned naughty version of “the fourth floor,” where the “do more with less” slogan seems to have lost its audience in the wake of a 40% underestimate by a state-selected architect. It should be noted that LSU Property and Facilities Committee Chair Rolfe McColister delivered blistering questions about this mishap but could not manage to turn the money tide.

## FRANK DISCUSSIONS IMPROVE GEAUXSHOP

Probably the biggest and best current experiment in beleaguered Louisiana higher education is the introduction of independent procurement procedures at LSU A&M, per provisions of the LAGRAD Act, which grants assorted autonomies to institutions that reach graduation rate goals. As the *Newsletter* reported in its October 4th, 2013 issue, the “GeauxShop” procurement project encountered some predictable turbulence during its takeoff. Unfazed, LSU A&M procurement chief Marie Frank hit on the idea of a “Procurement Town Hall” in which regular procurement system users could interact with both those who manage the system and also with major vendors. The first in a series, the opening Procurement Town Hall drew an enormous crowd, elicited rave reviews, and dramatically increased satisfaction with the GeauxShop initiative. Vendors enjoyed the chance to come out from behind the screen and to receive input from purchasers, more than a few of whom had been stymied by clumsy user interfaces but who now happily anticipate improvements. Congratulations to Marie Frank and her team for a laudable outreach effort.



Marie Frank at Procurement  
Town Hall

## SOUTHERN: MASON MAKES CONCRETE OFFER

Despite having been thrown off-balance by the strange story of a dismissed professor who continued to teach classes, Southern University System President Ronald Mason returned to a stable footing by delivering a \$1,000.00 supplemental pay increment to Southern employees. Although not a permanent pay increase, the surprise dollop applied a needed lenitive to economically aching faculty and staff at the riverside campus and at its affiliated institutions. Although far smaller than the alleged 4% raise in the LSU System, Mason’s supplemental payment has the great virtue of being truthful. Unlike the LSU raise, which fell short of 4% for the majority of faculty members, which allowed Deans to finance equity raises at the expense of elderly professors, and which has yet to be delivered on several campuses, the Southern bonus was what it was advertised to be. Mason’s good example offers a lesson for System and campus chiefs: those who seek good press should deliver what they promise.



## Lifestyle Feature

### LIFESTYLE FEATURE: TRAVEL BOOKING SITES

Last month, the Newsletter responded to the onrush of the holiday and conference travel seasons by reviewing and offering recommendations concerning the major hub airports in the United States. This month, in the second segment of a “travel” sequence, our lifestyle editors peruse the means of entering the air transport system, to wit, the leading online travel web sites, colloquially known as “e-bookers.” Although many if not all of these sites belong to large corporations, the inevitable differentiation that results from the pursuit of diverging market shares has led to more variety than might be expected. Of course, many university travelers will need to book their tickets for professional events through Short’s Travel Service. Fortunately, as was also reported in the last *Newsletter* issue, the advent of the “BookIt” utility allows savvy shoppers to roam over the full range of travel ticket providers and then transmit selected itineraries and offers to Short’s.

Before ambling across the electronic field of travel value vendors, let us address the first question: Why bother even to look at assorted sites when meta-search engine Kayak.com allows immediate access to and analysis of seemingly thousands of fare options? Kayak, alas, is no longer fully independent, having been recently acquired by Priceline. Although it continues to provide massive onslaughts of data, subtle changes have already occurred. For one, Kayak increasingly sends pop-up windows containing distracting offers from Priceline (enhanced by the pugilistic image of the “Negotiator” figure played by former Star Trek actor William Shatner). For two, Kayak is surprisingly deficient when it comes to the formulation of complex itineraries that require three or more legs and that cross airline alliances. Requesting an itinerary from Calcutta, India to Shreveport, Louisiana, for example, produces an ignoramus verdict: you can’t get there from here! Although Kayak offers appealing search limiters that use virtual rheostats to define departure times, it displays its multitudinous responses in screens limited to a few dozen items, with the result that only the hardy take advantage of its massive database, the proper exploitation of which requires paging through hundreds of screens.

At the lower end of online air ticket providers are those sites that aim at the huge market of discretionary travelers. Included among these down-market vendors are Orbitz.com, Cheaptickets.com, and the aforementioned Priceline. Orbitz and Cheaptickets are two manifestations of the same company. Their online presentation is identical except for the logo items; their database is identical; and their results are identical. Everything about Orbitz and Cheaptickets screams “three-star vacations for two-star customer with five-star ambitions,” whether that message is communicated through brilliant, indeed neon renderings of beach scenes or references to exotic places that one might go were it not that a Disney cruise might be easier to understand. Orbitz and Cheaptickets present their discoveries in large, page-filling boxes that inhibit extensive review of the data and that move traffic to the first few options, which tend to be the most profitable for the vendor (remember, many e-bookers buy tickets in quantity and then resell them). Priceline follows a similar strategy but gives users the choice to click buttons summoning up the offers of their favorite carriers, perhaps as a compensation for the tendency in the results pane for airlines and their offers to bunch together. In a Priceline search, the first page typically reveals no more than one or two airlines or changes up the display with an unreasonable connection such as a discount fare from San Francisco to Dallas via Istanbul aboard Turkish Airlines. These lower-end sites are recommended only for those with a lot of time to sift through distracting displays.

A far better choice for business travelers is Travelocity. Although the independence of this vendor is questionable—its relation with American Airlines and with Sabre, the American airlines database, seems to change every few months—Travelocity presents its results as a long list in manageably small type. True, such small displays may trouble those with eyesight deficiencies, yet the compactness and the multiplicity of the Travelocity site, along with its clean design, allow for quick decisions and for accurate planning of travel times. Travelocity’s inclination to palce everything on the left side of the screen, in one of the narrowest displays in the business, is confusion, yet its search results tend to scare up cheaper fares than the so-called “cheap” sites.

Travelocity’s number-one competitor has always been Expedia.com. Expedia has succeeded to a far great extent than any of its competitors in the game of travel brokerage and resale. It purchases gigantic quantities of tickets directly from the airlines and then resells them on a dynamic pricing scheme, making money from last-minute reservations yet still beating the airline prices for those late-breaking arrangements. The resale procedure dovetails nicely with Expedia’s package vacation offers; air travel to vacation destinations can be offered at a below-market rate while Expedia also earns profits from the sale of vacation bundles. For the business traveler, therefore, Expedia.com is a market-timing game. Hit it at exactly the right moment and you can save a lot of money if Expedia is dumping unused fares, rooms, or even vacation slots. On the other hand, Expedia’s Lego-land style display, which begins with outbound flights in very large boxes and then moves on to return flights that are also displayed in large boxes, is clumsy and frustrating. Expedia is thus a second-opinion site, a place to have a look to see if, by good luck, a traveler can hit on a bargain.

Continued on Page 9

### DEFERRED MAINTENANCE CUT \$76M

Those who were hoping for an abatement in the “District 9” look of many campuses will need to continue their vigil. According to *The Advocate*, Governor Bobby Jindal has snipped \$76,000,000.00 from the budget for deferred maintenance on Louisiana campuses: \$19,000,000.00 from each of the four systems. Estimates of extant campus-level deferred maintenance requests range from \$57,000,000.00 at Delgado Community College to a whopping \$277,000,000.00 across the Southern University System.

### PURCELL TOPS OFF TUITION-REFORM TANK

Knowing well the dangers that attend criticism of the proverbial golden calf, low-key but courageous Commission of Higher Education Jim Purcell has quietly unveiled the new Board of Regents Tuition Task Force, which held its first meeting on October 10th. In a

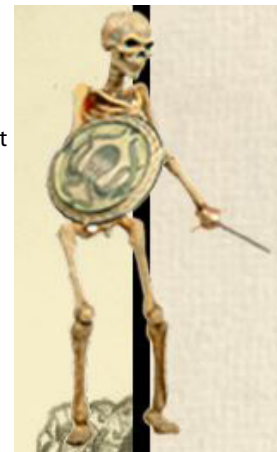


Commissioner of Higher Education, Jim Purcell

bold step for the in-grouped and invisibility-loving Regents, who received additional motivation from House Resolution 206, task force membership was extended to faculty as well as to the usual array of students, management board members, and “business and industry leaders,” as the Regents’ press release puts it. Subtle Purcell ensured that the opening meeting included a discussion of the role that business ought to play in the support of higher education and also a preliminary adventure into the question of TOPS, which the loquacious John Lombardi once characterized as a “middle-class entitlement.” The *Newsletter* applauds Commission Purcell for his inclusion of faculty from a variety of higher education systems in this panel and for his wise, often daring selection of discussion topics.

### MODERN ARGONAUT CLEARS DALRYMPLE OF FOOTBALL

Film enthusiasts have long applauded animator Ray Harryhausen’s rendering of the Argonauts battle with a legion of skeletons. Now LSU A&M professor Jon Cogburn has brought that battle to life with a stunning clearance of football framework from Dalrymple Drive. Cogburn had noticed that an array of barricades remained in place along the aforementioned and otherwise picturesque roadway both long before and long after football games. According to Cogburn, the traffic control paraphernalia posed a hazard to bicyclists, pedestrians, and joggers. Cogburn alerted LSU’s Faculty Senate Executive Committee, who then contacted LSU Provost Stuart Bell, who, in turn, asked LSU Police Chief Laurence Rabalais to part the rusty if not red sea and to allow the people of learning to pass unhindered. Rabalais then worked wonders with the Baton Rouge Department of Public works, which eliminated these misplaced icon of sports excess. Congratulations to all on the preservation of the pedestrian pleasures of Louisiana’s largest campus.



Skeleton legion falls before Cogburn





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

*Woody, a colleague in Natchitoches, writes: Dear A G,*

*Dear A G,*

*— I'm something of a "benefits junky" and have busied myself reading through the offerings of the various HRM units at colleges around the state. I notice that many benefits—for example, life insurance or disability insurance—seem to be pooled purchasing arrangements rather than true benefits, i.e., they are made available at a presumably reduced, volume-purchase price to large numbers of employees but are not subsidized by the universities. I've also noticed that the entry threshold into these plans is very low. A benefit recipient might live on a diet of muffalettas and beer or smoke six packs a day yet pay the same rate as someone who lives on quinoa and spirulina. So, my question: do you regard these optional benefits as good values for money, or do you think it wiser for a person to buy his or her own insurance from a more restrictive plan? In short, where are the best prices?*

Woody,

Back in the old days, when the term benefits primarily revolved around employer supported offerings to employees, we used to call employee financed or voluntary insurance plans "courtesies" rather than benefits.

I still use that old-fashioned term because it is more descriptive of the offerings than is lumping them in with employer supported benefits. Courtesies are, in fact, "pooled purchasing agreements" or discounted offerings attained on behalf of the employee by the employer. The expectation is that the reduction in marketing and administrative costs created for the insurance company will, in part, be passed on to the employee. Additionally, the ease of enrollment would make acquiring coverage easier for the employee.

In regard to your question as to whether they are a "good deal": that is, in part, answered by your question. Those of you who live a healthy but deprived lifestyle tend to pay less, in the open market, for insurance coverage than do those of us who think life is made better by fried foods, bourbon, and the occasional inhalation of a carcinogenic substance. So if you are older and possess some habits or a body shape that is viewed by insurance companies as creating a higher risk, you will usually save some money by purchasing group term life insurance through your employer. Importantly, a group purchase can at times provide you with coverage that you might not be able to attain at all in the open market. If you are 26, and rest comfortably in the physical conditions most appreciated by actuaries, you probably can do as well or better on your own. Still, as you grow older, the prices in the open market versus group plans may not prove to be a bargain and again the ability to purchase as a group may show a price advantage.

Convenience is also a factor. The ability to have premiums deducted from your paycheck allows for a stronger guarantee that insurance coverage will not be interrupted through a forgotten or lost payment. With many companies now offering direct payment via credit cards or deductions from bank accounts, this might not be as big a convenience as it was 10 years ago.

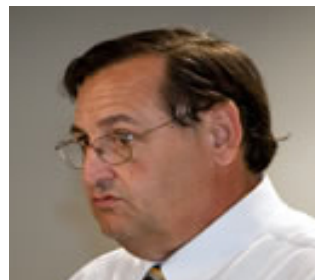
Then there is the matter of taxes. Plans like an employee paid vision plan or long-term disability insurance can be paid with pre-tax dollars, thus lowering your tax liabilities and allowing for a portion of your payments to be underwritten through income tax avoidance. These courtesies, though not paid for by the employer, provide an opportunity for capturing a bargain by the participating employee when he or she purchases them through their workplace.

Another courtesy offered by some employers is the opportunity to take part in medical or dependent care Flexible Spending Accounts. A flexible spending account (FSA), is a tax-advantaged financial account that can be set up through your employer. An FSA allows an employee to set aside a portion of earnings to pay for qualified expenses—most commonly for medical expenses but often for dependent care or other expenses. Money deducted from an employee's pay into an FSA is not subject to payroll taxes, resulting in substantial payroll tax savings.

A big drawback with FSAs: you must use all the money you have set aside each year, or the contributions are forfeited. These "use it or lose it" rules were recently relaxed by the IRS. The IRS now will allow FSAs to pay out claims up to two and a half months after the end of the plan's benefit year. Though plan administrators are not required to do so, LSU does offer that additional courtesy.

We live in a busy world with pressures that often take up so much of our free time. The offerings by your employer of options for additional group life insurance, vision coverage, disability insurance etc. provides the employee with the ability to reduce opportunity costs associated with attaining coverage by saving some of that free time and helps alleviate some frustrations through assistance with administration. Though not paying the premiums for certain courtesies, the University still provides a tangible level of support by employing a staff of benefit advisors who can help you with preparing claims or dealing with issues related to those plans.

Questions related to benefits or courtesies offered at LSU should be directed to our benefit staff in HRM.



A G Monaco



### Historic Highland Cemetery

Join us for a talk with Kenny Kleinpeter, the appointed sexton for Highland Cemetery.

Kleinpeter has spent more than 15 years researching and preserving the history of Highland Cemetery and is a ninth-generation member of the Kleinpeter family, one of the founding families of Baton Rouge. Retired from Kleinpeter Dairy, Kenny has dedicated his life to restoring and preserving this area's oldest cemeteries.

Thursday Nov. 21

The Capitol Park Museum, 660 N. Fourth St., is wheelchair accessible.

6 p.m. Refreshments provided by the Mid-City Historical Cemeteries Coalition

6:30 p.m. Presentation

### More Information



A Vital LSU! A Vital Community!

### WHO WE ARE:

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

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CONTACT: Mike Russo  
[6923louis@gmail.com](mailto:6923louis@gmail.com)

### ENDOWED CHAIRS LACK CUSHIONING

Thanks to reader Ravi Rau, a physicist at LSU A&M, for drawing *Newsletter* attention to the current inventory of unfilled endowed chairs in Louisiana universities. Rau informs us that \$113,100,000.00 remains unspent owing to an assortment of causes, whether lack of matching funds or the strange notion that existing professors do not qualify for these positions. A question arises: If the state cannot find enough funds to match a sum that is equal only to one-quarter of the annual budget of one campus (LSU A&M), how can we expect to operate all of Louisiana's campuses through philanthropy or, for that matter, through self-generated revenues or "F&A" (facilities and administration assessments on grants and contracts)?

## Lifestyle (Continued)

The best travel buys, especially for obsessively organized academic personnel, can be found in the little-known or experimental site, of which three rise above the pack. Those who are hard-core data types might try the [ITA software matrix](#), which goes straight to the travel agents' joint database and provides cavalcades of flight and price data in small type and list form. ITA does not sell tickets directly, but it transmits itinerary information to other agents, who then usually defer to its edicts and issue tickets at the stated prices. ITA is an utterly no-nonsense site, but it is refreshingly and gingerly honest and robustly complete. It can deal with almost any itinerary and will tell it like it is, revealing the airfares that are really "out there." Those seeking less austerity might try Cheapoair.com, which seems to combine the reselling strategy of Expedia with a hard-core database approach similar to ITA's, all with a dash of vacation flavor or at least well-selected file photos of sunny spots. Cheapoair is true to its name in that a review of several test itineraries yielded consistently less expensive offers on this upcoming site. Perhaps the most amusing of these experimental sites is startup Hipmunk.com, where a smiling chipmunk with waving arms amuses ticket purchasers while searches are executed. Hipmunk.com excels in the display of data. It uses an inventive, colored bar-graph array to line up itineraries alongside one another for easy comparison of both the cost and the experiential dimensions of any proposed trip. Hipmunk sometimes misses low prices but excels in the creation of complex itineraries with short layover times.

Have fun planning recess and holiday as well as professional travel—and, remember, the Hipmunk is certified rabies-free!

## TIP OF THE MONTH: SOY VAY TERIYAKI SAUCE

Those who spend a little too much time watching the Food Network or the Cooking Channel or even Create TV know that the fusion of kosher cookery with other and often unlikely cuisines is very much à la mode. A food truck in San Francisco, for example, is offering "Jewnese" cuisine, which combines kosher with Chinese elements. "Mexikosher" has also been seen in southern food Mecca Austin, Texas. Now a touch of this trend is available for home cookery in the cleverly named "Soy Vay" marinade, which, of course, puns on the "Oy Vay" exclamation often heard in Yiddish-speaking communities. Although presented as a fusion item, Soy Vay teriyaki marinade is hands-down the best version of this already hybrid (Japanese and American, with a touch of Hawaiian) sauce. Its wonderfully unctuous texture allows for ready coating of any meat or vegetable; its ability to penetrate the foodstuff undergoing seasoning is astounding. Better still, items coated with Soy Vay, when cooked in a genuine carbon-steel wok, acquire a delightful, almost polished sheen that could easily qualify for the cover photo of a food magazine. Soy Vay is available at most of the toney markets in town, including Whole Foods, Fresh Market, Calandro's, and Alexander's. Grab your wok and enjoy today!



Soy Vay Terkiyaki Marinade



## MCNAIR RESEARCH SCHOLARS

A TRIO program promoting doctoral studies for first-generation college students, students who are from a background of financial need, and students from ethnic groups underrepresented in graduate education.

Contact [McNair Research Scholars](#) or Joseph Givens directly at [givens@lsu.edu](mailto:givens@lsu.edu) or call 225-578-4321.

Our services are FREE to program participants.

We are taking applications.  
Priority deadline for the 2014 cohort is  
NOVEMBER 1, 2013.

Application details are available [here](#)

- Invite us to speak with your classes about the McNair program and refer students to the McNair program, or offer to mentor a student or host an undergraduate research experience

- Share your expertise and advice with McNair Research Scholars students through a presentation or discussion

- Faculty and graduate student mentorship is available along with workshops designed to help undergraduate students prepare to be competitive graduate school applicants

- Receive comprehensive advisement on strategies for graduate school funding and obtain undergraduate research experience.

- Participants are funded up to \$2800 per academic year for research activities

- Students are provided guidance in research protocols

- We help students locate funded undergraduate research opportunities at other universities in the United States and abroad

- Students who are participating in other undergraduate research programs are welcomed to apply for the McNair program

An ideal candidate for the McNair Research Scholars program is an eligible sophomore student with a 3.0 GPA or higher, and is interested in research and pursuing a graduate education, or is currently working in a research lab and could benefit from more funding and graduate school preparation services.

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