

5-2015

Faculty Senate Newsletter, May 2015

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College, "Faculty Senate Newsletter, May 2015" (2015). *Newsletter*. Paper 42.
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Faculty Senate Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Readers of heroic literature such as that written by Homer, Virgil, and an assortment of epic poets know that various forms of shame—embarrassment; bashfulness; reticence; and shyness to name but a few—serve as powerful mechanisms of social control. None of the warriors in *Beowulf* want their peers to regard them as less than valorous, hence will do anything, including courting of self-destruction, to avoid reprobation. Our ivy-covered walls stand far away from the shores of Troy, yet shame and shaming remain effective tools for controlling even freethinking academic people. In its various disguises, shame may well count as public enemy number one for those in the employ of universities.

A productive petri dishes for the cultivation of shame is the segregation of and resulting envy and wariness among the disciplines. In a process that resembles the tainting of mankind by original sin, relentless criticism of public employees, along with the suggestion that seemingly well-paid professionals ought to be grateful for their wages, sets up an environment in which faculty members feel shy about asking for more. What happens next is that those skilled in the less prosperous disciplines—nowadays, mostly those comprising the liberal, the performing, and the fine arts—begin to feel inferior to and therefore ashamed in comparison to those who have made the wise choice to prepare for careers in the affluent disciplines. This interdisciplinary shaming is by no means a one-way process. Those in the rich disciplines—for the most part, the STEM fields—become cautious about tooting their own horns lest they be seen as proud or presumptive. Finally, those in an assortment of homeless disciplines—agriculture and law come to mind—begin a regime of self-censorship, either fearing that they have no place in or wanting to avoid a dichotomous dialogue between the genteel and the mechanical disciplines. This cycle of shame fits well with the ambitions of those who would like to subordinate education to other agencies and other goals, for the aggressive seldom fear the reticent and are more than ready to speak out against the shame-induced silence.

The pervasive sense of unspoken shame in many American universities arises from a deep uncertainty in the American consciousness about achievement. On the one hand, the now old-fashioned faith in progress—in the “great big beautiful tomorrow,” as the Disneyland “imagineers” once called it—drives the American mind to present our institutions as better than everyone and everything. On the other hand, the intense egalitarianism of American culture casts into suspicion anything or anyone situated too far to the right side of the renowned Gaussian distribution curve. From this mentality, which transcends rank, the seemingly powerful upper administration enjoys no exemption. The thinness of credentials among those in command positions, where last-minute degrees in “educational leadership” and other recently invented areas is far more the rule than the exception, ensures that seeming leaders will experience secret embarrassment either when confronted with scholars possessing disciplinary competence or when compared to management board members, who possess that other badge of accomplishment, money, in much greater degree than do their proxies in seeming leadership roles. Those who not only run institutions, but who deal with legislators experience an even more special short of awkwardness on the realization that, in their well-learned smoothness as simulated academic personnel, they cannot possibly excel at the kind of aboriginal mediocrity that characterizes legislators and many elected officials.

Overcoming the culture of shame is both easy and difficult. One response to the juggernaut of shame is an unrepentant embrace of accomplishment: an affirmation that, despite everyone being created equal, some end up being cleverer than others and, on top of that, some are better at distinguishing Beethoven from bombast. Another, more therapeutic approach is to answer imposters by making recourse to fundamentals. Administrations, for example, enjoy barrages of statistics. They dole out shame by reminding a citizen giving public comment at a board meeting that a 1998 IPEDS study concluded x, y, or z owing to data drawn from the 1995 NCATE investigation of some or other acronym-identified phenomenon. Questioning whether such a pursuit of the trees is the best way to see the forest will often enough undercut the strategy of intimidation by overcompensation. So will asking covertly embarrassed experts why, if their expert opinions were so wise, we have, as a result of their policies, arrived at the difficulties that beset us today.



Kevin Cope

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Higher Education Headliner



James Kirylo

As a veteran elementary school teacher with eighteen years in the classroom, James Kirylo has a unique perspective about the needs of both teachers and students. As a university professor with fourteen or so years under his belt, Kirylo has been able to train a new generation of teachers, aiding them in navigating the treacherous waters of a changing education system, where testing, rather than exploration, is emphasized. In addition, as president of the Faculty Senate at Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU), he has a unique opportunity to make not just his voice heard, but the voices of his colleagues.

Born in Italy to a civil service family, Kirylo's family eventually settled in Utah, where his parents were drawn by a love of the mountains, which reminded his mother, originally from Holland, of the Swiss Alps. He received his undergraduate degree in elementary education at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah, and after working in schools in Alabama, Utah, and Louisiana (including in Jefferson Parish), he eventually decided to go back to college so that he could affect change from the inside out. He became especially interested in curriculum development and best pedagogical practices, which he continues to focus on today in the Teaching and Learning Department at SLU.

Clearly very passionate about his field and about the students of Louisiana, Kirylo spoke at length about some of the systemic issues facing members of the public education systems of Louisiana specifically and the United States generally. He believes one of the most serious problems facing students today is the extreme emphasis placed on "high-stakes" standardized testing, and he connects this relatively new phenomenon with an overarching attempt by government officials to make public schools run on a quasi-business model that places a testable end-result before all else. As Kirylo points out, US students are some of the most tested in the world. When the end-product of a test score is emphasized in such a way as to exclude the process of hands-on, active learning, then the unique exploratory elements of education become minimized. This can be detrimental to all students, and may disproportionately affect the most vulnerable student populations. Kirylo points out that while the groups who develop the standardized tests may pay lip-service to critical thinking and problem-solving skills (e.g. Common Core), in fact these tests drive out creative and process-driven learning, thus hampering the development of critical thinking skills in young students. In addition, a constant slashing of state funding hurts some of the most disadvantaged groups who cannot make up the funding in other ways. Those cuts also affect the morale of not only teachers at the primary and secondary levels, but those at the university level, as well. There are many very dedicated faculty members at all levels of education, but like so

many, they are underpaid, underappreciated, and working with outdated materials. Kirlyo, though, is optimistic that, if enough people make their voices heard, then change can occur at every educational level.

Kirylo's unique position, as both an education scholar and a veteran educator at all levels of instruction, allows him to understand better than many laymen the serious structural challenges in the public school and university systems, and he is able to see ways in which people can protest practices such as "high-stakes" testing. For example, he sees the ability for parents to "opt out" of standardized testing as a positive step in the right direction. Possibly the most telling fact about his belief in the educational system is his decision to send his two young children to Louisiana public schools. He believes in the system; it just needs to be overhauled.

One of his own success stories started when he was teaching fourth grade. He and some of his students used to play basketball together, and he remembered thinking how good one girl in particular was at understanding the game at a relatively young age. Although she struggled a bit in school, Kirylo worked with her, and she eventually went on to play basketball as a student-athlete at LSU before going on to play for the WNBA. Temeka Johnson is one of his success stories.

Based on his experience, Kirylo has a lot of good advice to give new teachers. One of the most important takes a page from the Greeks, which is, "Know yourself." He also challenges his new teachers to maintain their "epistemological curiosity," a must for any educator who wants to maintain his or her enthusiasm for the profession. In addition, taking advantage of professional development opportunities and reminding oneself why one has decided to teach in the first place are equally important pieces of advice.

While some positive changes may be on the horizon for primary and secondary education, Kirylo sees other serious problems facing public colleges and universities. As Southeastern Louisiana University Faculty Senate President, Kirylo is in a position to raise awareness about some of these issues among not only the faculty and staff of SLSU, but also Hammond and the Northshore region. He mentions pushes for greater privatization, an increased focus on job-market training, and the devaluation of tenure and academic freedom as some of the most pressing issues for public colleges and universities today. "Silence is would-be-complicity," he warns. He further cautions, "If you're not involved, you're accepting the status quo." Kirylo is a strong voice and advocate for his profession, and he fervently believes that hard work today can bring about a better tomorrow.

— By Amy Catania and Nate Friedman



ULS REACTIVATES PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE POLICY

The erosion of tenure guarantees continues at the University of Louisiana System campuses with the reactivation, at its April 23rd Board meeting, of its notorious program discontinuance policy. The equivalent of a state of financial exigency without any procedures, the ULS discontinuance policy allows for the elimination of programs when funding decreases beneath a specified level. In blatant contrast to AAUP (American Association of University Professors) guidelines for financial emergencies, which require consultation with faculty, development of a plan, and orderly reductions that respect length of service and curricular priorities, the ULS policy amounts to the state of perpetual emergency (and reliably capricious action) that appeals to organizations such as the National Security Agency.

CAUTION



SLIPPERY SLOPE

COLLAPSE OF HB42 MEANS “NEW TAX” FOR RETIREES

Since the release of the last *Newsletter*, the Louisiana legislature has begun its annual itinerary through the terra incognita of new bills, resolutions, and proposals. One of the first items to perish was HB42, a bill to provide cost-of-living increase (COLAs) to retirees on state defined benefit retirement plans such as those offered by TRSL and LASRS, the two quasi-private pension systems that cover most Louisiana university employees. Despite an admission by TRSL and LASRS that money to fund the proposed COLAs already abided in pension plan coffers, members of the House Retirement Committee heeded a new law that diverts additional money into the payment of the ravenous unfunded accrued liability (UAL). Although some would argue that withholding money to pay down the UAL is fair to retirees who draw benefits greater than the accrued value of their payments and the interest thereupon, the simultaneous depletion of the cash reserve at the Office of Group Benefits means that retirees with a constant income will pay more for medical insurance (or will receive less generous benefits). The net result is a reduction in the amount of state money ultimately reaching retirees owing to a reabsorption of that money into another state agency. That sounds rather like a “new tax”—what might be called “The Geriatric Grover Norquist Levy.”



LSUS DRAWS UNQUALIFIED APPROVAL FROM SACSCOC

Those who have participated in the accreditation review (or “affirmation,” as optimistic accreditors now prefer to call it) know well that [SACSCOC](#), the accrediting agency for most of the institutions of higher learning in the southeastern United States, specializes in finding problems and in calling for remediation. Almost every institution that comes before its judgment bar receives some kind of assignment by way of improvement, reform, or plain old penitence. It is therefore nothing short of astounding that one of Louisiana’s most underappreciated campuses, LSU in Shreveport, should have received an unqualified approval from the kingdom of crabs that reigns over the SACSCOC stew. Although it remains subject to final review at the December SACSCOC meeting, the LSUS accreditation report detected no shortcomings and abounded in applause. Those who worry about the impact of criticism on public institutions should note that LSUS oozes activists: colleagues such as Brian Salvatore, Mary Jarzabek, Thomas Dubose, and Sanjay Menon keep controversy alive yet bring renown to their university. Congratulations to newbie LSUS Chancellor Larry Clark and to all the “Pilots” on their exceedingly rare accomplishment.



MAGELLAN-STYLE MANAGEMENT AND BANKRUPTCY MESSAGE MESSAGE

The recent approval, by the Louisiana House, of an array of revenue measures that will prove helpful to higher education occurred shortly after LSU President King Alexander invoked the “B” word, “bankruptcy,” so as to signal to lawmakers that institutions were in genuine financial straits. Like all warning flags, Alexander’s emergency beacon was detected not only by lawmakers but also by faculty, who immediately began pondering their futures. Indeed, the siren sounded all the way to Wall Street, where an assortment of rating agencies incrementally diminished the LSU bond rating and recommended the delay of an upcoming bond issuance (perhaps the proposed recreational swimming pool shaped like the letters “LSU” will have to wait, or perhaps will shrink by one letter, losing the “L” and accepting subscriptions from Southern students). In one of the more clever examples of public discourse in Louisiana history, articulate Alexander made recourse to the tradition of fellow sometime Californians Balboa and Drake, issuing a follow-on proclamation that LSU would (in a fine example of a compound verb) “continue to explore” a wide range of contingency plans. As if by magic, the emotional pressure pertaining to exigency seemed to evaporate with the steam of academic conversation. Those whom the British call “turf accountants” are making book that the bond issue will be on again in a few weeks and that the legislature will now refrain from moves that might run up interest rates (or worse).



LSUNITED ADVISES CONCERNING, BATTLES SOCIAL SECURITY INEQUITY

One of the hidden secrets of those who measure their value to academe through their success at recruiting is that anyone who works for a state agency that excuses itself from participation in the Social Security system will face very large penalties—in some cases, up to fifty percent of the expected benefit—when it comes time to collect retirement support. The Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) can carve away large portions of the Social Security emolument even if a colleague works for many years in another state and even if a colleague has never been informed about these provisions. Under the leadership of Diane Mohler, LSUnited, LSU’s fledgling faculty advocacy and pro-union group, has determined to inform colleagues about this problem and to work toward the repeal of the aforementioned damaging regulations. Mohler recently delivered a presentation on the GPO and the WEP at the LSU A& Faculty Senate and is willing to continue her educational mission to all interested audiences.

The LSU A&M Faculty Senate has passed a [resolution](#) calling on all those involved in job searches to make full and fair disclosure of the nature and the limits of benefits and retirement options in Louisiana universities. Faculty Senates around the state are encouraged to pass similar resolutions.



UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX DWARFS LOUISIANA IN LOBBYING SPENDING

From faithful reader Tsegai Emmanuel of Grambling State University comes a remarkable link that helps to explain why higher education administrators are so impressed or even intimidated by the advocates for online higher education. In 2014, according to “[Open Secrets](#),” Apollo Group, owner of the University of Phoenix, spent \$1,380,000.00 on lobbying public officials, while LSU spent less than one-fifth of that sum, \$246,250.00, and the University of Louisiana System topped out at \$200,000.00. The Phoenix holding company was outpaced only by a cartel of medical schools. With that kind of political and promotional effort underway, pronouncements by political appointees about the value of online education comes under deep suspicion.





A.G.'s Corner

LSU HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER, CHIEF A. G. MONACO, ADDRESSES QUESTIONS ABOUT HRM AND "EMPLOYEES' LIVES" IN GENERAL. IF YOU HAVE A PRESSING HRM ISSUE FOR A G TO ADDRESS, PLEASE SEND YOUR QUERIES TO ENCOPE@LSU.EDU.

The Letter

Dear A G,

I'm one of the lucky ones who has worked in a Louisiana higher education institution long enough to build up at least something resembling a retirement nest egg. I've got about half a million in various retirement accounts (mandated; 403b) and am also clear of debts with a paid-off house and the intention either to continue living in Baton Rouge or downsize into some other, equally or less expensive community. At the same time, I'm a little too young to begin building ships in bottles or posing for group pictures on the social pages of the newspaper. I'd like to work a little while longer but am not eager to grind out the nine-to-five shift or, as happens with professors, to continue working twelve hours a day. I'm therefore wondering whether Louisiana institutions offer any kind of "wind-down" program by which a person can, say, go half time for a few years. I say "Louisiana institutions" because I work at an LSU campus but I know friends and colleagues at other campuses and other systems who are in the same position—and, although I know that you're a Tiger guy, I suspect that you know a whole lot about the other systems, too. Also, I'm wondering if you have any insights into the financial impacts of such a decision. Should I live off my presumed half salary and leave the retirement money alone? Should I keep on saving, even from my half pay? Am I endangering my finances by my proposed plan? What about my health benefits? A G, you're the smartest finance and benefit person on this planet; I know that you'll know the answers!

With appreciations,

Sarah in Shreveport



The Response

Sarah,

While possibilities exist for reemployment after retirement, some of the rules of the pension system limit our ability to be flexible and creative. That is too bad since during times of tight budgets reemploying retired faculty can help both the employee and the University meet their needs. The restrictions are another example of narrow-minded rules created by the state that may work well for the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, but make little sense on a college campus.

Post retirement employment is one of the few times the faculty's ORP participants have an advantage over the traditional TRSL members.

Faculty participants in the ORP can be reemployed without earnings restrictions, whereas faculty enrolled in the traditional TRSL plan are limited to earning no more than 25% of their pension amount. Additionally, ORP members are limited by a 90-day break in service before being reemployed, whereas TRSL participants are limited by a one-year break in service. While in both cases a faculty member cannot be immediately reemployed, ORP retirees could retire at the end of a Spring Semester and can be reemployed at the start of the Fall Semester. Traditional TRSL retirees must wait a full 12 months.

While savings to the department or the University might be attained based on whether the retiree's former duties all need to be performed, the savings to the institution is still limited. Retirees

who are rehired must receive contributions to the ORP retirement plan, and the dreaded UAL subsidy that LSU is forced to pay to support K-12 retirement benefits will wipe out a significant percentage of the potential savings.

Still, despite what our editor might say, there are some creative administrators at work at LSU, and possibilities for rehire that will benefit all involved might be possible. Certainly as the budget crisis continues we might need to pool our energies and find new ways to define employment relationships and rehired retirees might be one answer.

So, Sarah, I think that the place to begin conversations to explore the possibilities of post-retirement employment is with your Department Chair. She or he is in the best position to determine if some abbreviated appointment can be designed that will benefit the department. From there your dean is likely to engage with HR or the Provost's office to see about designing such a position that fits within the rules of the pension system.

I believe your idea holds merit for another reason. Often people retire too soon and find that the "amusement" of being retired wanes somewhat quickly. Whether or not it involves being reemployed by your present employer, the idea of seeking some less stressful employment after retirement is a good idea. It keeps you active, engaged, and the additional money earned can dramatically assist you in your retirement.

—Continued on page 5

Financially the very best thing to do in regard to retirement is to save as much as you can as long as you can. Rather than fully drawing from your 403b, you could save half of your post retirement wages and augment your retirement income with the rest of your salary. This will extend your savings further into retirement.

As for downsizing after retirement, I am a proponent. I think it is a good idea for two reasons:

1. As an investment, housing is not as great a deal as we thought 30 years ago, so unloading a larger house now when the market is still strong and buying something smaller or even renting an apartment could be to your advantage.
2. The larger and older the house, the more time and expense to maintain it.

Those expenses would earn more return if invested in a savings plan rather than replacing counter-tops. Also, the time spent weeding and feeding and cutting your lawn might be better served earning money by working part-time.

A good place to sit and consider the financial aspects of retirement and your future financial plans is at Sabores, a Dominican Bar/Grill-Restaurant, located across the river from Shreveport in nearby Bossier City. Any dislocated New Yorker will tell you that they serve the best Caribbean food west of Union City, New Jersey.

SRO CROWD FILLS ALEXANDRIA SUMMIT

For the first time in its four and one-half year history, the “Alexandria Summit Meeting” “went SRO” as a standing room only crowd piled into the Live Oaks Conference Room of LSU of Alexandria (LSUA) to participate in the statewide dialogue about higher education. Attendees, who hailed from every kind of college that Louisiana offers—two year; four year; HBCU; research; medical; regional; urban; rural—and whose affiliations extend to all four higher education systems, enjoyed a robust (and marathon) six-hour session. Opening the day was Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph C. Rallo, who came prepared to respond to no less than twenty-seven questions volleyed by Summit participants. Rallo’s [PowerPoint-enhanced presentation](#) ranged over the full spectrum of concerns among university professionals, from the mission and destiny of HBCUs to faculty control of the curriculum and on to the reform of governance structures such as the Board of Regents. Providing the second of no less than two morning keynote offerings was Howard Bunsis of Eastern Michigan University. Bunsis, the influential head of the AAUP (American Association of University Professors) Collective Bargaining Congress, delivered a breathtaking as well as rigorously researched presentation on the financing of Louisiana higher education, exposing an assortment of myths, debunking the suggestion that “bankruptcy” is near for Louisiana institutions, and exhorting colleagues to “act like a union” or collective bargaining unit even despite Louisiana being a right-to-work state. Bunsis’s provocative but [rock-solid presentation](#) is now available online.



An SRO crowd listens to Commissioner Rallo at Alexandria

Celebrities such as Rallo and Bunsis were not the only reason that the May 2nd. Alexandria Summit soared to new records of attendance and new levels of accomplishment. AgCenter Faculty Council President and LSU A&M Faculty Senate Vice-President Ken McMillin offered a performance-oriented presentation on the recruitment of public support while stimulating a discussion about practical courses of action during the coming year, including a proposal for a faculty march on the capitol. Engineering expert Suresh Rai delivered an analysis of the fate of “invisible minorities,” under-represented or even underprivileged groups that, for reasons that Rai energetically explored, seldom get the level of attention that their contribution to university life merits. Rai’s [presentation](#) (see the link near the top of the menu) stirred brisk debate as conferees recognized how lacking in diversity some diversity programs can be and what a hard fate some minority communities endure, even in academe. Finally, a concluding plenary panel comprised of Vipin Menon (McNeese State University), James Kirylo (Southeastern Louisiana University), and Sonya Hester (Southern University Shreveport) offered sagacious counsel concerning the creation of large public forums and other events in support of higher education and the debate appertaining thereto.

Summit participants were so encouraged by the May 2nd that they have called a special summer meeting on June 20th to plan strategies for the coming year. Mark that date on your calendars!



Terry Authement listens to Alexandria presenters



Vipin Menon, James Kirylo, and Sonya Hester advise on organizing public events



Howard Bunsis addresses the Alexandria Summit



Suresh Rai raises awareness of invisible minorities

NIGHT AT THE CAPITOL PARK MUSEUM



STARRING

LOUISIANA

A GALA HOSTED BY THE FRIENDS
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June 6, 2015 from 7-10pm

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TWO BITS ON SHAVES AND HAIRCUTS

Not only the devil but the pomade can be found in the details. Scalps tingled when news spread that the tonsorial team in the LSU Student Union Barbershop had recently been confronted with demands for economic productivity that would make even our outcomes-obsessed legislators head for the hot towel. A fluke in the economic history of the LSU Student Union had established the barbers as LSU employees rather than as independent contractors or franchise operators or concessionaires, with the result that the ratio of salary to earned revenue rose to administrative attention. Suggestions of a pay cut for the barbers or of a reconfiguration of the popular barbering services raised hackles around the campus. It is to be hoped that some compromise can be worked out so as to ensure the continued prosperity of these long-serving employees and so that the LSU Student Union can avoid degenerating into a private reserve for heartless national chains. Let us hope that the helically striped pole keeps whirling.



HUMPHUS, SOWELA LEAP INTO GUBERNATORIAL RACE

One of the most salient blessings to emerge from the severe economic threats to Louisiana higher has been a proliferation of public forums.



SOWELA--Home of Barry Humphus' gubernatorial debate

This abundance of public engagement opportunities has propelled more than a few professors into the political limelight and has renewed the reputation of campuses as venues for the discussion of the most important issues of our time. The current crisis has brought the community back to the campus and the campus back into the community. The latest instance of intense community engagement has erupted in southwest Louisiana, where longtime faculty activist and faculty governance enthusiast Barry Humphus has partnered with SOWELA (Southwestern Louisiana Technical Community College) Chancellor Neil Aspinwall to schedule a debate among gubernatorial candidates on Tuesday, August 25th. To be moderated by KPLC television reporter John Bridges, the exchange of ideas will occur in the multipurpose room of the SOWELA Arts and Humanities Building. Three of the four gubernatorial candidates have already accepted the invitation to the debate, with acceptance from the fourth contestant being imminent. Given the rapid pace of economic development in a region that hosts two major campuses, SOWELA and McNeese, this is a forum not to be missed.



LSUNITED ACTIVIST STEPHANIE BRAUNSTEIN GARNERS PUBLIC DOCUMENTS AWARD

Everyone who has had the occasion to file a public records request will appreciate the importance of librarians and other custodians of records and will therefore celebrate the selection of one of LSUnited's leading members, Stephanie Braunstein, as the recipient of the 2015 Margaret T. Lane Award. The Lane Award celebrates colleagues who have excelled when it comes to promoting the use of federal documents and to mentoring those who manage collections of public information. Applause to Stephanie for her accomplishment and plaudits to LSUnited for drawing so many talented persons into its ranks.



MENON RETURNED TO MCNEESE SENATE PRESIDENCY

All this with the wit to judge and the generosity to celebrate have been rejoicing over the news that the McNeese State University Faculty Senate has reelected Vipin Menon to its Presidency for a second term. Under Menon's leadership, the McNeese Faculty Senate has vaulted into prominence both with respect to faculty empowerment and to the advancement of southwest Louisiana. What many call "the Age of Vipin" has begun with the establishment of McNeese faculty governance as a core contributor to Louisiana's statewide dialogue about the future of higher education. With the help of McNeese-based librarian and faculty activist Walt Fontane, groundbreaking Menon created a pair of major public forums featuring the entire southwest Louisiana state legislative delegation. Congratulations to Vipin—and to the important southwest quadrant of the state that he so nobly inspires.



Vipin Menon

ALFS PRESIDENT ROBINSON LAUNCHES FACULTY GOVERNANCE FACEBOOK PAGE

Inspired by the dialogue at the recent Alexandria Summit Meeting, ALFS (Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates) President James Robinson has created a new Facebook page by way of facilitating the sharing of information, the mobilizing of colleagues, and the persuading of the populace. In its first two days of operation, the ALFS Facebook page attracted more than seventy-five member-subscribers. Those who want to be in-the-know about the latest moves regarding higher education should visit and "like" the page in order to be enrolled in it. Anyone who "likes" or otherwise joins the page may post information to it. The page can be discovered by entering "ALFS" in the search dialogue window on any Facebook page or by clicking over to its [URL](#).



Robinson's new ALFS Facebook page

GUEST COLUMN

Residents of north Louisiana have successfully spoken truth to power and forced the U.S. Army and EPA to change their plan to conduct the largest open chemical burn in world history. The decision to openly burn these environmental poisons stemmed from the need for an emergency removal of over 16 million pounds of M6 propellant, improperly stored at Camp Minden by U.S. Army contractor, Explo Systems Inc. Gross incompetence by the contractor and very poor site supervision by the Army produced a very serious predicament with seemingly limited options. This crisis represents one of worst-ever cases of negligence in the storage of explosives at a military contract site.



M6 Sacks

M6 is an obsolete military propellant, formerly used to launch tank artillery shells in combat. It is both toxic and chemically unstable and slowly degrades upon standing, becoming increasingly shock-sensitive and heat-sensitive over time. Despite all of these risks, the public was never informed that such large amounts of M6 were being accumulated at Camp Minden until a massive explosive occurred on October 15, 2012. The shock wave from that explosion was felt over 25 miles away, jarring folks out of bed and breaking windows over 4 miles away. It even knocked a train off the tracks. Fortunately no one was killed or badly injured, but that blast involved only 0.5% of all the improperly stored propellant at Camp Minden. Residents of Doyline had to be evacuated for 10 days while sacks of propellant were moved from sprawling fields and piney woods into 1940's-era bunkers. Following the subsequent bankruptcy of Explo Systems, the Louisiana Military Department of all 16 million pounds of M6, and Minden area residents have had to live under a perpetual state of emergency ever since, not knowing if and when another massive explosion will occur.



Dialogue Committee

In October 2014, after nearly two years of negotiations between the EPA, US Army, and the State of Louisiana, residents were suddenly informed that the material was had granted the LMD permission to burn all 16 million pounds of M6 in open trays (80,000 lbs. per day for 200 days!). When concerned citizens, asked to see a copy of the environmental impact study for the proposed

chemical burn, they were told that no such study existed, because the EPA had granted the LMD a special exemption to conduct this open burn. Residents became even more alarmed when they learned three components in M6 (dinitrotoluene, dibutylphthalate, and diphenylamine) are semi-volatile organic compounds that pose significant human toxicity, ranging from carcinogenicity to endocrine disruption and birth defects.

Thousands of angry residents quickly mounted a powerful grass roots protest movement that garnered national attention and ultimately forced the EPA and the Army to reconsider their consent agreement. In January, the EPA announced a 90-day delay, and a Community Dialogue Committee was convened, whereby area residents and government officials were given the opportunity to work with the EPA, U.S. Army, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality and the Louisiana National Guard to establish a new set of criteria for the safe disposal of this propellant.

The Dialogue Committee's new criteria were used to solicit proposals for a variety of safe alternative disposal methods, and on May 8th, the EPA announced that they would back a contained burn incineration, which includes a very advanced pollution abatement system. This system will protect the environment from the toxic pollutants that residents were most concerned about. The EPA's announcement has been hailed as a significant victory for residents of north Louisiana, including the towns of Doyline, Sibley, and Minden. Residents have also set up a Citizens Advisory Group (CAG), which will continue to work with the EPA and the LMD until all of the material is safely disposed of.

This grass roots movement was also a victory for the auspices of Louisiana higher education, because numerous current and retired faculty members from LSUS, LSU Health (Shreveport), and Louisiana Tech, stood up and partnered with concerned citizens and voiced their strong opposition to the sloppy decision making that almost allowed such an environmentally destructive plan to come to fruition.



Minden Farm Rally

—By Brian Salvatore
LSU Shreveport

LSU AUXILIARY SERVICES BACK IN WINNERS' CIRCLE

Auxiliary Services, which flourishes under the irrepressibly inventive leadership of Margot Carroll, has once again triumphed in a run for the roses. For the second time this year, Auxiliary Services grabbed a better-than-brass ring while circulating through the southern regional meeting of the National Association of College Auxiliary Services (NACAS). Earning the award was a new collaboration between the Tiger Card office and the LSU Olinde Career Center: a collaboration by which Tiger Card holders may receive the full suite of passport services and may then embark on a life and career of international adventuring and entrepreneurship. The first of the aforementioned two awards for Auxiliary Services was none other than the "2015 Best Card Design Award" from the National Association of Campus Card Users (NACCU), which recently held its national convention in New Orleans.

But one, nay, two awards cannot suffice to measure the merit of the upgraded LSU Auxiliary Services. Only three days after the announcement of the NACAS award, the Auxiliary Services reconnaissance team detected the placement of "The 5," LSU's premier student dining facility, on the [USA Today list](#) of the top thirty college or university dining halls in the country, where it stood cheek-by-jowl (or would it be guanciale-by-guanciale?) with an array of prestigious Ivy-League and old-line institutions. Noted among the offerings at "The 5" is a local variant on red pepper soup, which has enjoyed a vogue among enthusiasts for southwestern cuisine, and an array of regional dishes, including, of course, gourmet grits. Ovation for the Auxiliary Services team on their trophy sweep!



NACCU dubs the Tiger Card a winner



NACAS celebrates LSU passport collaboration

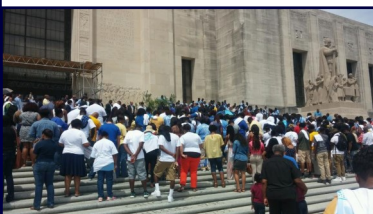
SOUTHERN SHREVEPORT STORMS CAPITOL

Louisiana higher education underwent a great transformation when colleagues at all Southern University campuses organized a rally at and march on the state capitol. The first to come up with the idea of a mass faculty, student, alumni, and administrator rally on the Louisiana legislators' front porch, Southern University supporters, acting under

primarily faculty leadership, assembled a fiercely critical mass of demonstrators in a venue that is frequented more often by apathy than by constructive indignation. Integral to the effort was Southern University Shreveport faculty leader Sonya Hester, who traveled from the far north of our expansive territory so as to show off the statewide solidarity of Southern supporters. Extensive media attention insured that the event constituted a victory for faculty and a lesson for reticent administrators.



SUSLA faculty Leader Sonya Hester stirs the crowd at the capitol



Southern University supporters march on the capitol

FOG OF WAR LIFTS TO UNVEIL MONACO MERIT

Persons around the state who hold 403(b) plans connected to the LSU System campuses received the latest in a multi-year sequence of baffling and potentially distressing letters in early April when VALIC, one of the retirement plan vendors, alleged that a mysterious "LSU Investment Committee" had scuttled an assortment of mutual funds and had replaced them with an assortment of new investment vehicles. Understanding of this cryptic communication was worsened by its attachment to a multi-column table of "mapping" procedures by which monies intended for one of the old funds would flow into one of the new options. It was only a short time before questions arose about the "investment committee" that no one could find and about "investment mapping" that no one seemed to have authorized. Fortunately, *Newsletter* financial reporters practice a form of heated investigative journalism that dries up the fog of war. When the clouds cleared, our financial desk saw that, behind the apparent conspiracy, stood not evil intentions but no less than the benevolent A. G. Monaco, our financial advice columnist. A. G., it seems, had recognized that some funds imposed excessive management charges and had called on faculty expertise to identify analogous, alternate funds that would carry out the business of making money more efficiently. In a move novel among administrators, A. G. mobilized faculty expertise, which VALIC and the other vendors allegorized into an imagined "investment committee." As is always the case with A. G. Monaco's actions, this sequence of events provides a teachable moment. Colleagues around the state are encouraged to parlay with their benefits managers to discover whether the funds selected by the managers of their 403(b) or similar plans evidence an adequate level of efficiency vis-à-vis service charges.



Lifestyle Feature

The Even-Numbered Hours of the Day

The arrival of summer includes the opportunity for the appreciation of time. During the hubbub of the academic term, time flies by while duties come to the foreground. When academe goes into recess, the texture of time quits the background and enters the attention. The multitudinous hours of the day offer an assortment of opportunities and come packaged with an array of identifying characteristics which, once understood, can contribute to both the enjoyment and the productivity of the diurnal round. There being too many hours on the clock to fit in a short column, we shall this month focus on the even-numbered times.

6:00 am is always one of the most promising hours of the day. As sleep passes into waking, the prospect of laudable deeds crosses the imagination but remains free of concerns relating to implementation. At 6:00 am, everything is possible as the awaking mind inventories the tasks that could fit into the forthcoming twenty-four hour round. Those waking before the obligatory alarm bell experience the freedom of non-obligation: the knowledge that no action is immediately required in order to entertain fantasies of great accomplishments. Which is not to say that this hour lacks a down side. The claustrophobia resulting from overnight immurement in bed may, along with the importunities of the bladder, lead to a premature interruption of quiet anticipations. While it is best to relish the early morning quiet, lingering too long may lead to jitters and contortions that will undo the preceding evening's rest.

8:00 am recalls the beginning of a Shakespearean play. Comments are incoming, thoughts are percolating, and, at least in reasonably households, some morning snack is on the table by way of fueling the engine of future accomplishment. Hovering an average of thirty degrees above the horizon, the sun shoots in freshly opened windows (or, in the steamy south, drapes), gently but decisively prodding dawdlers to get it going. At 8:00 am, so little has happened that everything still seems possible. But there is danger in this hour: the big burst of energy can sluice morning folk into distraction. At this hour, it is easy to think that answering those one or two leftover emails before beginning the main work will take away little from the storehouse of vitality. The incautious can easily burn up all that morning energy in a set of trivial leftover chores even before the day gets going.

10:00 am is the hour of unexpected determination. By 10:00 am, the perceived magnitude of the day's tasks has shouldered out the imagined expansiveness that characterized earlier hours. Suddenly, one is aware that not everything will be done in the day and that one has set one a specific subset of one's assignments. Outside, solar heating pushes convection as clouds swell up into the virgin blue sky, suggesting impending complications, whether slower travel or storm-induced power failures. The proper strategy for dealing with the ominous 10:00 am hour is the decisive minimization of expectations and the paring down of the task list. 10:00 am, however, opens up the possibility for a renewal of energy through a secret snack from that bag of cheese crackers that just happens to be open on the kitchen counter. 10:00 am is also the hour when emergencies break out on campus and when those in governance roles can expect the mixed blessing of engagement.

12:00 noon, the meridian of the day except during daylight sav-

ings time, delivers guilty relief: the acquiescence to the impossibility of doing even half of what one had planned. As the shafts of solar light beat down from overhead, the first prospect of rest and recreation comes into view along with the hope that some sort of collegial "power lunch" or other diversion will assist with the transition into the more agreeable, less demanding afternoon. 12:00 noon, however, opens the possibility that the distraction list might be minimized: that, even if one cannot complete the big project that opened the day, at least the backlog of emails can be reduced or at least the shopping can be done so as to prevent schedule clogging the next day.

2:00 pm might be described as the faux night that starts the second day. By 2:00 pm, most reasonable persons are ready for a nap—which, in the case of the administration, which pretends always to be working, means ensuring that this hour is never available for appointments or any other bookings, on the theory that the administrator in question is working hard on some project when, in fact, as the drawn shades show, he or she is reclined on the divan. 2:00 pm provides a

sample of the future or perhaps even of heaven in that it allows the recumbent party to dismiss work as a frivolity or vanity that pales before the occasional dream. The drawback, unfortunately, is that 2:45 brings the challenge of reawakening and of getting going once again!

4:00 pm, tea time, is the true beginning of the second day. By 4:00 pm, vitality has returned and a secondary list has emerged. It becomes possible to return to that day-starting project and to toss in a bit more in the way of ideas, especially if one has been resuscitated, as all civil people must be, by a cup of tea and a biscuit or cake. 4:00 pm, as its association with tea suggests, is the hour of great sobriety, when the mind may focus on the details of what was done in the morning, make speculations congruent with reality, and, in sum, intensely and successfully revise.

6:00 pm is probably the worst hour of the day, even despite its miscellaneous merits. At 6:00 pm, the workday is, for all practical purposes, done (true, some colleagues pretend that work never stops; but efficacy dims in all finite beings, thus suggesting that 6:00 pm is also the hour of boasting). The disorienting 6:00 pm hour often evokes the last telephone call of the business day, usually from an administrator who would like to be sure that the crisis of the day has really been tamped down or from a colleague who has thought better of his or her earlier outburst and who now wants to get back on course. 6:00 pm also marks the end of the news cycle with respect to universities, which means that any public statement is going to have to wait until tomorrow.

8:00 pm, in contrast to 6:00 pm, is an hour of great excitement. If going out on the town, wanderers will find that this is the hour when events either begin or hit their full pitch; if staying in front of the boob tube, viewers will recognize that the best and newest shows are either airing or promised forthwith; if having cooked, the gourmet is likely taking the last bite of that luscious quenelle or gorging on that favorite dessert. No one feels drowsy or tired at 8:00 pm, for the aggressive beams of midday have given way to the first twinkling of the stars, which, contrary to legend, elicit not sleep but lively curiosity. Exercisers will also find this an agreeable moment as the humidity of the day briefly abates prior to the evening release of ground steam.

— Continued on page 12



ULS MESSAGES AND MIXED-MESSAGES: ON- AND OFF-SCREEN

One way to characterize the University of Louisiana System is as “The Land of Mixed Blessings.” No where is this miscellaneous-ness of approach and attitude seen so clearly as in the latest round of adjustments in the public information system of the [ULS web site](#). On the one hand, the web site has undergone a comprehensive redesign, shedding a format that looked like an early-generation auto parts inventory page in favor of a splashy new layout with screen-filling pictures that suggest the endless fun of going to college in Louisiana (for example, somewhat staged displays showing football paraphernalia or highlighting school colors) or that show happy student faces looking at the rather pudgier and mostly male faces of decision-makers who regard enthusiastic students as, if not cute, at least controllable. Similarly, the new ULS website, which makes no mention of the difficulty that faculty at ULS campuses experience at finding time or getting permission to comment at ULS Board meetings, includes a handsome new “data dashboard” that is reported to include an abundance of information but that can be clumsy to use owing to its resistance to the “back” button (when the “back” arrow is clicked from a data page, nothing happens). What is perhaps most interesting is what is missing from the new site. Although it makes access to a vast store of past Board meetings easy, the new web site has quietly eliminated all of the background information that usually accompanies Board agenda, including information relating to high-salary personnel actions. Henceforward, those wishing to discover how much the University of Louisiana System squanders on athletic programs will need to make public record requests. Overall, the new site is an improvement, but it definitely privileges data that illustrate the industrial, productivity-oriented side of ULS campuses while downplaying information that might lead to complications or debate.



REGENT BRINGS GENDER EQUITY TO FIREARMS MARKET

Admit it—now
and then, you’ve
wondered whether
the eighty-two men
and six women who
comprise Louisiana’s
five higher education
managers



Power and light weight plus gender appropriateness--direct from our Regents

boards have managed to bring gender equity to the administrative ranks. And perhaps you've wondered about where the money comes from that has vaulted the various appointees into gubernatorial favor. Now, however, one of our educational wardens has struck a blow for gender advancement through the introduction in his [merchandise catalogue](#) of a "lady"-themed purse-ready pink handgun. Whatever the cost of this item, its manufacturer's description is priceless: "Charter Arms takes aim at the female market segment with a variation of their popular .38 Special Undercover Lite. The Pink Lady offers the same durability, power and lighter weight as its predecessor, but with a unique and attractive pink finish." Those who have questioned the power relations within higher education administration and those who have wondered whether lightweights might be in our midst now have their questions answered!



The image shows a presentation slide for LSU United. At the top center is the LSU United logo, which consists of the text "LSU" in white on a purple background and "United" in purple on a yellow background, with a horizontal line separating the two parts. Below the logo is the tagline "A Vital LSU! A Vital Community!" in a smaller, dark purple font. In the center of the slide is a large, yellow, rounded rectangular button with the text "JOIN LSUNITED" in bold, dark purple capital letters. Below the button, the text "WHO WE ARE:" is followed by a paragraph: "An independent advocacy organization formed to serve LSU faculty and graduate assistants". Below this, the text "OUR GOALS:" is followed by a bulleted list of three items: "•Securing regular, periodic raises for faculty", "•Improving starting salaries for Instructors", and "•Protecting and improving health and retirement benefits". At the bottom, the text "CONTACT:" is followed by the name and email address "Mike Russo, 6923louis@gmail.com". The entire slide has a light blue background with a thin white border.

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—Continued from page 10

10:00 pm brings with it an assortment of duties associated with the end of day. Perhaps it is time to exchange the cat's water; perhaps the washing machine has completed its cycle and has delivered fresh sheets for placement on the bed; perhaps there is an opportunity to jot down a thought that will govern tomorrow's research. Indoor lighting tends to reach its highest pitch at 10:00, with the result that householders feel the hope associated with comfort and may return their minds to the practice of inventiveness. If one is of a ludic disposition, this is precisely the moment to deploy the Yahtzee box for a final roll of the dice; if one is returning from a concert, this is the moment to pretend to comment on the trumpeter or tuba-master while secretly grabbing that little chocolate truffle that one bought the other day.

12:00 midnight is the hour of intense ambiguity. If the day has gone well, it is the moment at which consciousness acquiesces to sleep and in which the nature of reality comes into de facto question; if the day has been troubled, it can be the hour when excess planning and pathological review lead to too much rehashing of the past day and the beginning of insomnia. Midnight is the critical moment at which a decision is made: whether to persist in the previous day or whether to forge ahead into the next day by means of the temporary hiatus of sleep. Midnight can be productively dangerous if a new idea should pop into the head and draw one to the notepad when the pillow should be extracting its due.

2:00 am is also a critical moment. Often enough, 2:00 am brings some sort of distraction from sleep: the rumble of a pet; the blast of a locomotive horn; an unexpected noise from an air conditioner; the need to visit the restroom. 2:00 thus induces counterproductive prowling: motion that only seems to address these irregularities but that often enough only increases the

problem. At times when the moon is full or nearly so, our lunar friend is near or is approaching the zenith of its trajectory for the day, with the result that fierce blue light may set off the werewolf reflex in all of us. Although the mind may become suddenly busy at 2:00 am, the taking of notes should be avoided, for the thoughts that emerge under such circumstances seldom withstand the test of time.

4:00 is, in some sense, the real beginning of the next day. Should one happen to awaken at 4:00 am, one faces a choice: allow oneself to think and thereby

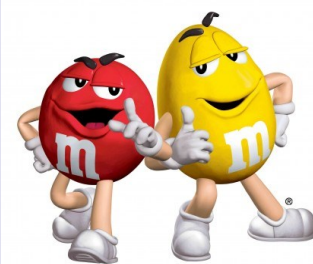
come up short on sleep the next day or surrender to the happy relief that a few hours remain before it all starts over again. Unlike 2:00 am, 4:00 am is close enough to the stark reality of illuminated day that, occasionally, new thoughts evidence merit. Fortunately, memory is more effective at that hour, with the result that the somnolent may return to their rest, reassured by the expectation of remembering the important thought when the cock crows on the next morning. 4:00 am being more recreational and easy than 2:00 am, one may even begin imagining and then dreaming about vacations and about fun.

Wherever the summer vacation may take you, have fun and indulge dreams, no matter what the time of the day!



MANN SAGA CONCLUDES WITH ISSUANCE OF CREDO-COLUMN

As T. S. Eliot judges, April is the cruelest month, an observation supported by the recent flap involving heir-publisher and LSU Supervisor Rolfe-McColister's public lambasting of accomplished journalist and chaired journalism professor Robert "Bob" Mann. Frequent readers of the *Newsletter* remember that McColister frowned on Mann's criticism of LSU leadership and especially at his suggestion that the next governor should solicit the resignation of the members of the LSU management board. McColister's salvo included a blast against professorial tenure, which the wealthy publisher evidently considered an enabling precondition for the workaday, salaried Mann's pricking of the balloon of vanity that always hovers over gubernatorial appointees. Following a detente-inducing luncheon that took place not, per Reagan and Gorbachev, over the icy terrain of a polar nation but, rather, over the warm plates at the once-great Juban's restaurant, Mann released a powerful manifesto, much in the style of Thomas Paine but also much influenced by Jeffersonian poise, in which he lucidly explains why he will continue his blogging campaign, why journalists not only may but must engage in criticism of the regime, and why it is incumbent upon institutions not only to support but to encourage self-criticism (we learn that some major news outlets actually hire people specifically to rail—intelligently—at them). LSU's most controversial M&Ms—Mann and McColister—have at least one item in common, and that is that most of their work is available for free. Read Professor Mann's public service proclamation online at his *Something Like the Truth* [blog](#). Then, if interested in seeing how much good a courageous effort can make, peruse the [online-accessible](#) affirmation of academic freedom that emerged from LSU President King Alexander's desk following faculty uproar over an apparent attempt at discouraging free speech.



Mann-McColister controversy shows value of tenure, free debate

GUEST COLUMN

With almost metronomic predictability, Governor Bobby Jindal has projected that yet another pound of flesh would need to be excised from the corpse of Louisiana higher education. The last six years of relentless cuts to higher education had somewhat inured those affected to the point that, when the expected announcement that the state could not afford the pesky expense of teaching its citizens, the general reaction was “Oh, well.”

This time, however, the breathtaking magnitude of that cut (\$608 million, according to LSU Budget Hub <http://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/budget/cuts-and-proposed-solutions/>) has the attention of legislators, administrators, faculty, and students. This time, the cut is not to the fat, the extraneous, the ineffective, the superfluous or even to the extremities (most of which have already been hacked off). This time, our Rhodes Scholar governor is proposing to cut out the heart. President Alexander said at a recent forum that LSU might not even be able to open in the fall; that is how drastic the proposed cut is.

Higher education generally and LSU specifically are faced with more program cuts, more teachers let go, fewer sections of required courses scheduled, longer and longer graduation times, and higher and higher tuition and fees.

So, what can be done to stop the obvious insanity of an additional \$608 million cut to higher education on top of the hundreds of millions of dollars that have already been cut?

President Alexander’s answer: be annoying.

Accordingly, LSUnited, the faculty advocacy organization, partnered with Geaux Vote LSU, a student-led group, to be annoying. These two organizations sponsored a grass-roots write-in campaign to urge Louisiana’s normally governor-friendly legislators to finally do their jobs and represent the people who hired them.

Originally intended to be a weeklong campaign in Free Speech Alley, the effort was cut short two days by April showers. The campaign was rescued by the library’s dean, Dr. Stanley Wilder, who allowed our table to be set up under the protecting eaves near the entrance of the Middleton Library.

For three days, members of LSUnited and Geaux Vote LSU encouraged students, faculty, and staff to write postcards to their legislators. The postage was paid for by LSUnited. LSUnited members looked up the correct legislators’ names, addressed the cards, and even supplied suggested talking points for those who wanted to express their outrage but couldn’t quite pull up the words to do it.

After only three days and a total of a mere 6 hours, 500 postcards were written, addressed, and mailed. We suspect that there would have been hundreds more, if the weather had cooperated.

Though the formal write-in campaign has ended, the effort must continue. And so, LSUnited and Geaux Vote LSU urge all concerned to take the time to contact their legislators (both senator and representative) and tell them what a monumentally stupid thing it is the governor is proposing they do. Here’s how to do it:

1. Go to <https://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/FindMyLegislators.aspx>
2. Type in your street, city, and zip code in order to find the names of your state representative and state senator.
3. Write a brief post card or letter directly addressing your legislators. Lobbyists tell us that hand-written letters have a much greater impact than emails, which are largely ignored. Send printed letters if your handwriting is illegible. Your communication should be brief; what matters is the volume of letters.
4. Use the following mailing addresses, where legislators receive mail during the legislative session.

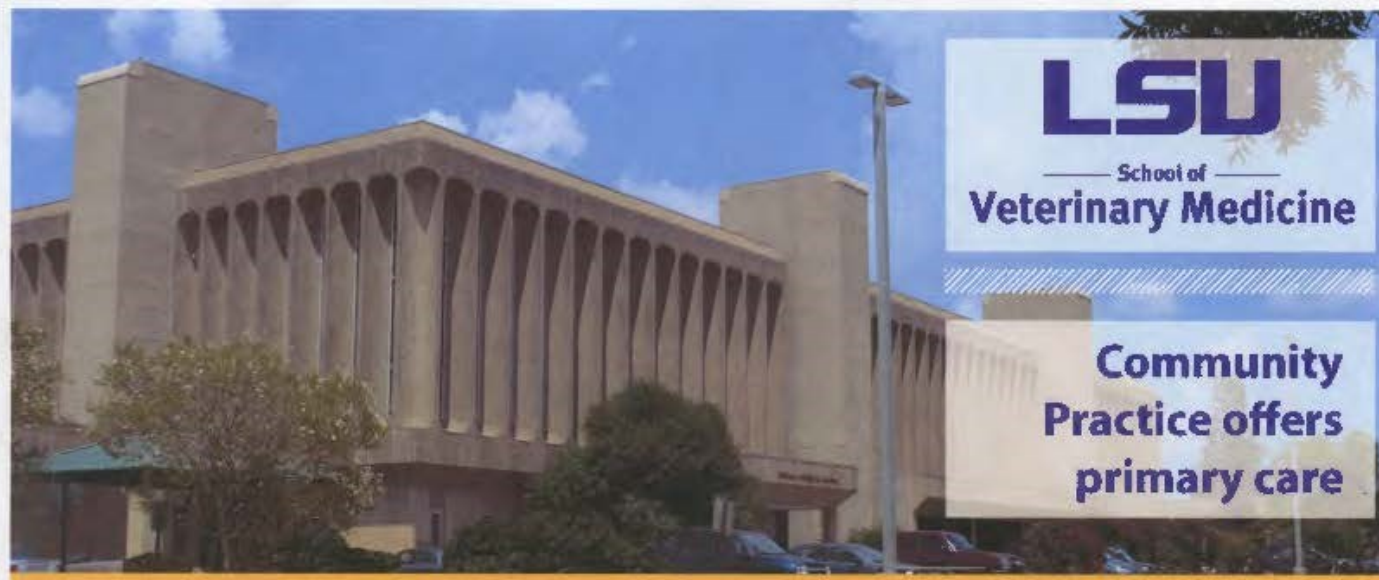
Representative John Doe
State Capitol
P.O. Box 44486
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4486

Senator Jane Doe
State Capitol
P.O. Box 94183
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4183



Now is precisely the wrong time for, “Oh, well.” Now is the time to be annoying.

—By Mike Russo
Associate Librarian
Member of LSUnited



LSU
— School of —
Veterinary Medicine

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Practice offers
primary care**



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LSU faculty, staff and students. No
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**225-578-9500 (horses
and farm animals)**

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Baton Rouge, LA 70803
www.vetmed.lsu.edu**

LSU's full-service Veterinary Teaching Hospital is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year; from small pets to horses, exotics and farm animals, emergency medicine to preventative care—we're here for you and your animals.

We have more board-certified specialists than anywhere else in Louisiana. Our specialty services include internal medicine, surgery, anesthesiology, cardiology, dermatology, ophthalmology, oncology, nephrology, reproduction, integrative medicine, rehabilitation, exotics, wildlife and diagnostic imaging (including CT and MRI).

Our Community Practice Service offers primary veterinary care for LSU employees and students. Come visit us for your pet's annual check-ups, preventative health care, disease diagnosis and management, micro-chipping, and health certificates.

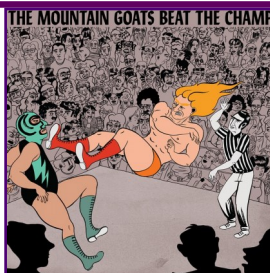
**LOVE PURPLE
LIVE GOLD**

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TIP OF THE MONTH: *BEAT THE CHAMP BY THE MOUNTAIN GOATS*

This month's tip comes from *Newsletter* reader Brandon Costello, who, attentive to the best in music and its history, has discovered a fine new [downloadable](#) album entitled *Beat the Champ*, the latest, and perhaps also the first, release of the folk-rock group, The Mountain Goats. *Beat the Champ* is comprised of thirteen tracks that celebrate the many eras of professional wrestling. Longtime fans of the squared circle will appreciate such sensitive lays as *The Balled of Bull Ramos*, which reviews the career of that hefty, bull-whip-wielding grappler through flashbacks experienced at the end of his life while the washed-up former hero lies on an operating table. Those with a sensibility for Latin-American gothic sprinkled with All-American heroism will relish *The Legend of Chavo Guerrero*, which recounts the emergence of the Guerrero wrestling clan from the early days of Spanish-language black-and-white television bouts to the glitz and glamor of the modern wrestling leagues. Bravura and cheekiness abound in numbers such as *Werewolf Gimmick*, in which a casually arrogant wrestler clears out the locker room without bothering to show up for rehearsal. Some of the lyric poetry nestles along the boundary between the heroic and the bathetic: "And the doctor recognize me / as the operating theater grows dim; / "Aren't you that old wrestler with a bull whip?" / "Yes, sir, that's me, I'm him." Perhaps there would be better ways to use pronouns. All in all, however, this album can't be beat (especially at \$8.99), especially for the multiple perspectives it brings on those who feign getting beat up, night in and night out. And there is plenty of cheering trivia—don't miss the allusion to legendary referee Johnny "Red Shoes" Dugan!



Beat the Champ by The Mountain Goats

NEW HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORT BUTTONS TO GRACE LAPELS

Keep your eyes open for the new "Save Louisiana Higher Education" buttons! They will be popping up on the lapels, purses, and shirt pockets of educational professionals around the state. The latest idea to emerge from the Alexandria Summit Meetings, the buttons will begin the process by which expressions of care for precious institutions of higher learning enter the visual and even fashion space of all citizens. More to come on the button campaign in the fall!

**SAVE LOUISIANA
HIGHER EDUCATION**

Pro-higher education button to pop up around Louisiana

KIRYLO-CREATED RESOLUTION ATTRACTS CONCURRING LEGISLATION

In the latest chapter in the long novel about his service as a champion of free thought and of the advancement of higher education,



Southeastern Louisiana University Faculty Senate President James Kirylo recently created a resolution calling not only for full funding for higher education but also urging institutional and system leaders to fight together for full funding for the entire Louisiana higher education project. Kirylo's simple and sensible resolution, which addresses both the funding needs of campuses and the urgency of not cutting, but extending higher education throughout one of America's least educated states, has already prompted concurring [resolutions](#) from the faculty senates at LSU A&M; Southern University in Shreveport; McNeese State University; and, in a varied form that also embraces the [Legislator's Pledge](#), the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. These and other resolutions that are still in development will be delivered to the legislature in a bundle by way of showing the solidarity among faculty members statewide.

NEGOTIATING NICHOLS AMPS UP TRAVEL COVERAGE

Faculty everywhere know that they have a friend in Brian Nichols, the easygoing and yet benevolently sly IT Services chief and risk management expert on the LSU A&M campus. Recognizing that faculty spend abundant time afield, Nichols has organized an automatic travel insurance offering that will provide a range of services, especially those related to overseas medical emergencies. Available to



those on the LSU A&M campus and presumably eventually on all LSU campuses, the insurance will provide needed security and logistics to those who travel outside America's shores. Activation of the insurance requires an assortment of actions prior to travel, so be sure to read the [instructions](#) before embarking for earth's four rounded.

PAR MOVES TO COMMERCIALIZE BOARD OF REGENTS SUPPORT FUND

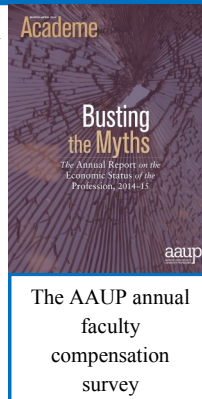
Even in the darkest economic days, Louisiana educators could make recourse to a variety of funds to assist in the furtherance of whatever research might be possible while navigating financial straits. There was always some modest emolument emerging from this or that transgression, whether a tobacco industry legal settlement or a structured payout resulting from federal appropriation of mineral resources or proceeds from the lottery. Despite its ubiquitous greed, the Louisiana business community often looked the other way, figuring that these crumbs and morsels would tamp down discontent among publicly-minded intellectuals. In its [latest report](#), optimistically entitled *Innovation in Louisiana: Maximizing Investment in University Research to Promote a Knowledge-Based Economy*, the Public Affairs Research Council (PAR) discards even the veneer of respect for comprehensive curricula and altruistic research. The suggestions in this devious composition include a call for the revamping of the Board of Regents Support Fund (BoRSF) so as to ensure that not a penny is used to support the arts or other programs that serve purposes other than economic gain; a recommendation that the state appoint an innovation czar to guide higher education away from pure knowledge enhancement and toward the production of commercially viable inventions; and the creation of a “knowledge-based economy” in which, presumably, the item at the base, knowledge, will bear the load while the superstructure of business draws the profit and praise. The report abounds in phraseology such as references to “innovation” that is “oriented not just to research but to real-world applications,” as if “just research” were a trivial pursuit.



PAR attacks pure research

AAUP RELEASES ANNUAL COMPENSATION SURVEY

Good news has come from Washington in the form of an announcement that the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has released its [annual faculty compensation survey](#). Entitled *Busting the Myths*, this document provides useful information for those engaged either in negotiations with administrators or in dialogue with politicians. Rich in statistical detail but also enhanced by clear explanatory narratives, the report erodes an array of “myths” that have enabled the diminution of faculty compensation. Clear and convincing arguments undercut a variety of urban legends: that professorial salary is responsible for the increase in the cost of college education; that tenure drives up wages and costs; that “disruptive change” requires market-driven salary erosion; and that faculty benefit packages are excessive. Free to anyone with Internet access, the survey shows everyone, including legislators, that the favorable economic impact of a strong and well-compensated faculty.



The AAUP annual faculty compensation survey

LSU Libraries Offers E-journal Hosting



LSU Libraries recently implemented an online journal hosting platform and offers support for journal publishing for LSU faculty members who edit journals.

Open Journal Systems (OJS) is a journal management and publishing system with more than 6500 installations worldwide. For each hosted journal, the platform offers a website, a search interface, a graphic identity, reader notifications, online submissions, online editorial workflow, exporting tools, analytics, and more.

The Libraries will assist LSU faculty members who are establishing journals or wish to migrate existing e-journals. Hosting a journal on the LSU Libraries OJS platform will support wider dissemination of scholarship and advance the journal and the university.

Interested LSU faculty members should contact Sigrid Kelsey, Director of Communications and Publications, at skelsey@lsu.edu for information.

MONTHLY MOVIE REVIEW

BOYHOOD (Richard Linklater, 2014)

Reviewed by Carl Freedman (2015)

There are few current filmmakers about whom I have more mixed feelings than Richard Linklater. *Waking Life* (2001) and *A Scanner Darkly* (2006) are among the supreme masterpieces of motion-capture—a technique in which footage is shot of live actors, whose images are then transformed into animated ones—and both succeed, I think, better than any other films have ever done, in conveying on screen the vision and spirit of Philip K. Dick, one of the greatest of all modern American novelists. Interestingly, *Waking Life*, which is not based on any particular Dick text, does so perhaps even more brilliantly than *A Scanner Darkly*, which is based on the well-known novel of that title. But both achieve a truly Dickian ethos for which one will search in vain in the Dick adaptations by such eminent directors as Ridley Scott (*Blade Runner*, 1982), Paul Verhoeven (*Total Recall*, 1990), or Steven Spielberg (*Minority Report*, 2002).

I am much less enthusiastic, though, about Linklater's live-action films. *Bernie* (2011) strikes me as one of the better dark comedies of recent years (and it is very dark indeed), but most of the films on which Linklater has made his reputation tend to leave me cold. *Slacker* (1991), his first work to garner significant attention, is technically somewhat innovative, but never solves its basic aesthetic problem: namely, how to make interesting art out of the tedious talk of tedious people. The thing can be done—Jane Austen's portrayal of Miss Bates in *Emma* is perhaps the classic example—but *Slacker* doesn't do it. Its sequel, the high-school comedy *Dazed and Confused* (1993), is more entertaining; but, as high-school comedies go, I would rather re-watch Amy Heckerling's splendid films like *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982) or *Clueless* (1995)—the latter, as it happens, an adaptation of *Emma*. The "Before" trilogy—*Before Sunrise* (1995), *Before Sunset* (2003), and *Before Midnight* (2013)—for which, at least prior to *Boyhood*, Linklater was most widely known, seems to me Linklater at his very worst. All three movies star Julie Delpy and Ethan Hawke, and all offer nothing much beyond interminable, pointless, repetitious, utterly tiresome conversation between a moderately boring character (Delpy) and a completely boring one (Hawke).

Boyhood has been widely praised as Linklater's supreme masterpiece to date and a film that ought to win over even those who have been dubious about his earlier work. It is probably more famous for the way it was made than for its actual content. The film focuses on 12 years (evidently 2002 to 2014) in the life of a fairly typical lower-middle-class white American boy named Mason (Ellar Coltrane), taking him from the age of six, in elementary school, to the age of 18, as he goes off to college. It is basically a film about family, and also central to the story are Mason's older sister Samantha (Lorelei Linklater) and their divorced parents Olivia (Patricia Arquette) and Mason Senior (Ethan Hawke). Films that span a decade, or even many decades, are of course not uncommon. But the extraordinary thing here is that Linklater actually made the film over a 12-year period, the cast and crew getting together annually for a few weeks of shooting at a time. To some degree, this procedure was required by practical necessity: professional make-up artists can easily age adult actors 12 years, or much more, but there are not (yet) any cinematic tricks that can make a child of six seem to be a young man of 18. Yet sheer practicality does not seem to be the whole story. In a decision that might well earn the respect of Werner Herzog (who once had a large ship moved over a considerable land mass so that he could film a large ship being moved over a considerable land mass), Linklater has chosen to convey the passage of time partly by embedding in his movie the actual passing of 12 years in the lives of everyone making the film.

This decision entailed considerable risk. Actors cannot be contractually bound for such a period of time, so Linklater had to trust that his people would continue to turn up, year after year, regardless of whatever else might be happening in their lives and their careers—and without suddenly demanding a prohibitively high increase in pay. (In fact, Lorelei Linklater, the director's daughter, did at one point become bored with the project, and asked her father to kill off her character. But he explained that this would

be too sensational an event for the film he had planned, and she managed to rekindle her interest in finishing the movie.) Then too, anything can happen in 12 years—anyone can be hit by the proverbial bus—and Linklater and Hawke are said to have made an agreement that, should Linklater die before the movie was done, Hawke would take over the directorial duties. In the event, however, *Boyhood* was completed without undue incident.

So there is no question but that, in making his latest film, Linklater has done a rare, risky, and difficult thing. But the fact that a thing is rare, risky, and difficult does not necessarily mean that it is worth doing in the first place. Does the finished product here justify the 12 years of labor that went into its making?

Once again, my feelings are divided—though more positive than usual with regard to Linklater's live-action work. Linklater's refusal to kill Samantha, despite his own daughter's pleas, points to one of the more interesting aspects of the film as we viewers experience it. Hollywood has so accustomed us to expect on-screen "action" (in the crudest sense of the term) that—even when the genre is not adventure thriller but fairly naturalistic slice-of-life drama—we find ourselves subliminally expecting sensational, life-altering things to happen. In *Boyhood*, for instance, there is a lot of driving—the film is set in Texas, and the characters move around a good deal—and, especially when the novice drivers Samantha or Mason Junior are behind the wheel, we often suspect that lives are about to be upended by a car crash. But no. The film frustrates such expectations, and motor vehicles are driven safely to their destinations, just as they usually are in real life. Even the more common and more positive milestones of life tend to be elided. Samantha and Mason pass from prepubescent innocence to their sexually active teenage years, but one sees the transition gradually and casually, as an ordinary real-life observer would. There are no harrowing, comical, or "very special" scenes in which the loss of virginity is dramatized—though there is a nice scene in which Mason Senior, while sharing a snack with his two kids, tries to impress upon the hideously embarrassed Samantha how important it is that her (evidently first) boyfriend should use condoms.

Indeed, Linklater seems particularly concerned to avoid most of the usual Hollywood clichés of courtship and romance. In one early scene, Olivia (the mother), who has gone back to college in the hope of being able to secure a better job, introduces the young Mason to her (male) psychology professor—whose interest in Olivia is clearly not confined to academic matters. The predictable Hollywood move would be to follow with a scene of the two adults at dinner in a moderately expensive restaurant, both perhaps feeling a bit awkward about professor-student dating. But, in the actual next scene, the marriage has already taken place, and the children of the blended family are preparing to welcome their parents back from a European honeymoon. Or again: Mason's most serious high-school romance is with an attractive, personable, apparently like-minded girl named Sheena (Zoe Graham). They meet at a party, and engage in the sweet, flirtatious, slightly shy banter of two teens who know each other somewhat and would like to know each other better. The next time we see them, they are an established couple, who take weekend trips together and are planning to attend the same university. Nor does the all but inevitable break-up take place in front of the cameras. Sheena, having grown bored with the soft-spoken, artistically inclined Mason, and having acquired a new boyfriend, a college lacrosse player, attempts to engage Mason in a bitter, frustrating conversation about whether they should nonetheless use their pre-purchased tickets to attend the high-school prom together (the lacrosse player will be out of town that weekend).

—Continued on page 20



Those who occasionally read the Old Testament from the Christian sacred books know that few leaders had more to say or more to offer than good old bullrush-buoyed Moses but that few historical figures experienced greater anxiety about public speaking. When not busy parting the Red Sea, Moses turned to Jahweh him/her/itself for both speech therapy and presentation planning assistance. Recognizing that professors abound in knowledge but may be tongue-tied when addressing legislators, faculty advocacy group LSUnited has developed an inventory of talking or writing points for those who address lawmakers. By way of advancing faculty engagement with our political leaders, the *Newsletter* herewith reproduces the slate of suggested comments. Not all will apply to every writer, but there is much of value here for everyone:



I am an active voter / in your district.

I challenge you to SAVE LSU.

I'm worried about [or insert college name in the possessive] future if the budget for higher ed is cut.

My education matters: this degree is important to me and my future employers.

I need to be able to take the courses I need to take; I do NOT need to be worried about my classes or faculty or programs being cut.

Louisiana makes it harder to attract business and investment when the state doesn't invest in its own people.

I am worth investing in: do not cut my college's funding.

I urge you to stand with Louisianians who know how important this school is.

When election season comes around, I will remember what happens to LSU.

I grew up in Louisiana, and I would like to stay in Louisiana.

My teachers are leaving and I don't want to have to decide that I should too.

I believe in public education at every level for the citizens of this state.

I want my state to provide the same educational opportunities other states do.

HIGH COURT PRIES OPEN SUPERVISORS' STASH OF SECRETS

The Louisiana Supreme Court ruled on April 17th that the LSU System must release the names of the four finalists for the position of President-Chancellor, a position filled in 2013 with the appointment of F. King Alexander to the prestigious post. Relentless in their resolve to hide their actions from the constituencies that they represent, the Supervisors expended large sums (in legal fees) to protect already overpaid candidates from the presumed (but not demonstrated) damage that they would suffer were they exposed as opportunity-seekers. Predictably, the group of fifteen men and one woman who make decisions for a professional cadre that abounds in diversity came up with an all-male applicant pool, shortly after the disclosure of which LSU's media relations chief, who happens to be female, proclaimed that secret searches were beneficial. Although the Supervisors continue to try to portray the court decision as a victory owing to the reluctance of the court to compel the release of the names of all the applicants, the fact remains that even Louisiana's court system found the secret source so contemptible that it smashed open at least a small hole in the Kremlin wall. And, once again, the mythology that candidates must be protected by secrecy has been dismantled, for not one of the finalists for the position has lost his job.



FINANCIAL WELLNESS SEMINAR DRAWS FULL HOUSE

In 2013, the LSU Faculty Senate partnered with the Campus Federal Credit Union and with Thirty North Investments to provide faculty members with a pair of "financial wellness" seminars. Those seminars were designed to provide university personnel, who receive little guidance from retirement fund providers, with the tools required to improve their overall financial status. On April 16th, Campus Federal Credit Union and Thirty North provided a follow-on mini-course that might be described as "Financial Wellness 2: Managing your Investments." During the standing-room-only seminar, the Thirty North Investments team reviewed the full range of financial behaviors that can mislead naive investors and laid out clear and concise strategies for portfolio development. Included in the event was a review of the different types of investment and their pertinence to persons in different roles and at different stages of life. Many thanks to Campus Federal Credit Union and to Thirty North for the generous sharing of their expertise.



Thirty North CEO Suzanne Mestayer addresses the financial wellness seminar

One of the most amazing—and amazingly sad—aspects of Louisiana academic life is the bizarre neglect of one of the most populous areas in the entire south, the far southeastern quadrant of Louisiana. One can only wonder how a metroplex that stretches all the way from New Orleans to the Florida Parishes can leave its great institutions all teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. That inverse trend toward melancholy disengagement was dramatically reversed at the end of April by the wonder-worker of I-12, James Kirylo, the dynamic Faculty Senate President of dignified but battered Southeastern Louisiana University. Kirylo organized a gigantic double panel that attracted media coverage from Hammond Action News 17 and that drew the attention of a veritable swarm of bloggers. The first of Kirylo's panels—populated by columnist and investigative reporter Bob Mann; political consultant Mary-Patricia Wray; Hammond Council Member Lemar Marshall; *Louisiana Voice* blogger Tom Aswell; and Louisiana Budget Project campaigner Steve Spires—addressed the origins and the solutions for the budget crisis *per se*, as a matter of general public policy. The second panel—which featured activist-blogger Dayne Sherman; LSU Faculty Senate President Kevin L. Cope; Southern University Shreveport Faculty Senate President Sonya Hester; Southern University Faculty Senate Vice-President Albert Samuels; and LSU student leader Justin DiCharia—focused on the specific crisis, budgetary or otherwise, in Louisiana higher education. To top it all off, refreshments nourished the panelists and a mix of Spanish-style and soft pop live guitar music softened the intervals. Brisk discussion from a burgeoning crowd took the panels far into the night as rapid-fire questions stimulated what was probably the greatest amalgam of education-oriented political talent in Louisiana history. Thanks to the media savvy of Kirylo and his consultants, both panels are available for viewing online, with one [link](#) for the first, budget-oriented panel and a second [link](#) for the second, education-specific discussion. What is even more remarkable is that Kirylo conducted the event not in some shabby university auditorium, but in nothing short of a basilica borrowed from the Catholic Student Center and the local pastor, who, for the evening, was declared the de facto father of learning. It seems that the perennially absent father of Southeastern, John Crain, had no inclination to participate in this great moment for Louisiana education (and for faculty empowerment). Retreating to his simulated, elephant-product-free ivory tower, Crain, perhaps knowing (or maybe fearing) that evil produces good, sent Kirylo packing to a far better facility that allowed his panel to draw a much larger audience than it would had it taken place in the SELU precincts.



Robert Mann and David Ramsey at the Hammond Forum



Higher Education Panel Hammond - March 2015

LEE, LSU LEAD EXPORT CONTROL REFORM

Academic life is full of unexpected perils. The latest danger to surface from the submarine realm of legal terrors is the federal crack-down on export controls. New, security-inspired laws and procedures establish firm and inflexible limits on the kinds and sophistication of intellectual property that may be spread to foreign shores. Today, there is at least one professor in Tennessee who now languishes in prison for inadvertently releasing ingenious software to foreign firms. Aware of the danger to faculty, LSU go-to research and IP expeditor Matthew Lee led the charge to create a policy to protect faculty from the aforementioned unfamiliar dangers. After the first draft of the new policy fell victim to legal professionals, who, per customary and profitable practice, created a policy that only professional litigators could understand, obliging Lee took down the Sherman of over-professionalization by creating a composite faculty-administration committee to devise a new and comprehensible export control policy. The result is a legally rigorous but colloquially interpretable policy that will set a standard for campuses nationwide. Congratulations to Matt, Bill Daly, Fabio Del Piero, and the other members of Lee's committee for a job well done.



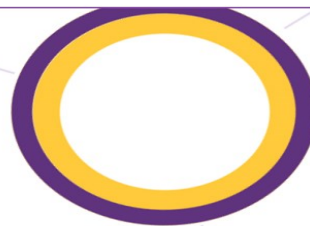
HAMMOND EDUCATORS MOUNT ENSEMBLE SUIT AGAINST OGB

Despite the repeated discovery that not only does crime not pay but that lawyers and settlements run up expenses, cheating, or the expectation that cheating can succeed, remains a strong suit of those with minimally checked power. The Jindal administration discovered that fiduciary monkeyshines can cost a pretty penny when an ensemble of Hammond educators, including renowned blogger Dayne Sherman, filed a lawsuit against the Office of Group Benefit (OGB). Citing the leakage of a half-billion dollars in surplus money and the artificial depression of premiums that led to that seepage, the litigants in the suit have alleged a violation of OGB's duty to administer insurance plans prudently and have also asserted that changes in premiums and benefits occurred outside of proper procedures and without adequate public comment.



Dayne Sherman joins litigants against OGB

FACULTY FOCUS WORKSHOP



Implementing Active Learning in Large Classes: Discover What Works for You

June 1, 2015 - 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
at the Shell Tutorial Center • 141 Middleton Library

Gain Insight from LSU Faculty:

Sean Lane,
Department of Psychology
Wanda Hargroder,
School of Kinesiology

Marybeth Lima,
Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering
Jeffrey Anderson,
Ohio University and & McGraw-Hill Education

Visit the faculty tab at lsu.edu/cas for registration and more information.

Lunch is sponsored by McGraw-Hill Education.



CENTER *for* ACADEMIC SUCCESS

LSU

—Continued from page 17

The main point of this unusual mode of cinematic storytelling seems to be that life is most consequentially made up of quite ordinary moments, both good and bad; that significant life change takes place not in sudden or sensational fashion, but gradually and almost imperceptibly; and that there is not much overlap between the sort of incidents that really define who we are and the sort that most Hollywood moviemakers choose to show on screen. The final shot (which Linklater has said he planned very early in the 12-year production process) is profoundly typical. It is Mason's first day at college, and he has chosen to skip an orientation mixer in order to go hiking in a spectacular rocky, mountainous area of rural Texas with three people he has just met—his new roommate, the roommate's girlfriend, and an exceptionally beautiful friend of hers. The friend provides Mason with a psychedelic drug to enhance the experience of rugged nature, and we leave the two of them sitting quietly together, chatting and gazing at each other. What might follow? Passionate sex? The beginning of a long-term love relationship? A drug-fueled spiritual awakening? A terrifying bad trip? A fatal or crippling accidental fall among the rocks? Any—or all—of these are possibilities, but Linklater chooses none of them. He prefers the integrity of the simple moment as it is, with two new friends enjoying the scenery and each other, and without attaching any spectacularly “big” meaning to it.

The low-key naturalism of *Boyhood* also enables Linklater unobtrusively to sketch out certain long-term life patterns. The contrasting trajectories of the two parents over the 12 years of the film make for an interesting example. At the beginning, Mason Senior, though amiable and well-motivated, is hopelessly immature: a restless, overgrown hippie and would-be musician who is quite unsuited to the responsibilities of marriage and fatherhood. Olivia, by contrast, is a hard-working single mom, determined to do her best for her little family under trying economic circumstances. But the 12 years change them both. Mason Senior, without losing a certain bohemian flair, keeps music as a hobby while acquiring a steady job in the insurance industry; in time, he happily remarries and starts a second family with his new wife. At the end, he has a good relationship with his two older children, especially his son and namesake, despite having not lived with them for nearly all of their lives that they can remember. Olivia earns an advanced degree and gets a good position as a college teacher.

But she makes two disastrous, short-lived marriages along the way (the initially affable psychology professor turns out to be an authoritarian and physically violent alcoholic), and, at the end, the prospect of an empty nest fills her with despair at what now seems to her an ultimately empty life. In perhaps the film's most shocking scene, just after Mason has graduated from high school, Olivia breaks down and verbally lashes out at her son for his perfectly natural and appropriate excitement at being about to leave for college—perhaps as though she is recycling some of the abuse that her second and third husbands inflicted on her.

So *Boyhood* largely succeeds in conveying the rhythms, patterns, and ironies of life in a way that very few movies even attempt. Yet this strength is not unrelated to Linklater's besetting weakness, which is the general besetting weakness of much naturalism: the intrinsic insignificance of at least some of the material. Though *Boyhood* does not suffer in this way to anything like the degree that *Slacker* or the “Before” trilogy do, even in this film there are too many scenes that are relatively pointless and dull. It could have been a stronger, more engaging movie if perhaps half an hour (a Harry Potter book launch party here, a Houston Astros game there) had been cut from its 165 minutes. Some would defend the weaker moments of naturalistic art by saying that they are, after all, true to life; but this is fundamentally to misunderstand the nature of art itself. As Aristotle explained long ago—and as Georg Lukács, the most important philosopher and literary critic of the twentieth century, elaborated in his theory of realism—the proper goal of fiction is not to offer a literal account of life as it is lived on an everyday basis but to concentrate, display, and illuminate the general patterns of life and thereby produce for the viewer (or reader) an experience more meaningful and interesting than any mere reflection could be. *Boyhood* does this to a greater extent than Linklater's earlier live-action work: but not to a sufficient extent to make a completely satisfactory film. It is said that “Boyhood,” with its implicit global pretensions, was not Linklater's first choice as the title of his film—that he preferred the simpler and humbler “12 Years,” but was prevented from using that phrase by the huge success of Steve McQueen's *12 Years a Slave* (2013). “12 Years” would, indeed, better convey what *Boyhood* actually has to offer: an ambitious and often rewarding attempt to capture the progress of ordinary life over a duodecade, but with a bit too much dead wood. Much happens over 12 years of anyone's life that is simply not worth representing on screen.