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Faculty Senate Newsletter, April 2016

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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Faculty Senate Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Among the axioms endorsed by literary people is the assumption that comedy coincides with confidence. Those who laugh are those who rise above worry: those who feel superior to or at least capable of dealing with whatever situation is amusing them. Similar statements could characterize a less jolly mentality, skepticism. Those who doubt are those who delay urgency, who allow time for reflection prior to action, emergency or otherwise.

Old-timers can probably remember an era when well-funded universities encouraged skepticism. In the days of yore, professors routinely doubted that everyone who entered college would enjoy what the new wave of remedial educators calls "success." Although American academe has always suffered from fashions, frenzies, and fervor, it is only in recent times that the expectation of career advancement became overtly associated with the rejection of skepticism: with being a "team player" or with being "committed" or with doubt-reducing "leadership" over an agreeing group or with quick adoption of undoubted "innovation."

The curious, indeed dangerous inversion of skepticism that characterizes not only angry political movements but also modern universities affects almost every aspect of academic life. The profusion of university team-branded and logo clothing and trinkets, the sale of which has expended geometrically in recent years, expresses a new tribalism—a new if disguised aversion to heterodoxy; the lack of any significant critique at the campus administrative level of university athletics licenses aggressive gender stereotyping (how many doubters have come forward to question the segregation built into football, with its showcased cheerleaders and "Golden Girls" with its fully male teams?); the "strategic plans" that every university prepares never even admit the possibility of doubt; the mantras of "workforce development" and the rise of heavily funded "career services" centers certainly do little to encourage doubt about capitalism or any other economic system; the gigantic effort to raise money from donors or from granting agency depends on the concealing of weaknesses, for no funding party wants to doubt the positive outcome of a donation; the candidate profile and "opportunity" descriptions developed by executive search firms suggest that campus leaders never entertain doubt but are driven by delirious optimism; and, again, legislation such as the LAGRAD Act, with its emphasis on completion of degree requirements, epitomizes the new fideism: the notion that *thou shalt not doubt anyone or anything*.

Students of skepticism—readers of Plato; Montaigne; Descartes; Locke; Hume; or even Shaw—recognize that doubt serves a hygienic purpose. In the words of Dr. Samuel Johnson, it clears the mind of rubbish. It sweeps away debris disguised as artistry; it recognizes the pervasiveness or at least the inevitability of fraud, failure, and fragility. The practice of skepticism demonstrates that competent, thinking people can hold back consent until they can make reasonable estimates concerning the truthfulness or viability of proposals. Skepticism is also a characteristic of the public world and a favorable influence on the common good, for its favorite target is fallible individualities, whether the individual actor or the individual assertion or the individual ideology. The drive to privatize universities by making them increasingly important on occasional, anecdotal, and individualized support represents an attack on skepticism and thereby an incursion on academic freedom. Better to accept the public burden of a little more tax in exchange for a lot more thinking room than to lunge after private money or otherwise embrace private prerogatives at the expense of dignified doubting.



Kevin Cope

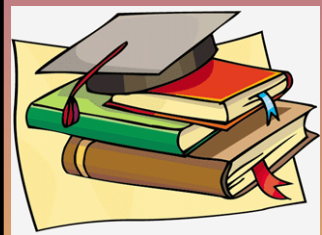
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Higher Education Headliner



Dr. Tina Holland



Dr. Tina Holland, a native of the South Jersey Shore and Atlantic City, graduated from the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, and became an officer in the Marine Corps before an injury and a desire to start a family led her to pursue a career in the civilian sector. In the Marines, she was an intelligence officer and decided that she wanted to continue in this career outside of the military, but for a group such as the Naturalization and Immigration Services (NIS) or the State Department. As an undergraduate, she had specialized in Latin American Security Affairs, and she continued to specialize in this area as a graduate student, pursuing a Master's degree in International Relations for Latin America at the University of San Diego. While pursuing this degree, she decided to try subbing at the local University of San Diego High School, where she could teach math, Spanish, and other subjects. Her military background served her well and gave her classroom management skills that non-militarily trained individuals might not possess. Her love of teaching began there, and she found a new way to serve.

Even in civilian life, she still carries herself with a proud military-like demeanor and the measured sincerity of an officer who believes that service is the most important component of her job. As President of Our Lady of the Lake College (LOL) in Baton Rouge, a Franciscan institution, Holland draws both on her military experience and the unique holistic pedagogical practices of Catholic education generally, and Franciscan educational models specifically, to produce a clear and singular vision for her institution's place in the community and in the world. "You learn in order to do," she says of her educational and executive philosophy, "not in order to be. I didn't learn to *be* the president of a university. I learned to *serve* and to *lead*, and eventually, I became the president of the university." This commitment to service – to country, to community, to each individual student – animates every aspect of Holland and the way that she conceives of LOL College's mission. Even taking the position at LOL College grew out of the idea of service. Originally set to retire from her position at Holy Cross in Notre Dame, Indiana, she received a call that she was on a short list to be president of Our Lady of the Lake College. Once she visited the college, she knew that this was a special place, and she wanted to help make the college the best that it could be.

And her leadership comes at perhaps the single most significant time in the history for her institution. Should the

proposed Baton Rouge Health District come to fruition, it would encompass a large swathe of Baton Rouge south of I-10 from Bluebonnet in the east to the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in the west and beyond. LOL College could find itself literally at the center of one of the most important economic and research engines in the region. Such developments would bring many changes to LOL College, including an entirely new campus.

The college is currently housed in a pell-mell amalgam of mismatched buildings, and Holland beams when she describes the green spaces and architectural logic that would connect the new campus and better foster a learning community. She envisions residence halls and other trimmings of a traditional university. Yet, she also draws inspiration from the idea that the new campus would be in the center of a bustling environment. "That's very Franciscan," she says, "to be in the community and to learn by serving others." The only problem would be if the college needed to expand and grow; then there would be limited space to do so. At the same time, Holland wants to keep the student body population low so that students can get as much attention from instructors as possible. As a private religious institution, LOL's philosophy is different from large public universities, which at times can seem more interested in an industrial model of education that views students as economic units and the university as a factory churning educated citizens out into the workforce as quickly as possible, rather than treating each student as an individual with individual needs that need to be met on an individual level. Holland wants to ensure that the students that graduate from LOL College are well-rounded individuals who believe in the same ethic of service that drives her, and that they have a similar carism to that of the Franciscan monks.

As a mother of four successful children, a former officer in the Marine Corps, a former mathematics instructor, a higher education administrator, and now a president of a college which has expanded to include new doctoral programs under her watch, Dr. Holland has indeed lived a life of service and provides a positive role model for how to live just such life.

— By Amy Catania and Nate Friedman

KOUBEK SETS EXAMPLE, OPENS OFFICE DOORS

In most institutions, the Office of Academic Affairs looks and acts like some bizarre combination of an Umberto Eco novel and the old way-out-west situation comedy, *F Troop*. Externally resembling a cavalry-style stockade but internally resembling a connect-the-dots puzzle, the standard Office of Academic Affairs baffles visitors with labyrinthine arrays of Office-Depot-originated partitions, all guarded by prickly subalterns, sentries who, in turn, function as the human equivalents as the sharp points atop those long poles comprising a Custer-style garrison. All in all, the typical Provost's office seems only a little more accessible than the leftovers from the Roswell flying saucer crash. This trend toward ego-inflating isolation has been reversed by trendsetting LSU Provost Richard "Rick" Koubek, who has created early morning open-door [office hours](#) for all comers. In a move that has never been tried at LSU or, for that matter, at any other campus in the state, Koubek has imitated the archons of ancient Athens by allowing for input from anyone in the *agora*. The *Newsletter* staff hopes that Provosts around Louisiana will follow imitate this laudable precedent. Congratulations to Provost Koubek for his willingness to hear every voice in the Republic of Letters.



MULTI-LEVEL LEGISLATOR TONY GUARISCO RIPS ATHLETIC FOUNDATIONS

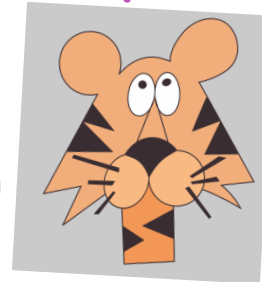
Long-term residents of Louisiana always enjoy retelling the strangely wonderful tale of Tony Guarisco, the most multi-level legislator in the history of governance. Guarisco served first as a member of the Louisiana legislature, then, in a move that would make Cincinnatus (the Roman general who went back to his humble plow following his duties as a military commander and head of state) jealous, returned to school and won election as a representative in his campus student government association. Guarisco, a frequent guest on the statewide *Jim Engster Show*, is now back in action with a blog. Guarisco's latest release exposes the athletic foundations that run roughshod over every campus and that drain away philanthropy that could go to the support of academic pursuits. The column also parses the tumbling balance of power in which campus leaders are coming up short with respect to control of athletic programs. The Guarisco blog is available for free [online](#).



Tony Guarisco, the Cincinnatus of Louisiana, undresses athletic foundations

KING STYLE REPORT CARD: NUMEROUS EXTRA CREDIT POINTS AND ONE CHRONIC PROBLEM

Past issues of the *Newsletter* have tracked the evolution of LSU President King Alexander's style. Contrary to the *Newsletter's* reputation for satiric, occasionally caustic comments, these style improvement tracking reports have been mostly complimentary and have noted steady improvements in King's ability to communicate with his audience from his craggy perch over in the Lakeshore Drive office. So it is that the *Newsletter* can award several bonus points to the highly visible yet seldom seen President for his recent multiple memoranda during the budget crisis. Written without any sugar-coating and with a steadier, somewhat less than nervous style, the communiqués from the spring budget crisis era rise to a high standard of statesmanship. Of course, the *Newsletter* being what it is, it cannot help but note the recurrence of a chronic style error. In his memorandum of March 10th, King once again resorts to the "as a Tiger" trope, claiming that "As a Tiger, you know that this place is more than a university—it's an ideal." So we appeal to King: King, remember that the analogy, "as a Tiger," doesn't explain anything (and it especially doesn't explain the character of a university); and, dear King, the faculty are clever enough not to get wrapped up in the corporate identity and branding mania, indeed (to borrow your phrase) "they know" that (a) trapping a free-ranging predator on the campus is of questionable morality and (b) sending healthy young men into an injury-ridden sport like "Tiger football" is not the appropriate work of a university. So, King, keep the good style and keep improving but, jiminy crickets, lose the "as a Tiger" thing!



FACULTY PANEL HEADLINES CLCU MEETING

Although low-profile and little seen during the off-season, few organizations do more good for higher education than CLCU, the Conference of Louisiana Colleges and Universities. Active for more than seventy years and headed, in one or another of the many years of its operation, by nearly all the legendary campus and system leaders in Louisiana, the CLCU, which brings together public and private, large and small, secular and religious, and two- and four-year institutions, is the only truly ecumenical organization for Louisiana higher education. CLCU held its annual convention in March at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center, which, of late, has become the preferred neutral ground for multi-sponsor organizations. After a somewhat formulaic keynote presentation by workforce-readiness and graduation-rate guru James Merisotis, head of the Lumina Foundation, the conference enjoyed a rollicking faculty panel. Organized by ALFS President Jim Robinson, the CLCU main-event panel included Sonya Hester from SUSLA; James Kirylo from Southeastern Louisiana University; Kevin L. Cope from LSU; and Ramona Olvera from South Louisiana Community College. Topics ranged from the advancement of foreign language education (per a question from Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph C. Rallo) to new methods of funding higher education. The crowd soared to nearly one-hundred delegates, providing the faculty panelists with the largest administrative audience they have enjoyed to date.



Faculty panel headlines CLCU

UL SYSTEM ISSUES MIDYEAR CUT PROJECTIONS

Now that the Governor and the legislature have found a way to "mitigate" (the favorite new administrative word of 2016) the effect of the budget fiscal year 2016 revenue shortfall on higher education, it is easy to forget that, owing to the under-funding of the TOPS scholarship program, a major midyear reduction has still occurred. According to a document obtained from the University of Louisiana System, the best-case scenarios called for reductions ranging between two and three million dollars at most University of Louisiana System campuses (and a cut of slightly over six million dollars at behemoth campus ULL). Those sums range between ten and twelve percent of the state appropriations to the UL System's nine campuses and system office—no small chicken change. Let us hope that the "mitigating" during the next fiscal year is a little less devastating.





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.

A.G. is on sabbatical, and we hope to welcome him back for the May addition.

CAPITOL PARK MUSEUM—UPCOMING EVENTS

Lunchtime Lagniappe!

Cultural Convergence and Shattered Myths: What's So Special about "Special Collections"

April 13, 12:00 p.m.

The terms "archives," "rare books" and "special collections" conjure up images of dusty rows of mysterious boxes and books, but this couldn't be farther from the truth. Jessica Lacher-Feldman will discuss the importance and significance of special collections libraries, with a focus on LSU Libraries Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library and just what happens in the library, why archivists and librarians do the work they do, and how it gets done. She will highlight the types of collections in the library and how this wonderful resource is available to all and the convergence of museums, libraries and archives and the shared responsibilities for cultural heritage preservation, education and access in the 21st century.

Attendees are encouraged to bring their own lunches and may come and go as their schedules require. **Free and open to the public.**

Jessica Lacher-Feldman is the head of Special Collections at Louisiana State University. She holds degrees in French, history, and library science from the University at Albany. Prior to joining LSU, she worked in special collections at the University of Alabama from 2000-2013.

Lunchtime Lagniappe!

The Frescoes of Conrad Albrizio

May 11

12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

New York-born artist Conrad Albrizio lived in the South for over 50 years working in various media, including oil, fresco and mosaic. In her new book, *The Frescoes of Conrad Albrizio*, Carolyn Bercier documents the many frescoes Albrizio created from the 1930s through the 1950s. These frescoes represent some of the most imposing, true fresco cycles ever achieved in the South. They exhibit a variety of styles and techniques and preserve many events in the rich culture and history of the area. Lunchtime Lagniappe will highlight some of these art works and will focus on one of the most monumental programs of Albrizio's career, the frescoes of the New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal.



A retired museum curator living in New Orleans, Carolyn Bercier worked at Hermann-Grima/Gallier Historic Houses and the Louisiana State Museum in New Orleans. She taught as an adjunct professor at Tulane University and Loyola University New Orleans. *The Frescoes of Conrad Albrizio* will be published by LSU Press.

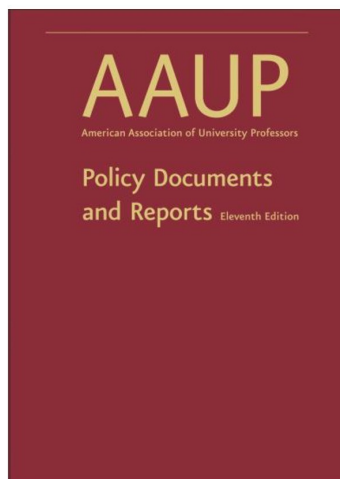
Attendees are encouraged to bring their own lunches and may come and go as their schedules require. **Free and open to the public.**

Eligible to vote in the election for SUSLA Faculty Senate President? Please consider the candidate endorsed by ALFS and its members, Sonya Hester!

SONYA D. HESTER
FOR
FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENT



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The AAUP's *Policy Documents and Reports* (widely known as the *Redbook* because of the color of its cover) presents in convenient format a wide range of policies, in some instances formulated in cooperation with other educational organizations. The current edition, the eleventh, includes basic statements on academic freedom, tenure, and due process; academic governance; professional ethics; research and teaching; online and distance education; intellectual property; discrimination; collective bargaining; accreditation; and students' rights and freedoms.

The new edition has been thoroughly updated and reorganized thematically. Brief historical introductions have been added to each section, along with an introductory essay on incorporating AAUP principles into faculty handbooks. Among the eighteen new reports included in this edition are statements on academic freedom and outside speakers, campus sexual assault, the inclusion of faculty on contingent appointments in academic governance, and salary-setting practices that unfairly disadvantage women faculty.

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LSUNITED BEGS FOR DECENT RETIREMENT WHILE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS SPLURGES ON ATHLETICS

One of the most heart-rending moments in recent administrative history occurred at the March 18th meeting of the LSU Board of Supervisors. At that event, a half dozen members of LSUnited, the independent faculty advocacy group, told compelling stories about the affect that Louisiana's stingy retirement plan exerted on their lives. Colleagues such as paleontology museum curator Judith Schiebout attempted to rouse the ever-somnolent LSU Board by forecasting an impoverished retirement fueled by pet food. Others prophesied that they would toil until they keeled over at the podium owing to the financial inability to retire. Despite these heart-rending stories, the Board proceeded without a single comment to its other business—business that included conferring a (minimum) \$1,200,000.00 salary on Assistant Football Coach Malcolm "Cam" Cameron, who prepares students for the workforce by training them to risk life and limb in order to carry a leather balloon from one end of a field to the other and then back again. This princely sum for pauper's labor could be added to the \$200,000.00 squandered at the preceding Board meeting on a statue for dribbling dropout Pete Maravich. Together, the nearly one-and-one-half million dollars blown on athletic follies would have raised the retirement contribution for the entire LSU A&M campus by one-third of a percent (which might seem a small sum but, given Louisiana's miserly retirement contributions, that supplement amounts to a six percent increase in the employer input). A video of the meeting may be viewed on the LSU Board of Supervisors' [website](#).



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COMMENTATOR KIRYLO SLAMS BILL GATES'S TEACHING PROGRAM

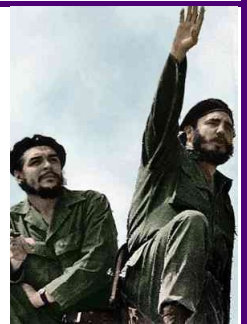
One of the most prolific Louisiana commentators on education, Southeastern Louisiana University Faculty Senate President James Kirylo, has once again reminded us of the integral relation between K–12 education (and what happens in it) and public higher education (and its commercialization). While the unhappy ensemble of the gullible applauds entrepreneur Bill Gates for his seeming humanitarian efforts around the world, Kirylo looks carefully at the efforts by the Gates Foundation to remake American education. His investigations uncover yet another effort to create a "brand" that stresses "buy in"—that discourages dissent while stressing various versions of outcomes-based, largely vocational education. Kirylo's searing but erudite column is a must-read for anyone who wants to understand the process by which indoctrinated students arrive at college with minimal critical skills and then eventually become voters committed to a naively commercial agenda. Kirylo's masterpiece of investigative commentary may be viewed [online](#).



Columnist James Kirylo
exposes the Gates
Foundation agenda

MILES FROM HOME, LSU FOOTBALL COACH APPEARS IN CUBA

Never much of an incubator for original ideas, LSU Football once again found itself in an epigonous position as LSU Football Coach Les Miles turned up in Cuba only shortly after the pioneering visit by President Barack Obama. Apparently immune to the mixed sentiment among Cuban immigrants concerning the lending of apparent legitimacy to the less-than-democratic island and apparently oblivious to academic freedom problems even in the post-Castro period, Miles busied himself distributing soccer balls in a nation desperately needing economic development, social, and technological development. Miles had previously shown his respect for academic freedom by appearing at rallies for Governor Bobby Jindal. Can no one in trademark management not compel this thoughtless coach to issue disclaimers—to make clear that his endorsements, tacit or explicit, do not represent LSU or Louisiana higher education?



Miles junket raises
question about who calls
the plays in LSU football

READER POSES A QUESTION

From reader (and world-class chemist) Luigi Marzilli the *Newsletter* has received the question: what happens to benefits and benefits-funded services (such as support for prescription medicine) if a university enters financial exigency? What backup is there for a benefit that is fiscally connected to a university, such as LSU First medical insurance? If anyone as an answer, please contact the [Newsletter](#).



9 OVER 9 PAYROLL CHANGE RANKLES EMPLOYEES

One of the peculiar misconceptions of administrators everywhere—as well as one of the more remarkable demonstrations that experience is not always the best teacher—is that every initiative will elicit enthusiasm simply because the subordinates in the administrators' offices advance their interests by cheering for whatever their chieftains support. So it is that technocrats in the upper-middle management recoiled when the "9 Over 9" plan drew more ordure than ovations. A correlate of the switch to WorkDay, the new business enterprise system for LSU A&M and eventually all the LSU campuses, the 9 Over 9 plan would convert all nine-month professional employees to nine-month salary payment plans. Currently, a large number of faculty—indeed, nearly 500—have elected to receive nine months of salary in twelve monthly installments. Announced only three months prior to its implementation without a word of consultation with any employee, the 9 Over 9 plan promised to deliver money at the time that it is earned; unfortunately, its advocates forgot to consider those employees whose checking accounts impose service charges in the absence of monthly automatic deposits (thus raising questions about how much money would have to be saved or otherwise invested during the nine months of official employment in order to make up for three months of heavy service fees). Questions also emerged with regard to the security of data and with regard to the location of storage facilities for faculty data. In a letter obtained by *Newsletter* undercover reporters, Human Resource go-to guy Gaston Reinoso attempted to deflect criticism by suggesting that immediate delivery of wages would "empower faculty" to manage finances, meet emergencies, and otherwise respond to special circumstances—an attempt at palliation that left some faculty members wondering how the removal of an option could increase "empowerment." At press time, LSU Faculty Senate officials had scheduled conferences with managers from the Campus Federal Credit Union and from LSU HRM in an attempt to find solutions to this unexpected onrush of problems.



LOUISIANA SETS RECORD FOR CANDIDATES FOR AAUP NATIONAL OFFICE

Each year at this time, the AAUP (American Association of University Professors) conducts elections for an assortment of offices, including elections for seats on the all-important national Governing Council. Louisiana academicians may rejoice that our state has apparently set a record for sending the greatest number of candidates into the annual electoral competition. Among the candidates, whose campaign statements and biographies may be viewed [online](#), are Leslie Bary of the University of Louisiana Lafayette and Alvin Burstein of Southeastern Louisiana University, who are running for the open seat in District V, and Sonya Hester of Southern University Shreveport, who seeks election to one of the at-large Council seats. Given that LSU Faculty Senate President Kevin L. Cope already holds a Council seat for District V, Louisiana and its campuses have an opportunity to exert formidable influence over the future of the AAUP. *Newsletter* readers who belong to the AAUP are urged to review the candidates' credentials and to cast votes (according to AAUP procedures).



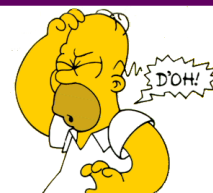
SUSLA Faculty Senate President is among those seeking national AAUP office



ULL faculty leader Leslie Bary is among three Louisiana colleagues seeking election to AAUP council

SOUTHEASTERN BLOGGER KURT CORBELLO DEBUNKS HIGH PER CAPITA MYTH

Southeastern Louisiana University blogger and politics expert Kurt Corbello has checked in with a new column in which he debunks the myth that Louisiana spends unusually high amounts per capita on its people and projects. The high per-capita figure is often deployed to suggest that state agencies, including higher education, could sustain even more cutting and trimming. According to Corbello, much of the data supporting this theory fails to pass basic validity and may emanate from dubious sources. Enjoy Corbello's enlightening article [online](#).



ASPHALT AUTHORITY JEFF CAMPBELL SCORES WIN WITH FIELDHOUSE-STADIUM PROJECT

Those who have spent hours or maybe even years of their lives waiting behind jammed buses on the putatively pedestrianized LSU A&M campus are now breathing an exhaust-free sigh of relief thanks to the heroic civil works accomplished by LSU parking and traffic director Jeffrey "Jeff" Campbell, under whose aegis the elaborate restructuring of the zone defined by Fieldhouse Drive, South Stadium Drive, the Electrical Engineering Department, and the co-generation plant has now reached completion. Thanks to Campbell's creative rearrangement of traffic flows, barriers, and attractively planted islands, sailing through this region of campus is now a breeze. Applause is due to Jeff for creative planning and expert implementation.



Not even the knottiest tangle of pipes can withstand Jeff Campbell's traffic redesign expertise

Lifestyle Feature

DINING ON THE APRON OF THE BIG CAMPUS

Although the *Newsletter* serves a statewide audience, it recognizes that this same statewide readership often comes to Baton Rouge, whether for academic business or for consultations, and that, while in the capitol city, even learned persons experience hunger (and not only hunger for the fruits of the intellect). Academic visitors to Baton Rouge almost always pass through or linger on the LSU A&M campus, where dining options are few and more dicey than a carrot after the julienne treatment. Both fortunately and unfortunately, the campus is surrounded by eateries: unfortunately, in that many of them regard even mediocrity as what administrators call “aspirational”; fortunately, in that the tumultuous turnover in restaurants assures that something new is always just around the corner. Since the last time that the *Newsletter* assessed near-campus dining opportunities, many restaurants have come and gone. This column will focus on five of the best new options for dining that includes serious business conversation, all of which options have emerged within the last year or two.

Closest to the bulging A&M campus, indeed within walking distance and cheek-by-jowl with the legendary Chimes restaurant, stands [Barcadia](#), perhaps the ultimate near-campus composite of student tavern, rough bar, gastro-pub, and hamburger joint. Part of a small chain that draws on urban or near urban crowds in locations such as Dallas, Fort Worth, and New Orleans, Barcadia converted the old Serrano's Cantina into a made-to-order dive—as it were, a genuine Home-Depot originated, DIY would-be rough bar. As its name, with its reference to arcades, implies, Barcadia also presents itself as partly an entertainment facility filled with assorted coin-operated games. Although these games create a certain amount of noise, they admittedly add visual interest to what is otherwise a bit of a shack. Food at Barcadia is tasty but somewhat predictable, with the usual array of hamburgers (with BBQ sauce; with peppers and jack cheese; with mushrooms and Swiss; with cheddar) and some admittedly tasty but also standard bar appetizers and snacks (fried cheese; fried pickles; cheese fries; etcetera). Likewise, Barcadia offers an artful matrix of craft beers but brews nothing of its own. Despite its down-and-dirty look, Barcadia is largely synthetic, but, as anyone who has enjoyed some Doritos or gobbled down some Twinkies knows, sometimes the synthetic strikes a chord.

A bit farther away from the LSU quadrangle is one of the best options to come along in years, [Breck's Bistro](#). Although equally synthetic with Barcadia insofar as its industrial chic plus interior and its somewhat displaced old-time mural-size photographs clearly suggest the designer's rather than history's hand, Breck's Bistro succeeds in bringing a bit of sophistication to the otherwise anonymous strip mall at the intersection of Burbank and Nicholson. Un-

like sandwich-intensive Barcadia, Breck's Bistro explores the upper and sometimes healthier end of the gastro-pub register, including in its offerings some farm-to-table-style ingredients (the smoked an honey-mustard-dressed bacon in its crispy chicken club sandwich has much merit). Certain semi-artisanal appetizers such as the delicious feta marinara with pita wedges verge on the delicious, as do lavish hamburgers, to which Breck's Bistro adds high-quality touches (including top-notch brioche buns). One or two of the salads (such as the Baja chicken bowl, with its zesty fusion of Mexican ingredients with sizzling oriental sriracha sauce) could compete for “classic” status. The overall structure of the Breck's Bistro menu is a little unbalanced. The juxtaposition of numerous pasta dishes against an array of sandwiches offers less of a contrast to than a continuation of the carbohydrate-and-protein spectrum. The full main courses seem vestigial—little more than the usual slabs of seared fish plus a steak. The skillful service at Breck's Bistro, however, more than makes up for its reluctance to become a full and genuine “bistro,” and the introduction of a brunch option seems to suggest that more explorations are anticipated.

The latest entry into the upper-end bistro market that Breck's Bistro has pioneered is [Canefield Tavern](#), an appealing and homey venue unexpectedly tucked into an ugly strip mall on Nicholson Drive from which dozens of restaurants have already come and gone. Managed by a company that directs six successful restaur-

ants in the New Orleans metropolitan area, Canefield Tavern, with its delightful, light, sunny, and homey interior (which includes some lovely refinished antique furniture), seems more likely to survive than did its numerous predecessors. The inventors of this pop-up plantation living room have devised an

excellent formula: fresh interior with morning, breakfast services (as well as lunch and dinner) coupled with a broad range of southern comfort foods, whether fried green tomatoes or fried chicken or good old catfish. In many ways, it echoes and harkens back to the old Silver Moon Café, which once offered trendy but hearty soul food just across the tracks from the present Canefield Tavern. The Canefield staff has added interest and variety by creating a huge rotating matrix of “chalkboard specials” that come and go on a daily basis, thus eliminating boredom and avoiding the routine. Better, the Canefield folks have recognized that professionals need a light but interesting lunch, hence have developed another rotating array of half-sandwich and soup-cup and half-sandwich and salad offerings. At Canefield Tavern, it is possible to experience the full range of gastro-pub offerings without spending the remainder of the afternoon asleep. And it is only a short hop down Nicholson from the LSU campus!

—Continued on page 10



HAPPY ENDING, OR, LOMBARDI LEGACY RESURRECTED

Last month, the *Newsletter* continued its lament that former LSU System President John Lombardi had inexplicably dropped off the history page of the LSU (formerly LSU System) web site. Following the publication of that story, LSU Media Relations expert Ernie Ballard, mindful of the potential for the emergence of a conspiracy theory, made contact with *Newsletter* staff and attributed the omission to a glitch in the migration of the old LSU System web site into the new One-LSU web environment. With his usual grace, good will and, precision, Ballard quickly reintroduced former President Lombardi to the [chronology of presidents](#), thereby allowing the Lombardi legacy to continue its protective hovering over succeeding presidents. Ballard has also struck a blow for sound research by ensuring the completeness and accuracy of the historical record. Next step for the former LSU System office: commissioning of a painting of former President Lombardi to hang alongside all other former LSU System Presidents (recommendation: seek a donation to pay for the painting from the football coaching staff, the salaries of same having risen with minimal public complaint during the Lombardi era).



The formerly invisible President, John Lombardi, has returned to LSU's online annals

COMMISSIONER INNOVATES WITH OVATION EPISTLE

The staff of the *Newsletter* never ceases to be surprised by the ingenuity of Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph C. Rallo. Each month, it seems, the most visible Commissioner in Louisiana history develops some new device for enhancing the strategic advantage of higher education. The latest innovation is in the panegyric mode: a *Statement from the Commissioner* released to a large mailing list that expresses thanks to all those who helped to interrupt most of the financial crisis that threatened to shut down Louisiana institutions by the end of April. Although the Commissioner's letter verges on the syrupy—it is darkly amusing that the Commissioner has figured out how to preserve good moods by saying that we are "committed to" or "focused on" an assortment of good deeds and ambitious programs without saying that we will really do them—the idea of getting the upper hand by nobly expressing thanks even as the enemies leave (or are carted out of) the arena is a good, indeed positively Roman-gladiatorial, one. Even more remarkably, the military-minded Commissioner seems to have had his finger on the button, for the somewhat less than ballistic letter hit the flew off the hard points only seconds after the close of the legislative session. Of a cartoon character from the golden age of animation it was often said, "Oh, Magoo, you've done it again," and so with the endlessly innovative Commissioner.

A statement from the Commissioner...

We remain thankful to the Governor, the administration, and the legislators of this State for their continuous efforts to mitigate proposed cuts to higher education. While there are still major budgetary challenges for the upcoming fiscal year, we are grateful that the originally proposed cuts for the current year were lessened. Higher education will remain focused on seeking significant and sustainable



Rallo scores a PR hit with a panegyric epistle



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— Continued from page 8

Just around the corner from Canefiled Tavern and across the street from old Mike Anderson's is the second location of [Caliente Mexican Craving](#), one of the best Latin options in a town where south-of-the-border food has yet to gain traction. Although it opened a few years ago, Caliente Mexican Craving has recently changed its marketing strategy, aiming to serve a full spectrum of clients during the lunch hour and the student clientele at night. The result is a venue that is lively but suitable for business conversation during the lunch hour and that provides a lot of dining-related entertainment at night. Although the service at Caliente Mexican Craving is a little bit irregular—the largely student workforce seems unable to pace the delivery of dishes so that appetizers, main courses, and desserts don't overlap—the food itself, whether the fresh salsa that comes with the free nacho chips or the wonderful Mexican eggrolls or the cleverly packaged chimichanga, is always respectable and often delectable. Curiously named after a state of mind, a craving, Caliente will

bank, in the slot formerly allocated to a Deangelo's location. Completely refurbished, the stressed and tinted concrete



plus wood interior of Your Mom's looks definitively post-Frank-Lloyd-Wright and probably more urban than Baton Rouge merits. An ingenious floor layout provides both sociability and privacy as well as a good flow for servers and other traffic. A second, upscaled location for a restaurant that has won awards from the New Orleanian exurban crowd in Hammond, Your Mom's offers an astounding array of hamburgers as well as some para-hamburger arrangements such as the inimitable patty melt. Better, Your Mom's seems to have hit on an ideal blend of hamburger meat. Tasty, juicy, and yet hearty, these patties really take a nice but discrete grill char. All of this pairs up well with expertly rendered "sides" such as the obligatory seasoned fries or beautifully delicate onion rings. There are sandwiches, too, and even a few salads, but the colossal hamburger menu is the star attraction of this surprisingly sophisticated and unexpectedly subtle "cheeseburger in paradise" environment.

In recent months, the campus-apron dining world has been expanded by more than a few culinary Columboes. Set sail for any of the aforementioned venues and enjoy a splendid business lunch!

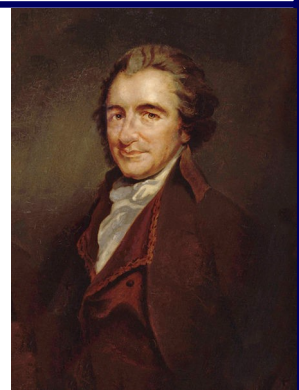


earn its moniker by eliciting a repeat desire for its admittedly tasty, if somewhat Americanized, zesty cuisine.

The surprise hit of the season is the new [Your Mom's Restaurant and Bar](#), which is tucked away in the Winn-Dixie shopping center at Brightside/Lee and Bur-

LSUA CHANCELLOR DAN HOWARD AND THE NOVUS ORDO SECLORUM

No matter how much we may hear about the religiosity of the American people and no matter how often presidential candidates may tell us that they begin each of their days on their knees (presumably in prayer, but, who knows), the most memorable feature of the American Revolution, along with its somewhat less successful French counterpart, was the grounding of a state on secular principles. For Jefferson, Hamilton, and even George Washington, ruling required no invocation of "divine right" nor any special intervention by Providence. What a joy it is to discover that this spirit of eclectic, open-minded, and yet tolerant secularism has flourished once again under central Louisiana's answer to the founding fathers, LSU Chancellor Dan Howard! In a recent report to the LSU Board of Supervisors, Howard revealed that the secondary school on the LSUA campus, somewhat quietly called "The Academy," had enjoyed great success, growing enrollments, and in important roll in stocking the regular LSUA student body. When quizzed about the apparently religious origins of "The Academy," Howard reported that he had successfully partitioned church from state—that this important pre-college operation would pass muster with Tomas Paine, Patrick Henry, and just about any freethinker who drank from a Paul Revere teapot. Jerry Lee Lewis may tell Beethoven to roll over, but James Madison had better cool it given the competition than Chancellor Howard is bringing to the halls of Enlightenment.



Educator-secularizer Thomas Paine would face formidable competition in Alexandria



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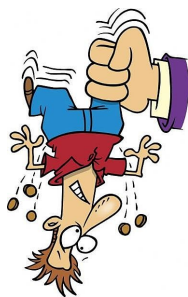
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LETTER REVEALS DEVASTATING EFFECT OF RETIREMENT PLAN

Every now and then, *Newsletter* personnel receive letters from the extended readership, a readership that now reaches across the nation and even occasionally into Europe. Most readers know the sorrowful tale of the French professors at Southeastern Louisiana University who were wrongfully terminated for no reason other than Louisiana's disrespect for its own heritage. Few, however, know that this dismissal, which remains the subject of both litigation and national controversy, inflicted devastating damage to colleagues owing to the unfairness of the retirement and leave system. For those doubting what the *Newsletter* reports about the way that higher education does its business, here is an excerpt from a letter received from a colleague at another great university.



"I, too, am a victim of the ORP. When I started at SLU in 2000, I met with HR, and was told to sign up for the ORP; which I did, not knowing what I was signing for! I was young and knew nothing about retirement! I taught at Southeastern for 12 years and was wrongfully terminated in 2010 (I'm sure you know the story). When I left in 2012, I had a meager amount of money into my ORP; which I transferred into a 403b at Auburn University. The sick leave (over 900 hours) I had accumulated were also taken away. I now have to start back at zero at Auburn, but at least, I'm contributing to a pension plan here. I feel robbed of those 12 years. I'm glad you are fighting this, and would like to help if I can. The ORP is an aberration and I hope you win your lawsuit!"

HAPPINESS BEGINS AT HOME FOR CAMPUS CHILD CARE

Those favoring home rule and those weary of perpetual outsourcing experienced elation at an unexpected turn in LSU's unexpected turn away from outsourcing for on-campus child care facilities. After an extensive search for an outside firm capable of operating a university-quality child care facility or at least of dealing with an assortment of challenges besetting the "CCC," LSU has terminated the bidding process for outside providers and has re-chartered the proposal consideration committee, assigning it the new task of guiding and evaluating a proposal from the on-campus College of Human Sciences and Education. Appreciations to Operations Associate VP Sandi Gillilan for having had the courage to make this daring call!



LSU FACULTY SENATE JOINS COALITION ON INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

A study of the command and control structure at any large, division-one university will make it clear that the tail is already wagging the dog. Most presidents and chancellors already lack the power to control athletics and athletic departments. The loss of control results from an assortment of causes ranging from management board members who cozy up to athletic directors while also maintaining hire-and-fire authority over presidents or boosters who buoy up the bloated athletic foundations on which universities have become dependent or lucrative contracts with leagues and television networks that have become too big to break. In such a situation, internal regulation quickly runs up against limits. To help in the regaining of sanity if not some degree of morality and control in athletic programs, the LSU Faculty Senate has passed a [resolution](#) in favor of joining COIA, the [Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics](#). Constituting its membership from faculty senates around the nation, COIA includes no less than sixty-four big-time sports schools in its membership roster. COIA, which holds an annual convention and which works year-round, through committees, on a vast array of athletics-related issues, also issues regular reports and studies and is a frequent voice in the news media. The LSU Faculty Senate has appointed Joan King, Secretary of the Faculty Senate, as its COIA liaison.



LSU A&M joins the COIA

FRIEDRICHS DECISION SHOWS STRENGTHENING OF FACULTY LABOR MOVEMENT

Many colleagues have experienced discouragement when attempting to organize academic labor in a state that many perceive as hostile to workers' rights and as otherwise intractable owing to "right-to-work" policies. Although the economies of California's three higher education systems (the "UC" System; the "Cal State" System; and the community colleges) vastly exceed the scale of similar educational economies in Louisiana,



statewide faculty advocates should not miss the implications of the "Friedrichs decision" (*Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*). In that decision, the United States Supreme Court, asked to decide whether educators in union "shops" who elect not to join a union must nevertheless pay fees to cover the costs of bargaining in their behalf, could only arrive at a deadlock. As a result, the obligatory fees for those not joining unions remain collectible. The decision (or, more accurately, non-decision) suggests an increasing strength on the part not only of labor but also of public employees and public-sector professionals following many years of diminishing influence. In the case of the California employees, the majority of the non-member bargaining fees go either to the AAUP (American Association of University Professors) Collective Bargaining Congress or to the SEIU (Service Employees International Union), two of the largest agencies representing academic personnel. More on the story can be found on the [AAUP website](#).

NASFAA ISSUES SUMMARY OF CANDIDATE POSITIONS

Trying to decide for whom to vote in the upcoming presidential election poses more than a few challenges to academic personnel. Does the average Joe Professor or the average Jane Professor want to vote for Bernie Sanders and instantly quadruple the size of enrollments, or would it be better to vote for Ted Cruz and expect that divine interpositions will solve the problem? To help unravel the Gordian knot of the 2016 presidential election, the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administration (NASFAA) is keeping tabs on at least the official positions of the presidential candidates with respect to higher education. The summary of candidates' views—including the views of candidates who have now exited the race—can be found [online](#).



MONTHLY MOVIE REVIEW

The People v. O.J. Simpson (FX Network, 2016)

—Reviewed by Carl Freedman

During the night of June 12, 1994, in the Brentwood section of Los Angeles, Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman were grotesquely hacked to death by someone wielding a knife. Shortly thereafter, O. J. Simpson, Nicole's ex-husband and one of America's most popular celebrities—he had been one of the most renowned football players of all time, and then, after his playing days were over, he became a commercially successful movie actor—was arrested and indicted for the double murder. Though criminal trials in the US generally last only a few minutes—or a few hours at most—Simpson's lasted nearly a year. The jury was sworn in on November 9, 1994; opening statements by the opposing attorneys began on January 24, 1995; and on October 3, 1995, the jury acquitted Simpson of both counts of first-degree murder. The case attracted more intense public attention, for a longer period of time, than probably any other single event in modern American history.

Indeed, the Simpson trial has, in retrospect, often been taken as the inaugural event of the current phase of American mass culture. For the case was a kind of “perfect storm,” combining nearly every obsession of the American public: sports, celebrity, the law, show business, money, glamor, crime, violence, race, racism, sex, and gender relations. The case had something for everyone. Sports fans wondered whether the superbly fast and graceful running back whom they had so idolized could really be guilty of such a terrible deed. True-crime aficionados reveled in every detail of the police investigation and of the cases put forward by the prosecution and the defense. African-Americans often suspected that Simpson was being framed by the notoriously racist Los Angeles Police Department. Feminists pointed to Simpson's documented history of domestic abuse and tended to see the case as mainly an instance of violence against women (it was widely assumed that Goldman was killed only because he had the bad luck to be visiting Nicole when O. J. attacked her). And nearly everyone was fascinated by the relationship between the handsome, dashing superstar and the stunningly beautiful blonde to whom he had been married.

One would not expect the entertainment industry to be slow in exploiting the dramatic possibilities of such a case, and, indeed, a made-for-television movie was broadcast not long after the trial began. But we have had to wait more than two decades for what is probably the best dramatization so far, the ten-part television series, *The People v. O. J. Simpson*, recently broadcast on the FX Network as part of its anthology show, *American Crime Story*. The series is based on the most widely praised journalistic account of the case, Jeffrey Toobin's excellent book, *The Run of His Life: The People v. O. J. Simpson* (1996); and it is worth noting that Toobin was one of the few people prominently identified with the case who emerged from it with an enhanced reputation. Though acquitted by the jury, Simpson him-

self was judged guilty by the great majority of the public and was later held legally liable for the two deaths by a civil court. He lost most of his once considerable fortune and eventually turned to armed robbery and kidnapping, offenses for which he is now serving a lengthy prison term. The lead prosecuting attorney, Marcia Clark, who had built a reputation as a kind of super-prosecutor, was derided by many for grossly bungling the case; Vincent Bugliosi, the popular true-crime writer and former Los Angeles prosecutor, wrote an entire book devoted to the proposition that Clark and her co-counsel Christopher Darden were “beyond incompetent” in prosecuting Simpson. Darden was also widely believed—whether fairly or not—to have been assigned to the case less for his prosecutorial skills than because he happened to be African-American. But the so-called “dream team” of famous lawyers defending Simpson did not fare much better. The original lead defense attorney, Robert Shapiro, a “lawyer to the stars” who specialized in plea bargaining, seemed a pompous egomaniac, hopelessly out of his depth in litigating a murder case. Shapiro's old friend F. Lee Bailey, who had once been the best-known criminal defense attorney in America, was actually disbarred and imprisoned several years after the Simpson case (though not directly because of it). It is true that Johnnie Cochran, who replaced Shapiro as Simpson's lead counsel, and who implemented the strategy that secured the acquittal, left no one in doubt as to his superb courtroom skills; but Cochran, who had previously been known mainly as a brave legal crusader against police brutality, was now thought of as a wily shyster who had enabled a double murderer to walk free. Judge Lance Ito, a hitherto respected local jurist, was for a year the most famous judge in America, better known than all the justices of the Supreme Court put together; but he revealed himself to be a celebrity-struck buffoon, unable or unwilling to keep control of his own courtroom.

Toobin, however, frequently appeared on television, offering commentary on the trial at the same time that he was covering it in print for *The New Yorker*; and, by the time the trial ended, he was probably America's most widely respected legal journalist, a status he continues to hold. Toobin serves as consultant for the FX series, which follows his writing about as closely as possible, given that not even ten full episodes could include all the detail in a meticulously researched book of nearly 500 pages. One subtle difference is that Toobin (himself a former prosecutor) repeatedly makes clear his view that O. J. Simpson was obviously guilty of the murders and that no reasonable doubt on the matter is possible. The series certainly leans in the same direction but does not explicitly commit itself to quite the same degree.

-- Continued on page 16



AAUP REPORT BLASTS ABUSE OF “FEDERAL LAW” TO PERSECUTE FACULTY

Newsletter readers who have followed the case of Teresa Buchanan are familiar with LSU President King Alexander's claim that the tough-talking professor violated what Alexander vaguely calls “federal law.” Prominent in the body of “federal law” that top-level administrators routinely invoke when overturning local policies is Title IX, a well-intended but widely-misunderstood regulation intended to enhance the equal protection clause by guaranteeing freedom from hostile environments and assorted forms of gender-based misconduct. Alarmed by the increasing frequency with which Title IX is deployed to justify violation of due process and to abridge faculty rights, the AAUP (American Association of University Professors) has issued an investigative report detailing the misapplication of Title IX and affirming that Title IX has become the administrative blunt instrument of choice. Few will be surprised to learn that, on page 24 of the online-available [report](#), LSU A&M receives special attention for its abuse of “federal law” in the mobbing of Professor Buchanan.



AAUP report blasts LSU leadership for abuse of Title IX, ADA, and mythical versions of federal law

WORKDAY UPDATE BY IT EXPERT SHERI THOMPSON

Colleagues and coworkers in the LSU community eagerly anticipate the “go live” date for Workday, the new business enterprise system that will all but eliminate the cumbersome and time-consuming paperwork and paper mail that, to date, has been involved in almost every LSU transaction or administrative function. From LSU IT Services Workday expert Sheri Thompson comes the following update.



The LSU Workday Project is still in the midst of its extensive testing phase. The project team is finalizing the end-to-end testing with a review of the features and functionality that Workday is incorporating into its product as part of its twice a year product upgrades. The final two stages of testing are user acceptance testing, which is scheduled for early to mid-April, and payroll parallel testing, which is scheduled for April through the end of May. One of the objectives of user acceptance testing will be the validation of training material developed to support LSU's July 1, 2016 go live. Any feedback from participants will be incorporated into the training materials in advance of end user training which, consistent with Workday's deployment methodology, is set to launch in late May/early June.

Impacted LSU faculty have recently been informed of a change to the academic withheld program which will afford faculty the opportunity to directly control how their pay check is distributed and give them direct access to their money year-round. As of July 1, faculty currently participating in the 12 month academic withheld program will be returned to the 9 month academic pay schedule. Workday offers faculty the opportunity to distribute their pay check into as many as four bank accounts. Action must be taken to setup an additional bank account in Workday, which can be used to distribute a portion of the pay check, effectively mimicking how the 12 month academic withheld program functioned. Instructions, videos and additional information may be found [online](#).

MCNEESE PRESIDENTIAL LETTERS SET PRECEDENT

Southwestern Louisiana has always suffered from a lack of communication. Seldom does news pertinent to higher education makes its way west of the Lafayette line; seldom do the megaphones of academic controversy mount McNeesian mouths. Which is a shame, given the extraordinary leadership shown by Vipin Menon and his many colleagues over in “Cowboy” country. Now, however, McNeese President Philip C. Williams has taken a long-jump-leap of a move forward through the issuance of a series of presidential letters to the McNeese community concerning the current budget crisis. Quietly characterizing the economic calamity underlying the special legislative session, Williams discretely but convincingly suggested to his faculty, over the course of multiple letters, that any and all citizens could write to legislators on their own time so as to report on the consequences that inadequate funding would have for institutions, for the education of the young, and for the economic health of the region and the state. Congratulations to President Williams for upgrading the discourse and for encouraging the fulfillment of civic duty in the Calcasieu-Cameron metroplex.



McNeese President Williams lights the torch of free debate

STATEWIDE MINI-COMMITTEE TO STUDY LEAVE POLICIES

The Council of Faculty Advisors, the statewide cabinet of Faculty Senate Presidents for the LSU System, is undertaking a comparative study of leave policies and practices on various campuses. The first phase of the project will address leave policies and implementations on the LSU campuses (from Shreveport to Baton Rouge) in the expectation that the study may be extended to campuses in all systems. Anecdotal evidence has suggested that leave policies seem similar across the state but that practices at campuses vary from the generous and flexible to the strict, doctrinaire, and capricious. Some colleagues around the state may receive calls and emails in the character of information requests from the committee, the membership of which includes ALFS President Jim Robinson from LSU in Eunice and LSU of Alexandria Professor Susan Sullivan.



ALFS President Jim Robinson to chair committee studying leave policies

SUSLA LEADER HESTER MOUNTS FULL-TICKET CAMPAIGN, DRAWS ENDORSEMENTS

Nothing less than the best friend of innovation, Southern University Shreveport (SUSLA) Faculty Senate President Sonya Hester has added another invention to her already formidable range of accomplishments. Recognizing that representing faculty in the modern, complex university environment is a long-term learning challenge and likewise recognizing that large-scale actions regarding statewide policy require large-scale responses by squadrons of faculty, Sonya Hester is not only running for her own third term in office but is fielding an entire slate of candidates—a cabinet—collectively denominated “Forward 2016.” Comprised of no less than six candidates (inclusive of Hester), the Forward 2016 team has already stumped around the state, appearing at an assortment of higher-education policy venues and astounding crowds with the vitality of faculty governance at Louisiana’s northernmost HBCU. Better, the Forward 2016 ensemble has garnered a portfolio of endorsements, including that of the Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates.



Sonya Hester's full-ticket campaign poster

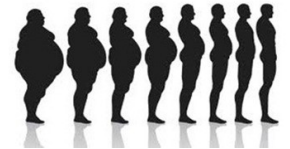
MCMILLIN “HEAT” RALLY PHOTO PORTFOLIO NOW AVAILABLE

The history of revolutionary social movements suggests that every action in the cause of reform enjoys both a life and an afterlife: a life, when it occurs; an afterlife in the media and in its imagistic reconstruction—in its reconstitution in the looking-glass of social history. To ensure the continued viability of the great uprisings that punctuated the spring 2016 special legislative session, faculty governance officer and photo journalist Kenneth McMillin has graciously released a portfolio of photographs from the February 2016 “HEAT” (“Hold Education All Together”) rally at the state capitol. McMillin’s photos were taken in the midst of the action, at boots-on-the-ground level; they show pro-education activism in both its grit and its glory. Those with a keen eye for governance figures will detect many faculty leaders in the massive crowd that rolled over the steps to the state capitol. To access the photos, visit the LSU Faculty Senate [website](#), click “refresh” to activate the current version of the home page, and then click the links in the special feature box immediately beneath the welcoming graphic and photo.



SEC ACADEMIC PROGRAM CONTINUING SLIM-DOWN

Perhaps recognizing that publications are the currency of the academic economy, the Southeastern Conference, the gigantic economic engine that rules collegiate sports in the lower-right quadrant of the United States, has issued the latest issue of its periodical poop sheet, *The SECU Quarterly*. The “U” in “SECU” stands for “university” by way of giving the impression that the Southeastern Conference offers a full curriculum or at least supports institutions that provide a full spectrum of higher education. When we examine the latest, [Winter 2016 issue](#), however, we discover that the entire one-page publication is comprised of three stories: one on a two-day student event on the diffuse topic of “social change”; one on a ceremony for the Academic Leadership Development Program; and one on a sixteen-student study-abroad program in Italy. Given that the SEC annual budget reaches into the billions, this slimmed-down, no-frills publications tells a substantial story.



TIP OF THE MONTH: LOQUAT FRUIT

Gardeners around Louisiana are fond of planting loquats, small but heavily foliated trees somewhat erroneously nicknamed “Japanese plums” or “Japanese medlars.” In our parts, the loquat is cultivated primarily for its decorative value: for its ornamental if somewhat protuberant and assertive foliage and, most of all, for its colorful pastel-orange fruits. Ripening in the last days of March and the first days of April, Louisiana loquats often slip off the tree and onto the ground. Vitamin lovers, beware! Those fresh and largely pesticide-free “plums” from this insect-free shrub offer a pleasantly tart taste and can also be converted into pies, spreads, fruit butters, and jellies. Now is the time to grab a bucket and harvest these overlooked tasty treats!



The loquat may well be Louisiana’s most overlooked taste treat

GET READY FOR THE APRIL 23RD ALEXANDRIA SUMMIT MEETING!

The lively faculty of our Louisiana institutions never ceases sharing its energies with the legendary Alexandria Summit Meetings, the quarterly gatherings of faculty committed to good leadership of higher education and its institutions. The concluding meeting of the 2015–2016 academic year is slated for Saturday, April 23rd, on the campus of Louisiana State University of Alexandria (LSUA). Included among the events will be a special presentation by Darlyne G. Nemeth, a renowned expert on the psychology of fear as manifested in groups and institutions, and a mini-workshop on academic freedom and freedom of expression by Zachary Wagner, a specialist in the relation of vigorous expression to the constraints of the classroom. And much more! Be sure to join us at 10:00 am in Alexandria. Free breakfast snacks and a free delicious warm lunch will be included in the activities!



Darlyne Nemeth to headline April 23rd Alexandria Summit

The several screenwriters do a fine, workmanlike job of translating Toobin's prose into dramatic form. But what really makes the story come alive on screen is the first-rate acting. The stand-out performance is surely John Travolta's. Playing against type, Travolta is superb as Bob Shapiro, the vaguely effeminate *prima donna* of a lawyer who is always more concerned with his own reputation and interests than with his client's fate or anything else. Travolta disappears into his character so completely that we often forget we are watching the same actor who portrayed Vincent Vega and countless other tough guys. Emmys have been awarded for much less. If no other player in the series quite equals Travolta, several come close. Sarah Paulson, previously best known for supporting roles in such intelligent films as Jeff Nichols's *Mud* (2012) and Todd Haynes's *Carol* (2015), is excellent as Marcia Clark. She nicely captures Clark as a tough-as-nails prosecutor but also as a woman of great emotional vulnerability: the latter as regards her empathy with crime victims and their families, and as regards the problems in her own private life (during the O. J. trial she is engaged in an often nasty legal battle over child custody with her ex-husband). The popular television actor Courtney B. Vance is equally good as Clark's chief adversary, Johnnie Cochran. If Vance is not quite so brilliantly theatrical as the real-life Cochran was, he powerfully conveys Cochran's spellbinding oratorical style, which was rooted in the African-American church of which Cochran was a lifelong member. The casting of the great Nathan Lane as F. Lee Bailey may seem problematic at first; for Lane's acting style—perfectly suited to his other current television role, that of the emotionally fragile gay-wedding planner Pepper Saltzman in the ABC comedy *Modern Family* (2009-present)—is remote from everything we know about Bailey, the pugnacious ex-Marine. Yet Lane is such a fine actor that, after an episode or two, we come to feel that, if this is not really what Bailey was like, it is what he somehow *ought* to have been like. The most dubious casting choice, I think, is Cuba Gooding as O. J. Simpson himself. Though Gooding's talent is not in question, he cannot convey the spectacular good looks and the cheerful charisma that were integral to O. J.'s popularity. Since O. J. is the title character and in a way the center of the series, this lack is more damaging than any misfires in Lane-as-Bailey. Gooding plays a very credible murder defendant, but not one who ever really seems to be O. J. Simpson. Still, overall, this is one of the best casts that any television series in recent memory can boast.

On one level, the dramatic structure of *The People v. O. J. Simpson* simply replicates the chronological unfolding of the trial itself. But there is also a second, more thematic structure of even greater interest, one that engages some of the dynamics of drama itself.

As both Toobin's book and the FX series present matters, there were many reasons that Marcia Clark lost what ought to have been a winnable case. With a string of successful prosecutions behind her, and armed with what she regarded as watertight evidence, she tended to be arrogant and overconfident, lightly throwing away many advantages in one self-defeating move after another. But there was also a deeper reason that Clark—who, however successful she may have been in run-of-the-mill criminal trials, had never before gone up against lawyers like those of the dream team, and especially not against anyone like Johnnie Cochran—botched the biggest case of her career. For Clark was a rationalist. She believed in reason and evidence, and she assumed that other people did too. For her, the prosecutor's job was simply to

state the facts and exhibit their logical implications. And Clark was certain that the facts were overwhelmingly against Simpson. With his history of domestic violence (and sexual jealousy and a hair-trigger temper), he had obvious motives for the killings; an examination of his movements on the night of the murders made clear that he had ample opportunity to commit them; and, above all, an enormous amount of physical evidence established beyond serious question that he was indeed present at the murder scene. When all this was pointed out to any even minimally competent jury, then surely—as Clark felt—they would have no choice but to vote to convict?

But Johnnie Cochran was not a rationalist, and he knew that most people—and thus most jurors—are not really like that. People respond more powerfully to stories than to syllogisms. Presented with a chain of valid, factually based reasoning that leads to one conclusion, and with a vivid narrative that leads to the opposite conclusion but coheres with one's general sense of how the world works, most people will choose the latter. Most of the jury was black; and, if there was one thing about the world that every black resident of Los Angeles knew, it was that the LAPD was viciously and violently racist. That white cops hate black people was never anything Cochran had to prove, for his audience had known it in their bones for as long as they could remember. (But, as a kind of bonus for the defense, it transpired, late in the trial, that one of the police detectives in the case, Mark Fuhrman—played here by Steven Pasquale—had openly professed a white racism that was extravagantly vile even by LAPD standards.) Accordingly, Cochran's elaborate story of how the physical evidence had been deliberately faked to incriminate O. J. achieved precisely its desired effect. Never mind that there was never any direct evidence of such fakery. Never mind that the police conspiracy that Cochran invoked for the jury would have been so technically difficult to achieve as to be all but impossible—even assuming that the police who arrived at the murder scene had all instantly agreed (in the glare of unprecedented publicity, and at terrible potential risk to themselves) to frame an innocent man for a capital crime. And never mind, indeed, that O. J. had a considerable history of friendship with the Los Angeles cops, who had invariably treated him not like a black man ("I'm not black, I'm O. J.!" he had once said) but like a rich, famous celebrity: that is, with great deference. Ordinary black Angelenos might be shot dead for a broken tail-light, or for no reason at all. But, when Nicole had begged the police to protect her from her husband's violence, O. J. was always handled with extreme lenience.

None of that mattered. As Jeffrey Toobin and the screenwriters following him relate it, Cochran—unlike Clark—knew that the trial was not a formal debate but a contest of dramatic narratives; and Cochran recognized that, in the narrative of the convicted wife-beater whose jealous violence finally culminated in murder, the prosecution had a potentially powerful story on their side. His job, then, was to spin an even more compelling tale: and this he did—brilliantly—with his story of the black demigod whom nearly everyone loved, brought down by the envious racist malice of one of the most infamously racist organizations on the planet. It is profoundly appropriate that the Simpson case should be dramatized, for, as this series shows, on one level—and that perhaps the deepest—the trial of O. J. Simpson was about nothing other than drama itself. Marcia Clark was a smart, tough attorney. But Johnnie Cochran was by far the superior dramatist, and that made all the difference.