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Faculty Senate Newsletter, April 2017

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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Faculty Senate Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Visiting the web sites, social media pages, or similar mass-distribution venues for Louisiana and indeed American universities will quickly disabuse explorers of the notion that adults exist or that the human life span extends much beyond twenty. Click to the ULM web site and you will see frolicsome youths bouncing on inflatable "moon walks" or scampering in muddy pools or water skiing; pop over to the Nicholls web site and the first image that appears is that of summer camp for elementary school pupils; try LSU Eunice and you will find a rotating display of shabbily clad youngsters jabbering their way along walkways or sunbathing alongside a bubbling fountain; peek at—worst of all—the LSU A&M site, and there you will find block after block of pictures and exclamations concerning the recreational and sometimes academic activities of callow kids. The people who presumably teach, guide, and advise these fresh sprouts in the field of futurity have disappeared from view, doubtless owing to prior engagement with anti-aging cream vendors.

The visual presentation of contemporary universities mirrors the administrative mania for the latest fashion among student recruiters, the "student-centered university." Designed to resist criticism, the language of student centrality plays on the American fondness for youth and freshness—or perhaps naivete—and on the correlated superstitious belief that youngsters know more than seniors, that experience impairs rather than assists innovation. Few, in an academic world that supports far more teaching than research institutions, dare to criticize the advocates of student centrality, especially considering the prominent role played by student evaluations in promotion, tenure, and the obtaining of favor.

Wherever there is the appearance of unanimity, there is almost certainly a cover-up. With regard to student-centered institutions, what is repressed is the honest evaluation of the ideology and goals of an administration or a management system that orbits around students. For one, as the aforementioned imagery shows, the student-centered industry promotes stereotypes about students, picturing them all as young and frivolous yet inadvertently productive: as continuously rollicking around the world of "student activities" while inadvertently helping some old codger win the Nobel prize. For two, the idea of student centrality alienates students from both the people who operate the university and from the worldwide academic community. A university cannot hope to convert a beginner into a member of the cadre of educated men and women if it puts them in a special playpen allocated to a segregated class of "student" persons. Third, the designating of a group of people as "students" identifies them as an exploitable resource for other users (or abusers). In Louisiana, this most often takes the form of the seemingly benevolent offering to "students" of access to lucrative careers in polluting, often dangerous industries—in other words, the alleged opportunity to enter the workhouse owned by persons who presumably do not belong to the "student-centered" world. Fourth, the juvenile rendering of the stereotypical student reinforces the highly traditional notion of family (and the obligations that go with it) that clamps down on the Louisiana imagination and that stifles the range of choices for "students" who remain permanently under the thumb of teachers and parents (the dialectical counterpart of "students," one might say).

Once upon a time, back when Goldilocks was still waiting for an appointment at the hair stylist, universities were knowledge-centered. Students, like professors and like good citizens, came to universities to gain access to their core resource, the fruits of cerebration. Returning to that mission and thinking a little harder would, doubtless, allow persons whose talents exceed those of this author to identify even more problems with the quietly exploitative playground mentality that is the true center of student-centeredness.



Kevin Cope

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Higher Education Headliner



Andrea Ballinger



LSU Associate Vice President and Chief Technology Officer Andrea Ballinger's office reflects her sincere desire to put LSU on a technologically successful path. Those paths are prominently displayed in multicolored dry-erase markers across the walls of the office, including everything from the LSU governance plans to lists that spell out steps for revising systems to inspirational quotes and ideas. In many ways, that vibrancy of color reflects Ballinger's own vibrancy and vivacious spirit. Ballinger has been in Baton Rouge for less than a month, and already has made her notable mark on the university that is sure to be felt for years to come. She has been and will continue to be instrumental in the development of LSU's IT master plan – a massive overhaul of the University's outdated IT system – which will shape the way students, faculty, and staff alike will interact with LSU and with one another in the coming years.

Ballinger comes to LSU from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where she served as Senior Vice President/Chief Operating Officer/Chief Information Officer and Interim President for the University of Illinois Alumni Association. Illinois is additionally her alma mater and a university she speaks of with genuine affection and pride. She developed a love for the unique atmosphere and opportunities that land-grant universities provide during her time at Illinois, and she sees similar qualities and potential at LSU.

Ballinger could little escape ending up at a university in one form or another. Her father was a geneticist and believed in the power of education. Originally from Italy, he had moved the family to Brazil in order to pursue his research. While in Brazil, Ballinger was pre-med. Yet, when her father received a job offer from the University of Illinois, the family moved back to the States, and this began a new interest and new chapter of Ballinger's life. She started working at a bank and

became fascinated with transactional mainframes. Eventually, she took a position in the mergers and acquisitions department in which part of her job was getting different banking systems to talk to each other. She then decided to pursue finance and become a business major. Needless to say, her parents were a bit surprised by her choice of major. Yet, Ballinger saw an important future unfolding in the computer age.

After many years working with IT, Ballinger is driven to find the right tool, not the cheapest tool, to fix problems. This is a refreshing idea after Louisiana has experienced a drought of funding in recent years, and pinching pennies has become the norm. This vibrant and energetic woman wants to bring LSU up to a standard that is comparable to other similarly situated institutions. The plan begins with LSU governance, a plan which is written in green, taking up a whole wall of her office, and moves forward from there.

While Ballinger tries to clean up the IT issues, her husband and children continue to reside in the Urbana-Champaign area on a working farm, but she came south to LSU for the opportunity to be a part of an administration she sees as dynamic and high quality. "I follow leadership," she says, "And King Alexander is a fantastic leader." Ballinger believes in her mission, and she is willing to meet with anyone and take their concerns, either as individuals or as members of a group, into account. In five years' time, she hopes to have completed her work, and by then, she will be moving on to her next challenge. Indeed, with the rapid pace of technological advancement, there is no telling what the state of the art might be by then; but there is no doubt that Andrea Ballinger will be there connecting the latest technology with the people and organizations that need it.

— By Amy Catania and Nate Friedman

BIG LCTCS MERGER, BIGGER MISSION QUESTIONS

Colleagues at Louisiana's two-year institutions were both rattled and relieved when LCTCS leaders announced the merger of multiple campuses: rattled, owing to a continuation of a long history of realignments which have prevented the LCTCS institutions from establishing much in the way of traditions, donors and supporters, or even identities; relieved, in that, thanks to the good stewardship of LCTCS System President Monty Sullivan, no campuses will close. The ingenious Sullivan and his team, who must, in their capacity as major workforce developers, attend to the needs, hopes, and often fears of working people, carefully crafted a plan that will reduce administrative overhead, rationalize the distribution of resources over geographical areas, and, best of all, save some ten million dollars. Sadly, the necessity for this kind of realignment arises from huge declines in state support for an corresponding hikes in tuition at our entry-level institutions. This decline, in which students who once paid a pittance now cover the bulk of their educational costs, raises questions about our legislators' understanding of the mission of two-year schools, which bridge the economic and social gaps that prevent promising citizens from entering college and which have long served as an avenue of upward social, cultural, and economic mobility for those who could otherwise never afford to pay university tuition. Good work, Monty—and listen up, legislators!



LCTCS President Monty Sullivan devises humane realignment plan

The Capitol Park Museum's

Upcoming Attractions

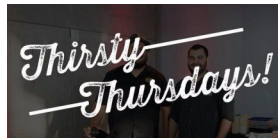
So You think You Care?: A Conversation on Millennial Political Engagement

**Hosted by Forum 35
Thursday, April 13, 6 p.m.**

Over the last few years, America has continued to face many of the same political and social issues that have plagued our nation throughout its history. With advancements in technology and the innovation of social media, the ways in which Millennials engage are starkly different from that of generations prior. Measuring the impact and effectiveness of those methods have been a topic of contention. Understanding how to engage and mobilize as Millennials will be key in shaping the future of our country. People frequently say that they care deeply about the direction of our country... Now is the time to prove it.

Thirsty Thursday!

**Hosted by Friends of the Capitol Park Museum
Thursday, April 20th , 6 p.m.**



Take a look at one of Louisiana's favorite vices through a history of hops, a primary ingredient in the brewing of beer. Explore the story of how hops have been the focus of controversies since its beginning, most noticeably seen during prohibition. The lecture will also explore how a related plant is undergoing a similar political and social controversy and how the upcoming medical marijuana legislation might impact Louisianans. As part of this program, Pelican House will serve tastings of Pompous Pelican Double IPA Cocktails and Duck Dynasty Ramen.

This event is free for members of the Friends of the Capitol Park Museum, and \$10 for the general public.

Spanish Town Walking Tour Saturday, April 22nd , 9:30 a.m.



Back by popular demand! Celebrate Baton Rouge's bicentennial by joining the Capitol Park Museum on a walking tour through historic Spanish Town, the city's oldest neighborhood.

Patrons are advised to dress comfortably. The walking tour is free and departs from the museum lobby at 9:30 a.m. Tours last approximately 60 minutes. Due to limited availability, reservations are required. Please reserve your place by calling (225) 342-5428.

Louisiana Inspired: Selections from the Permanent Collection **On exhibit until May, 2017**



Selections from more than two centuries of the state's history and culture on display now at the Capitol Park Museum.

For more information go to: <http://www.louisianastatemuseum.org/events>.

GOVERNOR'S CHIEF-OF-STAFF MEETS STATEWIDE FACULTY DELEGATION

Even in the darkness of winter and amidst the clouds of economic crisis, bright spots appear. Such a welcome radiance occurred one day before Mardi Gras, when an old but vigorous friend of higher education, former Senator and then gubernatorial Chief-of-Staff Ben Nevers, met for a full hour with a statewide delegation of faculty members. Gathered from every kind of public institution—regional campus; HBCU; research institution; comprehensive; medical school; the AAUP; and more—the ensemble included some of Louisiana's most visible faculty activists. Numbered among the participants were Sonya Hester of Southern University Shreveport; Brian Salvatore of Louisiana State University Shreveport; Matthew Ware of Grambling; Kevin L. Cope of LSU A&M; Dayne Sherman of Southeastern; Michelle Arnold of LSU Health Sciences Center Shreveport; Bernard Gallagher of LSU of Alexandria; and Leslie Bary of the University of Louisiana Lafayette. Frank, candid, robust, and unstintingly honest, the conversation with Chief-of-Staff Nevers ranged over crucial topics such as faculty compensation; retirement benefits; working conditions; management boards; campus administrations (and their alienation from faculty); the use of faculty talent in state projects and in the governance of higher education institutions; efficiencies; control and development of curriculum; development of a full range of future professionals, not only those in currently favored vocations; the neglect of historically black institutions; support for faculty research; faculty development; recruitment and retention; and much more. The meeting culminated in a promise by Chief-of-Staff Nevers that he would ask the Governor to create a blue-ribbon faculty panel to study and make recommendation concerning the course and the future of higher education in Louisiana. Chief-of-Staff Nevers has now retired, but he has delegated the project to his successor. More to follow on this story!



Chief-of-Staff Ben Nevers

TRSL AND LSU STEP UP ATTACK ON FACULTY RETIREMENT LAWSUIT

Those who believe that the state, its agencies, and its institutions encourage those who commit to a life of teaching, service, and research would do well to peruse the latest documents in the continuing lawsuit by faculty leaders against TRSL (Teachers Retirement System of Louisiana) and its largest client, the Louisiana State University Board of Supervisors. Counsel for these two behemoth agencies has hit the faculty plaintiffs in the lawsuit with "interrogatories" requesting huge quantities of frivolous information. For only one example in a double-digit inventory of requests, the attorneys for TRSL and LSU request records of every investment made in the retirement funds over the course of twenty-five years, a request that, alone, has produced several hundred pages of documentation (the cumulative request is likely to produce several thousand pages of statistical data). Amusingly, the request has revealed that TRSL and its vendors lack records beyond the most recent eight years, which demonstrates, once again, the lack of fiduciary responsibility, per the lawsuit. If LSU and TRSL plan to use this mammoth cache of data in any meaningful way, they will have to waste money that could support faculty in the payment of huge sums to the high-ticket attorneys who will examine it; if they do not plan to use the data, the only conceivable purpose in making such a request is the harassment of faculty who dare speak up against the redirection of funds that should go to hard-working faculty via their retirement accounts. Before listening to claims that educational institutions seek to retain and improve the morale of faculty, colleagues should consider the extravagant, costly efforts that the aforementioned institutions will make to aid and abet the misuse and abduction of funds that would support long-serving, aging faculty members.



NEW LSU CTO RUNS UP BIG SCORE EARLY

Nowadays, almost anything that Louisiana universities attempt is met with skepticism owing to the chronic insufficiency of funds or the hostility toward higher education evidenced in the national political climate. Fortunately, some things do go right even despite our sadly habitual pessimism. One good development is that arrival of new LSU Chief Technology Office ("CTO") Andrea Ballinger, who has already unveiled a 100-day roadmap and who has already laid out a veritable encyclopedia of initiatives. Included in the bouncy Ballinger's bag of helpful tricks is a visit to the Faculty Senate (already accomplished); improvement of the substance, accessibility, and overall look of Workday documentation; collaboration with library professionals concerning the unification of libraries and the strengthening of the LOUIS database system; upgrading of the Faculty Technology Center; a survey of information-related equipment on our campuses; the fluency or occasionally latency of logon and similar functions on remote terminals and in multimedia classrooms; the possible excision of the analogue telephone grid; and associating logon privileges with persons rather than institutions so that peregrinating scholars may access resources at campuses across Louisiana. We look for great things from what looks to be a great leader!



Andrea Ballinger takes the reins at LSU ITS

LSU MUSIC-DRAMA DEAN STARS IN ENROLLMENT WEBINAR

One of the serious threats to the idea of a "comprehensive" university arises from the declining interest among students in both the fine and the liberal arts. For the last few years, a new organization, A²RU (The Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities) has been tackling the hard questions about the status of those disciplines whose practitioners conceive themselves as close to the core mission of a large institution but who, increasingly or perhaps decreasingly, face vacant classrooms, minimal support from state general education commissions, and skepticism from students seeking high-paying jobs. The latest achievement of A²RU—one founder of which was LSU's own Lawrence Kaptain, who now serves as a Dean at a prominent Colorado institution—is a series of webinars. In the latest of these video productions, Addressing Declining Enrollment in the Arts and Humanities at Research Institutions, no less than Todd Queen, Dean of the College of Music and Dramatic Arts at LSU, appears as a prominent panelist. The A²RU [web site](#) reports that the recording and the transcript of this event will be available soon; keep an eye on that site so as to access what is surely an informative as well as inspiring instructional session.



LSU Dean headlines A²RU webinar



SUMMER CAMP

LSU UREC Tiger's Den is a recreational experience that provides fun and comprehensive camp programming for children ages 6 to 12. Each session is filled with sport activities, structured games, arts and crafts, and interactive educational activities.

Pre-Registration (LSU Affiliates): Feb. 1 Open Registration: Feb. 15

Prices: LSU Affiliates \$160, Community \$180

Per Child / Per Week

Session	Dates	Register By
Future Tigers	5/29 - 6/2	5/24
Under the Sea	6/5 - 6/9	5/31
Sports Extravaganza	6/12 - 6/16	6/7
Zootopia	6/19 - 6/23	6/14
Adventure Awaits	6/26 - 6/30	6/21
Water Week*	7/5 - 7/7	6/28
Reality Game Show Mania	7/10 - 7/14	7/5
Mad Scientist	7/17 - 7/21	7/12
Backyard Fun	7/24 - 7/28	7/19
Never-Ending Summer	7/31 - 8/4	7/26

*Prorated price for holiday

Ages 6 - 12 | For registration and more information, please visit lsu.edu/urec

LSU | University Recreation



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,

Having long admired your enormous mental flexibility, I'm daring to ask you a question that is on the outer limits of your official area of expertise. Yes, A G, I'd like you to don that famous Gold Jacket and answer a query relating to real estate (vis-a-vis faculty and their finances).

I'm on the brink of retirement and am thinking about departing Louisiana, but I'm not altogether convinced that I want to go to some one place or another. I know that Louisiana lies outside the boundaries of Utopia, but I'm not convinced that Pompano Beach or Big Sur to anyplace else falls within that happy jurisdiction. So, my question: Do you think it a good idea for academic retirees to hold on to their homes--i.e., to own the real estate in which they happen to live--or is there an economic argument to be made for renting (and maintaining mobility)? Do I stand to lose a lot by liquidating my house and living (paying rent) off interest and dividends, or would I do better by owning a house here, there, or elsewhere, at least for a few years at a time?

My financial profile: I own my current home (value of circa \$400K) and have three-quarters of a million in the ORP. But I also know a person who has the same questions and who will retire with a \$65K per year pension from the TRSL and who has a 75% stake in a \$300K home. Could you provide some guidance and suggestions?

Thanks so much,
Victoria from Schriever, Louisiana



The Response

Victoria, one initial thought is that with the eroding coast line of Louisiana in mind holding onto your home in Terrebonne Parish might be a tactical investment in future beach front property on the Gulf.

The question of continuing to own or to sell and rent provokes arguments among financial experts and among couples. I view it as the toughest decision a retiree can make to insure effective financial planning. Generally, the answers you find in the literature and on-line are mixed. I think it is made harder based on whether you are married or single, how long you have lived in your present home, what your house is worth, and how attached you are to your location.

Certainly owning your own home provides you with a high level of control over your living arrangements. People who have lived for a long period in their own home may find it very hard to transition to a landlord-tenant arrangement in retirement. After all when you own your home you are the landlord and in control.

Owning your own home allows you to invest in it and create the home you want, but renting of course limits your ability to customize. Still, owning a home is more expensive than renting in general. While most people can understand the concept of principle, interest, and property taxes and can budget accordingly what remains the great unknown with homeownership is the cost of repairs and maintenance. On average a homeowner should expect to annually spend at least 1% of the value of their home on repairs and maintenance. If you are handy and can handle a fair number of repairs yourself there still is the cost of materials, tools and perhaps most importantly the time spent actually doing the repairs. Then there are the truly countable costs...

A home worth \$400,000.00 holding a 30-year mortgage at 3.5% with an initial down payment of \$100,000 would result in costs (with

the tax break subtracted) of about \$32,000.00 annually. On average spending a relatively high \$2000 per month on rent would still leave you with \$8000 to invest per year. If you stay in your house long enough and pay off the mortgage just before retirement the value will increase but you won't get the tax break. The value of the home could rise in 30 years to about \$1,000,000.00 when factoring in past performance. At an investment return of 4% the cost of owning the home will be around \$70,000 per year. Over that same time period a rental opportunity costing \$24,000 per year adjusted for inflation would likely grow to a cost of \$50,000 per year. That is still \$20,000 dollars less per year than owning a home and that \$8000 per year you invested over the last 30 years, at a reachable 4% per year return, would be worth about \$450,000. Adding that to your retirement saving could bring another \$18,000 - \$20,000 in income per year. Certainly, on the surface renting a home seems to provide a financial advantage over owning a home at this time.

However, there is one caveat for those homeowners with limited income who own a home ...many federal and state aid programs exempt the value of necessities like a vehicle or a home. If you sell your home and invest the funds that money will be included in your "total assets" and could be a factor in disqualifying you from consideration for aid. Additionally, rental homes that would allow you the quality of neighborhood and square footage that a \$300,000 home would in a less urban environment are generally very hard to find. Moving from home ownership to rental might very well entail less square footage and perhaps town home or apartment like residences.

—Continued on page 7

If you crunch the numbers long enough you can find that owning real estate is not the financial panacea you might think it is. For those with insufficient retirement savings renting instead of owning might be the right retirement decision. The savings collected from selling your home could go further if one turned around and rented. For those older Americans who can afford it most prefer to own their home. Of the 47 million households with people 55 and older, 80% are homeowners.

Another area where renting has an advantage over owning is with flexibility. It is absolutely harder and more expensive to sell a house and move than it is to leave one rental and go to another. So if you like moving around in your retirement or living part of the year in two or more places...rentals can offer an advantage.

For those who feel that sacrificing your financial wellbeing and mental health during your life-span is not enough and you wish to leave your children an estate...well cash is easier to distribute and to manipulate to avoid taxes (legally or illegally... I am not judgmental on the subject) then real estate when creating an estate.

Still homeownership may sacrifice flexibility and some expenses but it does in many people's mind provide prestige, and most importantly security. For people relying on a defined benefit pension your real estate investment in the form of your home may represent your major financial investment. Living in that home always guarantees that you know how your money is doing.

Additionally, older couples find that the decision to sell their home and rent to be one of the harder decisions to make in a partnership. In terms of stress from disagreement it outstrips the decision to have children. I strongly advise anyone considering such a move to spend a few dollars on a good financial analysis of the situation.

As a disclaimer, as I near retirement I am anxious to unload my real estate and find that perfect low-cost storage facility to hold my possessions. Then my life partner and I could lease the sailboat of my dreams and sail to warmer waters. However, the CEO and Chairman of the Board of Monaco Financial Enterprises, (Mrs. Monaco), has the votes needed to veto that idea and is planning to remain a land bound homeowner. So while I consider my financial planning advice to be relatively sound I would avoid taking relationship-planning advice from me. A couple of hundred dollars spent on financial counseling regarding this decision could save thousands in the future spent on "couples counseling."

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- Advocate on behalf of faculty interests
- Build a stronger, better LSU academic community

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Membership Fee: \$10



SPEAKER CONTROVERSY TARS LSU ATHLETICS

Planetary orbits are not the only phenomena in which periodicity, the regular recurrence of patterns, plays a role. Despite all the chatter about “building character” and “teamwork,” observers expect that, every couple of years, some sort of criminality will recur amidst the porters of the pigskin balloon. The latest demonstration that Athletic programs have run far beyond the defensive line of good judgment is the mind-boggling decision by LSU Athletics officials to invite a former Vanderbilt football player who has been indicted for gang rape to make a presumably expenses-paid visit to LSU, there to advise student-athletes on the dangers of not speaking up when one is a “bystander” to an event (as if it were a morally neutral and potentially excusable matter to be a “bystander” as a felony unfolds). Evidently not anticipating that word of this strange exercise in would-be moral didacticism might leak out, the LSU Athletic Department had made all the necessary arrangements without asking faculty whether such an undertaking might count as a good idea. Once news of the plan escaped the Athletic Department tower, faculty members immediately and adversely reacted and faculty governance envoys went to work. Members of the Athletic Department were quietly advised that some might think that support for the proposed presentation constituted a tacit sponsorship of criminal behavior. The outcome: Within forty-eight hours, a mid-level Athletics Department official issued a terse statement: “Please note that the sexual assault/awareness presentation originally scheduled for April 3 has been postponed indefinitely.” Although one wonders why the Athletic Department is not using its formidable resources to promote the ethical education of its players by hiring the many unemployed philosophers produced by American graduate programs, one may also take note that faculty do have power and authority and that organized colleagues quickly sacked this dubious plan.



UL PRESIDENT JAMES HENDERSON ISSUES IMMIGRATION STATEMENT, OVERLEAPS OTHER SYSTEM CHIEFS

In the early days of frozen foods, dessert-maker Sara Lee developed a jingle: “Everybody doesn’t like something, but nobody doesn’t like Sara Lee.” So with the careers and deeds of university system presidents: There is always something that deserves calumny, but, when a good deed occurs, everybody in the faculty cadre is willing to confer praise. This cinnamon-roll-driven analogy applies to newly raised University of Louisiana System President James Henderson, who took the lead among Louisiana System presidents by issuing not only a statement concerning the immigration restrictions temporarily implemented by the Trump presidential administration, but also specifically naming the seven countries that were on the red-tufted Commander-in-Chief’s you-know-what list. The statement: “The Universities of Louisiana provide campus cultures of inclusion that offer students the opportunity to develop their natural talents. We welcome students and faculty from around the globe who contribute to the diverse learning culture only available on a college campus. Our universities are working closely with students, faculty and staff who may be impacted by the executive order. We value immensely the work of our faculty and staff from the U.S. as well as those from other countries including employees from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. Our international students and faculty are a vital part of our campus communities who contribute greatly to the missions of our universities.” In fairness, LSU System President King Alexander eventually issued an all-purpose sort of epistle to the community stressing inclusiveness, but that letter has drawn criticism from faculty for its lack of specificity and generalizing, cautious tone. Kudos go out to UL President Henderson for speaking firmly and unambiguously about the individual people who might be injured by the Trump immigration ban.



UL System President James Henderson issues robust statement on immigration

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AAUP: UNION VICTORY AT SUPREME COURT

Those who have questioned the relevance or influence of the AAUP (American Association of University Professors) should take note of its recent record of major legal battles. Only a few months ago and despite a tie-inducing vacancy on the Supreme Court, the AAUP prevailed, along with an assortment of labor-friendly groups, in turning back attempts, in the California public education system, to eliminate the mandatory fee paid to unions by teachers who chose not to become union members. Then, on February 27th, the Supreme Court, convinced by an AAUP amicus brief, denied certiorari in the case of *Jarvis versus Cuomo*. In that case, the plaintiffs, the National Right to Work Committee, an anti-union PAC, contended that exclusive representation, the certification of only one union, violated the constitutional principle of freedom of association insofar as it compelled an association between a teacher and a bargaining agent. Allowing the multiplication of certified unions was widely understood as a tactic to dilute and disperse the bargaining power of employees groups—to divide and conquer. According to AAUP Senior Counsel Aaron Nissenson, “denial of certiorari ends the threat in this case.” Although new threats will surely emerge and although new justices will join the SCOTUS tribe, the AAUP has secured two compelling and very likely long-lasting victories that should encourage colleagues seeking to organize academic labor, even in a right-to-work state.



AAUP Senior Counsel
Aaron Nissenson

THE Pharmacy AT LSU

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LCTCS BEEFS UP SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PLAN

In October 2016, the LCTCS, faced with decreases in self-generated revenue, i.e., tuition and enrollment, cutting ninety jobs, twenty-nine of which were instructional positions and implementing a hiring freeze. The October cuts were understood to be stopgap measures until a more coherent cost-saving plan could emerge. On March 8th, that plan emerged, with a summary of the now-approved recommendations to the LCTCS Board of Supervisors appearing [online](#). Credit must be given to the LCTCS leadership, which, recognizing the negative impact of draconian measures with regard to recruiting a largely contingent faculty that enjoys few tenure guarantees, included among its recommendations calls for further, strategic investment in people and technology; for faculty development; and for intensified financial monitoring on campuses. The new plan also reaches out to marginalized or forgotten populations, including incarcerated persons. True, the new plan plays up to the ill-advised state effort to educate those interested in a handful of presently popular vocations, but it is hoped that the call for enhancement of workforce development programs might be interpreted liberally so as to include the cultivation of future professionals in social service and similar altruistic pursuits.



AAUP BATTLES TRUMP, TARGETS HARASSMENT OF FACULTY, PROMOS ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Whether Republican, Democrat, Green, Libertarian, Anarchist, Socialist, or paradoxical apathy enthusiast, colleagues in our profession will readily admit that we live in controversy-rich times and that the recent presidential election has set academic issues in the national spotlight in a way that our vortectically-coiffeured American President might never have expected. In response to the ramping up of criticism of higher education and its practitioners, the AAUP (the American Association of University Professors) has issued several new statements and studies by way of encouraging if not assisting endangered faculty.

Noting that the current political climate may encourage students with grudges against faculty members and recording the increasing frequency of multimedia attacks on academic professionals, the AAUP has issued a statement as well as recommendations concerning the targeted online harassment of faculty members: the singling out of singular, heterodox, or controversial colleagues for abuse via social media, ranking, or similar computerized information distribution platforms. Available online, the white paper, *Targeted Online Harassment of Faculty*, describes this ugly phenomenon, analyzes its origins, suggests remedies to it, and makes recommendations regarding any surreptitious gathering of information or the secret recording of classroom experiences in a way that may violate the privacy rights of both faculty and students. The LSU Faculty Senate has already complied with some of the recommendations by passing a resolution condemning the most notorious of these harassment vehicles, the Professor Watchlist. That resolution asks the LSU central administration to issue a letter criticizing the aforementioned site, which has unjustly attacked an LSU astronomer, but, to date, the LSU central administration has issued no letter and has done nothing to support the attacked researcher.

In a second action in defense of academic activity, the new "Digital Organizer" for the AAUP, Mariah Quinn, has mounted an electronic drive in opposition to proposed cuts in scientific research. Intending to mobilize academic professionals so as to fend off the devastation of basic research budgets, Quinn is asking faculty everywhere to contact senators and representatives byway of voicing opposition to budget proposals from the Trump administration.

Third, and finally, the AAUP has created a new "webinar," Academic Freedom in the Age of Trump; information concerning the accessing of which can be found at the AAUP website. Prepared and hosted by AAUP Senior Program Officer (and practicing scientist) Hans-Joerg Tiede, the webinar offers a primer on academic freedom as well as its history and conceptual foundations while also offering specific advice on the defense of this treasured prerogative during the current presidential regime. Tune in and become informed—as well as ready!



AAUP cranks up white paper production after Trump inauguration

THE LOYALIST TEST

Those committed to the "P&T process, in which credentials gradually build into a reputation and in which tenure and rank solidify into standing and stability, believe that patience, hard work and durability define the academic career and cultivate success. Not so for those in top administrative jobs, where ephemerality is as much of a virtue as loyalty insofar as it suggests that a candidate is a hot commodity with many opportunities and with diverse experience. The new law of academic advancement, which might be summarized as "the shorter the stay the better," has been vindicated with the selection, in the last month, of no less than three former top Louisiana educational administrators for new top-level jobs. After an unexpectedly short stay as President of the University of Louisiana System, Sandra Woodley has emerged, according to [press reports](#), as the campus CEO at the University of Texas Permian Basin, there, in Odessa, to develop the future an institution that sounds faintly prehistoric and that graces a town, the name of which brings to mind the strains of *Dr. Zhivago*. Meanwhile, after less than three years in the role of Commissioner of Higher Education for Rhode Island, genial Jim Purcell, who often enough championed faculty causes (to ill outcome with the hostile Jindal administration), has been [tagged](#) as the new commissioner of Higher Education for Alabama, where, presumably, he will lay down the law to University of Alabama President Stuart Bell, another spinoff from the Louisiana administrative mill. Third among the itinerant academic musketeers is former LSU A&M Chancellor Mike Martin, now re-denominated Michael Martin, who bested a field of candidates to bag the presidency of up-and-coming Florida Gulf Coast University, which, among other things, has made strides in the world of NCAA basketball. Martin, who previously announced that the time had come for him to adopt a slower pace and work on other projects, seems to be getting back into a gallop. True, most of the positions seem somewhat less prestigious than those enjoyed while here in the tropics, but, then, for these players, a lateral pass can easily become a touchdown through the crafting of a good memorandum and the recruitment of a clever media relations manager.





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SIX UNEXPECTED GUIDES TO THE ACADEMIC CONDUCT

One of the shibboleths of the newfangled discipline called “higher education leadership” is the necessity of being up-to-date and of following the current research literature. Convinced that knowledge comes stamped with an expiration date, the new practitioners of academic management anticipate the endless scrolling of an infinite future library

full of the latest research papers and rich in recommendations pertinent to pressing problems. Those not yet convinced that administration is a science but who seek to advance in the arcana of educational institutions often wonder whether there might be a shorter and yet more durable curriculum in the skills needed to manage the men and women of the mind. In the days of Queen Elizabeth I, who remained in office eight times as long as the average president of a twenty-first century university, it was not uncommon to prescribe a small set of readings that would prepare a gentleman or gentlewoman for the practice of statecraft, or, in the case of universities, schoolcraft. The experts in the *Newsletter* office have polled the proficients and have developed a set of six tomes drawn from European cultural history that, if read over the course of the oncoming summer, will prepare most any clever person to rule a university.

First and foremost among the selections is Baldassare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*, which the aforementioned Italian advisor produced in the early sixteenth century and which received an English translation in 1561 by the ingenious Sir Thomas Hoby. Quickly a pan-European bestseller, *The Book of the Courtier*, like the modern curriculum in higher education leadership, analyzes the content of actions at court (or in university administrations) and explains how to excel in the art of doing nothing in particular while managing everything in detail. Aimed at persons who have not succeeded in any particular line of work but who have stumbled into a position that, in raising their social status, requires them at least to look both noble and competent, *The Book of the Courtier* explains in gently humorous detail the importance of seeming not to be too well trained: of appearing equally but minimally skilled at the superficial aspects of many disciplines so as confidently to tell everyone what to do without seeming so ignoble as to have actually muddled one's hands in doing so oneself.

Castiglione recommends the cultivation of discretionary, avocational diversions such as skipping stones on water, an aptitude that ought to fit one for a state like Louisiana, where many central administrations abide in buildings alongside rivers and lakes.

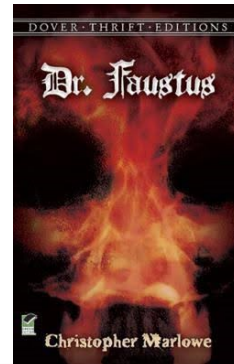
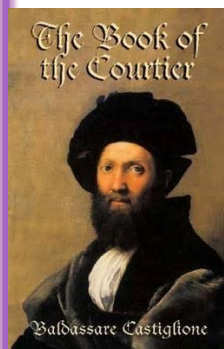
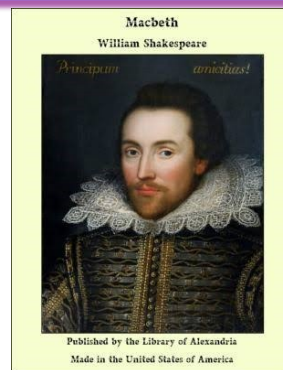
Our second, less cheerful but more pointed, selection, William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, might be characterized as a handbook and a warning for associate vice-chancellors. Aimed at those who slipped into position by the razor-thin advantage of being liked just a little bit bet-

ter than their rivals by those on the next rung of the administrative ladder, *Macbeth* celebrates the world of the upper middle management: of those who might—maybe—make it to the top but who need to find a way to edge out the competition. *Macbeth* is also what might be called the drama of an administrative family, where one of the partners evidences a little more ambition while the other has a bit more position in the world but a bit less ferocity. *Macbeth* looks at a family who is waiting for the top man to get out of the way so that it can enjoy the remarkable pleasure of knowing that other families are waiting for it to exit with the same dispatch. The calamitous end to which *Macbeth* and his relations come serves as what higher education leadership scientists might call a metric, explaining just how far one can go before the gaining of power becomes the loss of it. As such, it is more instructional than IPEDS, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and the entire archive of the Department of Education all put together.

The third entry on the reading itinerary of the budding top-level administrator, although also a tragedy, strikes something of an optimistic note, albeit one caught in a chord with a few disharmonious strains. That work is no less than Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's famed rewriting of German folklore, *Dr. Faustus*. Despite the sublimity of the Faustian figure, *Dr. Faustus* is ultimately about the lack of administrative skill and about a special kind of laziness that bedevils the academic mind and that will always perplex administrators. On the one hand, the character Dr. Faustus aspires to know everything, to do everything, and to reach into founts of experience and reservoirs of knowledge running beyond all imagined extent; on the other hand, he expects that this will simply happen, without his making any effort and presumably through the intervention of assorted helpers, including his graduate assistants. Dr. Faustus epitomizes the colleague who makes huge demands but then indicates that he or she has no plan and is exasperated because the helping administrative party also has no idea of what to do. Worse, Dr. Faustus is the very image of what we call *interdisciplinarity* and what has now, to amp it up a bit, become *bored interdisciplinarity*. He complains that he has run through all the arts and sciences, has found no satisfaction, wants to do something bigger, but also, in the end, wants that new prospect to be presented to rather than manufactured by him. Goethe's *Dr.*

Faustus is thus the preeminent textbook on dealing with what administrators quietly and probably correctly call “prima donnas,” which, incidentally, through their overselling recruitment efforts and lust for star celebrities, those same administrators create.

—Continued on page 15



MARIJUANA PORTAL POPS UP ON SOUTHERN WEB SITE

The strange history of debate, public engagement, and transparency continued when, in late February, Southern University officials convened a town hall to explain procedures and to hear questions concerning the plan to join LSU in the company of elite, university-level cannabis producers. Administrators who, for many a year, have hidden out from faculty inquisitors rushed into spirited conversation with anyone and everyone eager to cultivate the ultimate in potted plants. The multi-pronged initiative to cash in on the seven-leaved weed continued with the posting, on the Southern University AgCenter [web site](#), of an online application form by which those seeking to grow this “medical” plant on behalf of the university may identify themselves and get in the queue for additional information. Anyone looking for a post-retirement job involving exposure to a certain amount of fresh as well as a certain amount of smoky air?



LSU POSTAL BREAKDOWN PACKAGED AS TWILIGHT ZONE BUNDLE

In recent years, prominent university administrators have persuaded themselves that outsourcing and privatization solve any and all problems. In one especially egregious example, LSU A&M, in the early part of this decade, pushed the United States Postal Service out of its campuses premises (even billeting those couriers in a FEMA-style trailer for a few awkward months) and then contracted with Ricoh to handle campus deliveries along with assorted reproductive functions. The result has been abysmally poor delivery service and non-stop complaints from colleagues who find their envelopes and parcels in the most improbable places and at moments that prove, contrary to skeptical scientists, that time-travel is not only possible, but routinely occurs. One of the strangest episodes in the history of deliveries at LSU occurred right on the home turf of the LSU Faculty Senate, when, one fine spring morning last week, staffers found a gigantic bundle of mail on the desk. No one knew how the mail arrived overnight, who put it in the office, or, to get to the most crucial question, where it had been. That last question counts as crucial because an inspection of the package revealed that it contained an assortment of bills, requests, advertisements, invitations, letters, and even Christmas cards, the postmark dates of which stretched all the way back to February 2016! *Newsletter* intelligence agents are now subjecting these documents to assorted high-tech tests to determine whether the bundle might have passed through the legendary twilight zone—or whether, just maybe, outsourcing of an important on-campus function was not the best idea.



A sample portion of the mysterious time-traveling mail bundle

TIP OF THE MONTH: BEMIS 1000CP REPLACEMENT TOILET SEAT

Those who frequent big-box retailers can easily slip into the delusion that such shops offer everything. Inventory piled to the ceiling and confusion triggered by visual abundance can lead purchasers to think that there are too many rather than too few choices. Unfortunately, large-scale retailers must aim at the lower and middle ranges of the market in order to maintain the volume required to fund a mall-connected store. Illusory abundance coupled with restricted quality induces customers to buy apparently cheaper but minimally durable products, resulting in frequent replacement and thereby higher costs. This problem is especially acute when it comes to household fixtures such as those many do-dads involved in the elementary maintenance of spigots, hinges, cabinets, and other low-tech home components. Although few ever think about the humble toilet seat, this enhancement to the commode is among the most frequently broken and thereby frequently re-purchased items in the treasury of household hardware. Retailers such as Lowe's and Home Depot sell cheap replacement toilet seats in great quantity. Our consumer experts in the *Newsletter* plumbing department have reviewed the field and have found a truly extraordinary toilet seat, the Bemis 1000CP. The Bemis is characterized by a very broad seating area that evidences the work of mathematicians insofar as it follows a complex, compound curve, yielding superior comfort and minimal pressure per unit area. Strong struts prevent the collapse that destroys the typical bargain toilet seat. Better still, a sweeping, modernist design suggests that such a seat might have been used by Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe, or maybe even Tapio Wirkkala. Coming in at a little less than \$80.00, the Bemis is out-priced by the junk in the chain stores, but it will probably never require replacement again, making it the economy as well as the comfort king. The easiest way to pick up the Bemis is through online marketer [build.com](#), but there are plenty of other e-tailers with this gem in their collections.



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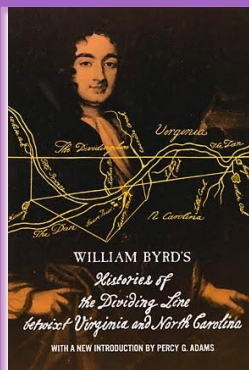
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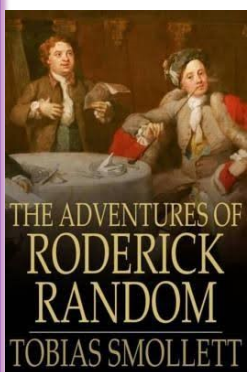


The fourth and probably least familiar item on this list is William Byrd's *The History of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina*, a mixture of diary, commentary, and didactical essay produced while Byrd was employed surveying the boundary between the two states mentioned in the title of his masterwork. The ideal curative for those who have read too many publications by too many national organization all too convinced of the universality of their insights,

Byrd's *History*, in its sharply satirical as well as subtle analysis of local customs, examines the interplay between idealism and eccentricity and between universalism and parochialism that animates the American mind and that, nowadays, makes every university advertise itself as at once unique but also in tune with the times and up with everything. Byrd is the unrivaled master of the top-level leadership pose, for he present himself as engaged in and yet above every situation. Those who know how unpredictable a big institution can be will learn much from Byrd's ability to mix accounts of prodigies (wonders encountered in the unexplored new world) with rationalism, confidence, and the sense that everything can be assimilated and understood within a good story line (per the operations of the typical media relations department). A man of boundaries as well as of travel, Byrd will instruct the young administrator who wants to tell the people that his or her school both serves the region and serves the nation. He shows his readers how to be consistent amidst inconsistencies—and how to make it all look sincere.

The fifth entry in this list of the half-dozen greatest inadvertent primers in academic administration, we turn to the most often forgotten of the famous eighteenth-century novelists, Tobias Smollett. Smollett's breakthrough bestseller, *Roderick Random*, reviews at extraordinary

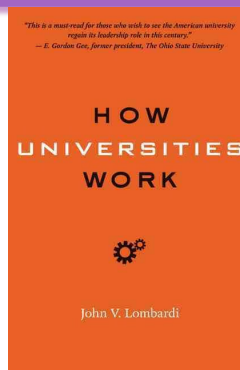
length the career of an ambitious immigrant (Scottish) seeking to make his way in the professions, in the plural (he tries medicine, academe, the navy, and fortune-hunting). Entering the English world from the wild northern latitudes of the land of oats and kilts, the chance-denominated Random tries again and again to make his way in the professional schools of London, in the process offering a devastatingly funny as well as alarmingly accurate rendition of the doings of academic societies. The worlds through which Random passes as he seeks what we would now call



“certificate education”—as he attempts to wangle his professional credentials and his first appointment out of hidebound and in-group dominated oligarchies—could easily be mistaken for encounters with almost any higher education organization, whether a professional society, a gang from an accreditation agency, an admissions office, or a central administration. Readers will learn much and laugh at least a little as they watch flattery working even better than bribery in opening the doors to preferment. *Roderick Random* is also about glorious favor and about the ultimate victory of the most traditionalist and conservative forces. In the end, Roderick cannot win, but must marry into big money after discovery a bit of blue blood in his own lineage. Think of the highest folks in the Louisiana hierarchy—even the Commissioners of Higher Education—who can only last so long unless they show themselves a member of *the family*.

Then, as a last installment in this reading carousel, there is one of our homegrown, modern products: no less than former LSU President John Lombardi's *How Universities Work*. Never one for unnecessary embellishments, Lombardi, with his sparse three-word title, pulls no punches when it comes to detailing, in staccato prose, the action of the various machines, subsystems, and parts that turn and whirl in the mental mill that is the modern university. Like some successor to Aristotle or some son of Sir Thomas Browne, Lombardi offers up a full, funny, and occasionally infuriating taxonomy of the types (and stereotypes) who fill the halls of administration and also who stumble up, day after day, to the podiums in front of lecture halls. He shows why and how some people get ahead and why and how some people don't; like some reincarnation of Machiavelli, he charts the road to power, diagrams what the educational machine does, shows where the limits are, and explains how a lucky few can pole vault over them. Bound in red binders, *How Universities Work* echoes both the AAUP Red Book and Chairman Mao's “little red book” and does so with a spare, almost musical edginess that will forever change the way one hears a lecture or a President's report. Read it and weep, read it and laugh, and, above all, read it and learn—if you dare.

Finish those six books, find a good search firm, and you'll be ready to rule, if not the roost, at least the rest of us!



LAST-MINUTE UL PUSH SAVES CLCU 2017

One of the most precious and yet least understood organizations in Louisiana higher education is the CLCU, or Conference of Louisiana Colleges and Universities. Organized in the early part of the previous century, CLCU has spent the better part of a century sponsoring multi-institutional meetings on the topic of Louisiana higher education and on the relation of same to higher education nationwide. Unique among Louisiana organizations and indeed only minimally paralleled nationwide, CLCU evidences a true spirit of educational ecumenism, bringing together all kinds of institutions, whether public, private, religion-affiliated, two-year, or four-year. For the last few years, CLCU has become the prerogative of the Board of Regents, which has convened meetings in the convenient precincts of Baton Rouge, whether at prominent hotels or in the meeting spaces at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center. For unknown reasons, the Regents this year seem to have forgotten about CLCU. Fortunately, the University of Louisiana System, with prompting from deep within the Regents office, came to the rescue, with current “UL” System President James Henderson stepping into the gap and packaging together a program on the admittedly remote grounds of his former habitation, Northwestern State University, where he served as campus CEO for several years. True, the program for this event does have that “last minute look,” but we nevertheless thank President Henderson for sustaining this important venue for the exchange of ideas among campuses of all sorts.



MONTHLY MOVIE REVIEW

ARRIVAL (Dennis Villeneuve, 2016)

—Reviewed by Carl Freedman

I doubt that there is any other author in current American fiction who has been acclaimed more highly than Ted Chiang on the basis of such a small output. About to turn 50, Chiang has been writing since high school and publishing since 1990, but has yet to publish a full-length novel; he has published one novella and 14 stories that range from very short to moderately long. Yet virtually every one of his stories has been hailed as stunningly brilliant, and about half have won multiple formal prizes. Chiang is perhaps best understood as our leading current practitioner of the conceptual fable—i.e., of that line in modern fiction whose undisputed master is Kafka and that includes such other major writers as Borges, Philip K. Dick, and Italo Calvino.

There seems to be something in this kind of fiction that is resistant to cinematic adaptation. Many movies have been based on Dick's novels and stories, but—with certain partial exceptions, such as Richard Linklater's motion-capture film *A Scanner Darkly* (2006), and some elements in the first half of Paul Verhoeven's *Total Recall* (1990)—all have failed pretty miserably to capture the peculiar genius of Dick's fiction. (Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* [1982] is an important film in its own right, but it has practically nothing to do with Dick's novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* [1968]). Kafka himself has been tackled twice by two of the very greatest filmmakers—by Orson Welles with *The Trial* (1962) and by Michael Haneke with *The Castle* (1997)—but the results, though not uninteresting, have been problematic. Reading Chiang's stories, one is frequently struck with awe and admiration. But rarely, I believe, does one think that this is a tale that would make a great movie. It would require a director unusually willing to take chances to decide to film Chiang; and such a one is Denis Villeneuve.

Probably the best known French-Canadian filmmaker of his generation, Villeneuve has been directing movies since the early 1990s, and has in recent years managed quite a burst of sustained creativity. He has released half a dozen full-length feature films during the past decade, with several shorter works along the way and one evidently major new film now in post-production. If none of his films has been quite unflawed, none has been less than interesting. In *Incendies* (2010)—perhaps his finest work to date—a twin brother and sister travel from Canada to the Middle East in order to seek the father they never knew and the brother they never knew they had until their mother's will was read. Their mother, when a young woman, lived through some of the worst horrors of the Lebanese Civil War of the 1970s; and, while some of what her children discover is fairly predictable, other things are extraordinarily shocking. *Prisoners* (2013) at first seems to promise a fairly ordinary Hollywood-style narrative of crime and revenge. But this story of three separate yet interlocking acts of kidnapping resolves into a meditation on violence so intelligent as to have earned the film justified comparisons to Clint Eastwood's masterpiece *Mystic River* (2003). *Enemy* (2013) challenges some of our most basic everyday metaphysical assumptions—notably the law of identity—in its story of a history teacher who comes across an actor that is his exact double, with the connection between them going even beyond their precisely similar voices and physical appearances.

Of all Villeneuve's earlier films, *Enemy* is, indeed, probably the one that most foreshadows *Arrival*, which is based on one of Chiang's longest tales, the nearly 60-page-long "Story of Your Life." It is a First Contact story, about what happens when human beings first meet intelligent creatures from beyond the earth. In this case, it is the aliens who take the initiative to make contact, arriving on our planet in a dozen of their spaceships. Each of the extraterrestrial creatures looks "like a barrel suspended at the intersection of seven limbs." These alien bodies are radially symmetrical, so that any of the limbs might be considered an arm or a leg; because the limbs are seven in number, the aliens are soon designated as heptapods.

Chiang's interest, however, is not primarily in the heptapods' physical form. It is in their language. In a nicely logical touch, Chiang assumes that, should we be visited by intelligent extraterrestrials, and presuming that the latter communicated by means of language, one of the most urgent issues would be that of translation. That every language has its own range of mean-

ings and its own distinctive mental framework and atmosphere—and that these have no precise equivalents in any other language—is, of course, a familiar enough principle even as regards closely related earthly tongues. In German, for instance, philosophical and technical discourse tends to be far more immediate and transparent than in English, because in German abstract and technical terms are normally compounds of ordinary, everyday words. For example, *Augenspiegel* (literally, "eye-mirror") conveys real meaning even to very young native speakers, whereas its nearest English equivalent—"ophthalmoscope"—is comprehensible only at a much more advanced stage of linguistic competence. French remained the standard tongue of Western diplomacy longer than was truly justified by French geopolitical power, because, as it is often claimed, the French language is richer than English in the nuances and ambiguities useful in international negotiations. Between a European language and an East Asian language like Korean or Chinese the differences are, of course, much greater. Yet even those human languages least related to one another are, after all, products of the same kind of brain. How different might be the mental framework of a language produced by nonhuman intelligence?

This is the central question that Chiang and, following him, Villeneuve attempt to answer. Human languages are sequential in the sense that every word (or sentence, or paragraph) must be heard or read after others and prior to yet others. In this way, our experience of language is at one with our experience of life itself: for life, as we know it, is a sequence in time. Sequence is inseparable from our whole sense of identity and causality: I do X now in order that Y may happen later, whether the time elapsed between X and Y is a fraction of a second (I flip a switch so that the light will come on) or decades (I save money now so that I will have a comfortable retirement). To live non-sequentially is something we can not only not do, but, strictly speaking, cannot even really conceive.

Yet, from Kafka onwards, one of the functions of the kind of speculative fabulation that Chiang practices has been to provide some glimmer of meaning in those things that lie beyond the strict epistemological horizons of humanity. The heptapods, it turns out, are not sequential creatures. Their language—especially their written language, which is their primary and preferred means of communication, and which is *not* phonetic transcription of speech—does not unfold temporally, with one unit of meaning following another. Instead, all the units of any discourse are comprehended simultaneously, perhaps a little like the elements of a picture that can be perceived at one glance. Such simultaneity of perception is not only linguistic but defines the heptapods' whole mode of being and perception. Time itself is for the heptapods simultaneous, not sequential. Whereas we humans experience the events of our life as remembered from the past or as envisioned in the future, a heptapod life is experienced all at once, defined by patterns that stretch across the temporal barriers that we perceive as separating past, present, and future. Since Chiang often raises essentially theological questions—though he always provides rigorously materialist answers to them—one might almost say that the heptapods live not in time (as we experience and understand it) but in eternity.

Of course, the power of conceptual fables lies not only in their ideas but in the ways that ideas are concretized in stories about memorable characters: think of Kafka's Joseph K. or Dick's Joe Chip. The protagonist of both Chiang's story and Villeneuve's film is one Louise Banks (Amy Adams in the film), a professor of linguistics and evidently something like the world's most brilliant authority on translation. Shortly after the arrival of the heptapods on earth, Dr. Banks is recruited by US military authorities as the person most likely to be able to establish communication with the aliens.



—Continued on page 19



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PROF. HALTIWANGER HAS MADE SEMINAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN RESEARCH ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP, BUSINESS
DYNAMICS, AND JOB CREATION AND DESTRUCTION IN THE US.**

MARIA CRISTINA DI NARDI

**PROFESSOR AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON
SENIOR ECONOMIST AT THE FEDERAL RESERVE BANK IN CHICAGO
PROF. DI NARDI IS KNOWN FOR HER INFLUENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE STUDY OF SAVINGS, WEALTH INEQUAL-
ITY, SOCIAL SECURITY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND TAXATION.**

This is the largest conference devoted to macroeconomics and related topics in North America. Traditionally hosted by Carnegie Research 1 universities in the mid-west and the Federal Reserve Banks, the conference usually has about 125 papers and two keynote lectures. In the past, participants included faculty from major research universities in the US and overseas, as well as research economists from the Federal Reserve Banks, Central Banks of other countries, multilateral organizations, such as the IMF and World Bank, and US government agencies such as the US Census, Congressional Budget Office, etc.

This will be a unique opportunity for LSU to showcase its commitment to research and the facilities of the Business College. LSU will be only the second Carnegie Research 1 University outside the mid-west to host the conference in its 23 year history. It will also be the largest economics conference hosted at LSU.

THE CALL FOR PAPERS IS NOW OPEN!!!!

THE CONFERENCE WEBSITE IS: [HTTPS://BUSINESS.LSU.EDU/MM2017](https://business.lsu.edu/mm2017).

The conference organizers are Areendam Chanda and Fang Yang in the department of economics.
Financial support for this Conference is being provided by the LSU Economics Department, the Economics & Policy Research Group and the E. J. Ourso College of Business.

Further details about the previous conferences can be found here:

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/econ/conference/midwest-macro-group/>

POP-UP POLL PERFORATES WORKDAY PROPAGANDA

Colleagues in the LSU System know well the endless frustration of dealing with Workday, the new business enterprise system. Purchased off-the-shelf in an economical, generic, and inadequately customized format, Workday has cost colleagues time, cost LSU repair charges, and cost the institution with respect to the most valuable of all commodities, morale. Rumor has it that LSU's new Chief Technology Officer scampered out to the Workday compound in California and laid it on the line to the architects of this shaky utility—and so the *Newsletter* efficiency experts are hoping for improvements. Meanwhile, LSU officialdom felt a bit of a rip in its metaphorically falling pants when a courageous colleague in SHREWD (School of Human Resources, Education, and Workforce Development) distributed a fully voluntarily and cheekily informal poll that drew more than seventy responses seemingly overnight and 104 responses in all. The results are nothing short of devastating: 82% of respondents report that Workday has “hurt their research capacity”; respondents indicate that they are spending five-and-one-half hours, or nearly 14% of their official workload, doing Workday chores; and up to 49% of the respondents report that they have curtailed research participation or shied away from making proposals or avoided involvement with hiring or bypassed travel opportunities or dodged purchasing owing to distress about Workday and its hassles. Most startling of all, a whopping 40% have transferred projects and purchasing to other institutions in order to ditch Workday. Many thanks to “Professor R” for creating a survey that tells the full story.



LSU TO LAUNCH ACADEMIC FREEDOM POLICY

One of the few remaining bipartisan attitudes (if not issues) is that of disdain for accrediting agencies. Everyone, even those who want to hold up standards, regards the current melange of questionably qualified boards (and their junketing parties of examiners and investigators) as somewhat less than authoritative, let alone admirable. Republicans regard the boards as both too tough and too lax, depending on which aspect of academe they address; Democrats regard them as whirlpools of costs that eventually drain the pockets of underprivileged children and their tuition-paying families. Despite their bad reputation, accreditation boards often induce good results, albeit indirectly. When LSU A&M passed through the straits of accreditation in 2014, the “visiting committee” pushed for the introduction into LSU policy of at least some language relating to academic freedom. That concession occurred in a somewhat clumsy way as LSU deployed a non-academic person to gather sentences hither and yon and insert them into the policy that normally governs promotion and tenure. Recognizing the awkwardness of this arrangement and hoping to highlight rather than hide academic freedom commitments, LSU A&M Provost Richard Koubek and Vice-Provost Jane Cassidy have embarked on the drafting, along with faculty colleagues, of a new academic freedom policy. Drawing on policy drafts compiled by former LSU A&M Faculty Senate President William Daly, Koubek, Cassidy, and a faculty committee will generate a policy that, at long last, puts LSU on the record as a supporter of free inquiry, free-ranging invention, and adventurous controversy.



Vice Provost Jane Cassidy to coordinate development of academic freedom policy

GUEST REPORT: THE FORUM

BY: MATTHEW BUTKUS AND JACOB BORDEN (MCNEESE STATE UNIVERSITY)

On March 16th, a standing room-only crowd in Lake Charles greeted regional state legislators, Education Policy Advisor to the Governor Mr. Donald Songy, and UL System President Dr. Jim Henderson to discuss their visions for the future of higher education in Louisiana.

The event, hosted by the McNeese State Faculty Senate, was the second such forum hosted in Lake Charles in the last three years. Over 100 students, faculty, and members of the public watched as Dr. Matthew Butkus, Faculty Senate President at McNeese, provided opening remarks that touched on challenges facing McNeese and Louisiana as a whole. In particular, Dr. Butkus discussed the sobering results from a recent state-wide survey of faculty that showed, for example, that over 60% of Louisiana higher educational faculty responsible for teaching areas essential to Louisiana's long-term economic prosperity, physical health, and infrastructure are looking to leave the state, and the questionable tenability of the current model of higher education in the state.

After his introductory remarks, Dr. Butkus joined Mr. Eric Cormier, Vice President of Policy Strategy for the Southwest Louisiana Department of Economic Development. Mr. Cormier moderated questions selected by Dr. Butkus from a list prepared by the Town Hall Committee and questions submitted by members of the audience.

The questions fielded from students and their parents focused on TOPS, and how to ensure that all Louisianans will be able to seek higher education now and in the future. At one point, Senator “Blade” Morrish from District 25 stated that Louisiana cannot afford TOPS the way it is structured, and discussed raising eligibility requirements. The panelists repeatedly stressed that the 2017 legislative session would be heavily focused on tax policy, including the statutory protections currently enjoyed by industry. They also endorsed the concerns of the crowd regarding securing TOPS, as well as freeing up additional funding without raising taxes.

To help carry forward the momentum built with the event, Dr. Jacob R. Borden, Chair of the Town Hall Committee, will be joining Dr. Butkus in Alexandria on April 29th to present on the organization of a town hall forum. Among other topics, Dr. Borden will describe the planning, communication, marketing, and event. Dr. Borden will and is also looking for opportunities for hosting similar other institutions across



gistics that went into the highlight key learnings, ward to discussing oppor-
tunities for hosting similar town hall events at Louisiana.

She does; but she does something more as well. In the early stages of learning a language, one understands the new language as one solves a puzzle, substituting familiar native terms for strange foreign ones. But, in the more advanced stages, one leaves one's native tongue behind. Anyone who has seriously learned a foreign language has felt the way that one's mind is not quite the same thing when one is speaking and thinking in (say) German that it is when one is speaking and thinking in English. Though Louise Banks is not the only human being who learns something of the heptapods' language, she evidently learns it more thoroughly than anyone else; and she thus becomes able to think, consciously and even unconsciously, in a radically alien way. She becomes able, to some degree, to perceive time simultaneously, as the heptapods do. She comes to understand that a physicist with whom she is working "will" become her husband; that they "will" have a daughter together; and that the daughter, after a happy, fulfilling life, "will" die at the age of 25 of a very rare disease. I have written "will" in quotation marks, because it would be misleading to say that Dr. Banks knows the future. The point is rather that, for her, when immersed in the heptapod language, past, present, and future do not exist in sequence but are all together part of a vast simultaneity. Her husband, however, can—like us—only think sequentially, and so fails to understand why his wife refuses to terminate a pregnancy that she knows "will" lead to a daughter dying young: ultimately shattering the marriage.

I have thus far been discussing Chiang's story and Villeneuve's film almost interchangeably, because the ideas about language and time, and the basic story that concretizes these ideas, are shared by both versions. But there are significant differences. In narrative terms, the story is narrated by Louise Banks and focuses almost exclusively on her professional and personal—and above all her linguistic—situations. Villeneuve, perhaps feeling that this concentration on the mind and experiences of an individual is uncinematic, has added a whole military and geopolitical dimension in which the more personal narrative is embedded. We see much of the US military encampment near one of the heptapod ships, and we learn about tensions between Dr. Banks and her fellow scientists, on the one hand, and the military chain of command on the other—as well as about tensions *within* the military itself. We also see something of how other countries respond to the heptapods (who have landed at various points around the globe) and the mixture of international co-operation and international rivalry that ensues. Most of this material seems to me otiose and fairly boring: It is too much like standard Hollywood alien-invasion fare, and it distracts from the really interesting central story that Villeneuve has inherited from Chiang. At least one of the director's additions, though, is nicely done (and more in Chiang's spirit). There is an effective scene in which we learn that Dr. Banks has defused a global crisis when she communicates with the commanding general of the Chinese People's Liberation Army by placing a call to his private cell phone—even though she does not learn the phone number until "after" the crisis is long past.

Villeneuve's most valuable contributions concern not the narrative but the resources specific to his own art. The film is beautifully shot, and its visual richness holds one's attention even while there is not much "action" in the popular sense. The alien spaceships have been widely praised, though I think their resemblance to the monoliths in *2001* (Stanley Kubrick, 1968) has often been overstated. Visually even more interesting than the space vessels, in my view, are the heptapods themselves. They are very far from being shown as improbably humanoid, yet the filmmaker also avoids the equal and opposite mistake of making them stereotypical Bug-Eyed Monsters. Villeneuve manages to make us feel that the heptapods' appearance is only unfamiliar, and not in the least grotesque or frightening despite being utterly non-human.

Then too, Villeneuve's frequent use of cross-cutting conveys Chiang's central concept in a mode unavailable in Chiang's own medium of prose. As the film cuts, rapidly and without transitions, from Amy Adams in one setting to her in a completely different one, and as we see Louise Banks at radically different "stages" of her life within split seconds of screen time, we get a glimmer of what it might be like to experience time as a simultaneity—perhaps even more effectively, and without doubt differently, than in the prose fiction. Still, if you had to choose, Chiang's story is, overall, a more powerful work of art than Villeneuve's movie. But you don't have to choose, and both are well worth your time.

LSU: MIGHT "S" STAND FOR "SYCOPHANCY"?

One lesson that faculty governance officials quickly learn is that no one should ever overlook the subtleties. So it is that, in the recent search for the President of the LSU, two telling details have emerged. First, the selection of the search firm. During the 2012–2013 search for an LSU President, the Jindal-dominated Board of Supervisors turned to Funk Associates, which was already in the midst of a controversy for its secretive and somewhat less than transparent ways in the hunt for a leader for the University of Florida System and which drew national attention—and plenty of flak—when the Florida Faculty Senate made the unusual move of voting "no confidence" in an executive search firm. Use of the Funk searchers was widely understood as an effort by the Supervisors to keep the search as obscure as possible and otherwise to evade public scrutiny. Now, with the LSU Foundation CEO search, the big bad university has turned to AGB Search, a Washington-based firm association with the Association of Governing Boards (hence "AGB") and known for its maintenance of good standards and practices as well as for its recognition of the special public obligations of public educational institutions. AGB Search was the firm that the LSU Supervisors rebuffed when pursuing the present incumbent in the LSU System Presidency. What might this all mean? We leave this to wiser heads. Next, the position description for "President and CEO of the LSU Foundation and LSU Vice President of Institutional Advancement" reports a change in the character and mission of LSU. This document proclaims that "there is a genuine donor-centric environment emerging on campus, and it is paying dividends." Translation: Someone "upstairs" is encouraging the currying of favors with monied people and is insinuating that we are all profiting by praising those favored by the unequal economic system that is Louisiana. Oh, and then there is that phrase, "genuine donor-centric environment," which, in a truly Freudian moment, suggests that there might be such a thing as a non-genuine, faked "donor-centric" mood. Now, some folks thought that a university should be "knowledge-centric," but apparently those buffoons are in the past when it comes to the practices at Red Stick State Sycophancy University.



Clapping hands without a sincere face appear as a backdrop to the LSU Foundation CEO job description