Faculty Senate Newsletter, February 2011

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President’s Message

Spring is the season in which metamorphoses routinely occur. It might also be a good time to consider the control that a dark old demon called habit can exert in even the bright days of renewal. Those who seldom sally through the ramarts of the many Boyd Halls and those who see the necessity of quick and often excruciating decisions by the administration may not see the grip that habit exerts not on any one campus executive but on the culture of administration as a whole.

The most obvious and often the most prestigious form of habit is now called “best standards and practices.” In an earlier, less loquacious day, habit might have been called “precedent.” Someone like myself, who sits through dozens if not hundreds of committee meetings, quickly learns to come prepared with a paradoxical offering: an extant example of something purportedly new. Whenever a new idea of any kind is put forth at LSU, the first response, with astounding regularity and predictability, is either “let’s see what other institutions are doing (and copy that)” or “what are best standards and practices at other institutions (and how may we copy them)?” In many cases this response is well intended, either as an expression of concern for the institution in a time of economic crisis or as an indication of the desire to do the right thing. What is more distressing if not puzzling is the degree to which protectiveness and good intentions have become associated with imitation and reluctance rather than with Tiger-level daring.

It is highly unlikely that LSU will ever lead anything, whether rankings or research productivity or quality of academic life, by following. Risk averse mentalities and terror of novelty will never produce preeminence. At the very least, we need to ask the etiological and analytical question, “where did the best standards and practices come from?”

At the very most, LSU colleagues need to ask whether the desire to be great can become too strong, whether the hope of doing what others seem more able to do becomes so overwhelming that we can do nothing other than what others have already done for fear of seeming stupid. Love of this institution runs deep at every level. Even the most cynical “lifers” in the administration crack a smile when Mike the Tiger hugs them or when the Campanile peals out an LSU-pertinent tune. Yet even this love can become too ferocious, as it does when we keep building mediocre new structures that look like overblown and under-considered knock-offs of the adorably colloquial buildings that make the campus core or when we see LSU trademark goods aiming low rather than high with respect to market sector (when, o when, are we going to get overblown and under-considered knock-offs of the adorably colloquial buildings that make the campus core or when we see LSU trademark goods aiming low rather than high with respect to market sector (when, o when, are we going to get some quality LSU-themed ladies’ wear?)? LSU, after all, is a happy novelty. There is no other institution like it on the planet. Let’s not, as the song suggests, “hold that tiger,” but let’s try to do something original this spring—and maybe next fall, too.

With all good wishes,
Kevin L. Cope, Faculty Senate President

Faculty Governance Interviews Commissioner Designate Jim Purcell

Of all the islands in the sea of Louisiana higher education, surely the most volcanic in every sense is the Board of Regents, which erupts at a moment’s notice, often spews only ash, and occasionally sinks beneath the waves. So it was that even the wizened observers of higher education governance were taken by surprise when the Regents unexpectedly announced a single candidate, Jim Purcell of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, for the office of Commissioner of Higher Education. The latest in a series of one-candidate selection “processes” built on the odd premise that six-figure salary earners and seasoned academic politicians are too tender to endure exposure of their candidacies, the Purcell designation was greeted with initial skepticism but open-mindedness by faculty governance practitioners.

To the credit of Regents consultant and de facto interim Commissioner Tom Layzell, an attempt was made, albeit at the last minute, to include faculty input in the selection of the putatively highest official in the world of Louisiana educators. Layzell arranged for LSU Faculty Senate President Kevin Cope and Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates President James Robinson (of LSU in Eunice) to conduct hour-long interviews with then-candidate Purcell. Both interviews ranged over an array of topics—and grievances—including the need to establish legitimacy for the Commissioner and for the Regents following a dubious and secretive search; the unacceptably poor communications techniques of the Regents; the value and indeed urgency of faculty representation on the Board of Regents; and the defense of both low-completer and low-revenue, basic-research disciplines in the face of pressure to produce trained workers rather than challenging thinkers. President Cope also urged the Commissioner-Designate to initiate a touring ensemble of faculty and administrators as well as Regents officials who could visit the far-flung campuses of Louisiana and hear the suggestions of colleagues who, owing to teaching or research obligations, are unable to participate in the governance process.

Perhaps the most important prospect to emerge from these interviews is the possibility of a “faculty bill of rights” that will guarantee the basic privileges and prerogatives of faculty and that will serve to raise the esteem of faculty among administrators. Commissioner-Designate Purcell has sworn to resume the dialogue on that topic at an early date. We monitor.

Budget Crisis and University Budget Committees to Merge

Faculty governance is not always perfect, and so it is that, with the growth of university budgets and the complication of the laws surrounding the economic management of large institutions, maintaining capable budget committees has proved challenging. Owing to the imprudence of state government, task forces have proliferated. For a brief time, five committees—the University Budget Committee; the Faculty Senate Budget Advisory Committee; the Multi-Year Budgeting Task Force; the Right-sizing Committee; the Budget Crisis Committee—were all operating simultaneously. In an effort to cut through the confusion, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee has cooperated with the administration in a short-term experiment in which the University Budget Committee, which excels in technical competence but lacks faculty involvement and political legitimacy, is merged with the Budget Crisis Committee, which has greater faculty representation and thereby standing with its constituencies but which has operated on only an ad hoc, emergency basis. The initial trial period will extend until December 2012, whereupon the arrangement will be evaluated. The approval document for the merger, which was signed by the Chancellor on December 22nd, may be viewed online. Meanwhile, the Faculty Senate will continue to maintain the Faculty Senate Budget Advisory Committee in the hope that the faculty can find and train a cadre of colleagues willing and able to devote the long hours required to budget analysis. This arrangement is evolving and evidences many flaws but may be the optimal approach to the demands created by economic instability, at least in the short term.

General Education Committee Revising Competency Goals

At the request of the Office of Academic Affairs, the LSU General Education Committee, under the guidance of Chair Melinda Solmon, has undertaken a rigorous examination of the expected “Gen Ed competencies” that students will acquire during a college education and has developed a series of implementation plans. A feature of the new approach to general education is a move away from the expectation that all general education courses will enhance all six competencies and a move toward the expectation that a given course will strengthen the competency appropriate to the department or college in which the course resides. Full details of this thoughtful as well as intricate plan can be found on the Faculty Senate web site. General Education Committee Chair Solmon will offer a presentation on the new approach to general education at the March 15th Faculty Senate meeting.

In Memoriam: Robert Ward

The Faculty Senate mourns the passing of Professor Robert Ward, of the School of Library and Information Science. Professor Ward was an able, outspoken, and enthusiastic as well as wry contributor to all aspects of faculty governance. As recently as September 2010 he added his sharp wit and keen insights to the Faculty Senate Budget Advisory Committee. The Faculty Senate will observe at moment of silence in memory of our colleague Robert Ward at its March 15th meeting.
ADMINISTRATOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT
Karen Denby, Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs

Few people would envy Karen Denby. As Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs, Denby is tasked with taking a state-wide perspective on Higher Education while attempting to meet the specific needs of individual colleges and universities - a balancing act not for the faint-hearted. Denby mentions, for instance, the 'formula'; an algorithm the Board of Regents uses to determine how state funds are allocated. Previously calculated according to a school's operational costs, total enrollment and the like, the formula now takes into account how well an institution is performing. Denby acknowledges that measuring productivity will likely draw a certain amount of criticism. "We've been trying to develop a formula that will please all gods," she quips.

Although she has been Associate Commissioner less than a year, Denby brings a hefty amount of expertise to the table. Denby received her initial training at LSU, earning a BS in Elementary Education and then a MED in Learning Disabilities. In addition, she holds an MBA from Southern Illinois and two degrees from Harvard, the EDM in Higher Education and the EDD in Higher Education and Policy Development. Beyond this thorough grounding in the academy, Denby spent twelve years in the Air Force as a Power Management Officer, during some of which time she taught ROTC students at Southern Mississippi. Nor is Denby entirely out of her element as Associate Commissioner, having prior experience at LSU as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Dean of Enrollment Management.

Denby admits to a certain amount of nostalgia for the university experience. "I miss being on campus," Denby confides, "I really enjoy the spark that students bring to a place." Yet, having been on both sides of the academic fence, Denby is well positioned to see the rationale behind decisions that are made at the top level. Speaking of the sometimes painful choices the Board of Regents must make, Denby comments, "It doesn't necessarily make me like them much more, but at least I understand what's behind them."

One not so painful decision the Board of Regents has made that will impact Higher Education in Louisiana is the Transfer Degree Guarantee. Implemented in 2009, the program enables undergraduates at two year institutions in Louisiana to more easily transfer to one of the state's public, four year universities. Students who complete the requirements of the transfer degree are guaranteed to have all sixty credit hours in general education count towards their four year certificate. "It's great for the students," Denby states with obvious enthusiasm.

Yet implementing the program in practice has not been all smooth sailing. Denby discusses, for example, issues that have arisen concerning what counts as a gen. ed. course across a four year institution's curriculum and gen. ed. course requirements within specific academic disciplines. "It's hard for the universities to understand, and it's hard for the two year schools to figure out how to advise," Denby observes. Yet Denby feels the advantages such a program brings the students of Louisiana outstrip any setbacks. "Even getting it to work is huge," Denby observes.

Like all four state systems in Higher Education in Louisiana, the administrative staff that makes up the Board of Regents has assimilated these observations and offered reassurances that the Flagship Coalition was indeed committed to the perpetuation of university goals, including the cultivation of cultural resources without immediate pragmatic purposes. Reilly and Martin both have a certain amount of nostalgia for the university experience. "I miss being on campus," Denby confides, "I really enjoy the spark that students bring to a place."

"If adults would believe in it more, maybe kids would get more involved even from the beginning"
HRM Out Reach

By A.G. Monaco, Associate Vice Chancellor of Human Resources Management

Editor’s Note: As part of the better-than-velvet revolution that is underway in Human Resources Management, the inexhaustible and hope-inpiring HRM head A. G. Monaco will be reaching out to the LSU community via the Faculty Senate Monthly Newsletter. Gradually, reports and information from A. G’s workshop will become regular parts and features of our monthly electronic publication. This month, A. G. begins this project with the following (and genial) open letter to our readership.

I am sitting at my desk listening to Otis Redding singing “Shake” and worrying that anything I write will not meet the standards of a certain rather demanding English professor.

Otis is not on vinyl - he is on my iPod… I am not in my dorm room and it is not 1976 - I am in my office on the 3rd floor of T. Boyd and the professor is Kevin Cope, the editor of the LSU Faculty newsletter.

As if I did not have enough pressure in my life why did I foolishly agree to submit something for this newsletter. Perhaps if I compose in verse he won’t take off for poor punctuation or maybe if graded on a Pass-Fail basis I will slide under Cope’s radar. Maybe I should just get to the point…..

I arrived at the Louisiana State University in November in order to assume a role in the Office of Human Resources Management. Much of the previous 10 years of my career had been spent wandering the halls at several institutions in an effort to maintain personnel services in the face of dwindling resources. What makes things different at this campus is that I genuinely think is is possible. While money for salaries and staff expansion is tight there are still things that the HR function can do to improve the experience of working at LSU and I guarantee there is commitment to achieve that improvement.

While HRM will be joining with Kevin and the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate to provide more information on a variety of issues related to benefits, compensation, and other matters that impact all of us, we also want to hear suggestions for topics directly from faculty members. Please tell us about problems or successes you have had during your interactions with the HRM office and yes we really want to hear about those times when HRM has failed you. If you do not avail yourselves of HRM services tell us why not and tell us what services we can provide that might help you. In order to measure the success or failure of our efforts and then work to improve or expand service we need feedback from the faculty. You don’t even need to be gentle - honest criticism is a compliment to the committed.

We want you to tell us what questions you need answered and what information you need dispensed. We recognize that our website is limited in its effectiveness but rather than wait for any redesign or improvements we want to start working immediately to find more direct ways to bring information to the faculty. Whether it is information about health insurance benefits, 403b plans or the state’s pension plans we are more than willing to go out and acquire the information you request and then design some effective ways to get that information to you and the rest of the faculty. One idea already suggested is that with a faculty scattered across campus the staff from HRM needs to go to them to provide services and information rather than expect the faculty to come to the HRM offices. Why not? My last position was at the University of Akron in Ohio and what passes for cold on this campus is June at that institution. If you have met me you know that more exercise is called for so you can expect to see us in your buildings more often. Eventually we will be sending out surveys around campus but I urge you not to wait for the arrival of those surveys. Please contact me with any questions, suggestions, or complaints and I will provide a response as quickly as possible. If you have a question that doesn’t involve HRM but you don’t know who to ask – email them to me anyway. I will make sure it gets to someone who can answer it. My email is amonaco@lsu.edu.

Thank you all for making LSU great.

A REVIEW DOES NOT IMPRIMATUR MAKE: COMMENTARY ON UL SYSTEM’S RECENT POLICY CHANGES ON PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE, TENURE, AND TERMINATION

By Donna Rhorer, Chair, University of Louisiana Faculty Advisory Council

On December 3rd, the Faculty Advisory Council to the UL System met with Dr. Randy Moffett. He asked for our input on proposed policy revisions yet one more time, and promised a meeting with us, perhaps on January 22nd or in early February, to discuss our revisions to the proposed changes under consideration since June, 2010. Members consulted with their Faculty Senates and wrote another draft—this time we were to revise during the final exam and final semester grading periods. (The first draft was written during the summer while most of us were not teaching.) On December 16th, I submitted the suggested changes to Drs. Moffett and O’Hara. When two new Board appointments were made in January, prospects for a positive outcome began to fade as the Board’s membership began to change since we would have limited time and opportunities to convince new members of our positions. The promised meeting with Dr. Moffett never materialized.

On February 10th, Dr. O’Hara emailed to thank FAC for its work and to announce that the final policies which were attached would be presented at the Board’s February 25th meeting. A quick review of the final documents revealed that none of our suggestions of December 16th had been incorporated into the final draft; therefore, our December work had been for naught. A week later upon learning that more new Board appointments had been made (one member had been re-appointed and three new members had been tapped to serve), we knew that the policies would be approved—unchanged.

In preparation for appearing before the committee discussing the proposed policies, FAC prepared an official statement outlining three key issues for which we had lobbied all along, but which still had not been incorporated into the policies. These include the following:

1. “If the academic courses of the program will continue to be taught, tenured faculty in that program shall retain their tenure, and continue to teach those courses.”

2. “Termination related to financial exigency and/or Program Discontinuance shall be determined by procedures which include participation by faculty impacted by such exigency or program discontinuance.”

(To be continued on page 4)
A Review Does Not an Impimatur Make (continued)

3. “Terminated tenured faculty shall have the right of appeal to the Board of Supervisors.”

FAC also asked that its name be removed from the “Review Process” list at the end of the document or if not removed, that “Not Approved By” be listed next to our name since a review does not imply an imprimatur. After the statement was read to the Board, FAC members, in the 3 minutes allotted to each public speaker appearing before the Board, presented resolutions from their Faculty Senates or spoke specifically as they documented problems in the proposed policies such as the shortened notification periods, the lack of appeal to the Board by tenured faculty who are dismissed, and the policies’ non-compliance with AAUP guidelines. Other speakers pointed out the effect such policies would have on the reputation of Louisiana’s institutions of higher learning.

Next, members of the Board responded to the public comments; then, they voted unanimously to approve the policies. Regarding the new policies—FAC members will return to their respective institutions where they will encourage their Faculty Senates to advocate for the fair and impartial treatment of any faculty member in a program which may be discontinued.

In summary, the Faculty Advisory Council has always enjoyed an excellent working relationship with the System officers and the Board of Supervisors even when we have found ourselves on different sides of an issue, primarily because we have had mutual respect for one another. We hope to continue that relationship with the Board in its new configuration.

Currently we are in the process of writing our own document in support of our Board’s resolution to Governor Jindal in support of the Governor’s initiatives regarding dedicated state funds.

The Louisiana Higher Education Wish List

For the last several issues, the Newsletter has examined the fun, lifestyle side of the LSU experience by rating phenomena that exist, whether campus art of buildings or quality of dress among the masculine masters of the à la mode. Although not every month can bring the kind of sorties into cultural humor that the Best Dressed list provided, readers may be assured that these evaluations and rankings will return to the culture column. Both humor and judgment, the components of ranking lists, are very much like chocolate. They require tempering and they benefit from a bit of salt in the sugar mix. This month, therefore, we step down a bit from the bench of judgment and consider what is not yet present to be judged. By this obscure locution, the Newsletter staff refers to that set of amenities that should comprise the penumbra of greatness surrounding and shading a university hot for excellence: that array of offerings that Louisiana higher education has yet to provide, inspire, or otherwise deliver on its way to greatness.

What, then, do Louisiana campuses need in order to teach our clientele, whether promising youth or aspiring non-traditional students, what the life of the mind is all about?

At the top of the list is, to borrow a term from the late middle ages, the faubourg of the university. Most universities that make their way into the prestigious associations, whether the AAU or the CIC or some other ladle in the alphabet soup of academic excellence, create a sphere of cultural and economic influence around their campuses. Visitors to the University of Iowa, for example, are impressed by the remarkable concentricity of the campus, with the academic and related facilities forming the center ring and a village of high-quality service-providers orbiting around the light of learning, after which the far greater circle of Iowa cornfields defines cultural outer space. Ditto for the mega-universities in the Arizona deserts or even for venues such as Yale in which urban blight is relieved for some distance around the ivy-encircled perimeter by an ensemble of upscale offerings. Over the last five years, LSU has made progress, especially in the area north of campus; over the last fifty years, a few “institutions” such as The Chimes or Highland Coffees have provided a history of delights. The south flank of the campus, however, remains an ardent anti-climax, with sprawling parking lots emptying into an economic wasteland relieved only by a few dispersed oases such as Roly-Poly or Walk-Ons. Unfortunately, too, is the influx of chain businesses such as Buffalo Wings, which are good enough in a pinch but detract from the local flavor characteristic of a true university faubourg.

Next on the list of missing items might be a school of proper processing. In the post-Katrina ascent of Baton Rouge as a if not the cultural center of Louisiana, LSU has played a big part. It is seldom that one wanders in either Whole Foods or Calandro’s or The Fresh Market without encountering a hungry professor or a sample-scrounging administrator. Unfortunately, LSU has failed to encourage high standards among the consumers of Baton Rouge, with the result that even such cheese-Meccas as Whole Foods asphyxiate their fine offerings in plastic wrap and even such fine clothiers as Cohn-Turner or Stephen Black depend heavily on pre-selected inventories. Universities have a duty to raise the quality of life by increasing consumer choosiness and by helping merchants understand the proper presentation of commodities of all sorts.

Third on the list would be a new standard for sanitation. No one wants to criticize the poor people who work all hours of the day and night in an attempt to keep decaying facilities at a minimum standard of hygiene. Unfortunately, the approach to cleanliness seems to be aimless, uninstructed, and unplanned. The quality of facilities service has expanded immensely since the arrival of interim Facilities Services chief Tony Lombardo, yet no one person can alone reverse the chaotic practices of decades. Believe it or not, some community colleges in Kentucky are now offerings certificates and even degrees in janitorial science. Surely we can find someone to evaluate the age-old approaches to cleaning our buildings, an evaluation which very likely would make life easier rather than harder for our helpers in this necessary field. Before the governor talks about work-force development or industrial improvement, he ought to provide highway rest areas that will not repel recruits even before the get out of the “Welcome Center” (last week, a visit to the Welcome Center in Butte LaRrose discovered that even the talking raccoon in the automated Cajun dictionaary had gone on a kind of loquacity strike, having put a barrier before the restroom and getting stuck in a perpetual talking mode).

Fourth on the wish-list would be a nighttime. Many Louisiana campuses are all but vacant from the afternoon onward. LSU has many night-time events but lacks adequate parking for them and adequate ways to publicize them to its community. The lack of nighttime community presence on the campus, however, arises from cultural reasons as much as from ergonomic, traffic, or logistical challenges. That big “K” in “KPMG” suggests early rising and early sinking. If Louisiana institutions are ever going to attain the profile of its brethren research institutions, they will need to find some way to attract more people to the campuses after hours and for more reasons than to sneak in some credit hours through an evening class. (To be continued on page 5)

Faculty Senate-Chancellor Forum Slated for March 16

Given the gravity of the economic situation in which universities find themselves, Faculty Senate officers, in tandem with the LSU administration, judged it best to delay the next Faculty Senate-Chancellor Forum until the economic and institutional prospects for the upcoming “cliff year” resolved into sharper focus. With the impending start of the Louisiana legislative session, the time has again arrived for the LSU community to enter into a conversation with the campus chief executive. March 16th at 3:30 pm in the Shaver Theater has been set as the date and time for this important dialogue, which will also be video-recorded and made available on the Faculty Senate web site. Refreshments will be available in the Shaver lobby commencing at 3:00 pm. The topic for the Forum will be “Leaping off the Cliff or Over the Chasm: LSU In and After the Recession.”

Technical Difficulties Mar Debut Of Flagship Coalition Website

Among the challenges faced by the new Flagship Coalition has been that of communication. It is unfortunate that its first days were marked by a series of mis-communications or even non-communications that tended to send a message contrary to the intentions of this beleaguered but isolated organization. In response to pleading from Faculty Senate officials, the Flagship Coalition has opened a new web site. During its first days, pressing the “comments” button led to a startling message that no comments were being accepted. That problem has been rectified, and members of the LSU community are urged to visit the site and leave their comments alongside the various stories. Similarly, the web page on which visitors may join the action network rejects addresses not recognized by the “VoterVoice System,” including the address of the Faculty Senate and the home address of the Faculty Senate President. This problem remains unresolved, but we are hopeful that Flagship Coalition officials will recognize that the membership rolls will not build without an easy interface.

Rest For The Weary

The staff of the Newsletter has been saddened as well as alarmed by the sudden increase in mortality among faculty and staff members. Academic professionals of all kinds are more susceptible to and afflicted by stress than they often admit. The continuing budget crisis and the resulting demoralization can have adverse effects on health. Please be sure to reserve some time for rest and calm. The gradual increase in duties and assignments that results from downsizing takes its toll. And, remember, everyone is entitled to use accrued sick-leave days for any legitimate reason, including exhaustion.

Tip of the Month: TWP

With the onrush of warmer weather, higher humidity, and longer hours of sunlight, homeowners will begin worrying about natural, stained, and transparent finishes on exterior wood surfaces such as doors, pillars, decks, and window-sills. To date, nothing, not even marine “spar” varnish, has been able to withstand the relentless ultraviolet radiation and the unstinting environmental pressures that lay siege to Louisiana structures. Southern science has now concocted a comparatively new product, “TWP—Total Wood Protectant,” that not only emerges from regional laboratories but that seems impervious to any and all environmental adversaries. Available online and from a few select local merchants such as Cajun Cypress, TWP comes in a variety of grades, colors, and near-transparent washes. After more than a year under TWP protection, the massive cypress pillars upholding the Senate President’s house show not the least sign of decay, degradation, or darkening. This is a five-star product!
The Chronicle of Higher of programs that are staffed in large measure by women with decades of unrewarded service. Watch of rest will allow him to contemplate the political and moral implications of an all-male Board authorizing the elimination merits” and who lamented that he had taken time from his prosperous law practice in order developer, cried out that he “would pray for faculty. “ This strange moment in the history of to Christianity and suggested divine guidance behind his vote and actions. While preparing streaming video in the offices of . In an even more bizarre that the proposed actions would have any impact on the reputation of Louisiana institutions ted). First to the microphone was terminal-degree free attorney André Coudrain, who denied that this proposal brought to Louisiana, the University of Louisiana System never completely extinguished this proposal but to diminish the standards for the discontinuation of programs at University of Louisiana campuses, to vest tenure not in the University of Louisiana System or a particular campus but in individual programs and departments, and to reduce the notice- of-termination time for faculty in discontinued programs to ninety days. Despite the national attention (and national shame) that this proposal brought to Louisiana, the University of Louisiana System never completely extinguished this proposal but remained aware of an obscure rule that allows a deferred resolution to be reactivated for consideration at any time and with minimal notice. That is precisely what occurred at the February 25th meeting, immediately following the replacement of three dissenting Board members with gubernatorial appointees. University of Louisiana System procedures call for the presentation of Super- visor comments on a measure before the hearing of public comment. This, in imitation of court proceedings that allow de- fendants to speak last. This time, however, the Supervisors, including several of the Jindal-packed appointees, asked to defer comments until after faculty input was received. Faculty comment came in as much abundance as is possible within a system that forbids its faculty to leave their campuses even when their professional lives are at stake unless they can certify that an equally expert colleague will substitute in their classes. Twelve faculty members asked the University of Louisiana Board to retain at least minimal rights to appeal decisions. LSU Faculty Senate President Kevin Cope spoke on the implications of this move for the cultivation of the next generation of educators, who, assessing such work rules as were proposed, would surely seek employment outside of Louisiana or in some other vocation. Comment was difficult because all speakers were limited to no more than 180 seconds at the microphone. Following the public testimony, an assortment of University of Louisiana Supervisors, who were subject to no time limits and who spoke at great length, roundly rejected and rebutted all testimony (to which rebuttals no further responses were permit- ted). First to the microphone was terminal-degree free attorney André Coudrain, who denied that the proposed actions would have any impact on the reputation of Louisiana institutions (this, despite the fact that an inside informant affirmed that the entire event was watched over streaming video in the offices of The Chronicle of Higher Education). In an even more bizarre turn, Supervisor and Jindal appointee E. Gerald “T-Boy” Hebert announced his commitment to Christianity and suggested divine guidance behind his vote and actions. While preparing to vote to allow the minimal-notice firing of hundreds of faculty members, “T-Boy,” a resort developer, cried out that he “would pray for faculty.” This strange moment in the history of evangelism proved ineffective, for T-Boy’s prayers were immediately followed by a tirade from former Executive Counsel to Bobby Jindal and Jindal appointee Jimmy Faircloth, who scolded testifying faculty members for bringing “anger” rather than “substance” or arguments “on the merits” and who lamented that he had taken time from his prosperous law practice in order to read a binder full of faculty input, a binder which he lifted up and fervently shook before the cameras. We can only hope that some of the affected faculty members, who earn only fractions of Faircloth’s salary, will be available to serve as taxi drivers to escort the weary supervisor back to his office (and sofa) in Alexandria. Perhaps a bit of rest will allow him to contemplate the political and moral implications of an all-male Board authorizing the elimination of programs that are staffed in large measure by women with decades of unrewarded service. Watch The Chronicle of Higher Education and the courthouse docket for further details on a disgraceful story that has not yet ended.

ULL System Board of Regents Revives Plan to Diminish Stanards to Discontinue Programs Under Guise of Public Hearing

Few spectacles could have been as disheartening as the February 25th meeting of the University of Louisiana System Board of Regents. Frequent readers of the Newsletter will remember that, last summer, the collective pressure from both faculty governance organizations and from the national press forced the University of Louisiana Supervisors to withdraw a motion to diminish the standards for the discontinuation of programs at University of Louisiana campuses, to vest tenure not in the University of Louisiana System or a particular campus but in individual programs and departments, and to reduce the notice-termination time for faculty in discontinued programs to ninety days. Despite the national attention (and national shame) that this proposal brought to Louisiana, the University of Louisiana System never completely extinguished this proposal but remained aware of an obscure rule that allows a deferred resolution to be reactivated for consideration at any time and with minimal notice. That is precisely what occurred at the February 25th meeting, immediately following the replacement of three dissenting Board members with gubernatorial appointees. University of Louisiana System procedures call for the presentation of Super- visor comments on a measure before the hearing of public comment. This, in imitation of court proceedings that allow de- fendants to speak last. This time, however, the Supervisors, including several of the Jindal-packed appointees, asked to defer comments until after faculty input was received. Faculty comment came in as much abundance as is possible within a system that forbids its faculty to leave their campuses even when their professional lives are at stake unless they can certify that an equally expert colleague will substitute in their classes. Twelve faculty members asked the University of Louisiana Board to retain at least minimal rights to appeal decisions. LSU Faculty Senate President Kevin Cope spoke on the implications of this move for the cultivation of the next generation of educators, who, assessing such work rules as were proposed, would surely seek employment outside of Louisiana or in some other vocation. Comment was difficult because all speakers were limited to no more than 180 seconds at the microphone.

Following the public testimony, an assortment of University of Louisiana Supervisors, who were subject to no time limits and who spoke at great length, roundly rejected and rebutted all testimony (to which rebuttals no further responses were permit- ted). First to the microphone was terminal-degree free attorney André Coudrain, who denied that the proposed actions would have any impact on the reputation of Louisiana institutions (this, despite the fact that an inside informant affirmed that the entire event was watched over streaming video in the offices of The Chronicle of Higher Education). In an even more bizarre turn, Supervisor and Jindal appointee E. Gerald “T-Boy” Hebert announced his commitment to Christianity and suggested divine guidance behind his vote and actions. While preparing to vote to allow the minimal-notice firing of hundreds of faculty members, “T-Boy,” a resort developer, cried out that he “would pray for faculty.” This strange moment in the history of evangelism proved ineffective, for T-Boy’s prayers were immediately followed by a tirade from former Executive Counsel to Bobby Jindal and Jindal appointee Jimmy Faircloth, who scolded testifying faculty members for bringing “anger” rather than “substance” or arguments “on the merits” and who lamented that he had taken time from his prosperous law practice in order to read a binder full of faculty input, a binder which he lifted up and fervently shook before the cameras. We can only hope that some of the affected faculty members, who earn only fractions of Faircloth’s salary, will be available to serve as taxi drivers to escort the weary supervisor back to his office (and sofa) in Alexandria. Perhaps a bit of rest will allow him to contemplate the political and moral implications of an all-male Board authorizing the elimination of programs that are staffed in large measure by women with decades of unrewarded service. Watch The Chronicle of Higher Education and the courthouse docket for further details on a disgraceful story that has not yet ended.

HRM Soliticing Feedback via Questionnaire Campaign

The parade of progress that has been rolling since the ar- rival of HRM chief A. G. Monaco continues to surge. A. G. and a team headed by Mimi Ruesbamen have prepared the first of a set of targeted questionnaires, the initial in- strument being directed to Deans and Directors. More questionnaires for more audiences will follow. The ques- tionnaires address every aspect of the “HRM” experience, from policies to customer service to desired improve- ments and more. A. G., Mimi, and their team deserve loud accolades for the astounding transformation that they are bringing about in their diverse and multi-tasked department. Is it not amazing what good results follow when someone is hired as a result of a fair and open search?

South Carolina Graduate Student Completes Dissertation on Senate Perceptions of Athletics

University of South Carolina graduate student Amber Fal- luca has completed a dissertation on the topic of “Faculty Senators and their Knowledge and Perceptions of the Governance of Intercollegiate Athletics,” drawing a sub- stantional potion of her evidence from a survey distributed last year to LSU Faculty Senators. Falluca’s dissertation ex- amined not the facts but the perceptions of faculty gov- ernance participants with respect to athletic programs on their and other SEC campuses. Falluca has prepared an executive summary of her research, which is available online and which demonstrates that LSU Senators feel slightly less influential with respect to Athletics than do Senators on other campuses. Additionally, Falluca’s study reveals less of a demand for direct faculty participation in the management of athletic programs than for the culti- vation of “interpreters” who can serve as liaisons and com- municators between academic and athletic professionals. Falluca also discovered only minimal support for the ap- pointment of coaches as faculty members.

Office of Academic Affairs Leaps at Leadership Agenda

Despite its reputation for sobriety, the Office of Academic Affairs engages in more than its share of goddess. So it is that the promulgation of “Chairman Bob Levy’s Lead- ership Agenda”—a document with a title that some- how mixes the cult of personality appropriate to a Huge Chavez or maybe a Bob Barker with the quasi-messianic self-fashioning of Chairman Mao or Chairman Steve Jobs—was greeted with enthusiasm by the best and the brightest among the Boyd-dwellers. And, indeed, some aspects of the agenda, including improvement of fiscal and business practices and the unambiguous designa- tion of a flagship university, represent a refreshing move away from Louisiana’s signature mix of egalitarianism and conservatism (we only wish that the Olympian “Chairman Levy” had not mixed metaphors by declaring the flag- ship university a jewel in a crown). On the other hand, the “Leadership Agenda,” which is accessible online, thumps on such familiar themes as “targeted” research (usually a code-word for research that has industrial applications and certainly not a reference to basic or theoretical in- quiry); mobilization of the junior colleges to create work- force members (heaven forbid that workers should also learn to think!); and compliance with the LA GRAD act graduation-rate standards, standards that have yet to be fully explained. By and large, the “Leadership Agenda” is a step forward, although maybe not so vast a step as some on-campus cheerleaders might hope.
Copycat Coalitions Coalesce

One of the more charming rituals of faith performed by the LSU and LSU System administrations is the evidence-free affirmation that any actions taken by an institution will enjoy perpetual novelty. On the one hand, campus officials would like to spread their gospels, but, on the other hand, they guard them jealously and imagine that their protection from imitators will preserve their sanctity. In desperate times, however, any idea with any element of good will spread like weeds in a Louisiana flower bed. So it is that, only a week or two after the launching of the LSU Flagship Coalition, similar coalitions began popping up around the state. The latest entrants in the coalition derby include the Shreveport Bossier Imperative for Higher Education, or SBI and Business for Improving Louisiana Development, or BILD (which has yet to deploy a web site). Students of the history of religion will delight to observe the metamorphosis of creeds as each of these organizations mix elements of the new Regents’ “Leadership Agenda” with the manifestos of the Flagship Coalition and then sprinkle in a few new propositions to turn the regnant orthodoxy in a direction more favorable to their respective local cults. In the long run, it will be more profitable to LSU as well as for any other institution to profit from the collective work of these sparring coalitions than to depend to heavily on any one lobby or philanthropic group.

SECAFL Petitions for Funding, Launches Webite

In November 2009, the Southeastern Conference Association of Faculty Leaders (SECAFL) developed a charter and elected officers. The emergence of SECAFL was encouraged by the Southeastern Conference (the SEC) subsequent to the signing of its lucrative television contract and as a means to direct some its prosperity into the cultivation of academic leadership on member campuses. Although SECAFL has been blessed by SEC Commissioner Mike Slive, it has operated without a budget, sustained only by the good will of the Faculty Senate officers of the SEC schools, most of whom traveled to SECAFL meetings at their own expense. SECAFL also operated under the canopy of SECAC, the Southeastern Conference Academic Consortium, a loosely confederated organization comprised of the Provosts or other chief academic officers of the SEC campuses. Recently, SECAC has signaled an intention to accelerate the work of its affiliate organizations and has asked for proposals from SECAFL. SECAFL has, in turn, submitted a request for funding of a major conference on faculty governance on the LSU campus. It has also inaugurated a preliminary version of its web site, where an array of documents, including its charter and the minutes of its past meeting, may be accessed.

Faculty Senate Secretary to Implement New A/V System at Meetings

Faculty Senate Secretary George Stanley has heard not only the ovations but also the suggestions of viewers of Faculty Senate video recordings (of Senate meetings, Forums, and other events). Spurred primarily by LSU Libraries Dean Jennifer Cargill, Stanley will implement, beginning with the March 15th Faculty Senate meeting, a multi-camera and multi-microphone system that should yield both multidirectional camera work (so that both those seated on the dais and in the galleries may be seen) and improved audio quality, especially for those who speak from the floor or the audience areas. Thanks to George Stanley for his aesthetic ambitions as well as for his continuing service.

Capitol Area Heart Walk

Top Fund-Raisers can win dinner with Les Miles
8am-noon, March 26, 2011
LSU Old Front Nine
For more info, please call contact Ray Castle at 225-578-7175 or Cary Lowery at 251-367-5000.
Go to Website: www.capitalarea-heartwalk.org
2011 SPRING SERIES

Wednesdays at Noon

Programs are held each Wednesday at noon at the museum, located at 660 North Fourth Street and last 30 minutes with a question and answer period at the end. Guests are welcome to bring their lunch and may come and go as their schedules require.

Refreshments will be provided by the Louisiana State Museum Friends for a small donation.

March 2

Furnishing Louisiana

H. Parrott Baot, Author

March 9

More Tales of Tiger Town

Clarke Cadwallard, Highland Cofees

A free series of lively talks on local history designed for locals and downtown workers on a break.

L.A. Deferred Compensation Plan (457)

Meet your savings goals...

Meet your retirement goals...

Meet with your Plan representative

If you’re looking for a guide to your retirement planning strategy and want to learn more about the importance of saving, your Plan representative is here to help.

Your Plan representative can provide you with a great opportunity to discover the many benefits of your Plan, including:

- Tax-deferred savings
- Tax-deferred compound growth
- A variety of investment choices

You can also learn about some of the key elements that may help lead to your retirement planning success as you get answers to these important questions:

- How much should I be saving?
- How much will I need when I retire?
- How long will my savings last?

So let's meet...

Chris Burton, Sr. Account Executive
225-663-5507 or chris.burton@gws.com

Tues., March 1st, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

110 Thomas Boyd Hall

LSU Human Resources Dept.

Want to Place an Ad?

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