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## Faculty Senate Newsletter, February 2011

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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# LSU FACULTY SENATE

## Monthly Newsletter

February 28, 2011



### *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 ramparts 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 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 Sciences. 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 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 that 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 curricula 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 felt the effects of the ongoing budget crisis. This has included the loss of personnel. “There are a heck of a lot of empty desks,” Denby comments. Those who remain have also had to contend with an increase in requests for information from the state legislature which, Denby says, “have gone up exponentially.” Yet, like many administrators committed to Higher Education in Louisiana, Denby seems more concerned with how the public views the state’s university systems and how those perceptions will influence future generations. “If adults would believe in it more,” Denby argues, “maybe kids would get more involved even from the beginning.”

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## Faculty Senate Meets with Flagship Coalition Spokesman

Perhaps no property is more widely distributed in LSU’s public outreach apparatus than a curious mixture of naivete and clumsiness that looks like conspiratorial behavior but that originates in unreadiness. So it is that the debut of the helpful Flagship Coalition proved less than felicitous as an ensemble of wealthy industrialists began making pronouncements concerning undefined autonomies and the revision of Civil Service guarantees. Baptized in the rough waters of surprise, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee raised the warning flag, asking for explanations of an assortment of bold pronouncements and reminding administrative officials that a public university could benefit from but should not be run by private cartels, however useful those helpers might be in the short term.

Good news resulted from these initiatives, with Flagship Coalition spokesman and advertising magnate Sean Reilly meeting with faculty, staff, and student leaders over an extended luncheon. Faculty attendees took the occasion to remind Reilly that faculty had grave concerns about the industrialist tone Coalition announcements—especially with the apparent zeal for the ideology of “workforce development”—and about work rules for staff members for whom Civil Service guarantees were the only protections. Faculty leaders also urged the Flagship Coalition to make a public commitment to basic research and to revenue-starved disciplines as well as to those that produce trained workers, noting that the value of the workforce produced by Louisiana institutions depends on many factors other than specific technical competence in currently-hiring fields. Reilly 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.

We await developments with regard to the Flagship Coalition, which has succeeded in influencing the governor and the legislature in a way favorable to higher education but that has yet to show its long-term commitment to the full and diverse range of university missions. Sean Reilly left the meeting commenting “this is fun, we’d like to do this again,” and so we hope that his principal on-campus contact, Provost Jack Hamilton, will ensure that these fruitful dialogues continue.

## Interim Postal Service Procedures Puzzling

With the withdrawal of postal service to the campus has come a parcel of troubles. Although Vice-Chancellor for Finance and Administrative Services Eric Monday has vowed to probe the problems, many units and departments continue to puzzle out compliance with the interim postal procedures (LSU, after all, is notorious for its use of interim administrative personnel, so why not make recourse to interim postage stamps?). In some departments, each and every letter, including mass-mailings to applicants, presently requires handling by an administrative assistant and assignment of a specific bar code. The Newsletter has yet to receive an indication as to how long these interim procedures will endure (possibly that communication has not been properly processed and bar-coded). Students have also expressed concern about the impending hike in on-campus box rental rates, which will soar some 40% to \$70.00 per term even in a time when electronic communication is gradually replacing traditional post.

## Chancellor Martin Announces “Listening To Faculty” Theme for ALFS-CLCU Meeting

For many years, the Consortium of Louisiana Colleges and Universities has resembled a collection of museum busts chatting to one another from their plinths. Greying heads of institutions proclaimed their passing visions of the future while a few auditors dozed. ALFS, the Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates, has often provided the audience for these arid exercises. Not so this spring. Chancellor Michael Martin, who will host the combined ALFS-CLCU event in late March or early April, has accepted a Faculty Senate suggestion that the meeting be conducted as a dialogue among statewide leaders, whether of the faculty or of institutions. Martin, boldly going where no Louisiana campus president or chancellor has dared go before, has proclaimed “Listening to Faculty” as the theme for the event. May this be more than a first!

## Library Databases Now Accessible Off-Campus via Mylsu

For years, those who sought to access library databases from off-campus sites have had to fumble through wallets, find lengthy identification numbers, and struggle to remember unique passwords. In an admirable collaboration, IT Services and the Middleton Library have quietly moved from the cumbersome old authentication page to the “myLSU” single sign-on interface. An off-campus request to access a library database will now bring up the regal purple page that greets PAWS users and that requires only the easily remembered PAWS logonid and password. Congratulations to Jennifer Cargill, Brian Voss, and the many staff members of their two organizations for a huge step in the advancement of learning and the cultivation of efficiency.

## Wikipedia Entry Masquerades as History at Capitol Building

From our Shreveport correspondent, Robert Leitz, Curator of the Noel Collection on the LSUS campus, comes the discovery that the curators of the display space in the state capitol have bypassed the many competent historians belonging to Louisiana’s liberal arts programs and have gone to Wikipedia for the final word in display-case science. The popular [Wonkette](#) blog reports that the statue of Governor Claiborne that soars up along the rear wall of the Capitol lobby is graced not with the astute judgments of academic historians but is rather accompanied by print-outs from the relevant Wikipedia entry. Visitors to the Capitol are confronted with faded pages that last saw the printer chute in 2009.

## 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-inspiring 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 it 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 you, 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 dispersed. 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.

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## A REVIEW DOES NOT AN 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 Dec. 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)

## LSUnited Making Headlines

LSUnited leaders Michael Russo (LSU Libraries) and Patricia O'Neill (Music) have scored multiple slam-dunks in their attempts to improve working conditions and contract rules as well as to improve compensation and increase respect for faculty. Russo was featured in The Baton Rouge Business Report, a feature that remains on the online edition of that publication. Both O'Neill and



Russo appeared on the February 25th edition of the popular WRKF radio news and talk program, The Jim Engster Show; pod- and computer-casts are available. Finally, these expert organizers have issued a "G.O.S.T." document, which ectoplasmic-sounding acronym is more substantial than its spiritualizing name suggests, for it lays out goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics for the LSUnited campaign. LSUnited as a whole has had a banner recruiting season, having attracted membership or "commitment" cards from over 100 colleagues.

## Louisiana Senator Appel Says SU-UNO Merger Would "Recreate" Education

The Board of Regents meeting of February 8th showcased the full variety of minds and characters in our great state. Devoted to the Governor's proposal to merge Southern University in New Orleans with the University of New Orleans, the meeting was festooned with more than a few examples of public comment at its best. However carnivalesque such events may seem, they often reveal the foundational thinking underlying legislation, and so it was that Louisiana Senator Conrad Appel declared that Senate Resolution 123, calling for the study of the aforementioned merger, would not repair but rather "recreate" New Orleans and with that would "recreate" its entire educational system. This "recreating" process was described in economic terms, as something appropriate to a city with the "largest port complex in the western hemisphere." Among other novel ideas put forth by Senator Appel was what appears to be a caste system among the disciplines. Recommending "two tracks," "one for high level academic students who are ready to attain a high quality education (concentration of math, science, and engineering graduates)" and "one [track] for the students that were not well prepared" or needed "a strong remedial element," Senator Appel seems to have given up on the music and letters that made New Orleans remarkable in the first place.

## Office of Academic Affairs Blows Whistle on Grad Act Metrics

Despite the air of mathematical sanctity conferred by the use of the term "metric," many of the indices used to measure performance with respect to the controversial LA GRAD act suggest sorcery rather than statistics. Complying with the Regents' request for "comment" on the LA GRAD act standards, the metric magicians in LSU's Office of Academic Affairs have struck at least two blows for common sense. The Regents have now learned that the ratio of real graduating students to all full-time equivalent students is a mathematical fiction and have also been advised that measuring the success of a university by the number of corporate "start-ups" that it instigates is equivalent to appointing Maurice "Hank" Greenberg and Bernie Madoff to membership on a SACS accreditation panel.

## 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 an imprimatur make. 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.

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## 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. Unfortunate, too, is the influx of chain businesses such as Buffalo Wild 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 workforce 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 LaRose discovered that even the talking racoon in the automated Cajun diorama 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 "A" in "A&M" 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 squeak 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 benevolent 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 Louisiana Higher Education Wish List (continued)

Fifth among the objects of community desire should be a new paint palette. No one seems to know why every interior on the LSU campus (other than those of top-level administrators) must be painted either Desert-Storm beige, Kremlin interrogation room drab green, or light battleship grey. No evidence has been presented that better hues cost significantly more than tints that conjure not oil painting but oil spills. The persistent refusal even to think about interior colors, let alone consider the preference of building occupants, declares, nay, screams, an institutional disregard for the happiness and welfare of employees. Disney's Snow White melodizes that "some day my prince will come," but many of us would be happy with the arrival of a hearty commoner with a paint bucket and access to pale yellow, sky blue, or any color that suggests something other than a bunker on a bad day.

Sixth and in the climactic position on the list is social space. However grand some of LSU's buildings may appear, they all lack spaces where people can gather. True, some facilities have impressive atriums; the Louisiana Business and Technology Center, for example, vaunts an impressive and attractive atrium-style space, yet no one ever gathers in an environment that is as much monumental as it is sociable. The number of venues where a medium-sized group of a few hundred can assemble is surprisingly small. This deficiency is often attributed to lack of funding for capital outlay, yet the abundance of floor space at LSU argues that the neglect of social space is the product of 75 years of isolationist thinking as much as it is a matter of money to buy building materials. Being an important school means holding important events, but that can never occur while the buildings seem to suggest that community members ought to hide out in their offices, classrooms, and carrels. It might also help to have a working campus map on the LSU web site so that the few available social spaces can be found.

That, of course, is only a tiny list of what LSU needs. There are many more lacunae in the book of Tiger excellence, but, considering that this column is about not only shortage but about that which ought to come in the future, the advice of P. T. Barnum, "leave 'em wanting more," would seem to be germane!

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## ULL System Board of Regents Revives Plan to Diminish Standards 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-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 Supervisor comments on a measure before the hearing of public comment. This, in imitation of court proceedings that allow defendants 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 permitted). 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 dockets for further details on a disgraceful story that has not yet ended.



## HRM Soliciting Feedback via Questionnaire Campaign

The parade of progress that has been rolling since the arrival of HRM chief A. G. Monaco continues to surge. A. G. and a team headed by Mimi Ruebsamen have prepared the first of a set of targeted questionnaires, the initial instrument being directed to Deans and Directors. More questionnaires for more audiences will follow. The questionnaires address every aspect of the "HRM" experience, from policies to customer service to desired improvements 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 Falluca has completed a dissertation on the topic of "Faculty Senators and their Knowledge and Perceptions of the Governance of Intercollegiate Athletics," drawing a substantial portion of her evidence from a survey distributed last year to LSU Faculty Senators. Falluca's dissertation examined not the facts but the perceptions of faculty governance 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 cultivation of "interpreters" who can serve as liaisons and communicators between academic and athletic professionals. Falluca also discovered only minimal support for the appointment 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 giddiness. So it is that the promulgation of "Chairman Bob Levy's Leadership Agenda"—a document with a title that somehow 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 designation 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 flagship 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 inquiry); mobilization of the junior colleges to create workforce 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.

**The Metal Children**

ADAM RAPP  
JOANNA BATTLES  
**MARCH 23-APRIL 10, 2011**

PERFORMANCES AT BELLY THEATRE

MUSIC ARTS DANCE THEATRE

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**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 Website**

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.

**start!**

American Heart Association  
*Learn and Live*

**HEART WALK**

**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.capitolarea-heartwalk.org](http://www.capitolarea-heartwalk.org)



# BATON ROUGE LOUISIANA STATE MUSEUM

Founded in 1906, The Louisiana State Museum system collects, preserves and interprets Louisiana's rich cultural heritage from pre-historic times to the present through more than 450,000 objects and works of art.

# 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.



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**MARCH 2**  
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So Let's Meet...

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