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Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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LSU FACULTY SENATE

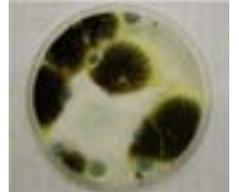
Monthly Newsletter

October 4, 2013

Ag-Based FS VP Pecks Through Mold

The centralized maintenance request system at LSU experienced a “Center for Disease Control More-than-Moment” while LSU A&M Faculty Senate Vice-President and Ag Center Faculty Council President Ken McMillin found himself issuing communiqués through a cordon of mold. The economically-minded McMillin reported an all-out mold attack on his keyboard shortly after the new fiscal year, but processing of his request began only on August 28th, accompanied by a note that the replacement keyboard should arrive “before the fall semester,” which commenced on August 26th. His luck running high, Ag-aware VP Ken managed to avoid the well-documented [health consequences of molds](#) originating in aging buildings.

Francioni Hall Keyboard Replacement Department



75th Anniversary at McNeese: Trademark Cavalcade

With the arrival of the seventy-fifth birthday of southwest Louisiana’s oft-forgotten treasure, McNeese State University, a cavalcade of logo, trademark, signature, and souvenir items have emerged from the little shop on Ryan Street and from its support organizations. Carry bags, notepads, you name it—all have begun giving the cowboy mascot and pioneer-rancher-education reformer John McNeese a slightly modernized look. Especially fetching are the new computer mouse pads, which achieve a merger of the WPA-era futurist style with a clean modern look in slightly muted versions of the official McNeese colors. Congratulations to McNeese State University on some successful design achievements.

McNeese Mousepad



Act 420: One Small Step Toward Retirement Relief

Universities and their faculties won a small but significant victory with the passage of [Act 420 of the Louisiana Legislature](#), which requires unexpended monies from the state general fund to recirculate into a special fund for the reduction of the unfunded accrued liability (“UAL”). The potential effect is a reduction in the sums extracted from universities to cover UAL debt. Although the sums to be recycled into the debt pay-down remain unknown, this measure prevents the expenditure of retrieved funds for less provident purposes. Presumably, in the long run, reductions in the UAL payment will free up more cash for raises and other good purposes.

President’s Welcome



A new shibboleth among the higher education leadership caste is that the good old days of ample state funding and generous budgets are “never coming back.” Few leaders of American public higher education systems or institutions challenge this seemingly intuitive axiom; none dare risk the loss of legislative or occasionally gubernatorial pity by expressing even a shred of optimism. The embrace of this apparent axiom—the incantation of the gloom-and-doom mantra as a peculiar status symbol indicating sophistication and membership in the highly briefed if

not all-knowing leadership in-group—demonstrates the increasing naiveté among the professionalized leadership clique that has emerged from an ever-enlarging selection of assembly-line administration programs rather than from arts-and-sciences disciplines. Few of those who have read history of any kind, whether of science, of diplomacy, or even sports, would intone “never” with such confidence.

The reifying of “never”—the treatment of the lack of public support as if it were a fact about the universe itself—conveniently conceals a more obvious fact. That fact: Leaders of higher education campuses and systems have not accomplished their assignment, which is to convince the public to support public education. Top-level administrators often complain that they cannot do what the public will not allow, but this excuse conflicts with the claim, so often heard during executive searches, that only over-bred specialists can do such challenging deeds as save a college or university from public apathy. Higher education executives are fond of invoking a somewhat undefined “business model,” yet business routinely expects its fixers, whether Lee Iacocca or James Dimon, to earn their substantial salaries by demonstrating the exceptional rescue skills that they advertise.

One reason for this failure is a strange, indeed crazy aversion to the product that these academic businesspeople aspire to vend. Louisiana’s vanguard institution, LSU (is it A&M or “oneLSU” this week?), is almost bereft of academic input or even presence at any level above that of Dean. The Deans, who retain at least emotional links with their disciplines, have been shorn of most of their authority, status, and influence through a series of centralization efforts of which the LSU consolidation is the latest, best-disguised version. No business would turn away from its products or from the expertise that produces them in the way that centralized administrations have scurried away from anyone with ideas. Imagining the outcome of a decision at Boeing to exclude aeronautical engineers from all decision-making processes yields an easy analogy for what is happening in Louisiana higher education.

What is most startling about this process is that, collectively, the upper administrations in systems and on campuses have no idea why they behave the way that they do. It is easy enough for an academic person to recognize that the aversion to competence is a form of gentrification, even dandyism. One theorist of the genteel life, Balthasar Castiglione, warned that gentlemen and gentlewomen should not seem too competent at anything lest it seem that they emerge from the trained, gritty working class. In Louisiana, that aspiration to genteel incompetence—to know a dab about everything in the government but not much about anything in particular—is also reinforced from the ground up by a large segment of the population that distrusts or even dislikes education.

What the genteel members of higher education upper administration might do to make a start is to “call the question.” To date, the dainty folks who run the universities have attempted to coddle and placate the government. That drawing-room approach has not worked. Step one would involve not only taking controversial questions but outright asking, in public forums, whether the people of our state want higher education in the form of comprehensive universities. If the answer to that question is “no,” then at least our schools can be drawn down in a way that allows those who are still on-staff to conduct their teaching and research under with adequate support and whatever students remain. If we knew that the population no longer wants to study literature, we could stop hiring in those departments, redirect assets to support those who remain, and see what happens with the accrediting agencies. The answer to this question—does the state want higher education?—will, however, not be “no,” but “yes.” It is only the lack of resolve among overly tender leaders and their fear of input from academic professionals that has prevented the delivery of this conclusive query.

Lockett or Lockout? Economic Efficiencies Strand Restroom Users

The normally serene countenances of Louisiana’s leading mathematicians turned grim this summer as Lockett Hall, home of LSU A&M’s abacus ensemble, experienced a near-total breakdown of restroom service. At one point, the revolutionary ideas of Paris universities in the 1970s came to life as only one unisex toilet served the requirements of constipating calculators. It seems that enthusiasts for economic efficiency funded a repair service from the leftovers of the expiring fiscal year only to find the restroom upgrades incomplete and the contractor on an extended bathroom break. Reports indicate that toilet troubles at the flagship campus have now migrated to Coates Hall, where extended flush times are now bedeviling members of the philosophy department.

Higher Education Headliner

Pamela Nicolle – Executive Director - User Support Services - Information Technology Services

The Higher Education Headliner is pleased to feature Pamela Nicolle, Executive Director of User Support Services and Information Technology Services. Pam was just recently promoted to the position of Executive Director from Interim Director and we offer her congratulations and wish her good luck to come!

Pam received her Bachelors in Education at LSU and her Masters in Special Education with a specialization in gifted education from University of Louisiana Monroe. Pam had been interested in technology from a young age and had used her tech savvy to teach students and faculty simple programming at the school where she worked in Northern Louisiana.

She was teaching in Monroe when in 1999 she decided it was time for a change. Initially she was torn about going back to school for a second Masters but she started anyway at ULM. However, she began to realize that she really wanted a degree from LSU. Her children were all grown and the timing seemed right. So, she and husband moved to Baton Rouge and started new. While there, the College of Education had started a new PhD program in Educational Technology Leadership. This degree was a perfect fit for Pam. She had the educational background and an avid interest in technology. Pam has worked a number of positions at LSU including teaching graduate level courses, federal grant coordinator for the College of Education, and Educational Technology Consultant for the college. She did all of this while in pursuit of her PhD. She received her PhD in 2005 and was then hired as the Director of Centers for Excellence in Learning and Teaching where she remained until the unit was absorbed by IT.

She received her PhD in 2005 and was then hired as the Director of Centers for Excellence in Learning and Teaching where she remained until the unit was absorbed by IT. She was then hired as the Director of IT until she was promoted to her current position! Quite the resume!

We asked Pam about some of the projects she had been involved in throughout her time working for LSU. She mentioned not only working with Student Tech Fee for over ten years but also being a major player in the switch over from Blackboard to Moodle. This was a big decision because it was such a major switch for everyone at LSU. She explained some of the process and reason behind the final choice of LSU's main technological link between faculty and students. Each of five programs – Blackboard, Moodle, Angel, Sacai, and Desire to Learn – was evaluated on their available tools, flexibility, and user friendliness. However, when it came to ability to adapt, the choice was clear, "Moodle is a constantly evolving, changing tool to meet the needs of the campus."

If you have ever had a class in room 202 of Coates Hall you have seen how Director Nicolle has enhanced the learning experience for distance education. This room was designed for a class that would be teaching long distance with a need for HD technology... in Europe! The room was one of the first HD classrooms in the United States and Pam was a key player in making it happen.

Other projects include but are not limited to the Info Commons at Middleton Library and the collaborative learning rooms on the second floor of Middleton Library.

We also asked her if there was anything we had to look forward to coming from her office. She mentioned that Watching LSU 2015 is high on their list of priorities. The project looks to leverage resources between the various LSU campuses. Furthermore, her new position has her looking ahead at what direction LSU is heading. This will help decide what needs to be added or changed to the services already offered, what can be consolidated, how staffing can be modified, and in general, "What's the best way to serve the campus."

The newly appointed Director has only the best to say about her staff, "I have the most amazing, dedicated, professional staff ever...I'm serious. They are completely committed. I do not have one person on this staff that is not committed to excellent customer support. We get a lot of praise- we will go out of our way we will go the second mile, the third mile to try to help...ensure the integration of technologies in the campus and campus life are seamless." It can be seen from the satisfaction rating their help desk has received. Currently the satisfaction level rests at an impressive 94%!

As Director of User Support Services and Information Technology Services, Pam spends a lot of time attending meetings and generally making sure everything is working properly. "I basically make sure my three areas are running smoothly on a daily basis. I answer a load of emails. And I am constantly attending meetings. Constantly touching base with all the people we have relationships with. I'm even interested in casual meetings just to see how people are doing. There are a lot of formal and informal meetings...It's not just an 8 to 4 job. I'm answering emails at 9 at night. I'm always tuned in," she says. And, on top of all this she still finds time to participate in collaborative projects across campus with other organizations. LSU is lucky to have such an enthusiastic person directing ITS, "It's the successful teaching and the successful learning that's important, and the technology undergirds that. Being able to support faculty in that undergirding and making it mesh together as one big picture. That's my mission. That's my purpose for existence!"



Dr. Pamela Nicole

"I really do love everything about my job!"

Prince or Pauper: Clothes Unmake the Man

Eponymously royal LSU President King Alexander had been under scrutiny for a possible revival of the "Best Dressed Men" list that scored a hit among *Newsletter* readers some years ago. Alexander has great potential to rise through the list owing to his remarkable ability not only to "look the role" but to do so even when the LSU Board of Supervisors has no idea what his role might be. The ascending Alexander may have hit an inversion layer, however, when a fashion-acute spotter on the Baton Rouge campus detected a Joseph A. Banks label in a jacket. A favorite of a former Chief Financial Officer at LSU, Joseph A. Banks specializes in low-cost knock-offs of slightly upscale mainstream design. Let's hope that, once King detects the achievements of Louisiana design schools, support among top-level administrators for the fashion-forward side of Louisiana higher education will increase.

Spotted in the
Top Offices



LAGRAD Purchasing Privileges: Bumpy Premier

Owing to the achievement (within statistical accuracy limits but perhaps not in hard numbers) of LAGRAD Act targets, LSU received permission to initiate its own purchasing procedures. Over the summer, purchasing maven Marie Frank and her associates unveiled the imperatively named "GeauxShop," a purchasing system emulating as well as imitating online marketers. Users may access several catalogues from vendors of office supplies, scientific equipment, furniture, and, indeed, most anything that would be useful in a university setting. To date, the GeauxShop has managed a definite but turbulent takeoff. Over the summer, purchasing officialdom undertook a massive training program that led to the conferral, on LSU buyers, of such status designations as "shopper," "requestor," and "approver." Training was outsourced to an expert who offered a sound but somewhat repetitive curriculum, with higher levels of training reiterating the content of lower-level classes, but, all in all, a fair number of purchasers were at least exposed to the new system. As could be predicted, assorted troubles unnerved users during the early days; Office Max, the designated office supplies provider, fell far short of one-day delivery standards, drivers from the squadron of delivery services failed to find buildings, and one wag compared a GeauxShop order to the open market only to find a \$225.00 or nearly twenty-five percent differential. Although GeauxShop has a long way to go and although such peripheral areas as office furnishings require further development, the outlook is nevertheless highly promising, and thanks are due to Marie Frank and her team, who are setting an example for all of Louisiana higher education.

LSU GeauxShop

Geaux Shop Soars through Rough Air

DJANGO UNCHAINED (Quentin Tarantino, 2012) By Carl Freedman

Though I sometimes review films that have just arrived in the theaters (or on the premium cable channels), I usually prefer to wait a while so that I can watch a film several times, think about it, sample some of the criticism, and try to get some perspective on it. Rarely, though, do I wait as long as with *DJANGO UNCHAINED*, which came out on Christmas Day of 2012. Tarantino has long been, for me, the most consistently interesting and accomplished American filmmaker of his generation. All of his films are excellent, and there are several—*RESERVOIR DOGS* (1992), *PULP FICTION* (1994), and *INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS* (2009)—that, like the very best work of John Ford or Martin Scorsese, I can happily watch a practically unlimited number of times. Over the past nine months or so, I have decided that his latest film may well be his best yet.

Not everyone agrees. Tarantino has always been controversial, and *DJANGO UNCHAINED* has probably stirred even more fuss than any of his earlier efforts. Spike Lee, who is one of Tarantino's few living peers as a filmmaker, and who sometimes seems to assume a proprietary authority over how racial matters should be treated in American cinema, thought to tweet—before actually seeing Tarantino's movie—"American Slavery Was Not A Sergio Leone Spaghetti Western." Well, no—it wasn't. And, since Lee didn't bother to watch the film before attacking it, it's not surprising that he also didn't bother to find out that *DJANGO* (1966), the fine Italian Western that served as the partial model for Tarantino's film, was directed not by Sergio Leone but by Sergio Corbucci. The real answer to Lee's complaint, however, is simply to point out that—for instance—the situation of race relations in the predominantly black Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn during the 1980s was not an Aristotelian cinematic drama that centered on a white-owned pizzeria and scrupulously observed the neo-classical unities of time and place. But that inarguable fact no more detracts from the stature of Lee's own masterpiece, *DO THE RIGHT THING* (1989), as one of the most brilliant films of its decade, than Lee's similar observation detracts from the similar stature of *DJANGO UNCHAINED*.

This may seem a pedantically obvious point: that no set of actual historical events or circumstances can be identified with its representation in film, literature, or any other art form. But this general truth has a special pertinence for Tarantino's work. A Tarantino film always maintains a kind of double vision, focusing on what appears to be its immediate subject-matter but also on how that kind of subject matter can be, and has been, represented in cinema. *RESERVOIR DOGS* is among the greatest of heist films, and it is also a meditation on the genre of the heist film, as it alludes to such precedents as *THE ASPHALT JUNGLE* (John Huston, 1950) and *THE KILLING* (Stanley Kubrick, 1956), and as it gives most of its characters blank names—Mr. White, Mr. Pink, Mr. Brown, and so forth—to indicate their partly metafictional (or metacinematic) status. *PULP FICTION* proclaims in its very title its self-conscious engagement with its own fictionality. *JACKIE BROWN* (1997) maintains a complicated relationship with the blaxploitation films of the 1970s, particularly in the use of its star Pam Grier, who had been featured in such efforts as *COFFY* (Jack Hill, 1973) and *FOXY BROWN* (Jack Hill, 1974). None of this is to say—as Tarantino's detractors sometimes do—that his work is ultimately about nothing except film itself, as though Tarantino were just an overenthusiastic cinephile who has seen too many movies and can't think about anything else (although it is quite conceivable that he has seen—and remembered—more movies than perhaps any other living viewer). It is to say that part of his genius is to understand his own medium in an especially radical way.

In *INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS* and *DJANGO UNCHAINED*, however, Tarantino attempts something even more complex and ambitious than any of his earlier work. To be sure, each of these films, like its predecessors, maintains a self-conscious dialogue with a pre-existing kind of cinema: the former with the traditional World War Two film that follows the adventures of a particular platoon or squad, and the latter with—yes—the spaghetti Western (among other forms). But in both films Tarantino is also inventing an effectively new genre, which might be termed the historical revenge fantasy.

The "Basterds" of Tarantino's 2009 title form a guerilla platoon of the US Army operating behind the lines in Nazi-occupied France. They are Jewish, except for the commanding lieutenant, who is played by Brad Pitt as the virtual apotheosis of the Southern hillbilly who talks like an ignorant hick but turns out to be a first-class soldier. Almost impossibly, the Basterds survive from month to month and perhaps even from year to year, travelling about and doing extremely unpleasant things to Nazis; and, to multiply the implausibilities, these hard-living guerilla fighters have no trouble transforming themselves into proper guests in formal evening wear when infiltration of a Nazi social event (at which they succeed in killing Hitler himself) is called for. In case you forgot just how evil the Nazis were, and thus how deserving they are of everything we see the Basterds doing to them, the film happily reminds you with its stand-out performance: the brilliant Austrian-German actor Christoph Waltz as Col. Hans Landa, just maybe the most powerful cinematic representation of a Nazi villain in Hollywood history. Landa is polished, suave, charming, and sardonic; and Waltz's real genius, supported by Tarantino's direction, is to play Landa so that these potentially attractive qualities actually intensify rather than mitigate our sense of the colonel's endlessly murderous evil.

What *INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS* does for the evil of Nazism, *DJANGO UNCHAINED* does for the comparable historical evil of chattel slavery in America's antebellum South. Here we focus on a dynamic duo rather than a whole platoon: Dr. King Schultz (Waltz again), a German immigrant dentist and anti-slavery bounty hunter, and his sidekick, the freed slave Django (Jamie Foxx). An opening shot announces the film's status as alternative or fantastic history by stating that the action takes place in 1858 or "two years before the Civil War" (though some especially dim reviewers thought that Tarantino had actually forgotten when the war began). Early on, Dr. Schultz frees Django, eliminating the pair of slave-traders holding him. The two partners (this is a buddy movie, among so many other things) then go on to kill all sorts of white villains, shooting down three plantation overseers and blowing up a whole gathering of Ku Kluxers. They eventually make their way to Candyland, the huge Mississippi cotton plantation owned by one Calvin Candie, played by Leonardo DiCaprio in by far the best performance of his career. Intelligent, cultivated, Francophile (though ignorant of the French language), and almost indescribably evil, Candie is the precise equivalent of Col. Landa in *INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS*.

(continued on page 4)

Ty Unties Smoke-Free Activists

Excruciatingly slow in starting, the smoke- and tobacco-free movement on the LSU A&M campus gained momentum thanks to the efforts of pro-health activist Judith Sylvester, who arranged for smoking cessation expert and [National Center for Tobacco Policy](#) leader Ty Patterson to offer a workshop for administration, faculty, and students on the winning of campus support for smoke-free environments. The jovial Patterson, who looks for all the world like Andy Devine playing the role of a boxing instructor at a YMCA summer camp, endorsed a grassroots approach in which community members rather than professional enforcers foster a commitment to clean air in public places. Sylvester's workshop followed on the recent passage of legislation requiring all campuses in Louisiana to develop smoke-free policies.



Smoke-Free Expert
Ty Patterson

LAE, Union Movement Down Outcomes Bill

Those who may have been wondering whether faculty unions can improve working conditions in universities let out a loud "huzzah" when the Louisiana Association of Educators, with help from faculty members, body-slammed Senate Bill 117, an initiative by neo-conservative legislator Conrad Appel that would have created a panel to study the linkage of statewide education funding formulae to outcomes defined in their narrowest sense (for example, with respect to supporting programs directly influencing workforce development or with respect to graduation rate). Indeed, the perseverant LAE, headed by Michael Walker-Jones and his legislative team, succeeded not only in halting this legislation but, as a backup measure, in inserting language that would have included several faculty governance officials in any panel that might have emerged. Had SB117 passed, campuses would come under increased pressure to divert resources from programs pertinent to the provision of a well-rounded education into vocational training and student-centered retention programs. Thank you, LAE, for downing another bogey!



Conrad Appel

MOVIE REVIEW (continued)

Appropriately, then, he is gunned down by Dr. Schultz, i.e., by the same actor who played Landa. The good doctor is immediately shot dead in retaliation, but Django lives on, single-handedly to free Candyland's slaves, kill its white people, and blow up the great plantation house with dynamite. He also succeeds in rescuing his beloved wife, beautifully played by Kerry Washington (the film is also a love story). Her name is Broomhilda von Shaft—yes, in addition to alluding to countless earlier movies, Tarantino also nods to Richard Wagner, arguably the aesthetic godfather of all cinema.

I have no space to detail all the superb things in *DJANGO UNCHAINED*. I have not yet even mentioned Samuel L. Jackson's extraordinary performance as Stephen, Calvin Candie's head house slave and the most shattering film representation of a comprador type that I can recall. Jackson here equals an earlier performance I had thought unmatched, his turn as the radically different character of Jules Winnfield, the hit man in *PULP FICTION*. But I want to end by very briefly saying what I think Tarantino is trying to do, in the largest sense, with his revenge fantasies.

Art always struggles to comprehend radical evil, and sometimes the struggle seems in vain: "To write lyric poems after Auschwitz," as Theodor Adorno famously said, "is barbaric." The most intelligent filmmakers, it seems to me, have understood that cinema is too "lifelike" a medium—too much the "redemption of physical reality," as the philosopher Siegfried Kracauer put it—to allow any direct representation of ultimate horror, which therefore must be approached by one or another sort of indirection. Thus, for example, *SHOAH* (1985), Claude Lanzmann's great nine-and-a-half-hour documentary about the Holocaust, uses not a single frame of archival footage and makes no attempt to show the events of 1938-1945; we see the death camps as the peaceful, green, sunny rural sites they are today (or were in the 1980s), and are left to imagine for ourselves what they were like a few decades earlier. In *LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL* (1997), Roberto Benigni—almost incredibly—conveys, successfully, the horror of Auschwitz itself by making a comedy about it.

DJANGO UNCHAINED has some humor too. Sometimes it comes as near-slapstick—as when Ku Kluxers struggle to see through misplaced eye-holes in their white hoods—but more typically the fun of the movie is a function of its metacinematic character. The way that Tarantino self-consciously plays with many particularly films, with entire film genres, with Wagnerian opera, and with actual history makes for a kind of intellectual high spirits somewhat similar to those of a Pynchon novel or a Tom Stoppard play. But the underlying intention is deadly serious. Like the Holocaust (with which Spike Lee explicitly compared it), American slavery is too horrible to be seen straight-on through the quasi-immediacy of celluloid. Tarantino engages the absolute evil that took place below the Mason-Dixon line by showing how a film about slavery must provide the audience with abundant Brechtian distraction—the distraction that he provides with the movie games of which he is the pre-eminent master, just as Lanzmann does with his distanced, low-key journalistic approach, or as Benigni does with his use of elements from the *Commedia dell'arte*. Since, as I have already noted in this space, the major Hollywood representations of slavery have generally been disgracefully mendacious—think of *THE BIRTH OF A NATION* (D. W. Griffith, 1915) or *GONE WITH THE WIND* (Victor Fleming, 1939)—it may not be too much to hope that Tarantino has opened a genuinely different path. With all of Tarantino's generic deconstruction and historical fantasy, a big-budget Hollywood production about slavery has finally begun to tell the truth.

UL System Wins Data Reliability Derby

Although the LSU System is among the first to enjoy some of the autonomies accruing from meeting LAGRAD Act goals, the foundation of that castle of privilege may contain a few grains of sand. According to the latest internal audit from the University of Louisiana System, "the university of Louisiana System was the only System to have 100% of its institutions judged as 'reliable' in terms of GRAD Act data." It appears that UL System President Sandra Woodley's fame for efficient data management has led to another victory. True, the audit report turned up a few vacillations on the campuses—McNeese and Grambling students, it seems, have been scheduling work during class time, and auxiliary services at ULM continue to battle management and procedure problems—but the attainment of data reliability in a critical as well as politically sensitive area merits robust applause.

Bookit Still Stuck on the Blotter

Those who travel on state funding are all too familiar with the shortcomings of the mandated state travel provider, Short's Travel Management. Travelers who book online must wade through a clumsy "badge" display that makes comparison shopping all but impossible; those browsing for fares must work within three-hour schedule windows that obstruct the discovery of the least expensive travel times; those wishing to book hotels near a destination find no convenient way to enter an address that the system will identify; worst of all, those who discover a better fare elsewhere must wait so long for an exemption from the requirement to use Short's that the better fare often disappears while approval is pending. Confronted with the poverty of both its database and its interface, Short's has developed a new utility, "Bookit," that compensates for Short's shortfalls. "Bookit" resides as an "app" in browsers such as Firefox and Explorer. When a user selects an itinerary from an online travel provider such as Expedia or Travelocity, the "Bookit" window appears, whereupon the entry of identifying information results in the transmission of the travel proposal to Short's. Short's then emails the user a Short's approved version of the itinerary that qualifies for state travel reimbursement. Although it does (occasionally) work, this Rube Goldberg mechanism requires that state travelers do extra work to compensate for Short's inadequacies, is limited to a handful of travel sites that allow itinerary sharing, does not work with the "ITA" database that Short's itself recommends, and is advertised through an instructional video that, at *Newsletter* press time, was no longer functioning. Even more extraordinarily, users of "Bookit" pay not the \$5.00 online booking fee, but an additional \$19.00 "Bookit fee," which a less polite user might dub a "Short's Incompetence Fee."



Bookit App to Patch your Shorts

ULL Faculty Leader Leslie Bary Analyzes Faculty Governance

Leslie Bary, a leader among faculty governance personnel at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, has released a thoughtful evaluation of faculty governance in contemporary universities in which the recent history of the ULL Faculty Senate appears as a case study. Published in the AAUP journal *Academe*, Bary's detailed commentary urges a reassertion of the faculty role in university governance and also warns that revisions of faculty governance procedures, rules, bylaws, or constitutions require careful scrutiny lest faculty protections and, indeed, faculty prominence quietly slip away. Bary's superb column is available [online](#). The prolific Bary has also issued an online posting in which she analyzes the drive toward MOOCs (massively open online courses). She considers the foundations on which the typical MOOC and discovers that even a successful MOOC requires the same infrastructure as do traditional courses. Universities, it seems, will only achieve a successful online presence when they take such traditional steps as upgrading libraries, restoring sabbaticals for faculty development, and encouraging study abroad. Read Leslie's posting at the online magazine *Remaking the University*.

Louisiana Librarians Sponsor ALA Bill

Reader Stephanie Braunstein, one of Louisiana's leading higher education librarians, reports success in the passage, at the recent ALA (American Library Association) convention, of a [resolution](#) supporting the two librarians who had been sued for making evaluative comments about the subsidy-driven Edwin Mellen Press. Extending the range of Louisiana's Faculty Senate, Braunstein sponsored a [similar resolution](#) in the LSU Faculty Senate, a resolution which elicited a corroborating resolution from no less than the University of California system-wide faculty parliament. Applause to you, Stephanie, for showing the power of Louisiana's libraries.

LSU HRM Unveils Sleek New Web Site

Long-term readers of the *Newsletter* will remember that, a few years ago, the LSU Human Resources Management ("HRM") web site topped the list of Louisiana's worst academic web sites. Now, under the guidance of HRM chieftain A G Monaco, LSU employees can enjoy and profit from using a brand spanking [new web portal](#) that is festooned with colorful imagery and rich in easy-to-use and intuitively labeled links. Rather than the bewildering "wheel of fortune" layout that baffled users for most of the early Internet age, the new web site features large buttons that would be easy for even the Bear Named Paddington to push! This new web site surely merits the "most improved" award for collegiate web site design.

Big Buttons Emblazon LSU's HRM Web Site



Priests Booted From Commencement

Careful observers of university protocol noted that the benediction and closing prayers slipped quietly away from the summer Commencement ceremony at LSU. It seems that, in its quest for national prominence, LSU attracted the attention of the [Freedom from Religion Foundation](#), a Wisconsin-based think-tank of libertarian inclinations that invokes the ghosts of Voltaire and Jack London in its own search for the sacraments of atheism. In a letter to LSU System President F. King Alexander dated 21 June 2013, Elizabeth Cavell, the staff attorney for the "FFRF," complains about the receipt, over the course of years, of (plural) "complaints" about Commencement prayers, adding that, in the opinion of the FFRF, the delivery of these prayers by a Catholic priest intensified the egregiousness of the alleged violation of the state-church boundary. Cavell asks that LSU "discontinue the practice of scheduling prayers or invocations as part of future invocations." No public discussion concerning the proper response to the FFRF challenge was held; rather, a quick stroke of the "delete" key surreptitiously eliminated the supernatural side of graduation day.

Woodley Transforms Workforce Development

Those who have long held that universities accomplish goals other than the provision of an inexpensive, home-grown labor force will delight in the latest strategies of University of Louisiana President Sandra Woodley. In inking a contract with "MYEDU" for software that matches student curricula with job prospects and which provides career coaching as education progresses, Woodley has opened the doors to a rethinking of workforce readiness. Although the local reporters in college towns where Woodley has spoken have characterized her effort as mainstream workforce development, [Woodley's innovation](#) promises to re-energize the liberal arts and other disciplines not normally associated with the Louisiana version of workforce revitalization. The data, after all, show that liberal arts majors comprise the majority of new hires. The Woodley approach promises to reveal the truth about which areas of stud lead to which careers; her innovation heralds a new era for disciplines that have sustained unfair criticism for their alleged impracticality.

The dynamic University of Louisiana System President scored another public-relations victory through the exemplary conduct of the recent search for a new campus President for Nicholls State University. Conducting an open search in which no fewer than seventeen candidates kept faculty evaluation skills sharp, Woodley won kudos from both the public and the Nicholls faculty, all while LSU Board members elicited contempt of court citations for their attempts to keep presidential search records secret.

LSU Engineering Hits the Heights - Online

Those who visited the amusement parks of old remember the test-of-strength in which a contestant hammered a lever that would send a weight sailing up a pole toward a bell. The intellectual equivalent of that bell was rung, and rung loudly, when, in July, LSU A&M Engineering won approval for a post-baccalaureate certificate in construction management. While most online enthusiasts spend their days finding ways to justify a diluted, boob-tube undergraduate education, LSU Engineering went straight for the postgraduate certificate education market, thereby performing a social good by extending the education of those already "in the field" and prepared for advanced work. Better still, the zoom into the specialist area of construction management addresses exactly the area in which Louisiana, with its crumbling infrastructure, repeatedly fails to make the metric. Low-cost (by Engineering measures), productive of tangible good results, and helpful to undergraduates (because the proposal includes suggestions concerning the use of courses in this curriculum within the undergraduate curriculum), this new certificate program is certain to continue the winning streak in LSU Engineering.



LSU Engineering Aces Online Challenge

Monuments More Enduring Than Brass

From top-level poets such as Horace and Shakespeare we learn that legacies preserved in durable metals last for a shorter time than do memorials graven in poetry. That lesson is still spreading through the LSU AgCenter, where employees recently discovered personalized name plates in their mailboxes, name plates that bore the soon-to-be obsolete escutcheon of a center undergoing a reaffiliation with LSU. Readers of the Book of Revelation may well wonder whether this final use of the AgCenter imprint in connection with personal identity might well count as the "mark of the beast," but those who are also winking at the copper plating of Efferson Hall also wonder about the source of mineral wealth in an institution oriented more toward fields than mines.

Crime Does Pay

The profit and loss sheet has yet to come in for the Larry King interview of Edwin Edwards that opened the cultural season at the LSU A&M Student Union Theater. We do know, however, exactly what crime pays: \$66,000.00 for the moderator plus \$6,000.00 and ten free tickets for the perpetrator. Perhaps the next event will showcase warblers interpreting jaybird calls.

Not Tulane, but Salvatore Continues Green Wave

Past issues of the *Newsletter* have featured reports on the energy efficient initiatives of LSUS chemist Brian Salvatore, who has now transferred almost all of his energy needs from SWEPCO to good old Sol, our own shiny star. Salvatore has recently declared a goal of an zero-dollar electric bill and a natural gas bill beneath eighteen dollars per month. To advance that goal, Salvatore recently persuaded his homeowners' association to allow installation of solar panels on what has become, de facto, a model home for utility devolution enthusiasts. Ten months after conceiving his bold plan, Salvatore threw the switch on his first 6 kW solar system, with an additional 7 kW expected to go online and on-grid in the spring. With that additional wattage, Salvatore will be able to juice up his sleek Tesla car, a vehicle that has become synonymous with energy efficiency in academe. Congratulations, Brian!

Brian Salvatore's Solar Installations



Pennington Shakeup Rattles Piggy Bank

Two observations concerning employment in prominent positions in the LSU System or its campuses continue to withstand the test of time. The first observation is that those freethinking persons who hail from prestigious institutions or who come from other places, especially those who come from the northeast, will soon run into the hurtles of xenophobia and parochialism and will quickly find themselves pushed out of the race; the second observation is that, despite budget troubles, the LSU Board of Supervisors never considers the cost of talent when conducting its purges. Previous issues of the *Newsletter* have noted that the combined cost of the idling of heterodox leaders has reached \$3,400,000.00; those who would like to measure the added cost of the latest, midsummer night's nightmare at the Pennington Center can peruse the impartial state finance transparency [web site](#) (make sure to add circa thirty-two percent to the sum for fringe benefits).

Middle Ages Go Online

The dozens if not hundreds of colleagues who offer courses touching on western antiquities owe a great debt to LSU's Professor Jesse Gellrich, who has assembled a gigantic web site called "The Middle Ages Online." Gellrich's diverse as well as colossal web site draws together resources and links pertaining to the long era before the War of the Roses. Easy-to-use tabs take visitors to online info-stashes pertaining to the full range of disciplines and arts. Included among the opportunities are electronic routes to recordings of readings of medieval texts by prominent thespians. A most enjoyable view is only [one click away!](#)



New Medieval Site Ready for
Classroom and Research Use

Regents Demystify Common Come

Every day, Louisiana's newspapers—and the folks who write editorials and editorial letters—churn up new causes for concern about the new common core standards for the public schools that supply the plurality of students in Louisiana higher education institutions. In response, that Casanova-level lover of data and debunker-in-chief, Commissioner Jim Purcell, has issued a thoughtful and carefully crafted information sheet concerning the myths that have arisen around these new requirements. Inquirers who would like to learn more about the common core standards (or who would like to uncover the reality behind the controversy concerning same) may visit a dedicated web page "[Myths and Facts about the Common Core Standards.](#)" Deep within the common core controversy abides the work of another organization, PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for college and Career) that coordinates the work of nineteen states as they attempt to create reasonable modern standards for proficiency in English and Mathematics. Commissioner Purcell has provided a portal to PARCC as well as an array of PARCC-related information at a second dedicated [web page](#) . Only one minor suggestion for the understated but heavily qualified Commissioner: Please, no more artfully posed but unfortunately obviously canned file photos of groups of ethnically diverse, relentlessly smiling students in the mastheads of web pages!

Middle Management Midsummer Bonanza at UNO

Summer brought an early harvest of lucrative middle-management sinecures at the University of New Orleans. Elevations to the management caste included the appointment of Kevin Graves as Interim Dean of Liberal Arts at an annual salary of \$140K; the lifting of Darrell Kruger to the position of Dean of Education and Human Development at a per annum rate of \$155K (it being a remarkable feature of our time that those specializing in *development* earn more than those in the liberal arts, which have already developed—but, then again, young wine sometimes commands higher prices than old vinegar); the situating of John A. Williams in the post of Dean of Business Administration for \$200K; the designation of Kenneth Sewell as the Vice-Presidency of Research and Economic Development with a salary of \$185K; and the anointing of Gregg Lassen as VP for Business Affairs, with Lassen crashing the two-hundred level at \$215K. Total salary awarded approached \$900K, which, with fringe, rounds out to something closer to \$1.2M. In other University of Louisiana System salary action, Southeastern favored a new interim Athletic Director with a dollop of \$135K while also contracting the new interim Dean of Education to an emolument of \$120K. Amusingly, in his CV, the new Athletic Director cites, in the subjunctive voice, a personal objective of attaining of a position where "prior experience, personal ability, and a commitment to professionalism would be of value"—but that "would" somehow slipped into the bigtime indicative. Up at LaTech, Dan Reneau awarded Stan Napper an appointment as VP for Research and Development at \$180K per year.

Regents Update, Beautify Website

Until recently, "up-to-date" at the Board of Regents web site tended to mean something like "up to a certain date, perhaps around 1997." Now, thanks to the leadership of the genial Jim Purcell, the Regents office has made some big if initial steps toward the energizing of its [Internet presence](#) . The upgrade is most evident on the Regents' main, "home" page, where an attractive new color scheme visually cues visitors to the location of important links and buttons such as those pertaining to the LAGRAD Act or to the state master plan. Some work remains to be done. As the user moves deeper into the menus, some of the old bland lists of inadequately denominated or insufficiently distinguished documents drift back into view. More than a few file photos give the site an occasional ready-made look. Overall, however, the new site communicates a sense of vigor and enthusiasm that the Claiborne Building has not transmitted in a good many years.



New Regents Website

College of Engineering Engages LSU and BRCC Faculty for Active Teaching Strategies

By Elise Bernard

Often college professors struggle for professional opportunities to engage in effective instructional techniques to help retain students in science, technology, engineering and math fields to graduation. In an effort to combat dropout rates among STEM students, LSU College of Engineering's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Talent Expansion Program (STEP) hosts an annual Faculty Development Workshop to facilitate active learning strategies as part of the "Bears to Tigers" partnership between Baton Rouge Community College and LSU.

Twenty seven faculty members from LSU and BRCC gathered May 20-22 for a three-day workshop on the LSU campus to enhance professional and instructional skills and motivate faculty with innovative teaching tools. The program allows BRCC and LSU faculty to meet and coordinate courses for the "Bears to Tigers" partnership that supports students who have completed the Associate of Science in Engineering degree at BRCC and will transfer into a Bachelor of Science degree program at LSU in a College of Engineering discipline.

(continued on page 7)

Facilities Utilization: Biggest is not Neediest

One of the unchallenged assumptions among higher-education spectators is the conjecture that the biggest institutions ought to do the most building. The greatest number of students (or at least student credit hours) ought to justify the greatest amount of space. Unfortunately for devotees of that superstition, universities grow or shrink at irregular rates, with building construction or demolition lagging behind the population curve. The latest space "utilization" [sic—try "use"] report, based on 2012 data, reveals that Louisiana's behemoth universities are not the most needy when it comes to additional square footage. Based on the "space factor" measure, the ratio of aggregate square footage to student clock hours, several LCTCS schools—Sabine Valley, Shreveport-Bossier, River Parishes, and Northeast—top the list of those squeezed for floor space. At the other end of the Spectrum, Lafourche Technical College bagged a massive 12.86 on a space factor spectrum in which a low number such as Sabine's 0.40 indicates either desperation for space or efficiency or both.

OGB Lowers Fees but Spikes LSU First

Dr. Samuel Johnson, the eighteenth-century British wit, observed that the bad thing about wages is that they are always increased but never lowered. Apparently "the great Cham" never worked in a Louisiana university, but the point that prices not only for labor but indeed for everything tend to go up is supported by a preponderance of the evidence. It therefore came as a huge surprise to most consumers of Louisiana-affiliated health insurance that the Office of Group Benefits lowered rates for most health coverage by one and three-quarters percent. How could that be? Well, the folks on the "fourth floor" have tried for a long time to redirect the half-billion dollar reserve that OGB had accumulated so as to make privatization easier (by lowering the price of acquiring Louisiana health plans) and so as to push participants' dollars back into the state general fund. And then there is LSU's "LSU First" policy, which is in every way better than any state offering and that operates outside the control of the aforementioned "fourth floor." Driving down OGB rates drives down premiums on LSU First, thus diminishing its ability to provide benefits to the faculty who have always applauded this insurance offering. In a final strange twist to this story, legislators, who occasionally show some independence from the governor, not only continue to enjoy the special privilege of access to LSU First but have also convinced the LSU System to open up that policy to members of their staffs.

Campus Federal Launches A2A and P2P Transfer Options

Statewide academic banker Campus Federal Credit Union has again leapt into the lead among specialty financial institutions with the release of its person-to-person and account-to-account online transfer utility that bodes fair to replace the old-fashioned checkbook with a faster, more secure electronic transfer option. At press time, CFCU had posted an instructional video concerning this new utility on its main [web page](#). Congratulations to John Milazzo and his team for another laudable innovation.

LSU ENGINEERING (continued)

Dr. Rebecca Brent, president of Education Design, Inc. and Dr. Richard Felder, professor emeritus in chemical engineering from North Carolina State University, facilitated the 2013 FDW. Brent and Felder have presented over 300 workshops on effective teaching, course design, mentoring and supporting new faculty members and faculty development on campuses throughout the United States and abroad. In addition, Brent and Felder co-direct the American Society for Engineering Education National Effective Teaching Institute.

"Traditional instruction in college science, technology, engineering, and mathematics includes hour-long chalk-and-talk sessions or PowerPoint shows, little or no real-world content, ridiculously long assignments, and tricky tests that only the fastest students in the class have time to finish," Felder said. "A large body of research has shown conclusively that instruction like that just doesn't work for many students who would make excellent STEM professionals. They go through a year or two of it and conclude that STEM is not for them, and even if they are getting decent grades, they drop out in large numbers. Unfortunately, college teachers are the only skilled professionals I know who are not routinely trained to enter their profession. As a result, most STEM instructors don't even know that there are other ways to teach with much better track records of promoting learning and increasing retention. Not knowing alternatives, they default to teaching the way their teachers taught them...and since their teachers were also untrained, the ineffective old methods just keep being inflicted on generation after generation of students."

Workshop participants learned how to recognize students' learning preferences, incorporate active learning strategies in their classrooms, write and use learning objectives in their courses, develop strategies for effective team projects and implement effective grading and assessment techniques. Participants also developed at least one teaching module to be used in their classes that will utilize active learning strategies and presented it to the group.



LSU Assistant Instructors presented about how they will apply what they learned in the workshop

"BRCC math and science faculty learned active learning strategies that they will use to improve student learning in their classes," said Dr. Jo Dale Ales, dean, STEM at BRCC. "Engineering students will be more successful academically at BRCC and when they transfer to LSU after earning their associate degree. This is a win-win situation for both institutions and the students."

Funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation, or NSF, the CoE is using the NSF grant to attract faculty from engineering, construction management, math, chemistry, physics and English who teach first- or second-year students to participate. The goal of the program is to improve retention and increase the number of graduates in engineering and construction management by designing ways to engage students in their classes and programs and discussing activities to increase their students' understanding of difficult concepts.

To date, approximately 146 LSU and BRCC faculty members, Ph.D. students and postdoctoral students from the CoE, biology, chemistry, English, math and physics have participated in the faculty development workshops.

LSU and BRCC, joined forces in the fall of 2010 to offer the "Bears to Tigers" partnership, which makes engineering more affordable and practical to many students who might have difficulty entering LSU, whether due to financial issues or entry requirements. The partnership allows participating BRCC students to become involved at LSU and experience additional opportunities specific to their major.

Having BRCC faculty attend this workshop will help to strengthen the program's recruitment, retention and placement into an integrated and comprehensive program that promotes student success in transitioning from the community college to LSU and foster the faculty learning communities between the two campuses.



Dr. Richard Felder and Dr. Rebecca Brent led the Effective Teaching workshop for LSU and BRCC faculty, graduate teaching assistants, and undergraduate assistant instructors

Cash Batted out of the Park

Among the revelations in the third-quarter audit summary was an economic "homer" in which a tidy sum of cash flew out of Alex Box Stadium. According to the report, \$7,872.00 "was discovered missing" (perhaps that could be more simply expressed as "was found lost") during a reconciliation of ticket sales for a baseball game. Students of freshman composition who are eager to find examples of the elimination of agency from sentences will smile at the announcement, in the report, that "the cause of the missing cash has not been determined." The "green" side of LSU was also in evidence during the June 7th Board of Supervisors meeting when the Finance, Infrastructure, and Core Development Committee revealed that uncollected accounts receivable slated for write-off had soared by a factor of one-hundred percent, up to \$2,000,000.00 from \$1,000,000.00 in the previous year. With its usual gift for understatement, the LSU Board presented this astounding sum as a paltry one-fifth of one percent of payments received. The identity of the collection agency that delivered this attention-grabbing performance was not revealed.

Another Smacker at Alex Box



LSUUnited Regroups, Realigns

The development of LSUUnited, LSU's fledgling faculty union, continues. After difficult debate, the LSUUnited leadership voted to place its affiliation with the Louisiana Association of Educators in suspension. LSUUnited will now focus on recruitment and on advocacy for faculty in such areas as adequate compensation, retirement and benefits, rolling contracts for instructors, and the right to collect dues through payroll deduction. Extended plans call for recruitment drives that will culminate in reaffiliation with a union and bargaining agent. Dues for the new LSUUnited have been set at a modest \$10.00 per annum. An advertisement with information on how to join LSUUnited is included in this newsletter.

New LSU Trademark Reflects Economic Erosion

In one of those strange events that could only happen in a marketing department where no one has studied art history, LSU, according to *The Baton Rouge Business Report*, has authorized the for-fee use of a yet another new version of the LSU Tiger logo. Intended for application to merchandise such as wearing apparel, the latest redaction of Tiger Mike presents the buoyant Bengal's stripes as open spaces (or even gashes) through which the empty background beams. No better feline version of an empty piggy bank could be imagined! Perhaps this is a move toward transparency?

Raises - or Raised Eyebrows?

If there were ever an incentive to calisthenics, it must surely be the raises recently announced by the LSU System, which alternately set faculty leaping up and raising their arms in exclamatory joy but also throwing themselves on the floor in astounded disappointment. When LSU officialdom announced raises, it proclaimed a four percent increment for most employees, but, to date, the only recipients of the full increment seem to be those in the LSU System office, those in administrative positions, or those in the enviable position of leveraging a counter-offer or equity claim. In more than one college, Deans deployed home-brewed social justice programs in which raises to senior faculty members were clipped in order to buoy up those with less experience and shorter histories of service, thus sending the message that loyalty and accomplishment yield taxation and penalties rather than reward and thus bringing age discrimination back into the headlines. Further up the river, at the other LSU System campuses, the alleged four percent "raise" devolved into a one-time supplement, the future of which remained murky. All the way up at the top of the state, LSUS employees learned that they might receive two percent increments beginning in January, if at all. Meanwhile, civil service employees who achieved satisfactory job performance ratings were granted a straight-up four percent raise, thus signaling that Louisiana universities value six months of office work above a lifetime of research. Also swirling through but hard to see within this mix is the one-half percent that the state retirement agency clipped from the "normal cost" that reaches employee retirement accounts, a reduction that not only trimmed a tidy sum from the "raise" but that left employees of other university systems, where no raises were bestowed, poorer than ever. Assuming that the LSU employees who received a partial raise constitute approximately one-third of the Louisiana higher education work force and taking all of the aforementioned reductions into account, the total increase for all of Louisiana higher education falls below one-half of one percent.

Lifestyle Feature

America's Hub Airports

Memphis International



Voyagers from Louisiana universities routinely fan out across America and the world in their pursuit of new knowledge, professional connections, and occasional encounters with high life. There was a day when all those traveling to or from Louisiana passed through a handful of hub airports. In recent years, the coming and going of several discount carriers and the introduction of increasing competition from airports in Lafayette and Lake Charles have made it possible to travel to one's final destination through a variety of transfer points. The invention of computer-assisted travel planning through sites such as kayak.com and hipmunk.com have made it possible to reach any city through a variety of routes. To assist traveling professionals in attaining the optimal if not always a good travel experience, the *Newsletter* offers the following capsule evaluation of a baker's dozen of hub cities that often enough pop up on itineraries beginning in Louisiana. Ranking is from worst to best, so, to borrow from both aviation and the LSU cheerleaders, "the only way is up"!

Coming in at position number thirteen and decidedly the worst option for Louisiana travelers is [Memphis International](#), which rose to great prominence as a hub for Northwestern but which has slipped since becoming a secondary hub for Atlanta-based Delta. Looking for all the world like a cold-war backyard bomb shelter, this clumsy and highly amalgamative brick monstrosity features tornado shelter stations in the men's toilets and offers some of the most uncomfortable chairs, in waiting areas, that designers have ever deployed. Most annoying are the endless lowbrow allusions to Elvis Presley, whose music pervades every corridor, to whom shops are dedicated, and after whom restaurant dishes are named. Despite the appearance of a multiplicity of restaurants in common areas, most operate out of a common commissary and kitchen, with the predictable depletion of variety and nutritional potential. MEM does have the advantage of a few nonstop KLM flights to Amsterdam, making it a quick connection to Europe, but it has not benefitted in any way from the huge influx of cash brought by its chief tenant, the FedEx cargo operation.

Close behind Memphis—chasing MEM by a tail—is aging [Atlanta International Airport](#), once the glorious symbol of the economically expansive new south but now the architectural epitome of stagnation and rearward glances. Low ceilings, long corridors, and deteriorating flooring combine to inspire gratitude for short connection times. Atlanta remains inadequately endowed with amenities. Usable electrical connections are few and far between; waiting areas are disproportionately narrow. As does Memphis, Atlanta consolidates its food services in food court areas in which common facilities increase operating efficiencies, but the result is some of the lowest-quality food ever to hit the trash can. As for sanitation—well, Atlanta inspires continence.



Atlanta International Airport

Hovering in the eleventh place is perdurable [New York JFK Airport](#), from which one can reach almost any major international city but which is sparsely served by domestic carriers save for connecting flights attendant on international arrivals and departures. Truth be told, JFK has little to recommend other than its enormous range of international travel options and its oaring Bauhaus-inspired design, which, admittedly, conveys the sense of former grandeur—with an emphasis on grandeur. JFK is impaired by the inconvenience of its location—at least forty-five minutes into the city—and by its surprising lack of amenities, there being only one genuine restaurant (other than snack food stalls) in this otherwise impressive amphitheater of travel. It is amazing that a venue that processes hundreds of thousands of travels per year could convey such a sense of sober vacancy. (continued on page 9)

Monument in the Making?

In one of the most bizarre episodes to date in the history of the "one LSU" consolidation, the great east wing of LSU's Thomas Boyd Hall, once the LSU Chancellor's office, has been vacated, padlocked, and otherwise immured in mothballs. Window treatments have been drawn; house plants formerly seen in windows have wilted away; and seekers after the campus leadership encounter darkened doors and heavy locks. Optimists speculate that the building, which resembles the Ark of the Covenant, may be headed for conversion into a monument commemorating the days before the outsourcing of leadership; skeptics opine that the building is undergoing decontamination.



Lockdown at Bill Jenkins's Old Office

Remember, Ozzie And Harriet Has Been Cancelled

Most everyone who monitors university fundraising regards the "TAF," the Tiger Athletic Foundation, as one of the most efficient and cleanest philanthropic organizations of its kind. Nevertheless, there is always room for improvement. Isn't it about time to rethink events such as the August 14th bash, "Kathy Miles and Coaches' Wives"? If the official line is true—that college football is all about opportunity—shouldn't there be at least be a "Coaches' Husbands" event?

Investigative Reporter Traces \$87K Southern Handout

Tyler Bridges, the inquisitive report for The Lens, has discovered \$87,000.00 in scholarships distributed on a purely discretionary basis by members of the Southern University Board of Supervisors. Those who have heard that Southern and other schools hunger for tuition will want to read the [damage report](#).



"A G Answers" is your premier source of human resources management advice. LSU HRM Chief A. G. Monaco addresses *Newsletter* readers' questions about HRM and "employees' lives" in general. Have a pressing HRM issue for A G to address? Please send your queries to encope@LSU.edu.



A G Monaco

AGATHA IN BRUSLY WRITES:

Dear A G,

I'm getting mixed messages about sick leave. It looks to me like I have thousands of hours "banked" in my account, but I'm within a few years of retirement and, lord willing, I doubt that I'll use even a fraction of it. I hear conflicting stories about its having a cash value at retirement or about its being worthless. I can't believe that I've earned all of this and that it will now go up in smoke. Can you help me figure out if my sick leave is good for anything?

Dear Agatha,

Well first and foremost sick leave is an especially important benefit if you become too ill to work. As we get older we are much more likely to suffer from a disabling injury or illness so accruing sick leave over the years can certainly provide an economic safety net during our peak earning years. So with that in mind Agatha- part of the answer to your question depends on whether you consider "peace of mind" worth something?

If an employee is in the traditional TRSL plan (defined benefit) accrued sick leave can be used to add to an employee's total years of service at the point of retirement. While sick leave cannot be used to attain eligibility for retirement, once the eligibility is reached it can add to your years of service. The calculation of how much your accruals will add to your years of service depends on when you amassed your totals. Sick leave accrued before 1988 is more generously credited to your years of service than sick leave accrued between 1988 and 1990. In regard to sick leave accrued post 1990 an individual will can only add one year of service to their total based on the of the amount of sick leave accrued. Still... even one year of additional service can translate into a valuable addition to your pension planning. A review of the charts on the TRSL website can give you specific information regarding the conversion of accrued sick leave to years of service.

I think where Agatha might be headed with her question is in asking -why sick leave accruals cannot be used to add years of service to retirement totals for employees enrolled in TRSL's Optional Retirement Plan (ORP)?

The reason sick leave accruals are not considered for ORP participants who are retired is because an additional year of service without an increase in contributions do not increase your benefits in the ORP.

The Optional Retirement Plan is a defined contribution plan and thus years of service are not the direct determining factor in the amount of the pension benefit you would receive upon retirement. Unlike the traditional plan the ORP does not rely on your years of service to determine the amount of your retirement benefit. The amount of contributions, the investment choices, and the timing of your contributions into your account determine your retirement payments. Thus rather than the number of years of service multiplied by a predetermined figure it is the size and performance of your investment portfolio that determines the size of your retirement fund. So for ORP members any additional years of service without additional amounts of investment do not add to your benefit.

Agatha, I hope that you and all our employees remain so healthy that you never need to use large blocks of your sick leave, but in the event that you do get ill keep in mind that the accrual of sick leave allows for economic security and a more complete recovery.

LIFESTYLE FEATURE (continued)

Travelers from Louisiana will surely know all too well [Houston Intercontinental Airport](#), formerly a Continental and now a United mega-hub and number ten on our list. Although "IAH" is surprisingly easy to reach by automobile, being on the north side of the ring road around outer Houston, IAH itself is an unpleasant experience, with clumsy and overcrowded ticketing and check-in spaces, inadequate air conditioning near exits, and loud luggage carousels that suggest the dropping of suitcases by parachute rather than by careful handling. The layout of the secured area is also confusing and disorienting, with no clear relation between the letter-designated terminals and a shortage of maps along the long corridors, walkways, and catwalks. Houston is the first of the airports surveyed to include some truly independent restaurants, a good bet being Bubba's Bayou Grill in Terminal C, but quality of both food and service is unpredictable. The great advantage of IAH for southern travelers is that, if one is willing to make the car trip, the remainder of the journey is usually a nonstop flight, even overseas.



Houston International Airport

Slightly but not much better than Houston, at position nine, is Newark, which can be reached from New Orleans without an additional stop. Newark is a strangely mixed bag, with clapped-together check-in areas that look more like a kiddie clubhouse than a professional airport and with gangways and underground walkways between terminals the inspire claustrophobia. Although Newark is, in fact, a small airport with only two major runways, it turns over an astounding number of passengers and so attracts a fine array of both retail merchants and food service options, including a delightful stall for lip-smacking Caio Bella ice cream. Newark seems to recognize that the unsightliness of its campus requires an infusion of art. Especially commendable is the indoor water-wall, which confers a sense of the fresh outdoors on weary travelers. (Continued on Page 10.)



Newark International Airport



EDUCATE! CONNECT! DISCOVER!

THE SOURCE FOR INNOVATION, INSPIRATION AND TECHNOLOGY
NOVEMBER 1, 2012 10:00am - 2:00pm | 1000 Student Union Ballroom

TECHPAWLOOZA SAVE THE DATE

The 3rd annual Technology Fair, TechPawLooza 2013, will be held on October 9, 2013! The event will run from 10:00am- 2:00pm in the LSU Student Union Royal Cotillion Ballroom.

TechPawLooza is a wonderful event devoted to connecting IT with LSU students, faculty, and staff. It is a celebration of the abundance of technology utilized on campus for academia, student support and retention, technology support, and for engaging the education community. Last year we had over 850 attendees and 50 exhibits. We anticipate this year will be even bigger and better!

We would like to extend an invite to LSU Faculty, staff and students and to attend. For information on this year's presentations, please visit our website. Please contact Hala Esmail (hesmai1@lsu.edu) with any questions.

Raises-or Raised Eyebrows?

If there were ever an incentive to calisthenics, it must surely be the raises recently announced by the LSU System, which alternately set faculty leaping up and raising their arms in exclamatory joy but also throwing themselves on the floor in astounded disappointment. When LSU officialdom announced raises, it proclaimed a four percent increment for most employees, but, to date, the only recipients of the full increment seem to be those in the LSU System office, those in administrative positions, or those in the enviable position of leveraging a counter-offer or equity claim. In more than one college, Deans deployed home-brewed social justice programs in which raises to senior faculty members were clipped in order to buoy up those with less experience and shorter histories of service, thus sending the message that loyalty and accomplishment yield taxation and penalties rather than reward and thus bringing age discrimination back into the headlines. Further up the river, at the other LSU System campuses, the alleged four percent "raise" devolved into a one-time supplement, the future of which remained murky. All the way up at the top of the state, LSUS employees learned that they might receive two percent increments beginning in January, if at all. Meanwhile, civil service employees who achieved satisfactory job performance ratings were granted a straight-up four percent raise, thus signaling that Louisiana universities value six months of office work above a lifetime of research. Also swirling through but hard to see within this mix is the one-half percent that the state retirement agency clipped from the "normal cost" that reaches employee retirement accounts, a reduction that not only trimmed a tidy sum from the "raise" but that left employees of other university systems, where no raises were bestowed, poorer than ever. Assuming that the LSU employees who received a partial raise constitute approximately one-third of the Louisiana higher education work force and taking all of the aforementioned reductions into account, the total increase for all of Louisiana higher education falls below one-half of one percent.



New York JFK Airport



Los Angeles International Airport

It is easy to forget that, although it stands at the perimeter of America, the west coast offers at least two major hubs, hubs that serve passengers traveling to western or Pacific destinations. Soaring into eighth position in the rankings is Los Angeles International, which has achieved instant recognition owing to its futuristic parking structure as well as for its simplified Bauhaus interiors. Although no match for the cavernous, cathedral-like spaces of New York JFK, LAX reverberates with the lighter and more whimsical redaction of mid-century German design that also gave us the Disney idiom. LAX also abounds with large windows and natural light sources, which counteract the sense of entrapment common to airports in our high-security era. Food selections are celebrity-oriented—Wolfgang



San Francisco International Airport

Puck and his ilk seem to own the concessions—but the occasional long wait for a transoceanic flight is at least minimally comfortable in light and airy spaces. Much the same can be said for airport number seven, San Francisco International, a favorite departure point for journeys to Australasia, Japan, China, Korea, and Hawaii. Although fully and wholeheartedly generic—there is almost nothing memorable about SFO—it partakes enough of the buoyancy and optimism engrained in its southern-California counterpart that the traveler leaves feeling refreshed, as if touched by Pacific eucalyptus oil.

Surprisingly high up in the ranks at position number six is Dallas, which, in recent years, has lost ground in the air derby owing to the economic troubles of its chief



Dallas International Airport

and near-sole tenant, American Airlines. The design of Dallas—two parallel series of colossal semi-circular arcades, somewhat reminiscent of Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport—is appalling, but the sheer immensity of the airport forces the introduction of heterodoxy in the retail and food offerings. Especially commendable is healthy quick-food vendor Ufood Grill, which pumps out a variety of deliciously sauced sandwiches and which seems to be a favorite of pilots and their crews. One serious shortcoming of Dallas is its shallowness. The distance from the security exit to the waiting areas and gates is very short, leaving little room for crowds during peak travel times.

(continued on page 11)



Washington Dulles International Airport



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Lunchtime Lagniappe Series Explores Louisiana History and Tradition

Enjoy a weekly series of lectures that explores the rich culture and history of Louisiana, at the Capitol Park Museum in downtown Baton Rouge.

Oct. 9: The 1779 Battle of Baton Rouge

•John Hickey, US Army Veteran, will present the Battle of Baton Rouge, discussing how the Spanish captured the town from the British. John Hickey retired from the U.S.

Oct. 16: The Lost Louisiana History of Cattle Trails

•Join Stella Tanoos as she tells the story of a cattle drive years before Texas made the process famous.

Oct. 23: A Place in History: Robert Tebbs’s Louisiana Plantation Photographs

•Tony Lewis, Curator of Visual Arts for the Louisiana State Museum, shares the story of Tebbs and the nearly 100 Louisiana plantations he photographed in 1926.

Oct. 30: Louisiana Indians and the Native Americans of the Southeast U.S.

•Member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Ken Dixon will discuss the culture, education and recreation of the Native Americans in the Southeast U.S.

LIFESTYLE FEATURE (continued)

Some of the best hub airports are barely able to remain in that category. Lively, uncrowded, pleasant, and quick with regard to connection time, number five, [Cincinnati Northern Kentucky Airport](#) has never quite taken off as a Delta transfer point. Nevertheless, Delta continues to offer a few international nonstops from CVG. These flights require shorter connection times and are almost always punctual. CVG is unique among airports in that it has a walk-around feel. Spaces are large and pleasingly boxy, often with high ceilings, and food offerings are diverse. Number four, [Washington Dulles](#), is in the same aviation boat. The idea of distributing Washington, DC traffic over three airports never seems to have worked out, with the result that "IAD" is often uncrowded, with flights that arrive and depart on time.

Washington Dulles can be reached through nonstop service from two Louisiana airports, making it an eligible change point for international flights. Like Cincinnati, Dulles is large and susceptible of ambling. Better, international travelers can interrupt their travel at the near-midpoint, making the over-water segment of the journey shorter, hence less taxing.

As the example of Cincinnati shows, an inland hub has some advantages even for over-water travel. Such is the case for Denver, which, despite the rough start occasioned by its maintenance-plagued computerized luggage delivery system, remains one of the cleanest, fastest, most accessible, and most convenient airports in north America. Large pane windows and vast public spaces eliminate terminal claustrophobia. Distributed facilities likewise curtail any food-court or retail-center "feel" and allow the introduction of restaurants that serve at different paces (rather than at the blitzing pace required of the



Denver International Airport

terminal intersections). Connections to Hawaii and beyond a easy, nicely scheduled, and not much longer, in travel time, than those leaving from the west coast.

The top two airports surprised even the Newsletter staff. Coming in at second place is the revitalized [Chicago O'Hare Airport](#), which was once a monstrosity but which, thanks to a series of renovations, has attained a kind of industrial chic, albeit not always gracefully. High ceilings, exposed structures, and abundant natural light increase the vertical size of the terminals, although the lateral dimensions remain a bit tight. In recent years, O'Hare has attempted to add some new dining options, but the majority of the food remains mainstream American or chain-driven, which is a slight drawback. Chicago is again becoming viable as a hub for European flights, which tend to leave and arrive at later times, thereby eliminating the problem of early-morning departures from Europe.



Chicago O'Hare Airport

The undisputed number-one hub airport, at last, is [Detroit Waring](#). Although the absorption of Northwest Airlines, onetime chief tenant of DTW, the magnificent glass box with the vaulted ceiling is possibly the last airport in America to convey the romance and aspirations of the great age of aeronautics and to do so in a way that is utterly free of cheap nostalgia. The one long gallery that comprises DTW, along with the cheerful bright red interior tram monorail, returns one to a childlike joy in locomotion. This tinker-toy paradise, a kind of living erector set, also houses a marquee hotel and an array of restaurants that could stand on their own, even without a captive audience. Art abounds in an environment where beauty is prized. SlapShotz Bar and Grill, near gate A23, offers one of the best patty melts in the world along with a selection of boutique beers. Plus, Detroit is a great hopping-off point for international flights either to Europe or the Pacific basin. It is nothing short of a miracle that beleaguered Detroit can maintain so splendid an aviation facility.



Detroit Metropolitan Airport

Book a flight today! And, preferably, find a way to do it without the fee paid to the state travel agent!

MCNAIR RESEARCH SCHOLARS

A TRIO program promoting doctoral studies for first-generation college students, students who are from a background of financial need, and students from ethnic groups underrepresented in graduate education.

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•Receive comprehensive advisement on strategies for graduate school funding and obtain undergraduate research experience.

•Participants are funded up to \$2800 per academic year for research activities

•Students are provided guidance in research protocols

•We help students locate funded undergraduate research opportunities at other universities in the United States and abroad

•Students who are participating in other undergraduate research programs are welcomed to apply for the McNair program

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Follow the [conversation](#)