Report on LSU Board of Supervisors Meeting and Council of Faculty Advisors (COFA) of August 28, 2010

COFA meeting

- Jim Robinson announced that Louisiana’s Interim Commissioner of Higher Education, Tom Layzell, the retired President of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, would be presenting at the AFLS meeting. Another speaker scheduled is Dr. Bill Stewart (President LA AAUP). This will take place in the Lod Cook center at LSU, Baton Rouge. Light refreshments at 12:30. Dr. Layzell will speak at 1:00. Currently Dr. Tom Layzell is a “temporary part time advisor” to the Board of Regents for the GRAD act. At the Board of Regents, Dr Layzell presented excellent ideas concerning the direction Louisiana is to take in education. As Jim put it, this would be the time to ask questions regarding these trying times in our fields.

- Dr. Robert Rasmussen predicted the BoS meeting would be brief with no new items introduced.
  - This would be Mr. Chatelain’s last meeting as chair. Mr. James Moore will take the gavel from Mr. Chatelain.
  - Installation of officers
  - There would also be an election for the chair-elect of the BoS. Committees
  - Scheduled to report are Health Care and Medical Education (a status report on activities at the Health Sciences Centers and the Health Care Services Division), Finance, Infrastructure and Core Development Committee (with consideration of the FY 2010-11 operating budget and the 2009-10 4th quarter budget report) and Property and Facilities committee (to present the approval of the 2011 Five-year capital outlay budget request).
  - A question posed from the Council to Dr. Rasmussen was clarification on Board member Senator Duplessis’ affiliations and potential contributions to the BoS.

- Jim Robinson presented a request to COFA that the BoS be requested to consider implementing a policy for sick leave for first relatives for 9-month salaried faculty. Currently civil service rules mandate that faculty use annual leave in such circumstances. However, 9-month faculty have no annual leave. Kevin Copes offered to check into where the policy lies on this issue.

- Kevin Cope reported to the COFA that the LAE would be willing to send representatives to the various campuses across the state to inform faculty on what they could do for them in terms of representations. Some discussion was held on why AAUP is not utilized as faculty representation. The clarification was that AAUP is unable to set or influence policy.

- AAUP is going to investigate LSU faculty (Ivor Van Heerden and Dominique Homberger) and the university’s rationale for releasing these two faculty members

- A discussion of the proposed changes in commencement ceremonies was held. LSU-S is not allowing grad faculty to hood their grads because it adds too much time to the program. A concern expressed by parents is that too many students are wearing numerous pins, stoles, etc. for individual recognition creating, in the parents’ perception, a sense of competition and thereby reducing the dignity of the ceremony.

- Proposed House Bill 229 which relates to Public Retirement would “require a 2/3 vote of the Legislature to authorize any state employee benefit provision having an actuarial cost.” The general feeling of the COFA is that Louisiana’s tend to vote “yes” on such items.
Board of Supervisors Meeting

- Committee reports:
  1. Health Care and Medical Education—According to Fred Cerise, the Baton Rouge project on the LSU Health Sciences Center continues to progress and issues had been addressed regarding prisoners’ care. This had been a concern of Senator Duplessis in Cerise’s report last month because this concern had not been resolved.
  2. Finance, Infrastructure and Core Development Committee (with consideration of the FY 2010-11 operating budget and the 2009-10 4th quarter budget report) This was CFO ‘John Antolik’ last report to the board as he is retiring.
   Mr. Antolik called attention to one of the money-saving steps the Board was undertaking by not printing all the copies of meeting agendas and minutes but instead providing links to each of the board members enabling them to peruse the documents on their computers. He also cited reasons for the increase in expenses to the campuses, specifically the increase in benefits to be paid to personnel. He also pointed out another obstacle placed on higher education by the state in the executive order implementing a hiring freeze that specifies a ceiling on the number of FTEs allowable for each state agency, budget unit, etc. which includes higher education.
  3. Property and Facilities committee (presented the 2011 five-year capital outlay budget request).

- The new board was installed.
- Mr. Ben Mount was nominated and elected chair-elect of the BoS.
- President Lombardi formally congratulated John Antolik on his retirement and on his successful career with the university as CFO.
- Report from BoR included information on GRAD act. All campuses have submitted reports toward the plan at this time. The BoR will hold meetings with each campus to attempt to understand how each campus will carry out their plans for the GRAD act.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane D. Sasser, LSU AgCenter Faculty Council member