

Council of Faculty Advisors (COFA)
July 16, 2010

These notes are a combination of notes from the Board of Supervisors (BOS) Information Session, the COFA meeting, and the BOS Meeting. The basic outcomes of the sessions were:

1. Mr. Blake Chatelain introduced the new members of the BOS.
2. Mr. Blake Chatelain also commented on the budget challenges faced by the System; the resources available; the need to look at options; the need for transparency; the need to minimize the impacts; the need for revenue clarity; and that no decisions would be made in the July 16 meeting.
3. Dr. John Lombardi commented on the flat budget for 2010-2011; the need to plan for budget decreases in 2011-2012; the need to plan for the loss of stimulus funding; the seriousness of the changes that will occur within the System including decreased opportunities, events, research, and public service; the changes in the State's economy; and the problems in the Gulf.
4. The session then provided the chancellor of each unit within the Louisiana State University System to provide a brief overview of the proposed cuts in the 2011-2012 budgets. Information for each unit is available on the System website (www.lsusystem.edu) . There is a link on the first page of the website that will lead to the budget.
5. Following the budget presentations Dr. John Lombardi made the following comments:

Other states are also dealing with budget shortfalls but may be in better financial shape since they may have lower levels of unfunded mandates and may have started with a higher base budget.

The last moment that decisions can be made on the 2011-2012 budget will be in September/October of 2010. While decisions need to be made quickly, they need to be made in a way that only required cuts are made; care must be taken that no extra cuts are made. Delaying decisions until Sept/Oct will allow a better assessment of what the available funds will be and a better understanding of the consequences of the restructuring of the System.

All units within the System were hit with the 23% budget decrease.

The budget cuts are gruesome, painful, and serious. They have the potential to destroy the capacity of higher education in Louisiana.

6. Mr. Blake Chatelain thanked all the units for the efforts in developing the budget cuts, He recognized the time and effort that had gone into the process. He also recognized that the allowable tuition increases will be largely offset by the unfunded mandates.

The actual meeting of COFA was called to order at 12:05 pm.

Dr. Robert Rasmussen commented on the how tough the morning meeting had been; the strengths of the new BOS members; and the basic agenda for the afternoon meeting.

Dr. Kevin Cope introduced the members of COFA and Michael Walker-Jones and Linda Guidry, representatives of the Louisiana Association of Educators (LAE). LAE is part of the National Association of Educators which works with K-12 as well as university level faculty to increase the leverage of the faculty in changes such as those being made within the System. LAE as well as AAUP and the American Federation of Teachers have been invited to meet with LSU faculty to determine the best way to develop faculty representation. To provide background for the guests, Kevin Cope commented that the issues/misconceptions from the morning meeting which included:

- A. The lack of faculty representation on the BOS and BOR
- B. The information flow problem
- C. The impacts of the unfunded mandates
- D. Problems in the retirement systems
- E. Impacts of the changes in the System on faculty innovation
- F. Poor faculty morale
- G. Layoffs/furloughs
- H. Lack of raises tied to lack of civil service raises
- I. Performance requirements of the GRAD Act

Michael Walker-Jones provided background on the functions of LAE; the need to unify the LSU campuses; the potential to consolidate LSU faculty with K-12 teachers; willingness to be a bargaining unit for the entire state; development of a higher education council; and looking at multiple models to develop the best strategy for all campuses. LAE is willing to meet with faculty from all campuses to determine the best way for the campuses to use the abilities of LAE and can be invited to the campuses by the faculty senates. Options will be discussed during the August COFA meeting.

Other issues discussed in the COFA meeting were:

1. The LOUIS database funding problems. The LSU Senate has appointed a committee to study the future of LOUIS; what databases are needed; the services needed by the users; and how the system should be maintained/developed.
2. The University of Louisiana System Faculty Advisory Council has suggested that British Petroleum be requested to fund re-education and tasking programs to train people whose jobs have been lost/impaired by the tanked economy. The LSU Chancellors are okay with the idea. Kevin Cope will write a proposal and distribute it.

The COFA meeting adjourned at 1:15 pm.

The afternoon meeting of the LSU Board of Supervisors followed the agenda provided.

Respectfully submitted:

Elisabeth Elder

July 19, 2010