Letter: Dean Not in Favor of Merger

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I am having a hard time seeing the positives (for LSUS) in the proposed LSU-S/Louisiana Tech merger.

It seems to me that if there were to be two campuses of Louisiana Tech — one in an urban setting and one in a small-town/rural setting — that there are programs which would likely make more sense in one location than in the other. To merely have two campuses duplicating each other’s efforts hardly seems innovative and forward thinking. The urban campus in Shreveport would provide opportunities for interaction between the campus and the community which are not available (or are in short supply) in Ruston. To me, it would make sense that programs — both undergraduate and graduate level — in business, education and some engineering fields — civil engineering, for instance — would be much better placed in Shreveport than in Ruston.

Similar arguments could be made for any of the health-related programs. Do you seriously think that Ruston would be willing to consider moving those programs, along with their students and faculty, to Shreveport? If not, I would contend that they are interested in a land-grab rather than a merger.

What about various kinds of programs for our current LSUS students? I am thinking in terms of such things as athletics, fraternities and sororities, the debate team, Student Government Association and so forth.

It is clear to me that our athletics program would cease to exist. Can you imagine any scenario in which Louisiana Tech would endorse the idea of two sets of teams running around the country with Louisiana Tech on their jerseys, one an NCAA Division I team and one an NAIA Division I team? I can’t. Can there be two debate teams, two SGAs, two student newspapers, two chapters of the same fraternity or sorority? I would like to have those questions answered.

So far, the generalities have been unsatisfactory. The idea seems to be that the merger will be approved and then we’ll work out all of the details, taking it on faith that we will be treated as an equal partner.

I have serious doubts that such will be the case. Convince me otherwise. These seem to be some of the simpler questions, more easily answered than questions of differences in tuition, differences in admissions standards, differences in faculty compensation, differences in semester versus quarter system and on and on. Let’s start with the easy stuff before we move on to those complex issues.

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