At the center of all the discussion regarding merger and role scope and mission are three issues:

(1) Lack of funding.
The current funding for higher education in Louisiana is still uncertain. It is subject to change at very short notice and has been falling steadily for several years. How can any administration whether it be at the local, regional or school level plan for the future with no solid investment base? This brings me to my next point.

(2) Lack of planning.
No business plan can succeed without a well thought out plan, based upon an accountable feasibility study, with projections, goals, performance expectations and numerous other ingredients to monitor progress and outcomes. As a huge supporter of dual enrollment, I have been instrumental in securing funding and planning and been directly involved in the placement of several dual enrollment projects in the Shreveport/Bossier metropolitan area and hope to be instrumental in extending such outreach programs in the future. However as we all discuss higher education and what we need for the future we learn that funding for what has been achieved and needs to be sustained with respect to dual enrollment is in jeopardy. So we start a program, it is a success, and then we can't fund it any more. Which brings me to my third point.

(3) The people in charge.
You know it's a strange thing but the real decision makers in higher education never seem to be experienced educators i.e. people with proven track records in education. It's not like the army or the navy where the generals and admirals have worked their way up by experience and accomplishment. Higher education is primarily controlled by political appointees, not by people with track records in education. For some reason even outstanding educators are not respected in our society.

So to summarise, lack of planning, lack of funding, and administration by people who don't know the job leads to a mess and higher education in Louisiana will continue to be in a mess until we align competent management with stable funding and accurate, accountable planning. Any scheme that lacks these components will amount to more wheel spin, endless, finger pointing, political posturing, unproductive battles over physical real estate, roles scopes and missions, turf wars which leads to further frustration, wasted effort and a total mess.

Where are we right now in northwest Louisiana with respect to higher education?

A total mess.

(1) Lack of a stable funding base.
(2) Lack of planning—all the talk about merger without a single shred of a plan and yet all we hear from the architect of the so-called feasibility study is "the devil is in the details". Details which did not include the interviewing of a single student!
(3) People doing all the talking, who have little or no knowledge of higher education. Political appointees sniping at each other as they try to justify their entrenched unaccountable positions.

Finally let me say this:

Planning without funding is delusion.
Currently we have scant funding and no plan at all as to how the bills concerning higher education currently before the legislature will affect our students in the Shreveport/Bossier area. Talk of progress and more opportunities with no plan or funding?

I have some sea front property in Nebraska I would like to sell you.

I urge all of us therefore to contact our legislators and ask them to use their influence and their vote to discourage passing any legislation until a detailed plan has been formulated to safeguard the future of higher education in our area. In closing let me say that I am always in favor of any plan that offers greater opportunities to our students. I do, and I think all of us will want to see that plan before we buy off on it.

Best wishes,

__________________________

Timing of the meeting notwithstanding, I believe that everyone including anyone supporting the merger of LSUS and Tech should not support the legislation currently before the LA House and Senate. The current legislation is poorly written and offers no protection to LSUS. Such a vote is way too premature. If a merger were deemed to be desirable at some point all of the details should be worked out before any vote is taken in the legislature or it just ends up being a hostile takeover with no guarantee of what programs would be kept or cut, faculty fired, tenure denied, and no guarantee of any new programs brought to Shreveport. As President Reagan once said "trust but verify."

__________________________

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5. Cost of merger vs. change in LSUS mission statement. (Why can't we have more master's programs and Ph.D.s of our own?)
Characteristically his "Five Talking Points" are (1)logical, (2)to the point, (3)positive, (4) well researched, and, worst of all (5)sensible.
Five reasons why they will not be part of the LSU/UL System/politically driven flawed agenda.
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-----Original Message-----

Subject: Talking points against the merger
Hi All,
here are my talking points. Also I don't trust Tech not to take the money for our budget and just close us down. Any administrator, dean, chair is at risk. Programs are at risk. Faculty positions are at risk. To me this is not so much a merger, but a hostile takeover. Hey, is not paranoia if they are really out to get you!
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Talking Points Against the LSUS-LA Tech Merger
1. National recognition and reputation of the LSU name. (outside LA every body knows LSU, not so much Tech)
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Colleagues, Help me understand. Other than personal preferences or protecting what we've created here, please give me some good reasons to be against this merger, or any good reasons to be for staying with the LSU system? I'm assuming we all want the same thing right; what NW LA deserves, a comprehensive doctoral degree granting university here in Shreveport-Bossier? I honestly have heard very few really legitimate reasons and I have heard absolutely no evidence that indicates we would, or even could, ever become the university NW LA deserves if we stay with the LSU system. I have seen a lot of evidence against it though.

I don't know what it would be like to join with Tech, nobody does at this point, but based on the last few decades and the current political realities, I believe I do know what it will be like if we don't.
is significance.
Faculty residing in House District 5 probably got a what at first glance appears to be a political advertisement, but is actually a survey, from Representative Alan Seabaugh. Question #5 asks if you are in favor of consolidating LSUS and La. Tech. This survey provides an easy opportunity to let at least one representative know how you feel about the merger. A lot of negative responses might get his attention, at least it is worth a try.

Here is my letter that went out as hard copy today to the seventeen representatives and senators on the list that Jackie reed furnished. I am very pleased to see Senator Peacock’s response to your letter.

Best Wishes,

*******************************************************************************
***************************************************************

The Honorable……………………….
March 2012
3245 Hollywood Avenue
Shreveport, LA 71108-3619

Dear Representative ……………………..

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. It concerns the proposed merger of LSUS and LA Tech. In studying the economics of the proposed merger, I note that it would result in our school in Shreveport being more expensive to the state, both in dollars per full time equivalent and dollars per graduate than LSUS costs currently. A merger would end up being more expensive to the students and their families, and will
serve less of the population than we are currently serving because of higher admissions requirements. Hardest hit would be the students and families of limited means. I urge you therefore, on purely economic grounds, to use your influence and vote in the legislature to discourage the proposed merger until a detailed cost-benefit plan can be worked out. Let me close by saying that as a professor, researcher, dual enrollment exponent, and fervent grant proposal writer, I am a contributor to joint programs between institutions, and was instrumental in starting the very successful joint master of science degree program between LSUS and LSUHSC-Shreveport. I am fully in favor of any plan for higher education that extends greater opportunities to our students. Thank you again for considering my comments and concerns regarding this issue.

Yours Sincerely,

: FW: the future of LSU Shreveport

I wanted to share the response I receive from Senator Peacock. Below his response you will find my email to our delegation.

From: Peacock, Sen. (District Office) [mailto:peacockb@legis.la.gov]
Sent: Monday, March 12, 2012 4:07 PM
To: Anderson, Larry
Subject: RE: the future of LSU Shreveport

I am opposed to House Bill No. 964 and Senate Bill 527 concerning the merger of LSUS and Louisiana Tech, as it currently reads. If LSUS and Louisiana Tech are allowed to merge, as HB 964 and SB 527 states, safeguards must be provided that require a postsecondary education system to meet the needs of our community with advanced graduate level courses. Our area of Louisiana, which is the third largest metropolitan area in the state, will be at a competitive disadvantage to compete in the global economy. With the importance of Barksdale Air Force Base, Haynesville Shale discovery, and our promising film production and digital media industry, Moonbot Studios & Millennium Studios, in Shreveport-Bossier, our state will be making a mistake to allow these two institutions to merge as currently proposed.

Ladies and Gentlemen:
My name is ________, and I’m a professor of English at LSU Shreveport, currently serving as Dean of Arts and Sciences. I am writing to ask you to vote against any legislation that makes it to the floor forcing LSU Shreveport to merge with Louisiana Tech, or any other institution for that matter.

I have been here for a couple of decades, but I was not born in this state, so I do not have that kind of emotional attachment. As I see it, there are two main issues. The first is that our state’s financial situation is not a real crisis, but a manufactured one. Those who control the legislative process made prior decisions about the financial needs of the state, and decided to make “revenue” a dirty word. If you actually try to balance the budget only on the expenditures side, you will destroy the state. I can only assume that is the intent.

The other issue is the posture adopted by the Regents with respect to LSU Shreveport. They have consistently restrained the growth of LSU Shreveport, for a variety of reasons, most of which are self-serving and political. There will be a law school opening soon in Shreveport, and it will probably be quite successful. Why didn’t we build one 15 years ago? Why don’t we have a nursing program? Or engineering? Many of you tout the efficacy of the invisible hand of the free market, yet LSU Shreveport has continually been prevented from engaging in a competitive free market. Everyone understood that we would have siphoned off students from other campuses.

You need to redefine the management boards, and give them oversight of the campuses in each of the four quadrants: Southeast, Southwest, Northeast, Northwest. Imagine if we had a management board overseeing a “system” comprised of NSU, SUS, BPCC, LSUS, LSUHSC, and Grambling.

As for a merger of Tech and LSU Shreveport, there are practical problems that have no solution short of the dissolution of one institution or the other—and we all know which one would be dissolved.

Perhaps I am being misunderstood at this point. And I don't think my advocacy matters. I was simply questioning the arguments made by some for potential or actual arguments against the merger. If someone is undecided on this topic, he or she might look to others for their reasons why a merger is a
good or bad idea. So, the comparison of Tech's academic reputation to that of LSUS's, when the sample of Tech students used are those that leave Tech, is arguably flawed when a biased sample is used and no conclusions (or opinions) should be drawn from that sample. I would also question someone's argument about the difficulties of going (driving 70 miles each way) to school when gas is going to be $6/gallon when in fact there is zero evidence that gas will be that price anytime soon. I also question someone's argument against the merger because it will hurt students financially when we have done nothing to stop the 10% percent increase that was not the effect of a merger. And I am not "demonizing" anyone who would argue against the merger because they might lose their job; rather, that is what I would like to hear when forming my own opinion on the potential merger.

Maybe the emails from faculty were not intended to sway other faculty opinions. If not, then, they shouldn't be sent out to everyone (in my opinion).

Cheers.

Subject: RE: Talking points against the merger

I have a couple questions with respect to Dr. Lucas's "Five Talking Points," specifically numbers 2 and 4. First, when forming an opinion of Tech's academic reputation, is this based on a sample of students that come to LSUS because they left Tech or is it based on a more representative sample?

With respect to number 4, it seems to me that there was no argument when we "decided" to increase the tuition of our students (10% increase), when it was allowed by the legislature. So why should we care now if students pay a higher tuition because they will be Tech students?

Perhaps I am misunderstanding the "(1)logical, (2)to the point, (3)positive, (4) well researched, and, worst of all (5)sensible points" made, but just as someone else argued that students will have to pay $6 per gallon of gasoline to travel 140 miles round trip, I question these arguments and wonder if there are more self-interested (not the same as selfish) reasons for not wanting the merger. I'll be the first. I'm worried that I might lose my job.

If we have to pay $6/gallon of gas anytime soon, we will have bigger problems than this merger.
Your comments are much appreciated, however I am not sure of your advocacy. Let me hit them line-by-line:

1. You are absolutely correct. If I may, as a former instructor at Tech, I can attest to the quality of the education and the instruction there. It is a good school. Keep in mind that some of the students we get from Tech may not have had education as their priority in the first place. I'm sure if we did an analysis of transcripts we would find that there is a common reason why students leave Tech to come to LSUS. In all honesty, I don't think we will win any arguments, nor any friends by attacking Tech and claiming academic superiority over them. We are an outstanding school, and they are an outstanding school.

2. Why should we care about a tuition increase? We should! Perhaps the legislature does not. I think any negative impact on our students is something we have a responsibility to care for. Additionally, as the resident debate person, this and others like it, is the argument that we should be focusing on. My concern about this major is not just that tuition will go up, but students will be disenfranchised. The mother who takes a class while her child is in school will not be able to spend two and a half hours driving to Ruston and back. The airman on base who is finishing a degree while he is stationed at Barksdale will not be able to take that much time off to get the degree he/she wants. The 20+ Shreveport/Bossier students who are on our debate team (who are leading in the national standings right now, again) will no longer have that educational opportunity. Our champion Division 3 baseball and basketball teams will no longer exist, robbing students of those opportunities. So, in short, the potential loss to OUR students SHOULD be the highest concern.

3. As to the question that there are more self-interested reasons for not wanting the merger... You know what? People may lose their jobs in all of this and reasonably, that may be the number one concern of some. In all honesty, I think that it is unfair to demonize any dissent on those grounds alone. In fact, it is my understanding that there is demonization going on across the board and I would ask that it would stop. Back to my point, I would have to remind all of us that higher education is not created to give us jobs. Its purpose is to give education opportunities which in turn benefit communities. That is why the number one concern for ALL of us should be what happens to, not only our students, but those who want to get an education 10, 20, 50 years down the line. Shreveport/Bossier is a metropolis of 430,000 people. Any study would show that it is being seriously underserved by higher education. We have an outstanding faculty who do care, yet they have had half their brains tied behind their back due to the failed policies of the last several decades. So, SOMETHING must change, but it must be the RIGHT change.

In summary, Tech is a great school, but this merger should not be about us or their academics... It should be about OUR students, now and in the future.
Thank you for your consideration,

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Five reasons why they will not be part of the LSU/UL System/politically driven flawed agenda.

-----Original Message-----

From: Lucas, Cran
Sent: Monday, March 05, 2012 8:27 AM
To: Hogue, Wayne; Smolinski, Carl; DL-Faculty
Subject: Talking points against the merger

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To Whom It May Concern:

It is exciting to see the community efforts on behalf of LSUS and its future evolution. Our almost fifty-year struggle to establish public higher education in the Shreveport-Bossier communities appears to be at a pivotal point. While I welcome the opportunity for expanded local graduate, post graduate and undergraduate degrees for our citizens, I cannot help but hope our local and state political leadership will consider the long-term opportunities that are available through the expansion of LSUS rather than a merger with LA Tech.

As a recently retired Vice Chancellor of University Development, I worked closely with the administrative leadership at LSUS, the political leadership of NW Louisiana, over 300 LSUS Foundation members and annual community donors, over 13,000 LSUS Alumni, and the business leaders of Shreveport-Bossier City. It is my belief that the majority of these individuals believe in the future of LSUS, are proud to be part of the great LSU System, and understand the significant and important role LSUS must play in future economic and cultural expansion for our local community. Not unrelated to this belief is the important role a local university must play as a supporting institution for LSU Shreveport Health System and medical and technical research facilities.

It is my belief that these goals can be accomplished quickly, efficiently and with little cost with the simple acceptance by the Board of Regents for the recommended mission change of LSUS, allowing the great university it has become to serve the community it was created for. LSUS and LSU Shreveport Health System exist under the same system, in the same community, and can combine many programs in addition to existing academic partnerships. It is also my belief that the LSU System recognizes these
opportunities and, in recognition of the tremendous community outpouring of support for expanded programs, will work with both LSU Shreveport administrations to help achieve future growth, expanded research opportunities, and future greatness for our community.

While I have great admiration for LA Tech and its long, distinguished legacy, it is based in Ruston, LA and will continue to have the best interest of Ruston as its guiding core. The community of Ruston has much to lose if that changes. It does not appear that our community has much to gain by begging the administration of LA Tech for programs in lieu of the administration of LSU. It would not appear feasible to imagine the LSU System, who is not in favor of the proposed merger with LA Tech, to willingly work with them in future research proposals. Higher education has strict guidelines for research asset revenues which would be challenging for LSU to share with another system. We are the only community in Louisiana with a medical school, research facility, and university, all under the same system. The opportunities are endless for Shreveport/Bossier City if we can combine resources and overcome political restraints. I do not believe that will happen with a highly contested merger between systems and communities. Someone always loses.

Another major consideration to consider is the many problems facing a merger between LSUS and LA Tech in terms of admission standards, tuition costs, academic schedules, athletic programs, faculty expectations, -- to name just a few. While compromise will bring eventual solutions, decisions will not be easy, soon or beneficial to all concerned. The administrative solution recommended by the study is not optimistic for LSUS faculty or students as assurances have been given to LA Tech that they will have administrative authority. Given the current state resources, it is difficult to believe that financial allocations to a proposed merger will be forthcoming, leaving few options but elimination of faculty and staff in Shreveport. Presentation of this proposed merger to LA Tech and Ruston has highlighted the outstanding opportunity this brings to LA Tech and Ruston as the governing institution.

The most relevant idea to come from the recent study is the crucial need to bring needed academic programs to LSUS, to untie the restrictions placed on the university for the past forty plus years, and allow LSUS to have the freedom to offer the academic programs needed for economic growth as is currently given to our two outstanding community colleges. Many are hopeful that the political bodies making decisions about LSUS will recognize the relatively simple, affordable, and desirable solution before us: change the mission of LSUS and allow it to become a great research-based university designed not just to provide expanded academic programs, but also become the supporting arm of the LSU Shreveport Medical School. This is an opportunity few cities in the United States have and no others in Louisiana. We truly can become the next great city of the South if we recognize the great potential before us and the more desirable and simple political solution of expanding the mission of LSUS. LSUS has proven its ability to do great things with limited resources; it deserves the chance to grow and be all that it can be.

Glenda Erwin

Vice Chancellor Emeritus

LSUS University Development, Retired
Dear colleagues,

First, I want to thank the Faculty Senate for putting together last night's forum. Though it may not have been the most pleasant event, I believe it was very educational. I also believe that the questions were of the highest caliber. As I mentioned last night, not a single student who asked a question complained about tuition increases, but focused on their education. Not a single faculty member whined about their salaries, but begged for help to make LSUS better. I would also like to applaud Drs. Marsala and Sisson for their representation on the committee. From there, not too many panel members deserve much applause.

First, it seems clear that most of the panelists were not interested in helping LSU Shreveport. In fact, and someone please correct me if I'm wrong in my assessment, I walked away with the impression that we are on our own. It is disheartening to get that message from the board of regents, but it is even more so when it comes from those who are supposed to fight the good fight for the 400,000 people who live in our metropolitan area. Additionally, after talking with several students who were there, it was brought up that the panelists did not really answer any questions. For example, the legislators mentioned that we must begin to compete. I think it was made clear that several specific regulations have handcuffed the ability to do so. So, I asked for them to give us some ideas for what bills or actions they could actually introduce, or do now, that could help take the shackles of bondage off this campus. At best they told us to contact the governor and put pressure on the Board of Regents. But, I ask each of you, shouldn't THEY BE DOING THAT? Prior to that question, Representative Carmody pined that they CAN do this and CAN do that… but the end result would be that they would just go down in flames… 1) If going down in flames prevents right action, they why is he in Baton Rouge? 2) How did a metropolis of 20,000 people garner all the power (LTU) they have with a smaller delegation? Pleading incompetence or fear of failure should not be an option for any state legislator.

Still, there are three nuggets to consider from this forum. First, I was pleased to see Senator Barrow Peacock ( newcomers) express some shock at discovering the shackles that bind us. There may be hope in working with him to attempt some kind of legislative pressure/change. Second, as we were concerned about plans to merge with Louisiana Tech just 24 hours ago, the legislators seemed less interested or concerned and there clearly was opposition to the idea yesterday. In fact, discussion of that issue was rare and offered only at the beginning relegating Dr. Rozeman to spectator status for the rest of the night. That does not mean any should drop their guard. Finally, one of our legislators brought up a new option in the equation. Go private. Perhaps a quasi-private idea could be a middle ground. We have land that is rich in mineral resources. We are already the cheapest 4-year public school in the
state. In a climate where the state is looking to save money and one of the governor’s options is to sell prisons, we might encourage the Committee of 100 to commission a new study to analyze that idea. At least then, we can shake off the Board of Regents and be able to build a university that will compete. Knowing the quality of people we have on this campus, if you let us, we will do more than just compete.

In closing, I appreciate your allowing me to offer my two cents. I think we can all agree that the status quo is unsustainable and perhaps bold action is what we must have to succeed. I think we can also agree that last night’s forum showed us that bold action is not going to come from our area legislators. It must come from within. I encourage everyone to put what we can on the table. I think that goes to the smallest idea of how to better run our classrooms, to new program development (I would love to collaborate with any department on campus) to the boldest ideas for how to break the chains that bind us. Eva Klein was correct in stating that colleges and universities are made up of some of the most brilliant academic minds. Let’s put all else aside and offer up those minds to our administration and fix these problems ourselves.