Highlights

Background on the special Senate meeting of January 19, 2005

a. Special meeting of the FSEC, January 15, 2005; the Senate must discuss the award of tenure to Chancellor O’Keefe, before the LSU Board of Supervisors ratifies it on January 20.
b. Drafting of Senate Resolution 05-06.
c. FSEC’s request for a call of the special meeting of the Senate.
d. President Advokat’s conditional call of the special meeting.

Special Meeting of the LSU Faculty Senate, January 19, 2005

1. Reading of Resolution 05-06, “Integrity in the Tenure Process (http://senate01.lib.lsu.edu/facsen; click on “Resolutions”). It referred to Senate Resolution 99-05 (“Statement of Principle for Faculty Appointments for Administrators,” adopted October 1, 1998), in which the Senate endorsed the principle that LSU administrators proposed for professorial appointments who do not have a record of accomplishment in teaching, research, and service that is commensurate with their proposed rank and tenure status shall not be given such professorial appointments. Resolution 05-06 then declared (among other things):

   “[N]o serious claim can be made consistent with PS-36 that Chancellor Sean O’Keefe’s scholarly record would warrant a tenured appointment at the rank of full professor at LSU or any other major research university....”

   The resolution concluded by urging Chancellor O’Keefe to decline an appointment to full professor with tenure “for the sake of maintaining the academic integrity of the University and its appointment and tenure processes.”

2. Review of Senate Resolution Resolution 99-04 (“Reviewing Faculty Appointments for Administrators,” adopted October 1, 1998), in which the Senate gave its permission to the FSEC to (a) [attempt to] review decisions involving proposed faculty appointments for administrators; (b) report the results of the review and make recommendations to the Provost and the Faculty Senate prior to any final decisions on professorial appointments for administrators; and (c) certify to the Senate that the rank, tenure status, and procedures followed are appropriate and consistent with the high standards set by PS-36.

3. Motion to go into closed session: The Senate Bylaws declare: “The Senate reserves the right, upon majority vote, to go into closed session if sensitive or personal items are to be discussed, but no final action can be taken in closed session.” Motion defeated, 23-25.

4. The repeated claim that Mr. O’Keefe had a tenured professorship at Syracuse.

5. Syracuse Dean Emeritus Palmer’s Jan. 18 statement that Mr. O’Keefe had been a “professor of practice,” not tenured or tenure-track.

6. Mr. O’Keefe’s statement that he had an indefinite appointment.

7. Current Syracuse Associate Dean not at liberty, on January 19, to confirm Mr. O’Keefe’s tenure status.

8. Another report that Mr. O’Keefe did not have tenure at Syracuse.


10. Clarification and analysis of the 13 items listed as publications: 3 book chapters or probable book chapters, 2 articles in Naval Institute Press, 2 speeches in Vital Speeches of the Day, 3 op-ed pieces in newspapers, and 3 cases and probable cases.

11. The vote would be 3-0 against granting tenure in the Accounting Department.

12. Whether or not the letter of the selection and tenure process was followed, the spirit was not.

13. Resolution 05-06 does not ask LSU to withdraw its offer to Mr. O’Keefe.

14. The Provost’s Advisory Committee’s participation in this sham.

15. In any tenure decision, we have a weighty obligation to two major constituencies: to our colleagues at LSU, and to the whole of the academic world; transferability of tenure.

16. LSU System President William Jenkins’ “other forms of tenure.”
17. Are Mr. O’Keefe’s [academic] accomplishments “exceptional”?
18. The letter of the procedures in PS-36 was followed exactly.
19. The Public Administration Institute faculty were consulted.
20. Tenure cases in the PAI should not be judged by standards used in other departments.
21. The PAI has five faculty members; this case was handled like other tenure cases, except for speed; no pressure from administration.
22. Mr. O’Keefe would be the first and only professor in the PAI without a Ph.D.
23. Only one faculty member eligible to vote on tenure saw the file by Dec. 16, 2004.
24. Dean Sumichrast had not read any of Mr. O’Keefe’s publications.
25. Without reading the publications, and with 50% of the eligible voting faculty out of town, how could “exceptional accomplishments” be confirmed?
26. Mr. O’Keefe’s accomplishments are influential; the PAI faculty have not complained.
27. On the minimum number of eligible voting faculty to grant tenure.
28. Adding eligible voting faculty, consulting college P&T committee? Not necessary if there are exceptional contributions.
29. Could the chancellor participate in tenure decisions if he did not have tenure?
30. Mr. O’Keefe’s public service (the second half of the 4th qualification for a professorship) is strong; and in the last 34 years, other LSU professors have lacked Ph.D.’s.
31. Motion to strike last sentence of Resolution 05-06 (urging Mr. O’Keefe to decline tenure) considered.
32. The last sentence of 05-06 does not overturn any department’s decision.
33. Certain statements in the fifth “whereas” are gratuitously negative.
34. SR 05-06 will be perceived as an attack on Mr. O’Keefe; all reference to him should be removed.
35. Striking last sentence eviscerates the resolution; service through civic duties not important for tenure.
36. Lack of Ph.D. a red herring; PS-36 emphasizes rigorous review of creative, scholarly work.
37. Mr. O’Keefe’s opportunity to support standards and capture political capital with faculty.
38. Amendment to motion (31 above) to strike last sentence, by striking “whereas’s” 5 and 6 (alleging a weak scholarly record), as well.
39. These amendments are preempting what was an illuminating discussion of the resolution
40. The Chancellor’s office holds sway not only over the PAI, but over the entire university.
41. SR 05-06 criticizes the wrong person; it should criticize the procedure and System President Jenkins.
42. If we strike all references to Mr. O’Keefe from SR 05-06, we are left with a repeat of SR 99-05.
43. Defeat of motion (38) to amend motion (31) to strike last sentence.
44. Defeat of motion (31) to strike last sentence.
45. Motion to strike the fifth “whereas”; considered:
46. Motion to amend motion (45) to strike 5th “whereas,” by replacing it with “Whereas the claim … is questionable”:
47. Discussion of the alternative word “questionable”; why not then say why the qualifications are questionable?
48. Defeat of motion (46) to amend motion (45) to strike fifth “whereas.
49. All amendments so far would substantially change intent of resolution; is that allowed?
50. Adoption of motion to strike the fifth “whereas.”
51. Were outside letters solicited? Is two eligible voting faculty a sufficient number?
52. Outside letters from professors of unspecified ranks.
53. Prof. Richardson’s statement that the PAI would want Mr. O’Keefe even after he is no longer Chancellor.
54. Was a tenured professorship part of the hiring package?
55. How many eligible faculty voted on the offer of tenure, and when did they vote?
56. Why did the tenure decision have to be rushed on Dec. 15-16, 2004, if tenure won’t be approved until Jan. 20-21, 2005?
57. This resolution is counterproductive; the department’s and the dean’s wishes should be respected
58. Prof. Richardson’s repeated statements that the PAI would offer Mr. O’Keefe tenure even if he were not coming here as Chancellor
55. John Hamilton, Ph.D., hired as tenured Dean of Manship School, with two eligible voting faculty, no prior tenure, little scholarly record, and no outside review; since then, he’s published 4 books:
56. Some departments need practitioners as well as scholars.
57. If faculty were hurried, they were grown-ups, and could say so.
58. The Senate should not act as a check on, or interpose itself in this weak, ineffective manner into, the appointment process
59. The administration dismissed faculty warnings in September 2004 against openly soliciting chancellor candidates whose records would not merit tenure.
60. Vote on Resolution 05-06, asking Mr. O’Keefe to decline the offer of tenure: 18-25 (42%-58%); fails.
Background on the special Senate meeting of January 19, 2005

Special meeting of the FSEC, January 15, 2005; the Senate must discuss the award of tenure to Chancellor O’Keefe, before the LSU Board of Supervisors ratifies it on January 20: Several members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee had concerns about the process by which Chancellor-elect Sean O’Keefe was being considered for a full professorship with tenure. Around January 14, 2005 it came to the attention of Senate Vice-President Pierce and Secretary Delzell that the LSU Board of Supervisors was planning, on January 20-21, to ratify the details of the contract for Mr. O’Keefe as new Chancellor, presumably including tenure. The next regular meeting of the Faculty Senate was not scheduled to occur until January 24, and Vice-President Pierce and Secretary Delzell believed it appropriate to arrange a special meeting of the Faculty Senate to provide the senators the opportunity to discuss the implications of such an award for the tenure system at LSU, and to arrange the special meeting some time before January 20, but with as much advance notice as possible; the date of January 19 therefore seemed to be the best possible date for such a Senate meeting. To arrange such a Senate meeting, it seemed necessary and useful for the FSEC to hold a special meeting as soon as possible—viz., January 15. On the morning of January 15, Pierce and Delzell proposed to all members of the FSEC that the committee hold a special meeting that afternoon. Professor McGehee was out of town that weekend and therefore unable to attend. Senate President Advokat had other plans for that day; but she agreed to broadcast to the senators any announcement that the five available members of the FSEC arrived at that afternoon.

Drafting of Senate Resolution 05-06: At the January 15 meeting, the FSEC drafted Senate Resolution 05-06, “Integrity in the Tenure Process” (http://senate01.lib.lsu.edu/facsen; click on “Resolutions”), that urged Chancellor-elect O’Keefe to decline an appointment to full professor with tenure for the sake of maintaining the academic integrity of the University and its appointment and tenure processes.

FSEC’s request for a call of the special meeting of the Senate: Near the end of the January 15 FSEC meeting, and with the support of the five committee members in attendance, the FSEC sent an email to President Advokat (with the above resolution attached), asking her to call a special meeting of the Senate for 3:00 p.m., January 19; a location for such a meeting would be determined on January 17, when LSU offices were to re-open. The FSEC also asked President Advokat to attach the above resolution to her broadcast to all senators, and refer the senators to the Senate By-Laws, Art. I, 5: “The Faculty Senate representative shall post the agenda of special meetings in all departments within his or her college or school.” The next day, Vice-President Pierce also sent to President Advokat a pdf file containing not only Senate Resolution 05-06, but also Resolutions 99-04 and 99-05, and the 1998 Report of the Commission on the Status of Academic Ranks, to be broadcast to all senators, and offered to send the broadcast herself if President Advokat found that she was too busy. The Senate Constitution states: “Special meetings of the Faculty Senate may be called at any time by the President of the Senate and shall be called by the President upon the written request of 20 members of the Senate.”

President Advokat’s conditional call of the special meeting: President Advokat declined the FSEC’s request to call a special meeting of the Senate immediately, and instead sent an email to all senators on January 16, stating:
“… I urge every Senator: Please read the attached Resolution (supporting documents are also included), make every effort to poll your respective faculties, and let me know by e-mail if you want to meet to consider this Resolution. If I receive 20 requests, by Tuesday, Jan. 18th, 5:00 pm, I will immediately call a meeting for Wednesday afternoon, Jan. 19th, 3 pm….”

By noon on January 18, President Advokat received 20 requests. Around 3:00 P.M., she broadcast a message to the senators, saying that the special meeting of the Senate would, indeed, be held on January 19 (in Room A101, Life Sciences Annex); and Assistant Vice Chancellor Jeannine Kahn (at the request of Secretary Delzell) broadcast a similar announcement to all LSU faculty (complying with the Senate Bylaws, Art. I, 5, quoted above).