HIGHLIGHTS FROM FACULTY SENATE MEETING
April 9, 1996

President's Report

Announced that colleges should be holding elections to replace outgoing senators
Reported on status of Program Review Proposal and nominations for the Program Review Council
Announced appointments to the ad hoc committee on pass/fail and advising students
Presented a legislative update with emphasis on bills related to higher education
Reported on signing of contract to build Tiger Athletic Foundation Golf Course

Election Results

President—John Collier (Chemical Engineering)
Vice President—Jerry Draayer (Physics and Astronomy)
Secretary—David England (Curriculum and Instruction)
FSEC Members at Large—Mike Cherry (Physics and Astronomy) and Wade Dorman (English)

Reports

Jim Catano and Betsy Garrison presented a report from the Conference of Louisiana Colleges and Universities

Old Business

Mike Cherry gave an update on activities of ASH committee regarding policy on drop/withdraw

New Business

Senate received the most recent revision of PS-36. Final vote to be held in May.
A proposed policy statement on student evaluation of instruction was introduced.
Senate received the proposed procedures for dealing with financial exigency.
At the March meeting, the Senate approved a Program Review Proposal in response to recommendations in the SACS reaccreditation report. This review process is to be overseen by a Program Review Council consisting of 15 senior faculty appointed by the Provost from a slate of names provided by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) and other areas such as the Graduate Council. The appointees are to be distributed among the broad disciplinary areas of (1) physical sciences and engineering, (2) life sciences, (3) social sciences, and (4) arts and humanities. President Strain stated that the FSEC must submit a list of at least 30 names to the Provost, from which a majority of the Council members will be drawn. Senators interested in being involved in this Council should contact a member of the FSEC.

At the January Senate meeting, a resolution from the ad hoc committee to look at policies on pass/fail and advising students. The committee has now been organized and given its charge. It is chaired by Elva Bourgeois (Human Ecology) and also includes Mike Cherry (Physics), Armando Corripio (Chemical Engineering), Greg Hussey (Physics), Joy Irwin (Business), Carruth McGhee (Mathematics), Robert Doolos (Records & Registration) and Lisa Harris (Admissions) ex officio, and a non-voting student member, Seth Hopkins. A report from this committee should be available at the end of this year or early in the fall.

President Strain gave the Senate a legislative update. The single-board constitutional amendment bill was successfully reported out of the Senate Education Committee more than a week ago. Strain testified before that committee in support of the bill. It was supposed to come before the whole Senate on March 5, but it did not. The bill to constitutionally protect higher education funding was also successfully reported out of committee after it was amended to retain a requirement of two thirds vote of both House and Senate before any cuts could be made to K-12 funding. This amendment provided greater protection to the K-12 Minimum Foundation funding. As a result, there was little opposition and chances of final passage looked good. Unfortunately, the Governor decided on March 6 to pull all four of the administration-sponsored bills on higher education and BESE. Governor Foster decided to pull the higher education bills because it appeared that some support was lost due to vote trading on the gambling issue. Therefore, rather than have the bills voted down on the floor of the Senate, the administration pulled the bills in hopes of re-introducing them later. Current speculation is that there will be an additional special session just for educational issues. President Strain also noted that there will be some smaller version of the Higher Education Transition Team that will continue to work and that he will continue to meet with that group. He promised to do what he could in that area and keep the Senate up to date as much as possible.

President Strain also reported that he had attended a press conference earlier in the day at the Athletic Department where the official signing of the contract to build and operate the new Tiger Athletic Foundation Golf Course was announced. The golf course is scheduled to be located on what is known as the Woodstock Plantation, about 7-1/2 miles south of LSU on Nicholson Drive. The 27 hole golf course will be called 'The University Club' and will provide a world-class facility as the official golf course for the LSU men's and women's golf teams. The plan is to have to first 18 holes open in the fall of '97, with an additional 9 holes added in 12 months. The contractor is from South Carolina and has built a similar facility for the University of South Carolina. Strain noted that the timing of this new golf course contract will probably impact the wrong image to some that there is 'university money being spent elsewhere.' However, the golf course is being constructed and operated at no cost to the university and without any state funds. The cost of constructing just the golf course is somewhere around $6.5-7 million. The Tiger Athletic Foundation also hopes to eventually add tennis courts, a pool and perhaps even a club house with a social membership. The idea is to have, in essence, a country club facility at a discount rate. To obtain a membership to 'The University Club', one must first join the Tiger Athletic Foundation and then the T.A.F.'s faculty, staff and student members will receive a discounted rate that will be below what other country clubs in the area currently charge. President Strain said that this new facility is expected to generate several hundred thousand dollars for T.A.F. which, in turn, will be plowed back into athletics and given to academic affairs. One of the current benefits which Academic Affairs receives from the T.A.F. is funding for teaching awards for each of the undergraduate colleges on campus.

President Strain then reminded everyone of the annual Faculty Council Meeting set for 3:30 pm on April 15th at the Atchafalaya Room. He encouraged the Senators to participate.

Elections

Senate elections were held simultaneously with the President's report. The nominating committee distributed and counted ballots for all offices. President Strain called for additional nominations for the office of President. There were no additional nominations from the floor. The two candidates, Ken Paxton (Agricultural Economics & Agribusiness) and John Collier (Chemical Engineering) made brief presentations to the Senate. John Collier was elected.

Nominations were solicited for the office of Vice President. Senator John Collier nominated Ken Paxton. A motion was made to close nominations. The motion was seconded and passed. Candidates for Vice President were invited to make comments to the Senate. Dan Yarnissell (Mechanical Engineering) and Jerry Drayer (Physics and Astronomy) made brief statements to the Senate. Jerry Drayer was elected.

President Strain asked for additional nominations from the floor for the office of Secretary. No additional nominations were forthcoming and the nominations were closed. David England (Curriculum & Instruction) and Ralph Kinney (Electrical Engineering) each briefly addressed the Senate. David England was elected.

Additional nominations were requested for members at large on the FSEC. No additional nominations were offered and the nominations were closed. The candidates, Mike Cherry (Physics and Astronomy), Wade Dorman (English), Kewi Tang (Information Systems & Decision Sciences), and Charles Tolbert (Sociology) each made brief presentations to the Senate. President Strain explained that two members were to be elected and a third member would be elected from new Senators next year. Mike Cherry and Wade Dorman were elected.

The Senate filled a vacancy on the Budget Committee by election. Nominees for the position were Nick Apostolou (Accounting) and Barbara Wittkopf (Library). Barbara Wittkopf was elected.
The next election was for representatives to the Conference of Louisiana Colleges and Universities. The FSEC nominated George Strain and John Collier the newly elected President of the Senate. Additional nominations were solicited and none were offered. Strain and Collier were elected by acclamation.

Three vacancies on the Grievance Committee were filled by election. Nominees for these positions were Fereydoon Aghazadeh (Industrial Engineering), Nathan Bennett (Management), Armando Corripio (Chemical Engineering), Bob McMullen (Mass Communications), Roger Stockbauer (Physics) and Gail Sutherland (Religion). Additional nominations were called for and none offered. Those elected were: Bob McMullen, Roger Stockbauer, and Gail Sutherland.

The Senate also elected four members to the Committee on Committees. Nominees for the positions were: Zaki Bassiouni (Petroleum Engr), Bonnie Belleau (Human Ecology), Kevin Carmean (Zoology), Marc McDill (Forestry), Ed Shihadeh (Sociology), R. A. Valverde (Plant Path) and Barbara Wittkopf (Library). President Strain called for additional nominations and none were offered. Those elected were: Bonnie Belleau, Kevin Carmean, Marc McDill, and Barbara Wittkopf.

Reports

Jim Catano and Betsy Garrison, representatives to the Council of Louisiana Colleges and Universities (CLCU) presented a report from the conference. The CLCU report was presented in three components: (1) Notes from various meetings, responses, and attitudes of attendees; (2) A handout summarizing issues and ideas presented during the conference; and (3) A compendium of materials distributed at the conference. The conference was attended by both administrators and faculty members from colleges and universities throughout the state.

The CLCU report identified six major issues and/or ideas discussed at the conference. First was the issue of compatibility. Included in this item were the notions that it is difficult to compare across universities and the need to develop proactive assessment measures. Accountability was also a major issue discussed at the conference. Primary points of discussion of this issue included a "faculty productivity" model and the benefits of a balance among research, teaching, and service. The primary student issues addressed included discussions of problems associated with viewing students as customers and universities as businesses. Also discussed as a student issue was the costs/benefits of course scheduling changes. Future planning issues were discussed in three components: LSU System issues; infrastructure issues; and the mission of future planning. Included in the LSU system issues was the articulation agreements with community colleges. Infrastructure issues included a discussion of costs/benefits of technology, especially the distance learning technology. Finally, the discussion of the mission of higher education focused on the notion of the intrinsic value of higher education. The full report is available in the Senate office.

Old Business:

Mike Cherry gave a brief update on the activities of the ASH Committee. Cherry indicated that he hoped to have a revised recommendation to the Senate by the May meeting regarding proposed changes in the rules for dropping and withdrawing from courses. He said that he believed the ASH Committee would be suggesting something very similar to last time. The earlier recommendation was to move the final dates for withdrawing from courses from the 11th week to the 5th week. The revised recommendation will include a number of detail changes. Cherry noted that the issue receiving the most criticism was the recommendation that when students wish to withdraw from multiple courses they must first talk to an advisor. Cherry said that there has been a lot of discussion on this point with the Provost, Assoc. Vice Chancellor Laura Lindsay, as well as a number of Deans and Associate Deans. Discussions will continue with this group in an attempt to resolve some of the issues.

New Business

The first item of new business was the latest revision of PS-36 (Appointment, Promotion, Tenure) which had been mailed to the Senators prior to the meeting for their review. Senator Ralph Kinney moved to approve the document. President Strain emphasized the importance of this document and asked that the Senators make sure they communicate it to their colleagues and those they represent. Stain noted that this document had come before the Senate last fall and this version incorporates feedback from the Senate’s comments as well as those of other groups on campus. Strain encouraged Senators to read the document closely and be prepared to vote next month.

The second item of new business was the proposed policy statement on Student Evaluation of Instruction, prepared by an ad hoc committee chaired by President Strain. Members from both the Faculty Senate and Graduate Council were represented on this committee. This proposed policy statement came in response to recommendations from the SACS reaccreditation review mandating student evaluation of instruction in all undergraduate and graduate courses. Of particular concern was the fact that this was not always being done in the graduate courses. Strain indicated that the committee was careful to maintain confidentiality of the evaluation process. In single student courses, whether research credits, special topics, studio, or any other situation where confidentiality could not be maintained, student evaluation of instruction would not be required, but could be done on a voluntary basis. The proposed policy statement also made the point that the committee encouraged the use of multiple measures in evaluation and instruction, however student evaluation of instruction should be the minimum requirement. President Strain commented that this policy statement will be used as both an evaluation instrument in terms of what’s needed for annual performance as well as something possibly more proactive to help the faculty improve their instruction. Senator deCaro moved the adoption of the proposal. The motion was seconded and will be considered for a vote at the May meeting. The floor was opened for discussion of the proposal.
Senator Jeff Moore responded that he had attended a National Seminar on Student Evaluation and that the experts have suggested that universities use a different instrument for the overall evaluation of teaching performance and another basically as a learning instrument for the faculty to improve their teaching skills, diagnostically. He emphasized that it should not be the same instrument for both because the sets of questions are going to get ‘contaminated’ and the results will not be a very good measure of either one. Moore raised additional questions/reservations about the instrument to be used in the evaluation and using the results of one instrument for two purposes.

President Strain responded that in the proposed policy statement, the development of the evaluation instrument is left up to the individual units and that nothing stated requires it to be a numerical score, it can be qualitative rather than quantitative. Strain acknowledged that using one instrument for both assessment for performance evaluations, etc. as well as to enhance teaching quality may be problematic. However, in order to comply with the SACS requirement, LSU must have some type of student evaluation instrument.

Senator Kinney spoke in support of Moore’s position. Kinney suggested that the Senate appoint an ad hoc committee to look into the matter. Moore remarked that Kansas State University has been working on a fiscal analysis of student evaluations for the last 25 years and possesses the know how to design such an instrument and also how to check the scientific validity of such an instrument against what it measures. He stated that he too concurs with Senator Kinney’s suggestion that the Faculty Senate should at least appoint a committee that would look into this sort of thing and give some guidance. Moore said that rather than every department on campus trying to find such information, it would be more useful for the Faculty Senate to form a committee to do something to centralize these efforts.

The last item of new business was the document entitled Proposed Procedures for Dealing With Financial Exigency. Copies were available on the table for the Senators to review. President Strain explained that the process for development of this document began on recommendation of the FSEC nearly a year ago, based on a Senate document developed more than a year before that. The committee responsible for drafting the document consisted of Dan Fogel as chair, Erwin Poliakoff, John Collier, George Strain, Loren Scott as Department Head, and Karl Roeder as Dean. The proposed procedures express, in general terms, how the University would deal with deciding if it was necessary to declare financial exigency and then how we would proceed if that decision was made. President Strain noted that there isn’t any likelihood that we will have to face a financial crisis of this magnitude at any time in the foreseeable future, but feel that it is wise to be prepared. The process is consistent with AAUP guidelines and is overseen by a Steering committee made up with a majority of members from the faculty. This Steering Committee would have the responsibility of handling financial exigency.

President Strain described and explained flow charts in the document. The first flow chart shows how the University goes through the process of deciding whether or not it is really necessary to declare financial exigency. The second flow chart would show how it is implemented. The university already maintains some databases and hopes to be establishing other databases so that the information necessary for making such decisions will be available and on hand. President Strain noted that the cyclic programmatic review that’s going to be done will provide some of this information. Senator Collier moved to approve the financial exigency document. The motion was seconded and President Strain asked if there was additional discussion.

Strain stated that the process described in Part II of the report calls for looking at all the programs on campus and classifying the academic degree programs into one of three categories. The first category would consist of those programs essential to maintaining core undergraduate education in the liberal arts and sciences and in fields critical to the economic interests of the state; strong graduate and professional programs with national and international visibility; and programs essential to maintaining the University’s mission as a Land-Grant and Sea-Grant institution. The second category would include those programs that fall outside of Category One but are essential for the support of programs in Category One. The last category would be comprised of all other programs, subclassified as follows: Programs with national reputations for excellence; Programs that generate total revenues substantially in excess of total expenditures; Programs that are unique in the state and region; and Other Programs.

Strain noted that this ranking simply provides a framework with which to try to look at making decisions on where cuts could be made. While it is almost impossible to lay out ahead of time exactly how the whole process will work, the FSEC attempted to anticipate as much as possible how it would be handled and to ensure faculty involvement to the point of majority voting on the steering committee. The document will be on the floor for discussion and vote at the May meeting.

President Strain reminded the Senators that the next meeting would be held at the Lod Cook Alumni Center. There will be a reception following it to honor those Senators whose terms were expiring. He also noted that Billie Collier would be leaving the Executive Committee as past president. The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Kenneth W. Paxton
Secretary