Highlights from Faculty Senate Meeting, December 3, 2001

Comments from Executive Vice-Chancellor and Provost Fogel:
• Our latest data on the six-year graduation rate at LSU is 57.8%.
• The Provost has asked Kevin Smith, Dean of the Graduate School, to respond to FS resolution 01-13, “Development of policies on graduate faculty.”
• Regarding the IT initiative, discussions with five external consultants have included reviewing 45 proposals from faculty regarding hiring recommendations. LSU will run a full-page ad in the Chronicle announcing the IT initiative and related job openings.
• With this year’s raises, LSU has gained considerable ground in faculty salaries relative to those at peer institutions.

President’s Report:
• SGA will be sending to the Senate suggestions for handling excused health absences.
• Service organization reviews will be included in the SACS assessment.
• The Task Force for the IT Master Plan has completed its work and will send its report to various campus committees addressing computing at LSU.
• Copies of the revised PS-36 and PM-35 were distributed.

Presentation by Teresa Summers, chair, Admission, Standards, and Honors (ASH):
In fall 2002, ASH plans to recommend to the Senate the next changes in LSU admission standards to become effective, if approved, in Fall 2005. The most recent changes become effective this fall at which time ASH will study their impact. Prof. Summers discussed factors that influence how admission policies are set.

Discussion of PS-36:
Mary Lou Cutrera, chair of Ad Hoc Committee of Instructors on PS-36, gave a preliminary report (posted on the PS-36 website) on faculty reactions to Chapter 3 which addresses the hiring, review, and promotion of instructors. Karl Roider, chair of the Committee to Revise PS-36, led a discussion of Chapter 2 related to Ongoing Academic Review (Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty). Discussion centered around three general areas: Why is it important to revise the current PS-36? What would departments expend to conduct the labor-intensive post-tenure review system being proposed, and what would be gained? Would a revision of PS-36 constitute in a contractual change? Other questions and discussion dealt with specific points in the draft. President Kestner encouraged Senators to continue to email responses to the document to be posted at the web site. He will send regular updates of what has been added to the site. With neither old nor new business to attend to, Senators adjourned the meeting at 5:10 p.m. The next Faculty Senate Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 24, 2002.
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 3:09 p.m., following distribution of copies of PS-36. A quorum was present; proxies were announced. Minutes of the November 6 meeting were approved as distributed.

Comments from Executive Vice-Chancellor and Provost Fogel:
- Our latest data on the six-year graduation rate at LSU is 57.8%, up from 39.4% in 1987 and 53.7% in 1999. The increase from 1999 to 2000 may be the largest single jump LSU has experienced.
- Sarah Liggett will chair the Undergraduate Council.
- The Committee to Revise Policies to Review Administrators is being expanded to include student and Staff Senate representation.
- The Provost has asked Kevin Smith, Dean of the Graduate School, to respond to FS resolution 01-13, “Development of policies on graduate faculty,” which calls for the Dean and the Graduate Council to “develop and present to the Faculty Senate and the university community a detailed set of policies about graduate faculty status . . . regarding . . . its committee charge, composition, procedures, meeting schedule, reporting deadlines and evaluation criteria, and appeal process.”
- Regarding the IT initiative, discussions with five external consultants have included reviewing 45 proposals from faculty regarding hiring recommendations and focus areas. LSU will run a full-page ad in the Chronicle announcing the IT initiative and related job openings. Hires will be made in the areas of core information technology (computer science, computer engineering, and related disciplines); biological computing; material science; and information systems.
- With this year’s raises, LSU has gained considerable ground in faculty salaries relative to those at peer institutions. This gain has happened partly because salaries at peer institutions have nearly stalled. No peer institution had a raise rate in professorial salaries greater than LSU’s rate this fall. For example, the gap for full professors was decreased from 14% to between roughly 3 to 5%. With moderate faculty raises in the next few years, LSU should match the averages.
- “Dead week” will run from December 5 to December 9. Faculty should consult the catalog for protocols on which activities are permitted during this time.
- The Provost has seen good suggestions for revising PS-36 coming through emails and urges the Faculty Senate to approach the revision process in the same constructive manner used with other policy documents.

President’s Report:
- SGA will be sending to the Senate suggestions for handling excused health absences.
- Service Organization reviews will be included in the SACS assessment.
- The Task Force for the IT Master Plan has completed its work and will send its report to various campus committees addressing computing at LSU.
- Copies of the revised PS-36 and PM-35 were distributed. President Kestner noted that PM-35 has an unusual history since it is one of the few PMs in which faculty had very little input. The document was written at a time of great national interest in post-tenure review as an “accountability” measure. Now LSU faculty members must design a process for post-tenure review that works well for us.
Presentation by Teresa Summers, chair, Admission, Standards, and Honors (ASH):
In fall 2002, ASH plans to recommend to the Senate the next round of changes in LSU admission standards to become effective, if approved, in Fall 2005. The most recent changes become effective this fall at which time ASH will study their impact. Higher admission standards are intended to help students increase their chances of success as LSU works toward its goal of at least a 63% graduation rate by 2008.

Several factors influence how admission policies are set.
• ASH members believe that a strong academic program in high school is the most important factor in predicting student success at LSU. Other predictors are high school GPA, rank in high school class, and standardized test scores.
• Once at LSU, predictors of student success include achieving a 2.5 GPA after 60 hours in residence. This variable is significant because many students in good standing leave LSU after two or three years. The retention rate from the freshman to sophomore year is about 83% and from sophomore to junior about 72%, and then from junior to senior it drops to around 65%.
• LSU wants to increase the diversity of the student body.
• As ASH recommends increased standards, it becomes more important to move from mostly quantitative measures to a more comprehensive review of students’ ability to succeed.
• The Board of Regent earlier this year approved general admission standards for all Louisiana universities to be in place by fall 2005. LSU has the most rigorous standards under these guidelines which require completion of high school core courses (TOPS core) and a 3.0 on all high school course work or an ACT of 25 or certain high school graduation rank to be determined. The LSU standards which go into effect in fall 2002 are a GPA of 2.8, an ACT of 20, or rank in the top 15% of high school class combined with an SAT of 870 or an ACT of 18. A stipulation that students be eligible for university-level courses in mathematics was added on the Senate floor as an amendment.

As ASH considers increased standards for 2005, committee members will study the impact of the 2002 standards, the use of a student essay for applicants applying for scholarships, and the various influences mentioned above.

During a discussion following Prof. Summers’ presentation,
• Senator Michael Cherry asked why new standards would become effective in 2005 rather than 2004. Prof. Summers stressed the importance of reviewing the impact of 2002 standards before setting new ones and for studying the “math readiness” requirement.
• Senator Steve Harrison asked about the relationship between admission standards and class size. Prof. Summers noted that this is an ongoing discussion. Provost Fogel added that so far increasing standards have not decreased enrollment substantially. The solution in the long run may be a cap in enrollment, but that involves more than admission standards; it requires agreements with the Legislature about how LSU will be funded. According to the Provost, we want to see resources and enrollment brought into a better balance, and we want to see higher admission standards.
Senator Carruth McGehee asked what the trends are from 2001 to 2005 in the number of high school graduates. In correspondence after the meeting, Karen Denby explained that, “‘Measuring Up 2000,’ the web site of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, projects the percent change in the number of all high school graduates between 1999-2010 in Louisiana as -10.5% (vs. +9.5% in the US). Meanwhile, the SREB, in June 2001, projected a state population growth of 5% (from 2000 - 2010) but a 12% decline in public high school graduates (vs a 10% growth in the SREB).”

Senator Cherry suggested an alternate model with very high standards and guaranteed admission and with a set enrollment and admission of other students upon review to meet this target enrollment, a model he says would decouple the issues of admission standards and funding.

Prof. Summers indicated she would communicate the Senate’s comments to her Committee.

Discussion of PS-36:
Summary of concerns on Chapter 3 (Instructors) by Mary Lou Cutrera, chair of Ad Hoc Committee of Instructors on PS-36

The section on the hiring, review, and promotion of instructors (Chapter 3) is new to PS-36. The Committee has held one campus-wide meeting and several meetings within departments to gather responses. Its preliminary report is posted on the PS-36 web site. Ms. Cutrera noted that PM-23, which calls for fixed contracts but no ranks for instructors, will need revision if the rolling contracts and ranks for instructors specified in the PS-36 draft are to be implemented. Instructors in departments which currently have instructor ranks are concerned about how the new policy might be implemented. The Committee recommended that a faculty member or administrator from the math or English department be added to the committee to revise PS-36. The preliminary report raises several questions:

- What is the purpose of creating a Senior Instructor rank? How do outside reviews relate to this rank when teaching and service are difficult to understand outside the university? The Committee recommends deleting this rank and replacing it with the rank of Instructor III with a rolling contract of five years rather than three.
- The Committee is concerned that there are no time limits for which an instructor can serve as an Instructor I or II. This flexibility works better for some departments than other since instructor roles vary across the university. However, the Committee is concerned that without a time limit, some departments might be unwilling to promote instructors.
- Instructors in general like the requirement that individual departments define what it meant by the ratings of excellent, notable, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory.

In discussion that followed,

- Senator Marilyn Christianson noted that general librarians are not tenure-track and thus would be covered under this section of the document.
- Senator Carruth McGehee summarized his comments, posted on the web site. He favors appointing instructors for terms longer than one year and suggests that academic units that employ instructors should develop their own policies for appointing, reviewing, and offering contracts. In his plan, only general principles
related to the instructor rank would be part of PS-36. Senator David Horohov questioned whether the instructor processes would best be handled in a separate policy statement.

Discussion of Chapter 2 (Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty) led by Karl Roider, chair of the Committee to Revise PS-36

During the discussion several general issues arose:

• What’s wrong with the existing PS-36? Why do we need a revision? What does PM-35 mandate that needs to be defined in PS-36? Responses suggested that a new PS is needed to include processes for the instructor rank. Furthermore, with respect to ongoing academic review (OAR), Provost Fogel added that some form of post-tenure review, to be specified in PS-36, is likely to be the best defense of tenure. A good revision that guarantees a due process is needed to protect tenure and academic freedom. It’s best that the faculty be proactive and define these processes for themselves rather than have them imposed by others. OAR is not a creation of the administration, but rather is a recommendation of the Faculty Senate Commission on the Status of Academic Ranks.

• What would it cost to implement the kind of OAR called for in the current draft? What resources will be needed? We currently have an annual review and periodic review. If we clearly defined how these reviews are carried out, would the system be sufficient? What do we gain from the proposed process? Is it worth the effort? If only a very small group of faculty is doing unsatisfactory work, why go to so much work for everybody? Are there triggers in our current system of annual reviews that could identify problems?

• Robert Tague reiterated a point made at the November meeting that each faculty member has a contract based on current PS-36 and that changes in the policy statement constitute contractual changes and that the Senate cannot vote to change the contract of others. President Kestner disagreed with this interpretation, pointing out the PS-36 had been revised in years past without violating existing contracts.

In addition to the general issues, the following questions were raised about specific processes in the current draft:

• Why can’t faculty members who’ve announced their retirements continue to be involved in issues of hiring, tenuring, and promoting? The Committee’s rationale is that persons who are retiring would not have a long-term investment in the department and would no longer be interested in a department’s welfare.

• Because the document does not define the ratings of excellent, notable, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory, but rather leaves the definitions to individual departments, are we being asked to vote on policies yet to be defined?

• Does the current draft change the standards for dismissal to two unsatisfactory reviews? If so, these are very substantial changes in our contract.

President Kestner encouraged Senators to continue to email responses to the document to be posted at the web site. He will send regular updates of what has been added to the site.
With neither **old** or **new business** to attend to, Senators adjourned the meeting at 5:10 p.m.

The next Faculty Senate Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 24, 2002.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Liggett, Secretary

*If you wish to be represented by another faculty member from your college or division, or if you wish to give a proxy vote to another member of the Senate, please give written notice to the Senate President prior to the meeting. Please refer to “Bylaws of the Faculty Senate,” Article VI, in the LSU Faculty Handbook.
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