Highlights from Faculty Senate Meetings
December 6 and 11, 2002

- The planning for LSU Flagship Agenda has begun with input from the recently completed Chancellor’s Leadership Retreat. The Chancellor seeks input from all LSU employees January 15th at the Chancellor’s Forum at 9AM in the new Campbell Auditorium.
- The President said that the assessment in the recent triennial review of Chancellor Emmert by five groups agreed with his own appraisal that the Chancellor was doing a very good job.
- The President said that it was a personal as well as a Board of Supervisors' decision whether he would accept $600,000 in salary; he would like to see a higher graduate enrollment at LSU; and he was concerned the small pool of viable candidates for university presidents placed great pressure on universities to find ways to keep and pay these people.

Provost’s Report
Tuition waivers for full-time graduate assistants will be phased in across a three-year period starting probably in Fall 2003. Promotional salary increases will be increased from earlier levels by $1,200 for promotions from assist. professor and by $1,300 for promotions from assoc. professor.

Invited speaker from AAUP on collective bargaining
Pat Shaw, Associate Secretary of the AAUP and an attorney, said benefits from collective bargaining included increased power over negotiations on salary and benefits, a fortification of faculty governance, a mechanism for enforcing terms and conditions of employment at LSU; through binding arbitration, and an effective bureaucracy through good and bad times. AAUP is different from other teacher unions because AAUP is classed as an educational and charitable organization; and because it allows more freedom to university bargaining units than do national unions. Dues would be about $150 plus 0.7-0.9% of salary. Disadvantages of collective bargaining were the time and energy required to run the organization and dues. In Shaw’s experience, faculty strikes were rare.

Old Business
Senator Carruth McGehee’s SR03-04 Grades and Standards resolution passed. The resolution may help curb grade inflation by highlighting the issue via required
discussion within departments; making grade distribution data for each course available to each instructor; utilizing grade distribution data whenever administrators or committees review a course or program; acquaint all teachers with the policies and expectations with respect to grades; and require that deans in consultation with a faculty body report on grading patterns and practices.

**New Business**
- Mary Sciaraffa described the 150-child LSU Child Care Center that will be built in 2003. She spoke of advantages to LSU, staff, faculty, students, and community from the center.
- Steve Procopio presented results from the LSU Image Study, a survey of Louisiana residents perceptions of LSU.
- PS36 (promotion and tenure) Committee Chair Carruth McGehee discussed the charges of their committee and presented background material of an in-preparation post-tenure review policy that the committee hopes to bring to the senate this spring.

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**Faculty Senate Meeting Agenda**

**Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2003 3:00 p.m.**

**Atchafalaya Room - LSU Union**

Everyone's Welcome!

1. Roll* and quorum
2. Approval of Minutes (December 6 and 11, 2002)
3. Chancellor Mark Emmert
4. Provost Laura Lindsay
5. New Business
   - Isiah Warner, Vice-Chancellor of Strategic Initiatives, Chancellor's Mentoring Symposium
   - Shirley Plakidas, Director of the LSU Union, Union Renovation plan
   - Lisa Batiste-Evans, HHMI Professors Program.
   - Governor Foster’s Chief of Staff, Andy Kopplin
   - Louisiana Higher Education Funding Resolution SR03-05, Thomas D. Lynch
6. President's Report
7. Adjournment
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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**Louisiana State University A&M**

**MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE**

December 6, 2002 3:00 p.m.; Atchafalaya Room, LSU Union, LSU

The meeting was called to order by President Laurie Anderson at 3:05 p.m with a quorum present. Minutes of the November 3, 2002 meeting were reviewed and accepted. Find the minutes at senate01.lib.lsu.edu/Facsen/ or go to the LSU homepage, select the A--Z directory, select “F” and the Faculty Senate.

**Attendance**

Present: William Adkins, Claire Advokat, Frank Anselmo, Nick Apostolou, Jack Beggs, Paul Bell, Susan Brown, W.James Catallo, James Catano, John Chandler, Michael Cherry, Maryilyn Christenson, Jeffrey Clayton, Jon Cogburn, James Cowan, Paul Farnsworth, Yvonne Fuentes, Robert Gambrell, Kristin Gansle, Andreas Giger, Marge Gill, Linda Griffin, Stephen Harrison, Maren Hegsted, Gregg Henderson, Laura Hensley, Dominique Homberger, Christopher Kenny, Don Kraft, Dennis Landin, Tom Lynch, Carroll Mathews, Andrew Maverick, Carruth McGehee, Mary McGehee, William Moore, Carl Motsonbocker, Irvin Peckham, John Pizer, Margaret Reams, Bhaba Sarker, Judith Schiebout, Jill Suitor, Dek Terrel. Represented by proxy: Lori Bade (A.Giger), John Battista (M.Cherry), Ian Crystal (J.Cogburn), Elizabeth Dow (D.Kraft), Kristin Gansle (C.Advokat), Angeletta Gourdine (Pat McGee), Karola Gray (E.Kaufman), James Honeycutt (R.Bowman), David Horohov (A.Penn), Thomasine Mencer (D.Landin), Nancy Nelson (D.Landin), Joan King (M.Hegsted), Robin McCarley (A.Maverick), Frank Rusciano (M.McGehee), Chuck Rush (S.Harrison)

Absent: Louis Gagliano, Cynthia Handel, Mark Johnson, Ji-Chai Lin, Aravamudhan Raman, Danny Reible, Mark Slovak, Ed Smith, Victor Stater, George Voyiadjis, Warren Waggenspack


**Chancellor’s comments:** The Chancellor reported briefly on yesterday’s Chancellor's Leadership Retreat and efforts to begin the process of setting the flagship agenda for LSU. The meeting included Vice Chancellors, Deans, Directors, Department Chairs, Unit Heads, Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Staff Senate Executive Committee, SACS Leadership Team, Student Government Executive Committee, and representatives from foundations. Some concerns discussed were the 200-250 tenure-track faculty shortfall given the size of LSU, the small number of graduate students relative to the undergraduate population, and too few postdoctoral researchers. Planning will continue January 15th with a meeting with the LSU community. The Chancellor said that applications for provost will be reviewed soon and he was very positive about the search’s progress.

Senator Linda Griffin asked what role the Chancellor will play in the upcoming airport interviews for the provost position and he replied that he would not participate without the search committee’s request. Senator Nick Apostolou asked whether anything can be done to improve the formula used by the Board of Regents to allocate funds to LSU and the Chancellor replied “There better be!”. The Chancellor explained that the formula has serious shortcomings, e.g.,
the funds allocated per student are the same for undergraduate and graduate students. Apostolou asked whether the State of Texas funds students in the same fashion as LSU. The Chancellor replied that the formulas used in states that he is familiar with all allow more funding for graduate students.

**President of LSU System comments:** President Jenkins spoke on the recent triennial review of Chancellor Emmert. Jenkins emphasized that the review was not the sole source of material used for assessment because he meets with the Chancellor frequently, is aware of the strategic plan of LSU, and meets with others who work with the Chancellor. The review process included meetings between the President and five groups: (i) alumni and other constituent stakeholders; (ii) administrators and the Chancellor's staff; (iii) LSU staff; (iv) students; and (v) faculty. Each meeting lasted 1 to 1.5 hours. The groups gave very favorable reviews of the chancellor with the following comments representative: a good listener who provides practical solutions to problems; shows effective academic judgment and delegates responsibility well; a charismatic leader with an uncanny ability to remember names; an articulate speaker; presents a bold new vision for the future; politically astute and clearly demonstrates an ability to deal effectively with constituent groups; very accessible; and replies to emails quickly. There were also concerns about the Chancellor's performance and more general observations that included the following: the Chancellor needs more contact with student and faculty groups; there must be increased salaries for graduate assistants, staff, and faculty; more resources are required at the Office of International Services; better internal communication is needed regarding the Chancellor's short- and long-term goals and for any issues affecting faculty; progress reports from the Chancellor should be provided to the review committee; the Chancellor should be more active with searches for mid-level administrative positions; the Chancellor and his staff should review the budget for class scheduling and facility repair and maintenance; and there needs to be a review of the budget for academic units not in the twelve centers of excellence.

Senator Nick Apostolou asked whether faculty thought the review process was adequate. The President replied that the participating faculty wanted copies of the Chancellor's goals and progress reports. The President said that he thought the goals were those of the campus strategic plan and that the CEO's (Chancellor's) responsibility was to pursue that plan. The President said he was very comfortable with the review process. Apostolou asked for the President's preference on the size of undergraduate enrollment at LSU. The President said that state legislators cannot cap student enrollment of a flagship university, but he also stated that he did not expect that enrollment would drop radically. He said that enrollment could drop from higher standards but experience has shown that increases in long-term enrollment arise from this action. Although the pool of Louisiana high school students is expected to drop, he thought other states could contribute to LSU enrollment. He was not ambiguous on his desires for graduate enrollment at LSU stating that enrollment must increase.
Senator Tom Lynch asked what must be done and what funds are available to accomplish some of the President’s goals. President Jenkins stated that LSU must be very innovative in acquiring funds and that more funds must be acquired from the state. He thought the present formula used by the Board of Regents was not meaningful and that it was out of whack. He commented on the unusual state process for funding buildings with a $250 million annual cap statewide and cited the long time (19 years) required to build the Biological Sciences annex. He thought a scheme like that used at North Carolina State may be successful.

Senator Bell asked what percentage of the raise that the Chancellor received came from the Tiger Athletic Foundation. The President said that it was probably or thereabouts 20% of the raise. Bell asked the President whether he would accept a $600,000 salary given that the Chancellor who serves under him earns that amount and that a member of the Board of Supervisors said he would like the President’s salary to be more than the Chancellor’s. The President said he would plead the fifth on that and that it was a personal and a Board of Supervisor’s decision. Bell asked about the difference in raises earned by LSU faculty in the last six years (about 40%) versus the minimum that any Chancellor earned in the last six years from LSU A&M, LSU AgCenter, LSU Medical Center, and Hebert Law School (150% or an increase of 2.5 times). The President said that he would not comment on the specifics of the question and then discussed the changing role of chancellors in the last five to eight years. Before that period, provosts were presidents-in-waiting but now chancellors—and the SEC is an example—do not stay at one school long and move among universities. Chancellors’ and presidents’ role in campus leadership has changed and they have acquired CEO responsibilities. There is a premium on campus leadership today. This issue concerned the President a great deal.

Senator Chandler commented on the gap in salary increases acquired by Chancellors and those of faculty. The President told Chandler not to underestimate the 3 to 5% annual salary increases professors receive because those increases allow salaries to keep up with inflation. He also stated that there will not be meteoric increases in faculty salaries if LSU depends on the state for funding salaries; funds from a variety of sources are needed. The President favors entrepreneurship and royalty efforts to increase salaries.

Senator Dominique Homberger mentioned that the administration does not place the same effort to keep the best faculty at LSU as they do to keep the Chancellor and other administrators. She also mentioned that it was difficult to attract graduate students because of low stipends. The President agreed that it is discouraging that there is a fierce competition for excellent faculty and that some of these faculty leave LSU. He also attributed the loss of associate professors to this same phenomenon. He said that tuition waivers have been enacted to increase graduate-assistant salaries. The President said that LSU must develop better packages for faculty. Homberger asked the President about the use of funds from private sources to fund the Chancellor’s pay hike. She was concerned about the use of un-audited, unsupervised, private funds and the difficulty of convincing the public that LSU is serving the public and not the private interest that provided the salary. The President replied that it is his responsibility to see
that the funds are used appropriately. He said that most leading institutions pay their campus CEOs with some of these private funds. The President said that at least every fortnight a headhunter calls him about open positions for university presidents.

Senator Jim Catano commented on the move toward a corporate model for the academy and the hiring of CEOs instead of chancellors. He was curious as to how a faculty member in the Arts and Sciences would function within this new model especially given the scarcity of entrepreneurship sources of salary. The President replied that the Commonwealth of Virginia funds 7% of the University of Virginia’s total budget while Louisiana universities are funded about 25-28% from the state. The President believes state funds will contribute less to LSU’s budget in the future. The President said that the academic core of an institution must be protected and this requires that faculty from at-risk departments be supported.

Provost’s Report: The Minority Task Force headed by Craig Freeman has written their preliminary report and it will be reviewed by the Provost. The University Planning Council will now include the chair of the Faculty Senate’s Review and Long-Range Planning Committee. The search continues to replace LSU Press Director L.E. Phillabaum. Three candidates for the editor of Southern Review will likely be selected and interviewed in the spring. There have been some struggles for the search for a new dean of the College of Business Administration but hopefully candidates will arrive by February. Graduate Assistant tuition waivers will be phased in across a three-year period starting as early as Fall 2003 with a 33% waiver for full-time graduate assistants in year one, jumping to a 67% waiver in year two, and a full tuition waiver starting in year three. Salary increases for promotions from assistant and from associate professor will be increased starting fall 2003. Those promoted this academic year would be eligible for the new raises. A letter will be sent after Christmas-break detailing the breakdown between academic and fiscal year appointments, librarian and other classifications.

BEFORE

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The Provost will hire Mary Evelyn Bazille in January for a part-time position for one year to help handle equity related problems and who will be a resource person for LSU employees and students regarding equity issues. Bazille will make recommendations for improving equity issues at LSU. Chuck Wilson is serving as a Vice-Provost and he addresses issues of sabbaticals, promotion and tenure, and space allocations. A web site was made that accepts input from
LSU personnel on LSU’s flagship agenda and includes the Chancellor’s computer presentation used in the recent Chancellor’s Leadership Retreat. Senator Susan Brown asked for the address of the website: appl003.lsu.edu/acadaff/lsuflagship.nsf/index/ or www.lsu.edu/flagship/

Invited Speaker on Collective Bargaining for LSU Faculty www.aaup.org/ : Pat Shaw, Associate Secretary of the AAUP (American Association of University Professors) spoke on collective bargaining for university professors. Mr. Shaw was invited by the Faculty Senate (SR02-07). Shaw said that no legislation in Louisiana allows or prohibits collective bargaining for professors. Shaw said that collective bargaining is an effective instrument for meeting AAUP objectives (protecting academic freedom, establishing and strengthening faculty governance, promoting the economic well-being of faculty, developing procedures for resolving grievances, and advancing the interests of higher education), but it is not required. AAUP is not defined as a union but rather is classed as an educational and charitable organization.

Other organizations that can unionize professors have been successful, perhaps infamously successful, in their efforts for teachers, Shaw said. Shaw has observed that effective lobbying efforts for faculty were inevitably in those states with universities that have collective bargaining. To provide services requires funds and AAUP charges about $135 for national dues and about 0.7-0.9% of faculty salary with no deductions after some amount, e.g., $100,000. Each chapter decides what level and mix of services they desire and they set the dues. Teaching union budgets last year were $288 M for NEA, $141 M for AFT, and $5 M for AAUP. Shaw thought that most university negotiations without collective bargaining were more likely collective begging.

Collective bargaining redistributes power and power dynamics varies with institution. Typically, real power on employment conditions are with the managerial class and which is bolstered by hierarchical styles of management. Collective bargaining transfers to the hands of the faculty collective much of the power over salary and benefits and, if done right, fortifies faculty governance, and assures that the procedures and product of faculty governance are respected by the administration and governing boards.

A fundamental advantage of collective bargaining is that it provides the means for securing and enforcing terms and conditions of employment through neutral binding arbitration. In the U.S., employment relations are fragile and remedies for correction via lawsuits are little used and have limited usefulness. An alternative to a collective bargaining unit and that would provide employee rights could be accomplished by requiring disputes from violations of the faculty handbook be subjected to binding arbitration. However, a supervising board would likely reject this proposal. Collective bargaining codifies the many terms and requirements of employment. A disadvantage is that there is less flexibility but, remember that any contract can be changed if both parties agree. Shaw has not found that collective bargaining resulted in more uniform salaries among faculty at an institution. He found disadvantages of time and energy required to lobby, negotiate, and handle dues. Dues were a distant third problem because money is
always required to provide the services. Shaw has worked with AAUP for ten years and worked on 210 contract talks and has experienced only 5 strikes with two of these at Wayne State University where professors strike during spring break.

Another advantage of collective bargaining is that it provides a structure that is sustained financially and politically by the faculty to ensure faculty’s professional and economic interests and for them to be addressed in a serious and direct manner on a continuous basis. Otherwise, faculty interest in faculty governance is much a function of crises and it is difficult to sustain an organization on such fuel.

Shaw disagreed with LSU Senate resolution 02-07 that stated that the faculty senate could be an alternative to collective bargaining. Shaw argued that the senate is a deliberative legislative body. The senate could not do a radio ad complaining that the state only funds a low percentage of the state budget, for example. Unions are one form of organizing, acquiring, and using power. Faculty are, in Shaw’s experience, more than any other class of employees, more willing to adapt to their version of status quo even when the next version of status quo is less effective.

Senator Chris Kenny asked what would AAUP provide LSU faculty should LSU unionize. Shaw replied that AAUP would teach LSU faculty how to conduct collective bargaining and that AAUP would be a source of technical expertise. You can't subcontract the acquisition of power from faculty to someone else Shaw said. Senator Jon Cogburn asked what effect the open-shop laws in Louisiana would have on collective bargaining in Louisiana. Shaw said that the law states that no one is required to be a union member or that they must pay an agency fee. In Ohio where this occurs, about half the faculty are members. Some universities will have 100% membership in an open-shop environment and it is probably due to peer pressure. It is an obstacle and depends on whether members wish to provide help and pay dues to make collective bargaining work. A continuous organizing effort is needed to convince junior faculty to join.

Senator Homberger commented on the disparity between the highest paid chancellor and the lowest paid teacher and whether a union would provide remedies. Shaw replied indirectly but not directly. Shaw quoted from the Chronicle of Higher Education (Bok, 2002) “But lavish compensation can hurt a university by undermining the effectiveness of campus leadership. Unlike corporations, colleges are collegial rather than hierarchical. As their presidents frequently (perhaps too frequently) proclaim, they are ‘communities of scholars,’ populated by independent teachers and researchers who are protected by tenure and instinctively resistant to commands from above”.

Shaw said that Chancellor Emmert last worked for a university that had collective bargaining and that the university donated land for a building for the bargaining unit.

Senator Chandler asked whether collective bargaining would produce competition between a union and a faculty senate. Shaw replied that it could, but sometimes the collective bargaining representative and the senate president
were the same person. Shaw found that collective bargaining strengthened faculty governance by making the faculty handbook an enforceable contract.

Pat McGee (proxy for A.Gourdine) commented on the ill effects of the corporatization of academia and questioned whether collective bargaining can provide faculty with power. Shaw replied that LSU faculty can accomplish this and one does not need to be an activist to do so. McGee asked whether the AAUP is different from other collective bargaining units because they offer more independence to the universities. Shaw replied that in general this was true and that the AAUP has a decentralized structure.

This portion of the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Continuation of the senate meeting on Wednesday, December 11th:

**Attendance Present:** William Adkins, Claire Advokat, Laurie Anderson, Frank Ansello, Nick Apostolou, Paul Bell, Susan Brown, W. James Catallo, James Catano, John Chandler, Michael Cherry, Jeffrey Clayton, Jon Cogburn, Jan Crystal, Paul Farnsworth, Yvonne Fuentes, Andreas Giger, Marge Gill, Angeletta Gourdine, Karola Gray, Linda Griffin, Gregg Henderson, Mark Johnson, Christopher Kenny, Neil Kestner, Joan King, Don Kraft, Tom Lynch, Carroll Mathews, Carruth McGehee, Thomasine Mencer.

**Represented by proxy:** Lori Bade (A.Giger), John Battista (C.Advokat), Jack Beggs (C.Kenny), James Cowan (R.Show), Robert Gambrell (M.Reams), Kristin Gansle (C.Advokat), Dominique Homberger (M.Cherry), Dennis Landin (T.Mencer), Robin McCarley (A.W.Eramid), Mary McGehee (C.McGehee), William Moore (D.Terrel)

**Absent:** Bhaba Sarker, Marilyn Christianson, Elizabeth Dow, Philip Elzer, Louis Gagliano, Cynthia Handel, Stephen Harrison, Maren Hegsted, Laura Hensley, James Honeycutt, David Horohov, Ji-Chai Lin, Andrew Maverick, Aravamudhan Raman, Danny Reible, Frank Rusciano, Milton Rush, Ed Smith, George Voyiadjis, Warren Waggenspack, **Visitors** F. Neil Mathews, M.Sciaraffa, S. Procopio, J. Fisher

**President’s Report:** The committee to write and help conduct a survey on faculty opinions on collective bargaining met Monday (the committee members are Jack Beggs, Kit Kenny, Kelly Rusch, Abhijit Biswas, and Monica Simmering). The Athletic Task Force will likely recommend revisions to Board of Supervisors by-laws regarding athletic councils as well as develop policy specific to this campus. Ken Carpenter will report on task force findings this spring. The chair of the Senate’s Review and Long-Range Planning Committee, Don Deis, is now on the University Planning Council. Anderson gave senators copies of the Chancellor's presentation from the Chancellor's Leadership Retreat.

**Report on Child-Care at LSU:** [www.lsu.edu/childcare](http://www.lsu.edu/childcare) Mary Sciaraffa, Director of LSU Child Care Center, spoke of an effort that started 30 years ago to bring child care to LSU. Ground-breaking for the center will be in January. Sciaraffa said that there are many benefits from having child care on campus. Children in high-quality child care have higher lifetime earnings, higher rate of high school graduation, and lower need for special education and costly social services. Student parents benefit with higher enrollment in higher education, higher graduation rates, higher retention rate, and higher gpa. The center could help LSU’s recruitment efforts and the center could have an academic component. The 15,300 sq. ft. building will be at the old golf course and will accept children
ages 6 weeks to 5 years. Costs should be at market rates. Children of faculty, staff, and students will have the highest priority for being admitted to the center. Sciaraffa will accept applications this spring. LSU-CCC is an auxiliary unit of LSU that is self-supporting with self-generated funds.

Senator Margaret Reams asked whether LSU pre-school or the lab school are a part of LSU-CCC and Sciaraffa said that they are not. She said that the pre-school is primarily an observation and research site. Senator Susan Brown asked how many children can the center accept and Sciaraffa said 150. Senator Linda Griffin asked where information on the center can be acquired and Sciaraffa directed senators to www.lsu.edu/childcare or the campus index. Senator Angelletta Gourdine asked what the teacher to student ratio will be and Sciaraffa said that the ratio will be better than that mandated by the Department of Social Services. Senator Chandler asked how many children from LSU students, staff, and faculty would be interested in using the center for their children. Sciaraffa said that a Vet School survey found 431 respondents interested in using the service. Sciaraffa hopes that eventually another building will be built.

Senator Jill Suitor was concerned about problems that may arise from too many children wanting to use the center that could not use it. LSU-CCC could not be an effective recruitment tool as a result. Sciaraffa said they have been discussing screening techniques to fairly award openings at the center. Senator Nick Apostolou asked whether Sciaraffa has received any pressure from politicians and Sciaraffa said no. Reams said that the lab school is no longer a meaningful recruitment tool. She thought the steering committee of LSU-CCC will experience pressure from applicants and that they should plan to combat favoritism.

Report on Results of Survey on Louisianian's Perceptions of LSU (LSU Image Study): [http://www.survey.lsu.edu/projects.html](http://www.survey.lsu.edu/projects.html) Jon Fisher, Assistant Director University Relations, introduced Steven Procopio, Manager of the Public Policy Research Lab of the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs, who reviewed a study to assess Louisianian’s perception of LSU. Survey results indicated that LSU was the first college to come to mind for 50% of the respondents and that 39% of those surveyed would prefer to send their child to LSU regardless of cost. The item most liked by respondents about LSU was LSU’s academic reputation. Only 13% thought LSU received less funding than other universities in the South, but 79% agreed that LSU should receive additional funding.

Senator Nick Apostolou said it was disturbing that only 13% of respondents thought LSU received less funding than other southern universities. Procopio said that the figure has uncertain value because there is no comparison with other states and what survey results might be found elsewhere. Senator Christopher Kenny agreed with Procopio and suggested that results from similar surveys from other states be presented. Procopio said there may be a need to do a series of surveys.

Senator James Cowan was disturbed by the common comparison between LSU and Southern colleges when comparisons at a national scale are needed.
Procopio said that these comparisons are with institutions that the public is familiar with but other national or private schools, perhaps, should be included.

Senator James Catallo suggested repeating the survey using LSU faculty and staff and see how they differ from the Louisiana resident group. He also suggested that respondents be asked if funding to LSU is important whether they would allow their income tax bill to be increased by $20 for LSU funding.

Senator A. Gourdine asked why the survey was done. Procopio replied that he works with University Relations and they desired better information on how to conduct PR, e.g., whether public relations projects should emphasize more name recognition for LSU (survey says no) or whether to use new terms for initiatives (more easily recognizable ones are better). Gourdine asked whether questions allowed respondents to state what LSU outreach program had a positive impact on them or their community without any offered answers. Procopio said no.

Senator Gray asked whether open-ended questions were given and Procopio said that they were mostly of the type of a scale of agreement (no, little, very...), but a few questions asked the respondent to state what direct benefits were received from LSU. Senator Judith Schiebout asked how were the people selected. Procopio said they were phoned and there was a 54% acceptance rate. Senator Joan King asked where to get a copy of the study and he said contact University Relations or get a copy from President Laurie Anderson.

Senator John Chandler commented on the irony of legislators helping their own regional university, but avoiding helping LSU because it doesn’t help their district when the survey found respondents throughout the state felt they benefitted from LSU. Senator W. James Catallo asked whether the survey was done before the firing of the anthrax person-of-interest Hatfill and before the salary hike of the chancellor. Procopio said the survey was done before these events.

Old Business--On Grades and Standards SR03-04  Senator Carruth McGehee read his resolution a second time On Grades and Standards SR03-04. Suitor questioned the assumption of the resolution that a teacher who gave her students high grades did something questionable and that improvements to item 2 were needed. Senator Irv Peckham said that items 2 and 3 were ideologically loaded and pedagogically counterproductive. He moved to amend the numbered item 2 to read as follows:

2. Whenever an administrator or a committee makes or reports an evaluation of teaching--or of a course, or of a program, or of an experimental mode or method of teaching--grade distributions will be on view and will be part of the record along with other appropriate factors such as course requirements, grading criteria, and evidence of student achievement.

McGehee seconded it. Senator Claire Advokat asked for examples of student achievement and Peckham replied that in Freshman English he has assessment criteria stating what suffices for what score. Suitor said that a teacher could have examples of student papers or assignments representative for each grade. Senator Dek Terrell inquired as to how to set student achievement criteria on a department or college wide basis and Peckham felt these standards would be set
for each teacher's class. Senator Chandler inquired as to whether grades are distributed normally. Senator Jon Cogburn thought the amendment did not materially change the amendment. Peckham said he offered it as a compromise. The amendment passed 44 to 7.

Senator Peckham moved to amend the numbered item 3 to read as follows:
3. Each academic unit will take special care to see that all teaching personnel are informed about pertinent policies and expectations with respect to grades, and supported as they undertake to uphold appropriate standards.

Senator Tom Lynch seconded the amendment. The amendment passed.

Senator James Catallo moved to amend numbered item 3 again, by adding "The appropriate officer of" at the beginning. Peckham wondered if it was a friendly amendment and Catallo said it was. The amendment passed.

Senator Mark Johnson moved to insert an item between the items presently numbered 2 and 3, to become the new item 3, as follows:
3. The definition of "appropriate officer" shall be one who has experience teaching and being evaluated as a teacher."

Senator Mike Cherry questioned whether the 'appropriate officer' really is involved in the evaluation as he is only involved in informing faculty of grading standards. It was noted that another item (2) does describe evaluations. Cherry questioned whether this concern was a bit afield of the major objectives of the resolution. The amendment failed.

Senator John Pizer moved to amend the Resolution by striking the sentence, in numbered item 4,
This reporting requirement will be waived if during the previous academic year, in the undergraduate courses taught in the Dean's unit taken all together, the average grade assigned was below 2.7.

Senator Don Kraft seconded the motion. Pizer argued that the Dean shouldn't be give the signal that such an overall average, in itself was OK; after all, one department could give all As and another all Fs, and there would then still be problems. Senator Jon Cogburn was concerned that the amendment does not address enough in that there is still an onerous paperwork requirement from the resolution and that paperwork requirements have increased over time. The amendment passed.

Senator Karola Gray thought the resolution applied to graduate and undergraduate students (it is only for undergraduate) and wondered about the effect of students withdrawing from class and its effect on grade distribution. Senator McGehee said that at LSU there's a standard way to state grade distributions, which gives each of the letter grades, including Ws, as a percentage of all students enrolled as of the fourteenth day. He remarked that the percentage of Ws has remained stable, 10 to 13 percent, while the distribution of other grades has been shifting upward. Senator Chandler asked who will be the policeman and McGehee said that the Resolution depends largely on the faculty for leadership. The resolution is similar to one that was passed unanimously at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where the process called for is under way. Senator Lynch said the general nature of the
resolution was best for this first try and if there are problems, then, make it more specific later.

Senator Judith Schiebout moved to amend the resolution by adding the sentence at the end of the resolution:

The primacy of teaching faculty’s judgment in determining grades in their classes is affirmed.

Amendment passed. SR03-04 passed 37 to 11.

New Business--Report on PS-36 Committee: 
http://www.math.lsu.edu/~mcgehee/C.html  Senator Carruth McGehee, chair of the PS-36 committee appointed early this semester by the Provost and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, reported on the work so far. He referred to an email report sent to the Senators on December 10, which was as follows:

The committee members are Professors Emily Batinski, Lou Day, Rick Ortner (the new Dean of Art & Design), Jim Richardson, Roger Seals, Roger Stockbauer, and Jill Suitor; and Director Janie Frickie, HRM, ex officio. --and myself, as chair. We have established a home page for the use of the committee, which you are invited to visit, at http://www.math.lsu.edu/~mcgehee/C.html. (There’s a link to it on the Faculty Senate home page too.) It serves as an online reference library. By the end of the semester, the committee will have held six meetings and one open hearing (12/3) for members of the Senate. In addition, I’ve held discussions with the Provost; with the chairs of the last two PS-36 committees; with the Council of Policy Committees; and with others. The committee has reached no conclusions. However, the notes on our discussions will prepare the way for drafting policy proposals, which will begin next semester.

Here is a summary of our six committee meetings. (1) Each of us described his or her experience and experiences in higher education and gave expression to primary concerns about faculty personnel policy. (2) We discussed our several points of view about the institution of tenure, about the purposes and values that it serves, and about the requisites for a tenure system to work well. (3) We discussed our experiences with promotion and tenure procedures. (4) We began a study of PM-35 and discussed the response that our campus might make to it in the form of policy provisions. (5) We discussed the Instructor rank on campus, and the overall policy provisions that may be necessary and appropriate regarding this rank. (6) At our last meeting (12/13) we’ll begin taking a systematic look at the policy statements of a number of other universities in the U.S., seeking ideas and models. Next semester, we have scheduled joint meetings, one with the committee of Instructors chaired by Mary Lou Cutrera, and one with the committee of non-tenure-track professorial-rank personnel (and certain other titles provided in PM-23) chaired by Nan Walker.

McGehee pointed out that the committee’s charge allows it to make recommendations to the Senate in steps, rather than one large document addressing all the issues. He said the committee is talking about preparing a PM-
response policy first, and presenting it in the spring. He read the following
draft of a statement offering an approach to this:

Here's one way of looking at the situation. PS-104 (2/1/2000), the Dismissal for Cause PS, which was approved by the Faculty Senate, says in the section called Reasons,

*Every member of the faculty of whatever rank shall at all times be held responsible for competent an effective performance of appropriate duties. No principle of tenure shall be permitted to protect any person from removal from a position after full and careful investigation according to the procedures of due process has revealed that the person has not met and does not give promise of meeting the responsibilities of the position as defined by the job assignment.*

There is much in PS-104 to guarantee due process, and there is much protection in University traditions for tenure and academic freedom. However, the passage just quoted is quite definite: It allows for consideration of dismissal, or reduction in pay, or demotion for bad job performance. What PM-35 (an LSU System policy) adds to this picture is the definition of another process whereby, in the case of tenured faculty, a time for remediation would precede and perhaps prevent entry into the PS-104 process. The last paragraph of PM-35 allows immediate entry into the PS-104 process at the discretion of the Chancellor. Nevertheless it appears that the intention and practical tendency of PM-35 is to make it the standard practice to provide, in the case of bad job performance, both (1) at least one year's warning and then (2) opportunity and assistance for improvement over a period of 2 more years. PM-35 calls for each of the institutions in the LSU System to adopt a policy further specifying the procedure. We have not yet done so. One kind of concern, as we write a campus policy, is to build in further clarifications and procedural safeguards. We can have that concern even if we see a benign interpretation of the whole thing and think that both PM-35 and PS-104 are basically OK. Another kind of concern is to counter the tendency for administrators to become aggressive in their use of these policies and actively to harass faculty in violation of tenure principles. In view of the provisions in PM-35 as it stands, a good many non-administrative faculty would have to join in the harassment for it to get very far, but even so, the worry is understandable. And it's connected to policy on annual evaluations, and to evaluation of administrators, and indeed to the selection and appointment of administrators, and further to general principles of governance.

Senator Nick Apostolou: Is PM-35 consistent with AAUP guidelines?

McGehee: It seems to be; on page 52 of the 9th edition of the AAUP Red Book appears this statement: "We recognize that some tenured faculty members may, nonetheless, fail to fulfill their professional obligations because of incompetence, malfeasance, or simple non-performance of their duties. Where this appears to exist, targeted review and evaluation should certainly be considered, in order to provide the developmental guidance and support that can assist the faculty member to overcome those difficulties." That seems to call for something like a
PM-35 process between the moment of an unfavorable evaluation and the entry into a dismissal-for-cause process.

Senator John Pizer: Is this a good time to be revising PS-36, since we are between Provosts? McGehee: That's a good question, and I have two feelings in response. On the one hand, for the sake of robust faculty governance, we should proceed. On the other hand, we ought to be cautious, and there are certain policy developments we should not push for within 02-03 unless we have clear support from Chancellor Emmert. But finally, I think we should be preparing for the new Provost, not just waiting for the new Provost. It may be that certain of the impulses behind Dan Fogel's push for PS-36 revision are no longer with us. But there are some fairly urgent needs for policy development in the area of the non-tenure-track professorial-rank and certain other PM-23 personnel, where there's now something of a policy vacuum. Senator John Chandler: Didn't the Faculty Senate vote to ask for the retraction of PM-35 two years ago? McGehee: On May 15, 2002, the Senate passed SR00-14 (The Questionable Legality of PM-35): Resolved, the Senate recommends the retraction of PM-35 pending the clarification of the ramifications for tenured faculty members regarding the restrictions on academic freedom and tenure.

One can get the needed clarification of PM-35 by reading it, and seeing it as a legitimate response to AAUP guidelines. PM-35 is in effect, and there are five PM-35 processes under way at this time on this campus. I see no way that faculty are in a stronger position if we take no note of PM-35 and embrace no policy. But indeed, the kind of question you should ask when the committee brings you a recommendation is, Does our proposal improve the faculty's position?

Senator Carl Motsenbocker: How many other LSU System institutions have written policies in response to PM-35? McGehee: All of them, so far as I know, though I haven't seen all the policies. Senator Mark Johnson: PM-35 committees should include people from outside the department or even the university. A recent tenure hearing vote went from 19 for, 2 against to, after lobbying by the department head, 9 for and 10 against the candidate. An outside committee would not be as susceptible to departmental pressure. Senator James Catallo: A lot of teaching faculty from his unit, some hired in 1978, are told by the administration to bring in grant funds although they were hired to teach. It's a move on tenured people who were hired to teach.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Paul Bell, Secretary

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Faculty Senate Resolution 03-04:

**On Grades and Standards**

Including (Only by Reference) Two Appendices

Presented by Carruth McGehee at the Meeting of November 7, 2002

As Amended and Adopted at the Meeting of December 11, 2002
Whereas, the evaluation of students' work and achievement is an important responsibility of the faculty; and

Whereas, University policy on undergraduate grades (p. 65 of the current catalog) states that A indicates distinguished mastery of the course material; B, good mastery; C, acceptable mastery; D, minimally acceptable achievement for credit; and F, failure; and

Whereas, grades serve to acquaint students with the standards of the discipline; to inform them about their mastery of skills and subject matter; and to advise them of their preparedness for further study or for a line of work—and ought to do so accurately; and

Whereas, grades serve to certify students' credentials to providers of scholarships and awards, to employers, and to graduate schools—and ought to do so in a meaningful and reasonably uniform manner; and

Whereas, students' educational interests are better served when they are challenged by academic programs of good quality, with grading standards which are rigorous, consistent, and sound; and

Whereas, grades at LSU (see Appendix 2) have been rising for many years; 63% of undergraduate grades in the fall of 2001 were As or Bs; furthermore, grade distributions differ considerably among academic units; and

Whereas, grading standards in U.S. universities have become the subject of widespread discussion and concern (see, for example, the Rosovsky-Hartley report, the material from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and other references listed in Appendix 1);

Therefore Be it Resolved, that all teaching faculty should thoughtfully examine their grading standards and practices.

Be it further Resolved, that in every department (or other appropriate academic unit), administrative leaders should promote analysis and discussion of grading standards and practices—in the light of the disciplines, teaching methods, and characteristics of student populations taught by that department. After due preparation, but no later than Spring 2004, the faculty of every department should review the issues and problems in a formal meeting—to exchange views, move toward consensus, and adopt new policies and guidelines if they see fit.

Be it further Resolved, that the Faculty Senate recommends the adoption of the following practices as a matter of policy:
1. Each semester, every faculty member will be informed of the recent grade distributions in the courses he or she teaches, and in other courses at the same level, courses in the same discipline, and so forth, so that he or she will have a clear picture of grading practices in the campus context. Each department or school will, in timely fashion, obtain the needed reports and studies from the Office of Budget and Planning.

2. Whenever an administrator or a committee makes or reports an evaluation of teaching--or of a course, or of a program, or of an experimental mode or method of teaching--grade distributions will be on view and will be part of the record along with other appropriate factors such as course requirements, grading criteria, and evidence of student achievement.

3. The appropriate officer of each academic unit will take special care to see that all teaching personnel are informed about pertinent policies and expectations with respect to grades, and supported as they undertake to uphold appropriate standards.

4. Each year, beginning in Spring 2004, each Dean, in consultation with the policy committee or other appropriate faculty body, will prepare a report for the Provost on grading patterns and practices in the units reporting to him or her, addressing any need that may exist for reform.

Be it further Resolved, that the Committee on Admissions, Standards, and Honors should, in consultation with the Provost, monitor developments in the distribution of grades. Each year, beginning in 2004, the Committee will report thereon to the Faculty Senate, offering recommendations as it sees fit.

Be it further Resolved, that the Committee on the Improvement of Instruction should, in the spirit of Faculty Senate Resolution 96-08 (passed unanimously by the Faculty Senate at its meeting of February 17, 1998) monitor patterns in campus procedures for the evaluation of teaching, consider issues related thereto, and offer recommendations as it sees fit.

Be it further Resolved, that colleges and schools whose degree programs have admission requirements including a minimum GPA should, if they find that the use of this criterion may be inducing a decline in standards, consider replacing it by a competitive consideration of the GPA;

Be it further Resolved, that the Faculty Senate favors appropriately rigorous and more nearly uniform grading standards based on sound course design and valid distinctions among levels of mastery. We do not favor arbitrary changes in grade distributions. We affirm the provision in PS-44 that at the beginning of every course, the teacher must give the students a clear statement of requirements and grading criteria. The primacy of teaching faculty’s judgment in determining grades in their classes is affirmed.
Appendix 1: References

LSU References
LSU policy on grades is stated in PS-44. It refers to the catalog, p. 65, for the definitions of the letter grades. Other formulations of grading policy may be found on page 17 of the Faculty Handbook of 1997, which is also available online.

The minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting of February 17, 1998 describe the deliberation on Resolution 96-08 may be found through a link at the Faculty Senate website; click on "Minutes." Likewise for the text of the Resolution; click on "Resolution."

Other References
A number of pertinent articles have appeared in The Chronicle of Higher Education and are available on the web to subscribers. With a search engine one can find many studies and commentaries on grade inflation, from various points of view. Here is a selection.

1. Evaluation and the Academy: Are We Doing the Right Thing? Grade Inflation and Letters of Recommendation, by Henry Rosovsky (Harvard University) and Matthew Hartley (University of Pennsylvania), published by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
2. Items from Chapel Hill: In February, 2000, the Educational Policy Committee prepared a 24-page paper, Grade Inflation at UNC-Chapel Hill, A Report to the Faculty Council. This report recommended that each large unit should strive to reach and maintain an overall GPA in undergraduate courses between 2.6 and 2.7. At its meeting of September 7, 2001, The Faculty Council unanimously passed a Resolution. endorsing the recommendations of the report. Also available on the web are the version of the Resolution that was originally presented and the minutes of the meeting, which give an account of the debate and of the amendments which were offered (one passed, one failed).
3. Grade Inflation: Myth or Reality, by Gary R. Hanson, Student Affairs Research, University of Texas at Austin.
4. The 1999 report Grade Inflation at the University of Arizona, by Jonathan Penner.
5. The report and policy statement adopted at the University of Minnesota in 1999.

For those who cannot use the hypertext links in the list above, here are the URLs:
Appendix 2: A Discussion of the Resolution

Overall, undergraduate grades at LSU have been steadily rising.
* In the fall of 2001, grades were 33% As, 30% Bs, 17% Cs, 5% Ds, 3% Fs, and 11% Ws.
* In the fall of 1991, grades were 27% As, 30% Bs, 20% Cs, 6% Ds, 3% Fs, and 10% Ws.
* In the fall of 1984, grades were 21% As, 28% Bs, 22% Cs, 7% Ds, 4% Fs, and 13% Ws.
* In the fall of 1965, grades were 17% As, 30% Bs, 30% Cs, 10% Ds, 7% Fs, 1% WFs, 3% Ws, and 2% Is. (Note that the W policy was different in 1965.)

Thus it appears that overall grading practices have slipped away from suitably rigorous standards. Moreover, grade distributions vary so much by college that the usage and meaning of grades lack campus-wide coherence. Here are a few numbers, considering only the colleges and schools that enrolled at least 1000 students:
* In the fall of 2001, the percentage of As and Bs combined varied from a low of 53% to a high of 78%.
* In the fall of 1984, the percentage of As and Bs combined varied from a low of 34% to a high of 73%.
* In the fall of 1965, the percentage of As and Bs combined varied from a low of 42% to a high of 69%.

To some extent, in some time periods, and in some courses, a rise in grades may be justified by reference to improvement in the academic performance of students. However, the overall rise in grades has outrun such a justification.

To be sure, there has been a substantial and gratifying improvement in the academic credentials of LSU's entering students. Let's grant that the improved credentials are indeed associated with improved academic performance at LSU. But if our students are now more serious and better prepared, as indicated by an ACT Composite average of 24, then surely our duty to them is not to hold steady, or to relax, but rather to raise expectations, standards, and the quality of degree programs.
As Reference 1 points out, a rise in grades is quite unlike a rise in prices, since grades can go only so high. The effect of even a slow rise becomes important over time, since it entails the de facto use of a smaller grading range, a less meaningful set of gradations. This effect is called grade compression. In the words of the Chapel Hill report (Reference 2, page 7), the effect is that "our whole quality evaluation system becomes less meaningful."

2. The Texas Defense
Reference 3, a study of a ten-year period at the University of Texas at Austin, undertakes to explain and defend the rise in grades by reference to an improvement in students' academic performance. It assumes that standardized test scores of entering students are a satisfactory index of their academic performance, at least in the freshman year. It concludes that the rise in grades was in fact a modest response to the improved academic credentials of the student population. In the absence of more information about the UT situation, it is reasonable to say that the argument is plausible.

The UT study lets us make a comparison between UT and LSU. In the following summary, the LSU numbers come from a report dated June 26, 2002 by Sandra J. Walker (Director, Budget and Planning). The SAT scores from UT are converted to equivalent ACT scores using a table available from the College Board.

From 1986-1987 to 1995-1996,
* the average first-year GPA of freshmen at UT changed by .25 points, from 2.46 to 2.71, while
* their average ACT Composite Score increased by about 2 points, from 25 to 27;
* the average first-year GPA of freshmen at LSU changed by .30 points, from 2.46 to 2.76, while
* their average ACT Composite Score increased by 1.6 points, from 21.8 to 23.4.

No criticism of UT is intended. Suffice it to say that the Texas Defense does not work terribly well for us at LSU.

There is no data at hand from UT for the period since 1995. As for LSU:
From 1986-1987 to 2000-2001,
* the average first-year GPA of freshmen at LSU changed by .49 points, from 2.46 to 2.95 while
* their average ACT Composite Score increased by 2.2 points, from 21.8 to 24.0.

3. The Case of Calculus
There are courses at LSU in which the rise in grades has been relatively modest, and where some research and discussion might, at least partially, explain and/or
justify the change. Consider the service course Mathematics 1550, Calculus I. The percentage of grades which were As or Bs was below 30% in the late 1980s, and it is now above 40%. The academic profile of calculus students improved somewhat over the period. On the other hand, in view of the position of this course in the engineering and science curricula, the expectations in the course should have risen. It seems quite reasonable to ask whether grades in Math 1550 are a bit higher than they should be.

Also, grade distributions in 1550 vary from section to section. Many of the variations are small and probably justifiable, but the grades in a very few sections run to extremes which may indeed not be defensible. So it seems quite reasonable to ask also whether grading standards are less consistent in 1550 than they would be if the department developed and promulgated appropriate guidelines, or maybe just made new faculty more aware of the norm.

4. The North Carolina Offense
The Chapel Hill report is readable, clear, and thorough, beginning with its description of an eerily familiar situation. It deserves to be used as a reference and guide at LSU, both for its examination of the issues and for its analysis of measures that might be taken.

The Resolution being proposed to the LSU Faculty Senate takes essentially the same stance as the Resolution adopted by the UNC Faculty Council at its meeting of September 7, 2001. That is, it calls for local review and reform. It is reasonable and proper that grading practices should be conceived and understood in ways that vary by course, by discipline, and by pedagogical approach. Grading standards are necessarily a commingling of the relative and the absolute, the competitive and the fixed. As teachers, our grading policies reflect our professional convictions, our experience of classes past, and our understanding of the world for which we want our students to have sound preparation and valid credentials. Because the assignment of grades is a responsibility of individual teachers, a call for higher standards must be mediated primarily through the several and diverse judgments and actions of all LSU faculty. But it is also true that grading practices, and the policies that have a bearing thereupon, are the collective responsibility of the faculty in each academic unit, and of the University faculty as a whole. We must assure that our students are graded in a currency with a steady value.

Remarks on the Grades and Standards Resolution at the Faculty Senate Meeting of November 7, 2002
Grades are not everything. I myself did not make all As in college. I thought that those who did were showing a lack of discrimination. I had good reasons and excuses for just doing B work in Mathematical Physics, and Russian, and German Philosophy, but I recognized the higher attainments of those who got As, and I knew that my Bs were accurate marks. I'm happy for a B to be considered a
good grade. I'm content that C students often attain riches and fame. D students may become university benefactors and Trustees, and that's OK too. Grades are not everything, but they have a certain job which they ought to do.

The Resolution, first drafted in mid-summer, has evolved through discussions with 20 or so other faculty, including members of the two Faculty Senate Committees which I asked for input, ASH and Improvement of Instruction. In at least 4 colleges, some units have begun talking about grades, perhaps as a response to the Resolution. I surmise that there is something of a faculty consensus that standards at LSU, as reflected in the overall use of the grading scale, are not quite what they should be. The percentage of As is increasing each year. It's not just the overall distribution of grades that is troubling. There are large variations by academic unit. There are too-frequent cases of individual courses in which grade distributions shift by leaps and bounds in a short time.

The challenge is campus-wide and requires campus-wide recognition and leadership - in this case from the Faculty Senate. But also, the challenge has local, discipline-specific particulars, and needs to be faced, understood, and resolved locally. Accordingly, this Resolution mandates study, deliberation, and reform-as-required in each of the departments and schools. Also, it calls upon ASH to monitor and report as time goes by. The approach is the one that is already under way at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, as mandated last year by their Faculty Council.

I invite you to consider some questions. Are there pressures, albeit unspoken and unintended, to grade more and more generously? Do we give the impression to newer and less secure faculty that we do not care about grading standards? Do we forget to consider grading standards in our decisions about good teaching and programs? Shouldn't we see grading standards as a good-teaching issue? I don't ask you to endorse any answers that I might offer. Instead, let's launch a process in which there is regular systematic questioning along those lines.

We cannot safely allow the university policy on grades to erode away, nor the faculty function of evaluation and credentialling to atrophy. Continuing as they are, matters will reach a point at which the University will be deeply embarrassed, in front of all those we serve, and recovery will then be difficult and painful.

Grading standards are necessarily a commingling of the relative and the absolute, the competitive and the fixed. It is reasonable and proper that grading practices should be conceived and designed in ways that vary by course, by discipline, and by pedagogical approach. There may be those who have sincere reservations, who believe that the Resolution expresses a misguided, unnecessary, or distracting worry. To them I say, if it passes, join the discussions in the departments, use persuasion, and contribute to a thoughtful consensus. But don't expect this trend to run on, unexamined.
Because the assignment of grades is a prerogative of individual teachers, a call for higher standards must be mediated through the several and diverse judgments of individual LSU faculty. But it is also true that grading practices, and the policies that have a bearing thereupon, are the collective responsibility of the faculty in each academic unit, and of the University faculty as a whole. If we get a grip on this responsibility, it will bring credit upon LSU, and benefit all those we serve. I leave the matter in your hands.

Frequently Asked Questions
1. Question: What has happened at UNC since their Faculty Council passed the Resolution last fall?
   Response: The Provost has so far passed on reports from about 60 academic units to the Educational Policy Committee, which as of mid-October has just begun to study them. The Committee will report to the Faculty Council sometime this academic year. I'm in touch with the Committee Chair and a few other faculty in Chapel Hill, and will be glad to share what I hear from them. As of this date it's clearly too soon to say just how the process will work out.

2. Question: Grades of W—which indicate student-initiated drops from courses--are 11% of undergraduate grades at LSU. This high incidence of Ws complicates the grade-distribution picture, and the evaluation of teaching in particular. Why doesn't the Resolution address it?
   Response: I think it's probably better to address W policy separately. Grades and standards are faculty business, as purely so as anything can be. The faculty can make it a priority to improve academic standards. The complications entailed in doing so, pretty much, all reside within our classrooms.

   On the other hand, a departure from LSU's lax drop policy would require a high degree of administrative attention, decisiveness, and resolve. It might well be a good thing if faculty took a stand and urged a change. But we must realize that the high incidence of Ws is reflected substantially in the habits and assumptions not only of students, but also those of teachers, counselors, and administrators who manage resources. That makes it a different kind of problem.

3. Question: Someone said, "grade inflation will continue until we outlaw student evaluation of teaching." Do you agree?
   Response: No. This is a free country; students will talk about their teachers, and what they say will get published; we just need to deal with it. Let the students' views be gathered and disseminated as accurately and as efficiently as possible. Manage it so that the result is as fair and valid and useful as you can make it. But then, don't worry about it. We all have to take our lumps.

   If student evaluations are a cause of grade inflation, then it's because they get used improperly in the evaluation of teaching by the University--and/or because faculty, particularly young teachers and those in insecure positions, have the
impression, correct or not, that student evaluations are used largely to the exclusion of other measures of their teaching.

4. Question: What do you think about the online publication of teachers' grade distributions, by semester and course?

Response: The publication and general knowledge among faculty of the grading practices all around us is probably a necessary condition for combating grade inflation. The Resolution takes that position, and the Faculty Council at Chapel Hill agreed.

As for general publication, it seems that secrecy in this area doesn't have much of a future. We've arrived at a point where it's impossible to keep tables of our grading histories from being published, at least on paper, perhaps even online. Students are always going to trade information about hard and easy graders, there's no stopping it, so why not make accurate and complete information easily available?

Let me give you an example of how things are going. The University of Georgia's server carries a table of faculty grading histories. You can look at it through this link. If that doesn't shock you, then have a look at a student website, which allows a U.Ga. student to search for a section of a desired course in which the teacher's grading history implies that the expected GPA is at least, say, 3.5. We may be right to resist making possible a computerized search for easy graders, but I don't think these developments necessarily imply the collapse of academic standards.

5. Question: Wouldn't a change to a plus/minus grading scale do a lot to reverse grade inflation?

Response: The term refers to the use of the grades A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, B- = 2.7, C+ = 2.3, C- = 1.7, and perhaps D+ and D- in addition to A, B, C, D, and F. There are many variants on such proposals, including purely numerical scales. I've heard faculty say they think it would help against grade inflation, but I've seen no report on the experience of other institutions to support that idea. Some have changed grading scales to or from plus/minus grading, for various reasons, without appreciable effect on GPAs.

The Faculty Senate defeated such a proposal (Resolution 87-08) in March of 1988. I have a file of statements, articles, and studies from that period. A quote from that time: "The arguments that seem worth attending to are subtle and delicate. It is a question of how finely calibrated the grading scale should be, to be optimal both as a reporting system and as an incentive system." Technically and administratively, a change would be time-consuming. In any event, the issue should be dealt with separately.

6. Question: Do you agree with the Rosovsky-Hartley report that the blame lies largely with events in the sixties?
Response: No. The sixties have little bearing on what has happened at LSU in the last 15 years. It seems to me that certain policies and pronouncements have created unintended pressures to lower standards. Our leaders were not often heard reminding us to keep standards up, or stating their presumption that we were doing so. That dog didn't bark.

That remark seems a fair comment, but, finally, it doesn't work as an excuse for us. We the faculty had best accept the blame, and the responsibility now to do something.