LSU Faculty Senate Meeting
3:00 P.M., Friday, December 7th, 2007
Atchafalaya Room, LSU Union

Attendance

*Faculty Senate Executive Committee members present:*

1. Kevin L. Cope (Senate President)
2. Andrew Christie (Vice President)
3. James R. Stoner Jr. (Secretary)
4. Pratul K. Ajmera (Member-at-Large)
5. Judith Schiebout (Member-at-Large)
6. George Stanley (Member-at-Large)

Parliamentarian: Charles N Delzell (present)

*Senators present:*

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*Proxies for absent Senators:*

Hugh Buckingham for Brittan A. Barker
Linda Allen for Sue G Bartlett, Erwin D. Poliakoff
Bruce Mark Olcott for Bruce E Eilts
Vincent J. LiCata for Steve Hand, Dorothy Prowell
Kevin L. Cope for Scott W. Harris, Patsy Seates
Richard Warga for Jeremy King
Priscilla D. Allen for Jeff S. Kuehny, Maud Maureen Walsh
Charles N Delzell for Jorge F. Morales
John Fletcher for James L. Murphy
Lucie Brind’amour for Adelaide Russo
Judith Schiebout for Frederick Sheldon

*Senators absent without proxies + (# of absences without proxies):*

|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
Introduction of Guests
Guests were introduced and urged to sign in on the attendance sheet. Guests attending the December meeting included:
Astrid Merget, Provost  
Frank Cartledge, Academic Affairs  
Katrice Albert, Academic Affairs  
Marco J Barker, Academic Affairs  
Donna K Torres, Accounting Services  
Mary Parker, Admissions & Student Aid  
Guadalupe Maria Lamadrid, Admissions & Student Aid  
Hongyu He, Department of Mathematics

Consideration of the Minutes for the meeting of November 6, 2007

The minutes for the meeting of November 6, 2007, having been circulated, Senator Beth Tope moved that they be approved, Senator George Stanley added a second, and the Senate voted their approval.

President’s Report

President Kevin Cope noted a number of matters that had drawn the attention of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) or some of its officers since the last meeting. First, problems with the new Ad Astra software for assigning classrooms had been noted and were being addressed. Second, Bill Daly, past Senate President, is serving as the FSEC liaison to the LSU 150th anniversary committee. Next, Bill Grimes has agreed to serve on the committee that is reviewing self-monitoring software to allow students better to track their progress toward a degree, in a program sometimes referred to as the “Florida Plan.” Fourth, the Interdisciplinary Committee is tackling the question of tenure in interdisciplinary programs. At this point the President’s report was interrupted by the arrival of

Chancellor Sean O’Keefe

Chancellor O’Keefe arrived to speak briefly about the extension of the contract of head football coach Les Miles, whose team had just been invited to the BCS Bowl at the conclusion of a dramatic season. The Chancellor spoke of intercollegiate athletics as the “front porch from which folks see the extraordinary depth and opportunity around this campus,” and he promised to use the occasion of the national championship game to promote other things at LSU. He praised the demeanor and integrity of Coach Miles, drawing particular attention to his support for improving the academic standing of our athletes, so they leave LSU with a degree, not only memories. Chancellor O’Keefe distributed copies of the Amendment to Employment Agreement signed by the coach, which will be filed with the original of these minutes.

President’s Report (continued)

The International Education Committee is operational and conducting a survey. The president and another member of the FSEC toured the new 459 Café and pronounced it a giant step forward for student catering, including instruction in cookery as well as food to eat. As many classes are now held in the evening, the suggestion of a gated night parking area for faculty is being explored. The Program Review Committee, which coordinates outside reviews of departments and programs, has three vacancies in the social sciences; nominations are urgently sought. Architecture plans have been drawn for the South Campus at the old GSRI and for the Vet School. The Student Government Association in interested in working with our parliamentarian to develop means for joint student-faculty legislation. The Council of Faculty Advisors, made up of the Faculty Senate Presidents in the LSU system, had a productive meeting with the new system president, John Lombardi; he promised to review exigency procedures and suggested we consider whether a tuition exemption for employee family members ought to be offered as a benefit of employment at LSU. Vice-Provost Chuck Wilson gave the FSEC an excellent briefing on capital outlay planning, explaining the “facility condition index” which measures whether it is worth renovating an old building and noting how building priorities are set. Dydia DeLyser, faculty NCAA rep, alerted FSEC to the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA), and a FSEC detail was deployed to examine the advisability of joining. Finally, President Cope praised the significant improvement of tone in the administration over the previous four or five months, expressing his appreciation to Provost Merget for her role in bringing this about.
Presentation by Katrice Albert, Executive Vice-Provost for Equity, Diversity, and Community Outreach

Vice-Provost Albert made a presentation to the Senate concerning the activities of her office. Among the topics discussed were the 2006 self-assessment project; the plan to move the African-American Cultural Center and the Women’s Center into the parking structure planned for their current site; the Spring Faculty Enrichment Series; a strategic approach to diversity in recruiting and hiring; plans for the January 2008 Martin Luther King Day commemoration; community outreach among schoolchildren in Baton Rouge; and LaCASU (Louisiana Center for Addressing Substance Abuse in Collegiate Communities). She urged the Faculty Senate to be part of the diversity agenda, and in particular to go through search process protocols on her website, www.lsu.edu/diversity. In answer to a question about whether faculty diversity had improved, she cited a program for visiting professors from historically black colleges. She also noted that different colleges at the university had their own task forces, grants, and resource bases.

Presentation by Donna Torres, Associate Vice-Chancellor for Accounting Services

Donna Torres gave a brief presentation about the activities and procedure of her office, commenting on the various aspects of the transition to an automated system: not yet in place for travel, up and running in Workspace for LaCarte accounting and approvals. She drew attention to the Accounting Services Newsletter on-line and to the Travel Orientation Brochure her office distributes. In response to questions, she went into some detail about meal expenses, discount flight tickets, and several other matters.

Amy Muse, Textbook Manager, and Paul Stevenson, General Manager, LSU Union Bookstore

Paul Stevenson gave a brief presentation explaining the bookstore’s textbook ordering procedures, in particular, how they decided how many books were likely to be sold and should be ordered. He promised to work with faculty to ensure the availability of adequate numbers of books and noted that students can now preorder books on the bookstore’s website.

Old Business:

Final consideration of Faculty Senate Resolution 07-06, “Executive Committee Members’ Disclosure of Gifts received from the Administration”

With the unanimous consent of the Senators, Senator Charles Delzell, who had introduced Resolution 07-06 at the meeting of October 9 and consented to its postponement at the meeting of November 6, moved and Senator Pratul Ajmera seconded a substitute version of the Resolution as follows:

LSU Faculty Senate Resolution 07-06, substitution:
        Faculty Senators’ Disclosure of Gifts Received from the Administration
        Sponsored by Charles Delzell, Pratul Ajmera, and Larry Crumbley

        Whereas members of the Faculty Senate need to be seen as incorruptible, and
        Whereas the corrupting influence that dealings with the University administration can have
        on the integrity of a student leader was described by a recent president of the LSU Student Government,


Therefore be it resolved that the Bylaws of the LSU Faculty Senate be amended by adding a new article, numbered “Article IX,” between the current Article VIII and Article IX (and by re-numbering the current Article IX as “Article X”). The new Article IX will go into effect on August 15, 2008, and will read as follows:

Article IX. Faculty Senators’ and Executive Committee Members’ Disclosure of Gifts Received from the LSU Administration

Members of the Faculty Senate and members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee will disclose any gifts and benefits provided them by the LSU administration, by financial supporters of LSU, or by the administration's consultants or counsel. The kinds of gifts or benefits that must be disclosed include, but are not limited to:

1. invitations or tickets to athletic, artistic, or fund-raising events;
2. travel, other than for academic purposes, at the request or invitation of the administration or its financial supporters, including travel on public or private aircraft, meals, accommodations, entertainment, etc.

The Faculty Senate may from time to time further clarify and regulate the kinds of gifts and benefits that must be disclosed, and the manner of disclosure.

The substitute motion extended reporting requirements originally proposed for the members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to all Senators. After some discussion, Senator Delzell moved and Senator Ajmera seconded an amendment to the motion that would strike the word “meals” in the section numbered “2” above; this amendment passed. Considerable discussion followed as to whether faculty senators were likely to be corrupted, whether conversation with the administration would be hindered by regulation, whether an invasion of privacy would be entailed if faculty had personal friends in administration, or whether as a public institution we ought to accept public scrutiny. The amended substitute motion failed by a voice vote.

Further consideration of Faculty Senate Resolution 07-07, “Fringe Benefit Rates for Sponsored Projects”

The Senate then turned to Resolution 07-07, introduced at the meeting of October 9 and postponed on November 7. The resolution reads as follows:

LSU Faculty Senate Resolution 07–07: Fringe Benefits Rates for Sponsored Projects

Sponsored by Vincent LiCata and Steven Hand

Whereas federal and state funding agencies, when granting funds for a multi-year award, most often allocate such funds in equal yearly increments; and

Whereas the LSU Office of Finance and Administrative Services has announced a plan to apply updated, annual Fringe Benefits rates to both new and existing sponsored program accounts each year; and

Whereas the previous Fringe Benefits policy effectively “locked in” a Fringe Benefits rate for the full duration of a grant at the time of application by applying updated rates only to new applications; and

Whereas the new policy will result in a progressive decrease in the remaining portion of funds available for research with each successive year for grants allocated in equal annual increments; and

Whereas such a policy would be unintentionally detrimental to the conduct of high quality research at LSU by requiring Investigators to successively decrease the funds available in other budget categories in order to compensate for the increasing Fringe Benefits rate in addition to its associated additional indirect cost expense; and

Whereas re-instatement of the previous Fringe Benefits rate policy would make it significantly easier to budget multi-year grants, would further support the research effort of the university, and would thus contribute positively and tangibly to the LSU National Flagship Agenda;
Therefore be it resolved that the LSU Faculty Senate recommends revocation of the new Fringe Benefits policy regarding annually updated rates for existing sponsored projects, and requests a reinstatement of a Fringe Benefits policy that locks in Fringe Benefits rates for the duration of the grant at the time of application.

Senator Vincent LiCata, author of the resolution, gave a presentation comparing fringe benefit rates in grants at LSU to rates at our peer institutions, showing the LSU rate to be high in comparison to others. Associate Vice-Chancellor for Accounting Services Donna Torres, who had presented to the Senate earlier in the afternoon, suggested that complexities of accounting explained some of the apparent anomalies. With the suggestion by Provost Astrid Merget that a special committee be formed to examine the retirement issue as it bears upon the fringe benefit rate, the Senate agreed to table the motion.

Postponement of Faculty Senate Resolution 07-10, “Anonymous Hot-Line and/or Suggestion Boxes”

Time having grown short, Senator Larry Crumbley, author of resolution 07-10, introduced at the meeting of November 7, 2007, agreed to its postponement.

New Business:

Motion to Affirm a Wording Revision to Faculty Senate Resolution 06-10

Guadalupe Lamadrid of the Admissions Office presented what was described as a non-controversial adjustment to Faculty Senate Resolution 06-10, which had been approved by the Committee on Admissions, Standards, and Honors (ASH), that would raise the high school math requirement and so the total units from 18 to 19, as a result of an ACT research study contracted for by the Board of Regents, which showed that students with 18 units did far more poorly at the university than students with 19. The adjustment was accepted by a unanimous voice vote.

Adjournment

at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

James R. Stoner, Jr.
Secretary