HIGHLIGHTS FROM FACULTY SENATE MEETING
December 4, 1995

President's Report

- Comments about the Governor-elect and new members of the legislature.
- LSU has communicated primary concerns to the Foster transition team.
- The Faculty Senate Executive Committee has established regular monthly meetings with Chancellor Davis and Vice Chancellor Eaton.
- A consultant has been hired to develop a new formula for funding in higher education.
- Report on activities of Board of Regents and Board of Supervisors.
- Library funding improved with receipt of approximately $300,000.
- PS-36 and Exigency Committees to be reconvened for final consideration of documents.
- The second in the series of "white paper" reports from the Provost is scheduled for the January Senate meeting.

Old Business

Resolutions 95-01 (Drop-Withdraw policy) and 95-02 (Student counseling) were introduced by Mike Cherry. Resolution 95-03 (Repeat policy) was introduced by Ken Paxton.

MINUTES
Faculty Senate Meeting
December 4, 1995

The meeting was called to order by President Strain at 3:05 pm. Proxies were announced. Guests present included Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost William Jenkins, Lisa Harris, Director of Admissions, Carol Barry, Chair of Courses & Curricula, Alan Fletcher, Chair of ASH, Louis Day (Mass Communication), Jayme Marler (LSU Today), Mary Boudreaux (Staff Senate), Robert Doolos, Director of Records & Registration and Neil Kestner (Chemistry). The minutes of the November 3 meeting were moved and approved.

President's Report:

President Strain commented that although it is probably too soon to become optimistic about potential changes and future prospects in the state, very positive vibrations are being received and what has been seen thus far looks promising from the governor-elect. Foster intends to push a constitutional amendment to protect higher education funding. He also hopes to bring salaries to the SREB average in the next few years. Foster has said that higher education is the only part of state government that is not to be cut. It is also very encouraging that most, if not all, of Foster's appointments so far are LSU alumni and/or very strong LSU supporters. Strain also added that many of the newly elected legislators, although fiscally conservative, indicate higher education as a priority. Much of this information was gleaned from an informal discussion held recently between members AAUP and Chuck McMains. The transition team is currently housed in Pleasant Hall and at least one LSU representative has been asked to serve on the higher education transition team.
Strain noted that the LSU administration has communicated to the Foster transition team their concerns, which include constitutional protection for higher education on a par with other state agencies; funding for mandated expenditures; continuation funding consistent with other agencies; higher education funding formula; dedication of funds for deferred maintenance; implement funding source to ensure incremental increases in faculty salaries; indexing tuition; and developing a community college within existing facilities. President Strain also mentioned that the first person selected to be Chancellor of the Baton Rouge Community College accepted, then rejected the offer. The Community College is scheduled to open in the fall of 1997.

Strain reported that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) has established a schedule of regular monthly meetings with Chancellor Davis and Vice Chancellor Eaton in addition to their bimonthly meetings with the Provost and solicited input from the Senators on topics they would like brought up. The FSEC’s first meeting with Vice Chancellor Eaton, November 21, focused mostly on the problem of cost sharing. This is required by LEQSF and many federal agencies, but the University essentially has no funds for this. Eaton will suggest to LEQSF that funds be set aside for cost sharing with federal agencies, which would be consistent with LEQSF guidelines. Another possibility is to have the LSU Foundation establish such a fund. Donors could then be solicited to make contributions to the fund, thus providing a source of matching funds. Strain said that he would be setting up a meeting on this with Eaton and Cecil Philips, Director of the LSU Foundation. Also discussed in the meeting with Eaton was how allegations of misconduct in research are being handled. The FSEC will also be discussing with Eaton the establishment of a uniform campus-wide policy on overhead return.

President Strain also reported that the Board of Regents is hiring a consultant from Florida to help devise a new higher education formula for using money appropriated by the Legislature. This consultant will be working with the presidents of the three Louisiana systems, Copping, Calliet and Spikes, and at least one staff member from each system. Strain indicated his hope to convene an organizational meeting of the Board of Regents Faculty Advisory Council soon, and said that he would seek to provide faculty perspective input to this committee.

Next President Strain noted that the December 8 meeting of the Board of Supervisors will be followed by a joint meeting of the LSU and SU Boards, which is a requirement of the Desegregation Lawsuit settlement. On the agenda for the Board of Supervisors meeting is approval for a new joint LSU-SU BS in International Studies, which will be housed in the LSU College of Arts & Sciences. Also up for approval in principle is re-establishment of all of the BS degrees in education that were dropped several years ago when the Holmes Program was established to grant MS degrees in education after completion of a BS in math, chemistry, English, etc. Each of the individual degree programs will have to go through our Courses & Curricula Committee before approval. Approval in principle by the Board is to ensure that the Board is agreeable before investing the effort to obtain campus approval.

President Strain also reported that Library funding has made progress. The Athletic Department is turning over funds (approx. $125,000) from spring semester student athletic fees, combined with additional funds from Office of Research to total over $300,000 which is already being spent by the Library.

President Strain announced that the Provost would be reconvening the PS-36 and Exigency Committees now that all comments have been received and also that a proposed policy for dealing with dismissal for cause is under development so that those rare cases where this does occur will be handled consistently and equitably. Both committees’ final reports will be brought back to the Senate for approval when finalized. Strain also announced that the Provost was in the process of setting up search committees to find replacements for Eddie McLaughlin of Engineering and Ken Carpenter of Design, both of whom have announced plans to step down as Dean.

President Strain also reported that the University Strategic Planning Committee has been reactivated, but with a much smaller number of members, including John Collier and himself as faculty representatives.

Finally, President Strain announced that Provost Jenkins would be presenting his second of three White Papers at the January 12 Senate meeting. That presentation will address proposed reorganization of the academic side of the University. The Provost has also requested approval to meet with several of the Senate’s standing committees in an effort to maintain open lines of communication. The FSEC encouraged him to do so.
Old Business:

Senator Mike Cherry introduced Resolutions 95-01 and 95-02. These resolutions were based on the final report of the Admissions, Standards and Honors Committee. Both the final report and copies of the resolutions were distributed to Senators prior to the meeting. Also included in the mailing was a minority report drafted by a member of the ASH committee. President Strain noted that these resolutions had also been distributed by mail to the Senators and that by parliamentary procedure a resolution from a committee would not require a second.

Cherry described the four points in Resolution 95-01 as basically those in the Summary of the ASH recommendations that was distributed last month in Alan Fletcher’s interim report to the Senate, noting that this resolution only addresses the university’s drop/withdraw policy. Senator Cherry said that the ASH Committee was not recommending that a repeat/delete policy be implemented.

According to Senator Cherry, the ASH Committee recognized the need for students to be encouraged to do some experimenting with their choice of courses. The committee felt that because they were suggesting a bit of tightening up on the drop/withdraw policies, they would like to compensate by suggesting that the university seriously consider expanding its current pass fail option to all students so that they could do some experimenting and take some legitimate risks with their course selection. Acknowledging that the Pass/Fail concern did not really fall within the strict purview of the ASH Committee, Senator Cherry indicated there was a strong educational need for it, while also recognizing that it would also require further discussion. So, Resolution 95-02 first suggests that another committee be set up to deal with the ramifications of Pass/Fail. In addition to that, Resolution 95-02 asks that this committee discuss some extension of our current procedures for advising students. This advising component was included because students do sometimes run into trouble and have difficulties which may or may not have to do with their courses. Rather than institute a Repeat/Delete Policy which just addresses the issues of grades, the committee felt, that if a student really has problems, what really needs to be done is to identify those problems and get help for those students on an individual basis. So, one of the committee’s goals in Resolution 95-02 was to expand the university’s advising capabilities and get the students to come and talk to advisors and deal with their problems on an individual basis.

President Strain commented that, if Resolution 95-02 passes and a new committee is set up to examine these issues, there may be some problems with allowing students to change from a Pass/Fail to a letter grade on the last day of the semester, noting that Director of Records & Registration, Robert Doolos, viewed this as problematic since grade sheets are printed and mailed out a week or so before the end of the semester. In addition, it would also be difficult to block a student from registering if they have D’s and F’s until they’ve been advised due to the advance billing system. Under this system, students register and pay their fees well before the end of the semester. Cherry responded that the ASH Committee recognized that there were technical difficulties which would need to be addressed.

Senator Wade Dorman asked Senator Cherry if the committee has compared any relationship between class size and drops. Cherry said that he didn’t believe this had been done (Robert Doolos and Alan Fletcher also indicated that it had not been done). President Strain then reported that he has heard that a large percentage of drops come from within certain disciplines and certain courses on campus. He added that this may be something worth examining.

President Strain stated that the ASH Committee Report recommended that there be no change in the current repeat policy. However, he also called attention to the Minority Report which came out of that committee and which also had been distributed by mail to the Senators. Strain then said that partly because of this Minority Report and partly because of the fact that the Senate has never actually seen the “nuts and bolts” of some of the proposals that have been made on ‘repeat policies’, he, with the help of some others, drafted Resolution 95-03 so at least this issue could be brought to the Senate floor to discuss what has been proposed. Ken Paxton then moved the introduction of Resolution 95-03 for discussion. The motion was seconded. Senator Wharton asked if this would bypass the ASH Committee’s recommendations completely. President Strain responded that if it is passed, the new resolution would bypass the ASH Committee’s recommendations. Strain asked if there were any questions from the floor on Resolution 95-03.

President Strain explained that the earlier suggested proposals made in past years by different student groups were pretty much “no holes barred” type suggestions such as (1) to drop grades from transcripts; (2) to allow unlimited numbers of repeats and (3) to allow repeats on any level course from 1000 to 4000. However, this year’s discussions with Eric Monday, the current SGA president, indicated that he was agreeable to this very reduced proposed policy which included a maximum of 9 hours of work which could be repeated for credit and it would have to be at the 1000-2000 level, with only grades of “D” and “F” to be repeated, and the calculated GPA with the deleted grade not to be used in the determination of Honors. In this
proposal, the grades would not be removed from the transcript, but instead, there would be an indication of some sort to the right somewhere of the 1st take to indicate that the course was repeated later. President Strain said that this policy proposal in Resolution 95-03 was a very stripped down, minimal suggestion of what could be done.

Senator Mike Cherry then added a closing remark pointing out that the ASH Committee did consider Repeat/Delete in 'excruciating detail' and a lot of those discussions and arguments are included in that ASH Committee Report. But rather than just go down the individual items and try to address each of those, Senator Cherry encouraged everyone to take a look at that ASH Report, stating that most of the specifics in Resolution 95-03 were addressed in that ASH Report. He concluded by saying that this resolution was not going to help any, and in fact, it was a 180 degree turn opposed to what the committee has voted against now for the third time now.

Senator Dan Yannitel commended Alan Fletcher and the rest of that committee for writing a very fine report with very good suggestions. President Strain also endorsed that comment and added that the ASH Committee has worked very hard on this, moving very expeditiously with weekly meetings and their efforts were very much appreciated.

President Strain announced that the 2nd item of old business to be discussed was the proposed curriculum change from the Manship School of Mass Communication. The issues from both Mass Communication and the Courses & Curricula Committee were heard at the November Senate meeting.

Senator John Collier raised questions concerning the availability of suggested electives for specified career paths and who approves electives taken by students. Day responded that Mass Comm does not have lists of approved electives for alternative career paths. He indicated that given the number of alternative paths, it would be impossible to have a set of electives for each. He then cited specific examples to illustrate his point.

Senator Moore then asked Carol Barry if there was a more simple, less drastic mechanism to accomplish some of the same goals that they wished to achieve. Carol Barry responded that depending of which area of concentration the student goes into, most only require 15 hours for a minor and she didn’t see a problem with the Mass Comm students not being able to complete a minor within the current curriculum.

John Collier then moved to postpone action on this matter until the January meeting and asked Mass Communications to come back with a proposal to address having more faculty control over the selection of electives by the Mass Comm students. Senator Batinski seconded the motion. Senator J. Collier said that he was very impressed with what Mass Comm was trying to do with their curriculum. However, he felt that the curricula are the purview of the faculty and the current proposal has no mechanism to ensure faculty control.

There being no additional discussion, a vote was taken and the motion passed.

There was no additional business brought before the Senate and the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 pm.

Respectively Submitted

Kenneth W. Paxton
Secretary