President's Report
- Announced Faculty Senate home page through LSU home page.
- Reported on proposed pay raise and faculty concerns with funding.
- Discussed Executive Committee meeting with Chancellor Davis in response to Senate Library Committee letter to faculty, an anonymous letter expressing extreme dissatisfaction with upper administration, and other matters of concern.
- Provost plans to periodically send a letter to faculty to improve communication.
- December meeting will be at the Lod Cook Alumni Center, Abell Board Room.

Invited Guest
Provost Jenkins’ presentation on “Personal Reflections on Possible Future Directions for Our Academic Programs,” the first in a series. He invites feedback.

Old Business
Interim Report by Alan Fletcher, Chair, Admissions, Standards, and Honors Committee

New Business
Mass Communications appeal to change curriculum: Louis Day, Mass Communications; Carol Berry Chair, Courses and Curricula.
• $500K from freezing filling positions as much as possible for the rest of the year
• Remainder from other temporary cost-saving measures, mostly end-of-year funds from purchases that do not arrive by June 30.

Funding for 1996-97 is proposed to come from the following:
• $400K from same set-aside as 1995-96
• $500K from the same tuition income increases from retention and increased enrollment which leaves
• $1.7M from sources yet to be identified (increased state appropriations, tuition rate increase, etc.

This final amount concerns the Executive Committee most because it will become necessary to make cuts from within the existing budget to annualize the pay raises if other sources of funding do not become available. The Committee expressed concern to the Chancellor that cuts should not impact filling vacant faculty positions. The Chancellor believes the raise is absolutely necessary for faculty. The Administration is waiting to learn the impact of the passage of Constitutional Amendment #6. Strain took a straw poll to see how many Senators would still endorse the raise knowing there might be problems finding the funds next July. No one indicated support.

Next, Strain discussed a letter from the Senate Library Committee, sent to all faculty, encouraging them to contact the Chancellor by telephone or fax to express their concern over the lack of funding mentioned in the letter. The Chancellor responded with a letter that was distributed to the Senators for their faculty showing the intent of the Administration to provide year-end funds when extra funding was available. He also indicated that there have been plans since the budget was approved by the Budget Committee last summer to provide library funding in the Spring semester.

Strain reported that the Executive Committee had received an anonymous resolution expressing extreme dissatisfaction with the Chancellor’s performance. The Executive Committee conferred with the Provost, then met as an invited group with the Chancellor on Wednesday, November 1, to discuss the library issue, faculty complaints, and other issues. The discussion was frank and the Chancellor agreed to meet with the Executive Committee every four to six weeks. To help with disseminating information the Provost, also in attendance at the meeting, offered to periodically publish a newsletter to faculty. Strain requested that Senators forward concerns to the Executive Committee.

The December meeting will be held at the Lod Cook Assembly Center in the Abell Board Room.

Provost Jenkins’ Presentation

Provost Jenkins delivered what he hopes will be the first in a series of papers to the faculty regarding his reflections on the future directions of the academic programs at LSU. He repeatedly stated that he needed the cooperation, support and input of all segments of the university, including the faculty. (The transcript of his talk and copies of the handout he distributed are available in the Faculty Senate office.) During the past three years he has gotten to understand the workings of the campus better, including policy issues, budgetary concerns, and the relations with bodies outside the university. He expressed regret at not being able to dwell on issues of entrepreneurship and academic ventures because of the fiscal issues that dominate the scene. He stated that the opinions are his own. He also wants to work in concert with all the planning groups on campus including the Strategic Planning Committee and programmatic planning groups. He is extremely concerned that we address the SACS recommendation to address institutional effectiveness in a demonstrable way.

Vice Chancellor Jenkins began by stating twenty “assumptions.” Even at the national level he sees no more than the status quo in financial support. There will be more off-campus students and more accountability as to how we know if students are learning, with electronic delivery of information increasing in importance. Such accountability will require that the university reallocate its resources, financial and human. There will be tuition increases, with federal support decreasing. Times of course offerings will need to fluctuate to accommodate demand. Interdisciplinary efforts will be demanded and public confidence in our institution will need to be sustained. Students will need to be more conveniently accommodated and the Board and Regents will need to be appeased. There will be more part-time/adjunct faculty and more outsourcing of services.

Provost Jenkins then presented several assumptions over the next five year period. The first concerned the hope for a minimum 3% continuation budget with other adjustments for salary adjustments and deferred maintenance. The second regarded more accountability and articulation agreements regarding duplicate programs, regarding vocational/technical programs, and retention and graduation rates. Regarding the potential Baton Rouge Community College Provost Jenkins said we would feel the initial impact of their enrollment but would then regain many of the transfer students back in LSU. Constitutional Amendment #6 not withstanding, Provost Jenkins foresees more student assessments for laboratory and library
fees, for example. Jenkins sees an increase in scholarships and a decrease in tuition waivers. Finally, he foresees that students will demand and partake of more innovative options and scheduling for their programs.

Provost Jenkins indicated ways we can respond to the fiscal challenge:

- Increased enrollment of fee-paying students without offsetting increased expenditures,
- Modest tuition increases with fees for laboratories, library, etc.
- Continuing Education and other extension and outreach programs, increasing LSU’s visibility in the community,
- Gaining modified salary savings by charging portions of salaries to grants,
- Increased private funding to support scholarships, professorships, equipment acquisition, physical facilities, etc., and
- More entrepreneurial enterprises.

Vice-Chancellor Jenkins then suggested ways to decrease expenditures:

- Increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness even more wherever possible,
- Some faculty and staff reductions,
- As painful as it is, reduce graduate student fellowships and assistantships,
- Increase faculty workloads about 10%, adding there must be a tangible reward for the additional workload, and
- The alliance with business and industry with the acquisition of equipment or services.

Provost Jenkins believes we need to be a learning centered institution. He offered the following comments regarding student related issues:

- As a fiscal matter we need to recruit more students,
- With the introduction of a 2.3 GPA admissions requirement, we need to retain more students and assure that especially first year students become “joiners,”
- We should have a Freshman College,
- We need more faculty to volunteer for counseling and advising, and
- We need to consider weekend and evening classes and take advantage of more electronic delivery systems.

Jenkins believes we must have a more faculty-supportive environment to faculty can attain his/her potential. He offered the following scenarios.

- The number of FTE faculty will be reduced by 100, yielding $5M annually to be redistributed to programs selected for enhanced funding,
- The number of support staff will decrease by 50 with a salary savings of $1.5M,
- Salary adjustments should be made for faculty assuming additional responsibilities,
- Public outreach endeavors by faculty must be conducted to benefit the home department and LSU,
- Faculty should charge a portion of their salaries in grant and contract proposals, and
- Faculty should independently explore ways and means to increase support.

Provost Jenkins stated that LSU currently has 73 bachelor’s degrees, 77 master’s degrees, and 56 doctoral degrees. In the future, outstanding programs in the graduate programs will need to be supported with reduced support in others. Most of the undergraduate program will need to be retained. He suggested reallocating $1M/year by overlapping or eliminating programs. A number of measures, which he articulated, will be used in this decision-making process. Programmatic review will continue. Reducing doctoral programs would not initially provide great cost savings but would protect from elimination as a low-completer or less than competitive program. The future of academic successes will depend in part on interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary programs perhaps with alliances with federal and state agencies or business and industry, such as a university-wide environmental sciences program. Cooperation and collaboration are ideal. Some administrative units will also have to be reduced to effect cost savings.

Provost Jenkins concluded by saying this is only the beginning of the discussions he envisions. Ultimately some action must be taken and he is welcome to input. He then entertained several questions and invited others when he returns in a couple of months.

Senator John Collier wanted more assurance about faculty incentives for added workloads. He suggested some bureaucratic measures could be reduced with the university making more data available to faculty electronically (as in filling out forms for grants, budget figures, etc.). Regarding faculty advising, Collier thought it should be in the respective colleges from the beginning, instead of “arrow” structures. The Provost agreed with his first two comments.

A question was raised as to how the Provost wanted feedback. The Vice-Chancellor said the Senate could decide and that he would also receive individual responses. President Strain told the Senators it was their responsibility to provide feedback.
and asked for copies to assist the Executive Committee in its deliberations with the Provost and to have the Committee and Council on Policy Committee continue representing those positions for the constituents.

Old Business

President Strain said that last month the Senate voted to have the Admissions, Standards, and Honors Committee take a fresh look at the issues of having a course repeat and suspend policy and a revision of the withdrawal policy. Chair Alan Fletcher then presented an interim report for the Committee which was also distributed to the Senators. He said feedback could also be given to committee members. Lisa Harris and Robert Doolos have also provided input.

Fletcher said this was the third time the Committee has looked at this policy. He said the issues of “grades” was not the focus of their deliberations but the questions, “How will new policies affect the quality of education? How will they benefit our students? and How will they enable us to produce better qualified students?”

Regarding the drop policy, there are already mechanisms in place whereby a student can drop a course, usually for legitimate reasons, sometimes frivolous. The problem is excessive drops and drops that happen so late in the semester others cannot add and faculty resources have been wasted on grading papers for students no longer in their classes. Data collected by the committee, indicated that last Spring about 18% of the seniors had never dropped a course at LSU and about 29% dropped only one course. The mean number of courses dropped by students dropping courses during their college career was 5.1.

The tentative proposal suggests that if a student drops a course after the first week s/he would receive a “W,” for the record. The final date for dropping a course and receiving a “W” would be the 14th day. The final date for adding a course would be the 9th day of class, allowing students to sit in classes in case there are drops. To withdraw from more than one class in a semester the Committee recommends the student receive prior approval from an advisor for counseling. No student could receive more than five “W’s” during their academic career at LSU. Students could take a course “Pass/Fail” to “shop around.” There should be an option for them to go from a “P” to an “A” if that is what they’ve earned credit for. The Committee hopes to complete its report next month.

New Business

President Strain distributed copies of the charge of the Courses and Curricula Committee that details the appeal process a department may use if the Committee disapproves a request for a change in its curricula.

Louis Day addressed the Senate for the Manship School of Mass Communications. The proposal includes the reduction of the foreign language requirement from 4 courses to 2 and the replacement of the 6 hour literature general education requirement with a 6 hour block that students could use to take any of the general education courses in the humanities. The change would afford greater flexibility to students in fulfilling their humanities requirements. The change in reducing the number of foreign language courses, the rationale was to provide students with more opportunities to pursue minors outside the traditional liberal arts and sciences areas which would help make the students more marketable. Day distributed a handout detailing the issues. He said the changes: would conform to university academic policies and regulations, are consistent with the practice in other academic units on campus and with curricula in mass communications at peer institutions, and in conformity with accreditation guidelines. The changes would not lower standards.

Carol Barry, Chair of Courses and Curricula indicated that the current proposal from Mass Comm reduces the number of foreign language requirements from 13 to 8-10 semester hours. She outlined some of the background on this issue and concerns of the committee. The committee felt that curriculum requirements were being reduced to accommodate minors. Barry indicated that representatives from Mass Comm visited with the committee to address committee concerns. After careful deliberation, the committee voted to reject the proposal. Barry answered questions about the proposal and committee actions from the Senate. After some discussion of the matter, Senator DeCaro moved to postpone the vote until the December meeting. The motion, which indicated a vote by secret ballot, passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Wittkopf, Member-at-Large
Recorder