HIGHLIGHTS FROM FACULTY SENATE MEETING
October 5, 1995

President's Report
- Distributed current list of senators and committee assignments
- Reported on first unofficial meeting of LSU Board of Supervisors' Faculty Advisory Council. LSU System will be reinstituting an old form used to report how faculty time was distributed.
- Reported on meeting of Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates (ALFS). Strain was elected president and now is a member of the Board of Regents' Faculty Advisory Council.
- Reported on Board of Supervisors' meeting. Chancellors have been asked to look at the number of hours required to complete degree requirements to examine the possibility of reducing those requirements.
- A new policy on network publishing is being proposed by the Office of the Executive Vice-Chancellor.
- Strain is serving as chair of committee to draft a policy statement on student evaluation of instruction.
- The advisory committee for CAMD is being organized and will begin work soon.
- Reported on forums for political candidates held at SLU and LSU.

- Proposed financial exigency document discussed. No action taken.
- The PS-36 document distributed at the September meeting was discussed. No action taken
- Provost Jenkins will begin presenting his “white papers” at the next Senate meeting.

MINUTES
Faculty Senate Meeting
October 5, 1995

The meeting was called to order by President Strain at 3:05 p.m. Guests present included Dan Fogel (Associate Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs), Jayme Marler (LSU Today), Pat Lipscomb (Honors College), and Advocate reporter, Doug Meyers. Minutes from the September meeting were moved and approved.

President's Report

A complete listing of all senators and Faculty Senate standing committee memberships was distributed to the Senators. Strain announced that Paul Schilling had been elected to fill the CAMD vacancy and also noted the new representative in Arts and Sciences, replacing Annamarie Davis, was Nels Anderson from Theater. Other changes recognized due to sabbatical included Victor Stater being replaced by Charles Shindo and James Stoner replaced by Mark Gasiorskiwi. Strain indicated that the Senator who was the Parliamentarian for the Senate was on sabbatical leave and asked if anyone would be willing to serve in this capacity.

The LSU Board of Supervisors' Faculty Advisory Council began its unofficial meetings Thursday, September 28. Officers elected were Gary Allen of UNO as president and George Strain as vice president. Because the Faculty Advisory
Council has not yet received approval from the Council of Chief Academic Officers and the full Board of Supervisors, they are meeting each month unofficially before the Board of Supervisors' meeting with System Vice President, Doug Braymer. One item that came up was that the LSU System will be restructuring a form used years ago to report how faculty time was distributed. On this form, each year faculty reported the percent of time they spent working in each category of activity, i.e., teaching, research, service, etc. Strain said that this was initiated in response to pressure from the legislature and elsewhere for accountability and preemptive to what may be proposed by the Board of Regents who are currently studying the issue. Several years ago, the legislature actually established a Commission of Accountability in Higher Education. Strain served on the subcommittee that made recommendations to this commission relating to faculty affairs. Strain said that he hopes to track these recommendations and possibly be able to influence what happens so the amount of red tape that LSU faculty have to deal with can be minimized.

Next, Strain reported on the Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates (ALFS) meeting on September 30, in Alexandria. ALFS is the statewide organization of representatives from each state-funded school in Louisiana that tries to address issues affecting all the campuses. George Strain was elected President, which automatically makes him one of the four members of the Louisiana Board of Regents' Faculty Advisory Council. Strain noted that LSU faculty will continue to have good input to the extent that we are allowed to do so on the different management boards. One of the issues that concerns ALFS is a Congressional proposal by Senator Nancy Kasselbaum to apply an 0.85% tax on all federal student loan dollars funds to institutions of higher education in return for keeping some funds in the budget. Strain said that LSU students do not make much use of this category of loan money, but it does affect some of our students and many on other Louisiana campuses. In order to protect those institutions that do have these students, Strain will be contacting our congressional delegation to express opposition to this. ALFS also continues to seek better representation of faculty on the management boards.

Strain also reported that at the last LSU Board of Supervisors' meeting, John Williams of Monroe expressed concern about the increase in the number of hours required in some curricula to complete an undergraduate degree. This is a concern because of its effect on the time and cost required to graduate. Williams asked President Copping to ask the chancellors to report on what could be done to reduce the number of hours. The Senate Executive Committee has been working on this for about six months and has received recommendations from the Council of Policy Committees and the Courses & Curricula Committee. A letter was sent out the week of October 2 from Strain and Associate Vice-Chancellor Fogel to the deans asking that faculty be surveyed to see what can be done. The minimum number of hours required for an undergraduate degree is 128 hours, or a load of 16 hours/semester for four years. However, some programs in education, engineering, and human ecology are well beyond the 128 hour minimum. Some programs, such as architecture, are explicitly intended to take five years, and some are affected by outside factors such as accreditation requirements. Strain said that the Senators would hear more about this in the future.

The Office of the Executive Vice-Chancellor is proposing a policy statement on network publishing that will provide guidelines for official University home pages as well as private home pages based on the University network. The Executive Committee is in the process of reviewing this policy statement.

Strain announced that he was chairing a committee charged with drafting a policy statement on student evaluation of instruction. This was initiated in response to criticism from the SACS reaccreditation report that criticized a lack of uniform use of evaluations in graduate courses. According to Strain, there is an unwritten policy that undergraduate courses should be doing this as well. The draft will propose a requirement of evaluations in all undergraduate, graduate, and professional courses, as long as student confidentiality can be guaranteed. The SACS team felt that LSU should have a uniform policy for administering these evaluations. Strain then said that the committee felt the need to formalize this as a policy statement that will be available to everyone, rather than just issue a memo that could get lost in five years. Strain said this is appropriate since annual performance evaluations, promotion and tenure evaluations, and graduate faculty nominations all require assessment of instruction. He said that he would keep the faculty updated on committee work.

An advisory committee on future directions for the CAMD facility has been organized and Erwin Poliakoff will convene the first meeting of this group.

Sally Clausen, President of Southeastern Louisiana University, organized a gubernatorial candidates' forum on higher education that was held Monday, September 25, at the SLU University Center in Hammond. Another forum was held at the Board of Regents' meeting on September 28. According to Strain, these candidates' forums demonstrated how little many of them actually understand higher education and the problems it faces. Strain said that several of the candidates support a single higher education board, which he feels would be very bad for LSU, based on his observations of the politicization of the Board of Regents. Other candidates think they can find sufficient funds for higher education by eliminating "duplication." Strain encouraged the Senators to become informed about the views of the candidates and to participate in the election process. The Hammond forum will be broadcast on Public Television in the near future.
There was also a forum for senatorial candidates organized by the AAUP and sponsored by the Faculty Senate held on Tuesday, October 3. Strain noted that most of the attendees were from the outside community rather than LSU faculty and staff. The debate was between the two senatorial candidates from LSU’s District 17—Tom Greene and J. E. Jumonville. Strain indicated that the debate was educational and the Senate will continue to sponsor other such events in the future.

The Faculty Senate home page should be up within a week. Everything is now complete with the selection of our last senators, said Strain. The Faculty Senate home page will be accessible from the LSU home page.

Old Business

At last month’s Senate meeting, a proposed policy on financial exigency was distributed. Strain, John Collier, and Erwin Poliakoff were the faculty members on the committee that developed the proposal. The Bylaws of the Board of Supervisors contain an exigency policy, but it does not spell out for a given campus the steps leading up to a declaration of exigency. Therefore, this is not a policy for its implementation. The proposed policy has been approved by the Provost and Chancellor. However, because the Council of Deans and Directors has proposed substantial changes in scope to include the domains of all Vice-Chancellors (not just the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs), Strain noted that there are likely to be more revisions before a final version is ready for the Senate’s approval. Because of this, Strain suggested to the Senators that they just discuss the proposal and collect comments to be conveyed to the Provost. There were no objections on this, and the floor was opened for discussion.

Patrick Lipscomb raised the question of whether or not the LSU Board of Supervisors would accept our own declaration of financial exigency within the LSU campus, since their Bylaws contain an exigency policy for the entire LSU System.

Strain indicated that he thought the answer was yes, because two years ago the Agricultural Center declared exigency while the main campus did not. Dan Fogel, who chaired the committee, was asked if they had addressed the question of partial exigency for the campus.

Fogel indicated that the document attempts to provide a mechanism for deliberations within the campus to make a recommendation to the Chancellor. The Chancellor would have to carry forward any exigency decision or his handling of any recommendation to the System and, at this point, the Board of Supervisors and their guidelines would presumably apply.

The question of partial exigency is not addressed in the present document and perhaps it should be addressed. Strain said that this would be suggested to the Provost for consideration.

Strain then added that, due to the extent of recommended changes from the Dean and Directors, the committee would be reconvened to revise the exigency document. He also emphasized that the Faculty Senate would continue to insist that there be a majority of faculty represented on the committee that does all the decision making up to the point where the Chancellor has to make the final decision. Currently, the committee does not include representation from the Vice-Chancellor for Research and Economic Development’s part of campus. The makeup of the advisory committee would have to grow to accommodate representation from this segment.

Strain noted that the proposed PS-36 revision was also distributed at the September Senate meeting. He gave a brief description of PS-36 as the University Policy Statement that deals with hiring, reappointment, nonreappointment, promotion, tenure, and evaluation of performance. The committee that put this proposed revision together included as faculty Billy Collier, Connie Van Fleet, Ralph Kinney, and Ken Carpenter, who served as chair. The major thrust of their revision was to change PS-36 into a more consistent and user friendly document and also to deal with the small number of issues that have cropped up since the most recent version issued in 1991. One of the major issues addressed was not allowing reappointment reviews as a means of precluding pretenure reviews. Strain said that in some areas of campus, faculty were coming up for their sixth year reappointment review when they should have been going into a pretenure review. However, just before that time, the department elected to do a reappointment review and chose not to reappoint; so the faculty member in the tenure track position was not allowed to come up for the full-blown tenure evaluation including outside evaluations. Strain then opened the floor for discussion and comments.

Senator Frank deCaro questioned the reasoning behind the statement on page 5, lines 8-11 that reads: “The misapplication or failure to follow any specific provision of this policy statement should not be grounds for setting aside or modifying any employment decision when it has been determined by appropriate administrative authority that the decision was fairly made and in the best interest of the University.”

Senator Billie Collier responded that the committee did not address specific legal issues of the document. Strain also indicated that the PS-36 committee has made a request to the Provost that a separate policy document be developed on how “Dismissal for Cause” should be handled, noting that the last few cases occurring within the last 5-10 years have been done on an ad hoc basis because there have been no guidelines to follow.
Senator Stephen Beck questioned the use of the term "collegiality" (page 6, line 21) as a criteria for evaluating academic performance. He expressed concern that "collegiality" was too vague and subject to many interpretations. Therefore, he suggested that the word "collegiality" be replaced with a more specific, definable term. After some additional discussion, it was agreed to ask the committee to consider a replacement for the term collegiality, recognizing that a more suitable term might not be found.

Senator Jeff Moore questioned the intent of the statement "...no new reviews in the 5th year." He indicated that this might have consequences not originally intended by the committee.

Collier indicated that in some instances on campus, reappointment reviews were being used in place of pretenure reviews. Strain indicated that the intent of this PS-36 revision was to ensure that the reappointment review not be used as a way of subverting the opportunity for a faculty member to go through the full promotion and tenure evaluation that includes outside evaluations.

Senator Kinney said that faculty can be reviewed for reappointment in the second and third years and maybe the committee should look at these side effects again. He suggested including this item in the report back to the Provost on the document.

Senator Seth Johnson raised a question about whether or not guidelines pertaining to visiting professors and nontenure-track faculty should be included as part of this document.

Strain responded that issues relating to nontenure-track faculty were being addressed by another committee and perhaps this item was more appropriate for that committee. He also indicated there was an effort to establish a track for nontenure or teaching-only faculty. Johnson requested that it be addressed in the Senate report to the Provost.

Patrick Lipscomb spoke in support of an earlier statement by deCaro regarding the statement on page 5, lines 8-11. His concern was that this statement seems to marginalize the role of the Faculty Senate Grievance Committee.

Strain indicated that the Faculty Senate Grievance Committee can decide what they feel is appropriate to consider. Therefore, this verbiage should not unduly restrict the Grievance Committee in what it would consider. Further, there have been no incidents in which the administration has gone against the recommendations of the committee. Its word carries considerable weight with the administration. Strain indicated that the Provost would be informed that the wording in this section seems to allow ignoring procedural errors, and the Senate feels that this may damage due process.

Fogel commented that the intention was to protect all legally enforceable rights that pertain to individuals and the institution outside the domain of the policy. Examples of these enforceable rights include the right of an employee to sue under state codes for "breach of contract" or under federal laws for "deprivation of civil rights."

Strain indicated that it is important for the wording to be changed so that the intent and the wording are consistent. Once the policy becomes official, whatever the intent was originally is lost and the legal interpretation of the policy becomes the way it is enforced.

Strain summed up comments on PS-36 by saying that the University has made great strides during the last 10 to 15 years in developing as a research institution. Given the progress in this area, it is appropriate to now put additional emphasis on improving our teaching component. This does not necessarily detract from our research excellence and achievement. Strain said that was the intent of this committee, as they included more specific items that could be considered for excellence in teaching, research, and service.

Strain said that he would compile a report to be presented back to the Provost with the concerns raised at this meeting. He, then, reminded the Senate that when both documents—the Financial Exigency Document and the PS-36 Revision—had been revised in accordance with the comments from various constituents, they would be brought back to the Senate for concurrence.

New Business

Strain informed the Senate that Provost Jenkins would be the guest speaker at the November 3rd Senate meeting to discuss his proposals for reinventing the academic portion of LSU. He will start presenting his “White Papers” on how he thinks the University could be changed to better deal with student and faculty issues.

Strain asked if there was any other new business. There being none, a motion to adjourn was moved and seconded. Motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 4 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth W. Paxton
Secretary