Minutes of the Called Faculty Senate Meeting
29 September, 1992

1. Welcome to Senators and Visitors. President Pat Culbertson called the meeting to order at 1:33 P.M. Visitors and senators were welcomed and reminded to sign the rosters as they circulated around the room.

The following proxies were recognized:
Patrick McGee for Malcolm Richardson
Douglas Rossman for David Good
Maren Regsted for Billie Collier
Gary Rice for Donna Mealey

2. President's Report. President Culbertson presented some background information on matters pertaining to the university's financial problems and related activities. Among the points made were:
-- One of the avenues for dealing with the current situation is with tuition increases. For every $100 increase in tuition, the anticipated revenue is $1.6 million.
-- Tax increases and dedicated funding are other avenues that should be explored.
-- The current situation is fluid and changing, thus changing recommendations are to be expected.
-- The Senate Executive Committee has been kept informed, and mention was made of several meetings already held and others planned with the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors. The Senate was briefed on highlights of the meetings held to date.
-- In response to recent questions, it was stated the faculty cannot be furloughed in a mandatory fashion.
-- The Budget Committee recommended a $200 increase in tuition to the Board of Supervisors.
-- The Board of Supervisors meet on Friday, 25 September, and postponed considering the tuition increase.

President Culbertson's personal position is that everyone's opinion is to be respected as there is no uniquely correct solution to this problem, he is still in favor of a $300 tuition increase, and, he hopes the faculty will respond favorably to the requested furlough or equivalent donation.

President Culbertson introduced Chancellor Davis who spoke to the Senate.

3. Chancellor Davis. Points made by Chancellor Davis included:
-- The University has made advances in a number of areas in recent years including substantially increased grant funding and an increased retention rate which will soon translate into a higher graduation rate as a result of more selective enrolment.
-- His priority during this short-term and perhaps long-term period of financial difficulty is to maintain the intellectual and academic integrity of the University.
-- LSU Baton Rouge has taken 10 percent of the entire state cut to higher education.
-- The Chancellor said he has worked hard to share information with the faculty, and discussed the savings steps being implemented.
-- Though a $300 tuition increase request was considered initially, his decision was that this put too much of the load on students and he felt his current plan more evenly split the burden on students, faculty/staff, and programs.
-- The hours of classified and unclassified employees can be reduced by administrative decision to effect a savings, but this cannot be done with faculty. Thus he is asking faculty for a voluntary leave without pay for 5 days, or to make an equivalent contribution of 2 percent by some other means. He hoped this would not set one part of the University against the other and appealed for voluntary participation in what he hoped would be a one-time furlough or contribution.
-- Financial exigency was mentioned as a last resort by which the University can cut through contracts and tenure to release people if necessary. However, he wants to avoid this if possible.
-- It was mentioned that for the short-term, we must stop the "hemorrhaging" but for the long-term, there needs to be something worked out for stability in funding for higher and public education. A concern was expressed over higher and public education becoming adversaries over the constitutional amendment that will go before the voters in November.
-- The Chancellor mentioned a number of steps he is initiating or supporting. A "Crisis in Education Steering Committee" is being set up to deal with this and proposed members of this committee were announced. He is supporting a petition for a special session of the legislature requesting the Governor and legislators address the problem. He is planning to travel all over the state to meet with legislators, media, Board of Supervisors members, administrators at other universities, and others to communicate with them about the problem and solicit their support.
-- He concluded his address to the Senate by reviewing again three actions being taken: 1) the support budget is being reduced by $3,160,000 by cutting travel and eliminating 45 unfilled positions, 2) the work week for unclassified and classified employees is being reduced, and faculty will be requested to volunteer an equivalent contribution, and, 3) a tuition increase request for $200 for the main campus and $500 for the Veterinary School is being submitted to the Board of Supervisors. Also, he stated he believes a special legislative session is urgently needed to address the problem of funding for public and higher education,
but that the Governor does not appear to be in favor of a special session at this time.

The Chancellor offered to try to answer questions from the Senate and visitors. Questions and comments included:

- What is the plan if the Board of Supervisors does not approve the tuition increases? Davis: He has to assume they will approve.
- Will we be asking for Alumni support? Davis: We may have to fall back on that, but it would only be of short-term value.
- Except for the Senate President, there is not a faculty member on the special committee mentioned.
- Davis: The people selected adequately represent the faculty.
- A suggestion was made to seek help from the athletic program, such as placing a $5.00 surcharge on tickets that would go to academics.
- A comment was made that some see a problem in going to the faculty asking for a voluntary 2 percent donation on top of reducing travel, no merit pay increases, and other imposed hardships on faculty.
- Is there any chance that faculty making the donation would be paid back if the crisis were resolved? Davis: No, the University would just be getting further behind if the donations were considered a loan.
- A comment was made that the public does not understand the situation and the question was asked what is the University doing to educate the public and seek their support? Davis: He thinks the public is supportive, but mentioned again his plans to travel all over the state during October.
- The comment was made by more than one person present that sharing the cuts makes a persuasive argument, except many people believe to accept the cuts is to say we can take the cuts and maintain quality, and, that this fosters more neglect from the Legislature. A number of senators expressed belief it is possible to take these and further cuts and maintain quality. They suggested the Legislature should be told we cannot accept the cuts, and/or we must inform the Legislature their actions are reducing quality. Davis: We have to operate on the basis that the cuts are real and we must deal with them.
- A comment was made that the Chancellor had talked about funding efforts in the past. Davis: A person has been selected to head a larger effort in this area. The present endowment of $58 million is not large for LSU.
- The suggestion was made that at least 1 furlough day should be a class day to get greater public attention, and another senator asked if faculty had to show up to work on furlough days? Davis: If you so choose, you do not have to work on furlough days, but some will choose to make donations to maintain benefits.
- Won't leave without pay (furlough days) affect retirement and possibly other benefits? Davis: That is correct. (Later, it was mentioned that a contribution would not affect fringe and retirement benefits.)
- The comment was made that the word "furlough" is not the appropriate word for what the faculty is being asked to do.
- Concerned was expressed over what the anticipated greater than $600 million shortfall in next year's state budget will mean to higher education.
- The comment was made that we are not organized as a faculty to deal with this. The Senate is a good body, but not representative of the faculty in the area of financial matters. The suggestions were made to bring all the people of the university together to discuss this; to close the University for 5 days; and, to cancel a football game.
- The Chancellor offered to try to answer questions from the Senate and visitors. Questions and comments included:

4. Additional Discussion. Ann Doucet from the College of Engineering read a statement from that college that was distributed to the Senate.

Another senator stated we are preaching to the choir and that the Faculty Senate is not doing all it can. We need to support something more dramatic than quietly absorbing cuts.

One senator mentioned his colleagues held a straw vote on a voluntary furlough and most did not indicate support.

Another indicated he could support voluntary salary cuts if the politicians were acting responsibly. He was told that staff making very low salaries would not have pay cuts.

Reflecting earlier comments, a suggestion was made that the 5 days of furlough should be taken during the same 1-week period.

One faculty took a straw poll in her class and learned that only one student pays for their tuition whereas the other 20 had their tuition paid by parents. It was suggested this is a factor in getting the public's attention to the problem when higher tuition is implemented.

5. Address to the Senate by Ruth Stevens, President of the Staff Senate. The Faculty Senate was told the staff took the major cuts in the 1980s where about 400 service positions were lost, and the additional work load falls on the remaining staff. She mentioned the staff wants to work with us, and opposed to the faculty making the donation to the University doing to educate the public and seek their support? Davis: He thinks the public is supportive, but mentioned again his plans to travel all over the state during October.

The comment was made that the burden of the failure of the politicians in this state is falling on our shoulders, and that the people of the state do not have a clue as to what is going on.

The question was asked if the cuts this year are anticipated to be a one-time happening or will we be forced to respond in a similar manner over and over.

The Chancellor left the meeting at this point.

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short-term emergency we have to deal with.

Concern was expressed over decisions being made with minimal faculty input and over whether those who give or not will be identified. (It was mentioned at another time that it is the intent of the University to not reveal who does or does not participate by making donations.)

The comment was made the Senate is not in a position to act as a bargaining unit for the faculty regarding financial decisions, and interested faculty were invited by this speaker to help organize and support a meeting with the American Federation of Teachers. President Culbertson concurred it is not inappropriate for faculty to explore options.

The comment was made that it is a shame if making a 2 percent contribution is done without making a point, and again it was suggested everyone should take at least one furlough day at the same time.

Concerned was expressed that the Chancellor did not stay longer to respond to questions. It was stated the public does not understand our plight, and a draft of a letter being circulated in the Vet school was read. Again, a call for action visible to the public was made such as closing the university and cancelling a football game.

There was concern over circumstances that may lead to hard feelings between faculty and staff.

Concerning cutting football games, the comment was made that this program generally makes money and that in the recent past the athletic program made a $2 million donation to academics. Also, there may be legal problems with cancelling a football game since a lot of contracts associated with football games are already in place.

A motion (Resolution 92-05) was made by Senator Svoboda and seconded by Senator McMillin that the Senate make a recommendation that the faculty unite in response to the request for voluntary furloughs or donations such that faculty participation is done in a way that will make a strong statement, within and outside of the University, of faculty sentiment toward the current crisis. There was additional discussion on the effect of leave without pay on retirement benefits and insurance coverage, versus a donation that would be tax deductible where benefits would not affected. Since the Senate was not sure of all ramifications of the motion, it was referred to the Executive Committee.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:47PM.