Dean’s Column

My original plans for my September column were predictable: looking backwards to the celebration that was Commencement on August 5, and ahead to welcoming new graduate students to LSU. I had pictures. I had stories. I had ideas. And then, on August 12, it began to rain . . . and rain . . . and rain. The “thousand year storm” seemed to go on for a thousand years as homes washed away, towns flooded, and roads disappeared. The waters receded, leaving not only debris in their wake but inundated lives.

Those waters did not, however, “wash us away” (Randy Newman, “Louisiana 1927”). In the wake of Louisiana’s disaster, the LSU community sprang into action. Reaching out not only to faculty, staff, and students from the LSU campus, they also reached out into every affected parish to provide housing, clothing, food, and comfort. We saw the best of LSU in the worst of times.

The campus struggled to achieve its own equilibrium by resuming the rhythm of academic life so that we could be a place of stability and routine at a time when much seemed anything but routine. Looking at an audience of 600 new graduate students at the new graduate student orientation, and one of over 160 new teaching assistants the next day, I marveled at how hard we work to be who we are, how committed we are to our goals as engaged scholars and teachers.

Throughout this semester, we will be asking you to continue that work at forming communities off and on campus. You should be getting our call announcing our new mentoring program and asking for faculty/student volunteers at just about the same time as this newsletter. Join, and meet others. Come and meet other students during “Conversations with the Dean” on Friday (12:00 - 1:00, David Boyd foyer). Participate in our fall workshop series on Psychological, Financial, and Physical Well-Being, as well as the paired series on Networking: Finding Others like You, Networking: Finding Others Who Are Different from You, and Networking: Finding Mentors. Let me know if you’re interested in being a participant, want to propose other topics for presentations, or have ideas for the spring. But most of all, reach out to a new student who’s still wondering what it means to be in Louisiana and in graduate school, and show that new colleague what it means to be part of the LSU graduate student community.

Cordially,

Michelle A. Massé
In the midst of the historic flooding that affected Louisiana in August, there was one helpless group that could have easily gotten overlooked – the animals. Fortunately, the Graduate School has selfless individuals such as graduate student Audrey Grismore and graduate faculty Dr. Carolyn Ware who were ready to assist all flood-affected animals in every capacity. These well-trained experts certainly were not new to helping animals in times of crises as both Grismore and Ware gained experience volunteering post Hurricane Katrina to assist animals in need.

Grismore is a third year Ph.D. candidate in the geography and anthropology program focusing on historical geography and coastal adaptations and resilience specifically in Louisiana. She has been fostering for a year and a half with Friends of the Animals and Companion Animal Alliance (CAA). When CAA got converted into an evacuee dog shelter after the flooding, there was a need to move their adopted dogs into foster homes to make room for the evacuees.

Without hesitation, Grismore immediately extended a helping hand and took as many dogs as she could fit into her car home to foster. She took home five dogs (four puppies, two of which were bottle fed, and one large dog) from CAA. Including Grismore’s own three large dogs, she had a house of eight dogs. Grismore said she greatly enjoys helping dogs because “they are unconditionally grateful regardless of what is going on, and you can see transformations almost instantly when they are given the proper love and care.”
Ware is an Associate Professor in the English department whose flood-related volunteer efforts commenced when she began taking on extra shifts at Cat Haven. With a desire to do more for more animals and more flood victims, Ware volunteered at the Lamar Dixon Expo Center where approximately 450 dogs, 109 cats and a number of horses, cattle, pigs, goats and exotic animals were housed. Ware shared how it was incredibly touching to see people at the Lamar Dixon Expo Center visiting with their animals. She enjoyed being able to greatly help out flood victims by caring for their animals, making it one less thing they had to worry about during this time of crisis. Ware described her volunteer work as both physically and emotionally tiring, but in the end, it was so worthwhile. And, being the animal lover she is, Ware even signed up to be the owner of an old chocolate lab whose previous owner had to surrender him. So Ware’s current two dogs, a lab and a boxer, may be getting a new brother as a result of Ware’s selfless acts to care for the animals affected by the historic Louisiana flood.

If you are interested in volunteering with any of the organizations Grismore and Ware frequently assist, please visit the websites below and contact the appropriate individuals to find out how you can help:

- Cara’s House
- Cat Haven
- Companion Animal Alliance
- Friends of the Animals
- Louisiana State Animal Response Team

Dr. Carolyn Ware

Rescued kittens fostered by graduate student
Stacey Amo
Flood Relief Resources for Graduate Students

The Graduate School extends our sincerest concern and thoughts to everyone affected by the devastating flood waters. For those in need of assistance, please visit LSU’s flood relief site for a list of resources available to members of the LSU community.

Below is a list of resources particularly relevant to graduate students, including Trinity Episcopal Church’s special offer of assistance.

**Student Relief Fund**
For students directly affected by the recent flooding, there is financial support available to help you recover. To apply for assistance, please complete the online application. A committee will evaluate all applications and make awards until all funds are exhausted.

**Food Pantry**
The LSU Food Pantry, located in room 455 of the Student Union Building, is open to students, faculty and staff during the following business hours:
- Monday – Thursday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Friday: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Student Health Center**
LSU’s Student Health Center offers a wide variety of services for enrolled students, including mental health counseling. You can call 225-578-6716 for an appointment. Please visit their website for additional information.

**LSU Cares**
LSU Cares is a university initiative dedicated to the well-being of students. For more information or to submit a concern about a student, visit their website.

**Community Resources**
From Sharon Alexander, Rector of Trinity Episcopal Church
“We have long had many close connections with LSU. We have a number of faculty, staff, and students who are members, and a large number of our members attended LSU. After our recent flooding in Baton Rouge, Trinity is holding LSU in its prayers and is also reaching out to provide whatever help we can, particularly to LSU graduate students.

Trinity has a food pantry that is stocked with canned and dry food. After the flood we are also stocking items such as paper towels, toilet paper, trash bags, toiletries, hygiene products, diapers, and cleaning supplies. We are happy to give these items to those who were affected by the flooding and those who are helping people whose homes were flooded.

You are welcome to come to Trinity on weekdays between 9:00 am and 4:30 pm. If you need other items please email Professor Suzanne Marchand who will contact Trinity, which will try to locate those items as quickly as possible. If you are not able to come to Trinity during the hours the pantry is open, Professor Marchand will also be able to help make alternative arrangements.

Trinity is located at 3552 Morning Glory Avenue (at Stanford). The food pantry hours are 9 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. We would love to help the LSU community through this difficult time.”

Other resources in the community are not specifically for graduate students, but are important resources.

**Community Resources Overview**
http://help.225batonrouge.com/

**Crisis Counseling and Support**
Visit the Louisiana Department of Health Office of Behavioral Health Crisis Response Services site for useful information. You can also contact the Louisiana Department of Health Office of Behavioral Health Crisis line at 1-866-310-7977 or the National Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990. Text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.
September Local Events Calendar

With the start of a new semester, here are a few popular local events to enjoy.

**Life After Five**
*Repentance Park, Downtown Baton Rouge*
5:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- September 9: Rockin' Dopsie, Jr. & The Zydeco Twisters
- September 16: Bag of Donuts
- September 23: Michael Foster Project
- September 30: Kenny Neal

**Red Stick Farmers Market**
*501 Main Street*
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- September 10
- September 17
- September 24

**The Ogden Park Prowl**
*Ogden Park Neighborhood*
1:00 – 6:00 p.m.
- September 24

**Perkins Rowe Arts Festival**
*Perkins Rowe*
- September 24 @ 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
- September 25 @ 12 p.m. – 6 p.m.

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