

President's Report

February 2022

Well, Happy Mardi Gras. Here we are fast approaching the anniversary of the world, for all intents and purposes stopping on its axis. I'm sure that we share in the hope that we emerge from the multitude of restrictions that confined us for the last two years. I'm so glad to see you, my friends. Your presence here confirms your strength and commitment to our LSU. Thank you.

More than 100 students, faculty, deans, donors, administrators, alumni and board of supervisors' members met at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center for a day and a half on beginning bright and early this Monday morning. The overarching goal of the meeting was to identify values and vision for a consistent and meaningful message from the collective that is our LSU. This was the first step of the implementation of a new strategic plan. You may remember a survey that went out a month or so back asking for this same information. There were about 10,000 responses to the survey from across the state. As for the most recent philosophical sojourn, attendees worked in groups of about 10 in brainstorming sessions to clearly articulate a set of values and ultimately translate them into mission statements. The meeting wound down with a fierce competition between group mission statements. There was no single winner, and I assume that faculty, staff, and students will participate in the final selection.

Notable highlights from the meeting included a presentation by Coach Kim Mulkey to shake things up a bit with humorous candor, insight on leading successful teams, and clever commentary. We also heard from a representative from EAB, a company that has been commissioned by the University to help identify goals for our University customized to our unique circumstances and position in the piranha pool that is higher education. Presumably, the report will be made publicly available as it materializes into a written format.

President and chancellor, William F. Tate, IV, did make it abundantly clear that he will steadfastly and ardently defend tenure. I believe his words were something to the effect that he will go on the record as willing to die on that hill. Chairperson Starnes of the BoS has previously stated publicly much the same.

You have all seen the message about the conversion of all videos from Kaltura to Panopto by LSU Online & Continuing Education. It seems prudent to follow up on the message that was shared to make sure that your hard work is preserved and where you expect it to be. On another note, I did request that the interim VP of LSU Online and Continuing Education, Kappie Mumphrey, consider establishing a standard procedure for requesting access to Moodle accounts. As you may know, only the instructor of record has access to their Moodle account. Due to faculty and instructor departures, there has been some challenges accessing materials to continue course instruction, grade assignments, and other functions associated with the system. I will hope to hear back from her on some standardization of the procedure by which access is requested

and granted to avoid security or confidentiality breaches of any kinds. For now, please send all requests for access to Moodle accounts to Kappie Mumphrey.

Consistent with the flux that is administrative infrastructure the office of finance and administration has been reorganized slightly. Kimberly Lewis is the new Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer who will serve as chief advisor to the president and the LSU Board of Supervisors on all fiscal and administrative matters. Interim CFO Donna Torres will now serve as the VP for Finance.

In our FSEC meeting with VP Torres, information about faculty salaries was requested by some FSEC members. The salary equity study by an outside consultant is in the data collection phase. Concerns about campus safety was raised given reports of not only break ins and burglaries, but also concerns by students, staff, and faculty that police presence on campus and emergency communications seem to be waning or absent. A reminder about the LSU Shield app to your phone. However, I freely admit that if I am in dire need of help, an app on my phone may not be a reliable resource. The FSEC asked that appropriate faculty consultation be secured when the fire hydrant currently positioned in the one of the Indian Mounds is relocated. I'm happy to report that a new interdisciplinary science building is scheduled to open in 2023. Also, if you happen to see some stealthy actions around the Louisiana Emerging Technology and Digital Media Center situated behind the Livestock Pavilion, this may be because it will be the new hub for cyber security and military science. A preliminary report is due on the graduate student stipend tax March 1st or next week. I'm sure you all saw the news about the largest philanthropic gift in LSU history (\$245 million!). The details of the distribution are shared elsewhere, but we can send you the link if you missed this outstanding feat. And finally, the legislative lions are roaring. Let's all hope to get a much-needed portion of the anticipated budget surplus.

Problems with the library collections due to years of underfunding continue to be at the forefront of the FSEC agenda. With limited resources the number of turnaways are unfathomable. For many of us, a turn away equates to a mental maelstrom that occurs when you think you find the perfect manuscript to support your conclusion, hypothesis, or life's quest only to have it declined because our LSU does not have a subscription. Perhaps a bit of that legislative lion's meal can find its way to our library.

As I understand it, the Provost is visiting Tennessee today with the chair of the Board of Supervisors and other high ranking officials on a visit to gather tidbits and tangibles to help align our LSU with our peers. From our meeting with the Provost on Feb. 9, briefly. Dual enrollment participants have surged from 2-7 K and are on track to reach 10 K within the next five years. The 1st to 2nd year retention is about 83%, but it falls off precipitously after. VP & Dean Brandon Common is visiting with us today and he may have additional insight about plans to improve student retention and success. We hope to have VP Jose Aviles visit with us in the near future to discuss his view of the current state of student enrollment and plans to weather a precipitous decline in college age population that looms.

As you recall, there was significant discussion about our December 2021 minutes. To allow us to focus on the business of the Faculty Senate, we have secured approval to procure outside transcription of the meeting by a professional vendor. As you know, Professor Veldman provided highly detailed corrections. I personally apologize for the fact that the corrections were sent to some but not all senators. We will send them out today. Now, we anticipate that the transcript will be available for our March meeting. We will send out both the transcript and Professor Veldman's corrections prior to our March meeting at which we will discuss the December 2021 minutes. The plan is to use the transcript with any necessary, agreed upon corrections for that portion of the minutes currently in question.

On the topic of resolutions. Friends, we have received a record number of resolutions this year. Concerns have been raised about the value of some of the proposed resolutions to the LSU faculty we represent. I remind you that you, as a body, have the option to decide whether or not to consider a resolution. In my experience, the FSEC has never served as a gatekeeper to prevent faculty expression in any way. In fact, we have typically served as facilitators when individuals came to us with ideas for resolutions. After some candid and thoughtful discussion, the FSEC has settled upon the following: For submission, a resolution must have a corresponding author. That individual will be responsible for arranging the introduction and reading of the resolution, responses to questions and comments during the discussion, and to make any necessary amendments or other revisions to the resolution. Further, the FSEC believes that resolutions must pertain to that which is defined as the purview of the Faculty Senate as delegated by the BoS and detailed in our constitution. Professor Jeffrey Roland is preparing a document with FSEC input to guide submission of faculty senate resolutions. We will hope to have it in place in advance of our March meeting. I will include the details of the FS responsibilities in the text of this report that will be posted on the website.

The Faculty Senate has been delegated the authority of the Faculty Council to establish curricula, fix standards of instruction, determine requirements for degrees, and generally determine educational policy for the University, subject to the authority of the LSU Board of Supervisors. Also, the Faculty Senate Constitution provides that it may suggest actions, or make inquiries and recommendations on any aspect of University life, such as, but not limited to, conditions affecting academic freedom; criteria, policies and procedures regarding faculty appointment, conditions of work, dismissal, evaluations, grievances, promotions, tenure, retirement, and salaries; buildings, equipment, and facilities; rights and responsibilities of students, and student affairs generally; criteria and procedures for the selection of the administrative personnel and academic officers of the University;

And that brings us to yet another pursuit – that of the last valid ratification of our FS Constitution. Dr. Knoll and others are scouring the records once again to identify the last constitution that was voted on in person by the faculty as a whole. At present, it appears

that we may be returning to the 1973 constitution. This endeavor, though highly necessary, has been a tremendous undertaking. I appreciate the efforts of Dr. Knoll and Professor McMillin to scour the archives and resolve once and for all this constitutional conundrum. Remember that the process is further complicated by the fact that the FS has not always functioned like a public body. It is via our role in deciding educational policy delegated by the Board of Supervisors that lands us in a strange nether land of governance. Over the years, it seems that BoS and FS governing documents have slowly migrated in different directions. This has contributed to significant misunderstanding over the last year. I have every intention of restoring order in this arena before the dawn of Fall 2022. Vice President King has prepared a resolution to help facilitate an annual meeting of all LSU faculty.

The nominating committee to secure nominations for FS officers and members at large has been formed. I plan to meet next week to set them upon their mission. Thanks to our departing senators who have agreed to serve, Peter Doran, Science, John Miles, LSU Libraries, Rosemary Peters-Hill, HSS, Wei-Hsung Wang, Sea Grant and Energy Studies

The committee members will be reaching out to secure nominations. Please forward names of those you wish to be considered to Dr. Knoll and she will forward them to the committee. Self-nominations are welcome. We hope that you will all consider the valuable experience of Faculty Senate leadership and satisfaction of working tirelessly for the faculty of our great institution.

And lastly, as you will recall, a member of the Louisiana Attorney General's Office will be attending our March meeting to provide training on LA open meetings law. I will communicate details as soon as I am able to secure them.

Okay, friends. I cannot close without thanking you. Thank you for your presence, your courage, strength, candor, and persistence. You represent our LSU. I encourage you to be fierce for our faculty every day as you represent them with admirable poise and professionalism despite trying times. Better times are most surely ahead, my friends. Thank you.