

LSU Faculty Senate President's Report

January 25, 2022

Thank you for being here, colleagues. You are what makes this University great.

There seems to be some misunderstanding about the relationship between college policy committees (or senates) and senators. To be clear – college policy committees oversee the election of senators to represent their college faculty. It is anticipated that the senators share information from the senate with the college policy committees and college faculty, and that they bring concerns, issues, actional items, etc. from their college to the faculty senate. It is equally important that the senators share information from the faculty senate with their colleges. The college policy committee is also charged with assisting in identification of alternates. Please reach out to your college policy committee if you have not done so recently to make sure communication channels are open.

From the top. The council of faculty advisors met and reported to the BoS on December 10, 2021. As promised, chairperson Starnes met with the committee prior to the Board of Supervisors meeting and expressed his support of faculty, including first amendment rights and tenure.

Highlights from the report include a hearty congratulations to Professor Graca Vicente for being named our newest Boyd Professor. Faculty also requested that the BoS work to secure the right of each campus to set tuition and fees through the Louisiana legislature, prioritize faculty raises, especially since faculty remuneration is well below the SEC average, and years of lack of raises has contributed to salary compression and inversion. The BoS was asked to respond to the resolution by the LSU Baton Rouge Faculty Senate for tuition and fee remission faculty children and spouses. A response to the faculty expectation that administrators will from the dean level up will undergo regular evaluation, including those with an interim status, was also requested.

As alluded to in my earlier message to faculty senators, the state attorney general's office will conduct Louisiana Open Meeting laws training at our March meeting. This was agreed upon in response to concerns filed with their office. Please come prepared with questions. The training will, no doubt, help to reconcile some of the inconsistencies that have resulted from our transition to a public body in recent years.

Updates to PM 63 – Regarding the Death of a Student or Employee. The faculty and staff requested consistent application of the tenants defined in PM63. Additionally, the chain of communication was outdated and abundantly unclear. Great news, the PM is in the process of revision. Some revisions include standards for communication of a colleagues passing while respecting the family's wishes, and for communications about when an LSU flag is flown to honor a colleague. As indicated in the PM, once the LSU flag is flown, it will be available to the family. I will request that updates are shared from the administration to the faculty on this highly important topic.

As a result of discussions with the upper administration, the President has agreed to include one member of the Senate on his Health and Medical Advisory Committee. As you will recall, this is the committee that makes all recommendations for campus safety during these challenging times. If you are interested in serving on the committee on behalf of our LSU faculty, please provide a short description (no more than ½ page) of your qualifications for consideration by the committee. Send the information to Dr. Knoll, and she will forward them to committee for selection. That is, selection of the member will be by the committee.

A survey will be going out from campus IT to query faculty about classroom technology – as mentioned by CIO Wooley at our last meeting. I have not seen the final form, but I encourage you to respond to the survey to help guide our central IT toward positive and helpful change.

You may have heard or will hear about a shortage of ZOOM space. With LSU's Zoom license, we can store up to 88TB worth of recordings. As of Jan 1, 2022, we consumed 80TB of space. Faculty recordings account for almost 70% (57.2TB) of the current storage space use. CIO Wooley has proposed some solutions and requested feedback. We will share the write up with you shortly after the meeting, and request that you respond directly to CIO Wooley.

It appears that a New Day, Student Work Day, will be joining the LSU IT collective. I understand the visceral reaction of many faculty to this and can only admit that I share your discomfort. Rest assured, the FSEC continues to express angst about this decision. More news as it comes available.

I meet with interim VP of online education, Kappy Mumphrey monthly. Remuneration for online courses continues to be inconsistent across colleges. This issue was raised previously with now departed VP Thackaberry and has yet to be resolved. While the format for online credit rests with the college, faculty have expressed concern that a basic template for online credit/remuneration be provided by the administration.

As you know, the faculty information system, formally known as LSU360 has crashed and burned. No word on the cost of this unflattering foible, but faculty leadership has put forth that additional time may be necessary for faculty annual activity reports. It appears that a new ship is on the horizon once again, though the stutter steps forward are pretty concerning. Final point, and redundant to previous messages, faculty leadership has requested an extension to the activities report deadlines. We have not heard back from the administration.

Finally, the FSEC had a great advisory committee meeting last week. We met with Trey Jones from the General Counsel's office to discuss all available options for open meetings given current pandemic conditions. We brainstormed at length. I also took the liberty to communicate with the state attorney general's office. As I summarized in my earlier messages, we had only this single option for our meeting.

We discussed Student Advocacy and Accountability procedures with VP Jeremiah Shinn and Dean of Students Brandon Common. Concerns were raised about faculty authority over grading policies and what might be perceived as inequitable treatment of students found responsible for the same violation of the student code of conduct. We received a great summary of procedures by Dean Common and discovered incongruities between policies and the student and faculty handbooks. It seems that faculty do not decide grade changes associated with any form of "punishment". The FSEC will work to resolve some of these inconsistencies, and, with the approval of the Senate, will ask VP Shinn and/or Dean Common to join our next meeting.

Committee members also met with VP of Enrollment Management Jose Aviles about transfer credits – that is the inconsistent application of 2.75 credits, and the rather lackluster participation of LSU in the transfer student market, including an abject presence on Transferology. Members of the ASH committee, Professors Cathy Williams and Kanchan Maiti joined us for the discussion, and action is anticipated from the ASH committee on the topic of transfer credits shortly.

Finally – As you know, the FS voted to revise the constitution in Oct. 2020. Due to disruptions aplenty, we have yet to ratify the constitution by vote of the entire LSU faculty. Awesome news - We think we have finally found the date that the last FS constitution last voted on by the entire contingent of LSU faculty -2004. We are tracking down the constitution and will send it along with all recent changes to the faculty for a vote this semester. If you happen to have a copy of the constitution or know someone who does, we will appreciate the help.

As always, I conclude with thanking you. Your presence here sustains our LSU faculty voice. I understand and thoroughly empathize with the challenges that beset us daily. And yet we persist.

Thank you, senators. Always be fierce for our faculty.