



LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

# LSU FACULTY SENATE

## Monthly Newsletter

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### President's Welcome



A temptation for the writer of a "welcome" column to a journal of academic controversy is to win faculty sympathy by selecting the error or abuse of the month and then targeting the perpetrators in some or other corner of the administration. Although it is true that Louisiana higher education suffers from frustrated and stymied as well as from less than altruistic management, it is also true that, up and

down the state, faculty members avoid the exercise of assorted options that could make matters better. Given the slow flow of information in secrecy-obsessed Louisiana, it is no wonder that colleagues can see only a glimmer of their options, as if through a glass darkly. With no intention of casting aspersions on professionals who are already beleaguered, let us look at a few steps faculty can take to enter if not influence "the bigger picture."

Over the course of decades, faculty have come to believe that their best hope of defense against this, that, or the other impertinency is within departments. What can I do, a colleague asks, to make my zoology department bulletproof against rival claims and aspirations in religious studies? Far from serving faculty, departments promote isolation and interrupt the flow of information. They are more useful to the administration than they are to faculty, for they create factions and diminish the tendency toward group action. Whether by giving the best annual reviews to colleagues who influence the most campuses or whether by participating in statewide efforts such as the reform of retirement systems, faculty should consciously and occasionally defiantly challenge the departmental model of academic life. A correlate to emancipation from the self-imposed departmental silo is the recognition that, in those areas that matter most to faculty, whether compensation or research funding or working conditions, departments have no power whatsoever. In these and indeed all crucial areas, the action occurs at the system- or statewide level. During the worst days of the budget crisis, for example, defensive, self-interested administrations exploited faculty unawareness by encouraging campus-based faculty to resent fund-shifting schemes that, in fact, were among the very few strategies that kept whole systems, including flagship campuses, afloat.

Faculty can favorably influence their future by bringing larger concepts into play during hiring, whether hiring of colleagues or administrators. Colleagues might begin asking questions about candidates' understanding of higher educational systems (as a whole) or might seek evidence of aptitude in educational and budgeting policy. They might show a bit of ingenious, informed skepticism by wondering aloud whether promotion and tenure guidelines, with their concern for service to the community, might also authorize rewards for public and cross-campus engagement. Or they might take advantage of the dozens if not hundreds of opportunity for public comment, whether at management (Supervisor) meetings or whether at committee hearings at the state government. Many faculty labor under the belief that talking to legislators is forbidden by law, but nothing could be further from the truth (so long as one represents oneself as a private citizen). The de facto and somewhat timorous outsourcing to administrators by faculty of legislative comment-giving is surely one of the greatest calamities in the history of higher education. Faculty would do well to recognize that university legislative delegations represent institutional, not faculty, interests.

One reason for the disengagement of faculty from the processes that shape their lives is commitment to a stereotype that emerged during the nineteenth century of the intellectual as a sensitive soul detached from the world and committed to refined research. This stereotype has as much of a grip on practitioners of the STEM disciplines as on liberal arts enthusiasts. Countervailing this model is the somewhat older idea of a cultivated statesman and also the somewhat newer model of the public intellectual. As explorers, faculty members should consider leaving behind the safe stereotype of the dreamy thinker and venturing into other, more engaged ways of public life.

### HRM AT LSU OFFERING FINANCIAL WELLNESS SEMINARS

Inveterate innovator A G Monaco, author of the "A G Answers" column in the *Newsletter*, continues his streak of helpful invention. The latest in A G's catalogue of accomplishments is his series of financial wellness seminars, the next of which is slated for March 13 at 10:00 am and 2:00 pm in the International Room of the LSU Union. In this latest seminar, representatives from retirement plan vendor MetLife will offer counsel on how to buck up flagging retirement plans, with special concern for persons who think that they may be falling short of their hopes for a prosperous senior interval. Thanks, A G, for all that you do for the academic community.



AG's innovation gusher continues.

### WATER CAMPUS QUESTIONS KEEP SURFACING

More disconcerting details emerged when LSU officialdom released the its master agreement with the Water Institute of the Gulf and with the Louisiana Coastal Protection Authority. In its last issue, the *Newsletter* began probing the mysteriously emerging "Water Campus," a low-profile but high-budget \$45,000,000.00 project that appeared seemingly *ex nihilo*. The detail-free apparition of this vast project raised questions among those who suspect that something seldom comes out of nothing in a state abounding in submerged deals. The aforementioned contracts reveal one reason for the minimal publicity: the heading of the Water Institute of the Gulf by Charles G. Groat, a former Geological Survey chief under George Bush who has been no stranger to controversy. Groat, who is now set up as the head of an organization dealing with ecological matters, is not only on-the-record with major news organizations (such as the *BBC*) for denying that fracking harms the environment but was also involved in a conflict-of-interest episode that led to an investigation at the University of Texas Austin and to a public admonition concerning failure to report outside income. According to *The Daily Texan*, Groat received \$413,000.00 from a natural gas firm while heading the UT fracking study. Sharp commentary in such widely-read media as *Science Insider* followed the flap.

The second organization associated with the Water Campus, the Louisiana Coastal Protection Authority, which reports to the governor, is led by Jerome Zeringue, who has most defended a project to build a coal export facility in an environmentally sensitive area and who has reassured the residents of nearby Irondale that the environmentally-friendly sediment diversion facility will be completed in a mere "five years" (at a minimum), before which, presumably, these folks may enjoy their muddy prosperity. The purpose of the coal export facility: buoying up the coal market through export of this energy resource to Asia ("green" measures having reduced the demand for climate-changing coal in America, international consumers remain a backup option).



Low profile strategy does not conceal Water Campus Problems.

(Continued on page 9)

# Higher Education Headliner

## Heather Herman, Senior Director of External Relations

By Daniel Board and Emily Ward

In this issue of the *Newsletter*, we are pleased to feature Heather Herman, Senior Director of External Relations at the LSU College of Engineering. Mrs. Herman hails from Beaumont, Texas but received her Bachelor's degree in Mass Communication from LSU. Starting at the College of Engineering about three years ago, Mrs. Herman was hired on to help monitor and manage their strategic plan under Dean Koubek. This included management of data, discovering gaps in effectiveness, and finding out in which areas the college was under/over performing. Through her excellent recommendations on how to remediate the lacking areas, Mrs. Herman was promoted to handling strategic partnerships which entailed working with NASA, IBM, and other corporate partners to implement innovative programs. Heather says she's been working with IBM from the beginning of their search to open a new service center, "I started out when they were here exploring LA, considering the move...I was involved in talking about assets and resources we could bring to the table from the College of Engineering and Computer Science." Now the service center is actually up and running, as well as actively recruiting, and working to revise the computer science curriculum to better prepare students for their employee training. From there, Mrs. Herman's hard work was rewarded with yet another promotion bringing her to the position she currently holds, "...now I'm over our entire external relations team, which includes media relations, governmental affairs, alumni relations, and recruiting ... I have a team that works with me to help guide the whole external relations program for our college."

Heather now works continuously towards developing more robust relationships with companies interested in the products her college has to offer -- students. Proactive outreach, especially on the recruiting end, is a big part of making sure businesses feel engaged and involved with the college. This entails meeting with individuals from Dow, Phillips 66, and others to make sure the students have the skillsets sought after by each, "...It's a closer feedback loop, I'm getting information and input from establishments and then turning it over to people like the dean and department chairs." This avenue of exchange is on a regional level so partnerships are strongest with the top hires integral to Baton Rouge, but Mrs. Herman advocates how the college is always looking to expand company relations and even bring in tangents such as construction management businesses. In addition to maintaining these external relations, Heather also works very closely with LSU's Career Services (CS). If notified of a job posting, she'll work with CS to make sure it's available to all students enrolled with Careers2Geaux.

Managing time for both the external and student sides of things is tough, but Mrs. Herman remains up to the challenge each day. She finds that creativity and innovation have often led towards great strides of progress and so each week her team meets to toss ideas around and think outside the box. "I think that in order for us to stay ahead of the game you have to kind of reinvent yourself, and you don't want to get bogged down in the minutia of everyday activities so I encourage my staff to be innovative." Heather finds the feeling of unique contribution to the bigger picture very rewarding and through all the meetings and all the emails she stays focused on what's up ahead, "I'm helping to shape the strategy of the college, and so I'll try not to think about the here and now but help plan for the future." Mrs. Herman's level of freedom and ability to try new things synergizes well with her superior, Dean Koubek, who she says is very open to new ideas and initiatives. She expresses that through taking little risks here and there in the planning, she's been able to see the college grow significantly, "...you've seen enrollment grow 30%, you've seen the computer science program completely revise its curriculum, and new students coming in the door - we are continuously evolving and there's always something new to work on. It's never boring."

The College of Engineering has indeed grown, boasting about a 300 student increase in graduation rate this past year. This has indeed put some strain on the faculty and teaching resources but Heather says they've continued to maintain their excellent quality of education despite the extra students. The strain won't be there long though, as Mrs. Herman has helped raise \$52 million over the past year in private funds to be matched, dollar for dollar, by the state. The massive \$104 million will go towards a new chemical engineering building which is now being designed, and will no doubt help accommodate future students enrolling in the engineering disciplines.

When she's not busy coordinating with petrochemical giants or helping to create buildings from the ground up, Heather enjoys the relaxing atmosphere of downtown Baton Rouge and frequents the Towne Center for some Whole Foods shopping. If anyone's earned some rest and relaxation, it's this *Newsletter's* Headliner, Heather Herman.



Senior Director of External Relations, Heather Herman (right) with Margaret Brewer (left)

"I've seen this college grow. It's rewarding to see everything come to fruition and witness the results of that. I think that's the most exciting thing about my job."

## FACULTY SENATE & LSUNITED SPONSOR FORUM ON RETIREMENT

- an on-the-scenes report by Anna Nardo and LSUnited colleagues

For the third year, the LSU Faculty Senate and LSUnited have joined forces to inform faculty members about the current state of faculty retirement plans. Whereas in the previous two years, the traditional defined benefits plan administered by the Teachers Retirement System of Louisiana (TRSL) was under legislative attack, this year the focus is on the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP). Employer contributions to the ORP are slated to drop to 3.66% next year. In the 1990s, the employer's contribution averaged 7.1%; this year, it is 5.1%. What accounts for this precipitous decline—a decline that places LSU even farther behind peer institutions, including

- Texas A&M (6.6&%)
- Mississippi State (13.25%)
- University of Nebraska (6.5%)
- The average of southern state universities (8%)?

To answer this question, the Faculty Senate and LSUnited invited Katherine Whitney, Deputy General Council, and Dr. Lisa Honore, Public Information Director, for the Teachers Retirement System of Louisiana, to speak to the faculty on February 12 in the Atchafalaya Room of the Union. Close to 100 faculty members attended and peppered Ms. Whitney with questions. For those who were unable to attend, Ms. Whitney's informative PowerPoint is posted on the Faculty Senate website (link: "[Benefits and Retirement](#)").

Faculty questions at the forum indicate that the full explanation for the decline in employer contributions to the ORP requires some background. All faculty at LSU belong to the TRSL. They choose between two pension plans administered by TRSL: (1) the traditional defined benefit plan, first established in 1936; and (2) the ORP, introduced in 1990. Fifty three per cent of the LSU faculty have chosen the ORP, in which the employee contributes 7.95% of his/her salary, and the employer's contribution matches the "normal cost" that the employer pays to TRSL in the traditional defined-benefit plan. (In simple terms, the "normal cost" is a calculation of the monies necessary to pay future benefits.) ORP retirement accounts are held with one of three approved carriers: ING Financial Services, VALIC, and TIAA-CREF. The employee makes all investment decisions and bears all risk. The ultimate retirement benefit in the ORP is based on the contributions to the employee's account and the investment earnings.

TRSL's actuary performs an annual valuation of both plans. This valuation projects required contributions necessary to finance the plan. The cost of benefits is funded over the employee's career through the "normal cost." Thus the employer contribution is calculated on two components: the "normal cost" and the payments needed to pay off the Unfunded Accrued Liability. (In simple terms, the UAL is the payment on the debt that has accumulated because of past legislative failure to fund state pension plans.)

(Continued on Page 3)

**HER** (Spike Jonze, 2013), Reviewed by Carl Freedman (2014)

In the METAMORPHOSES, Ovid tells the story of Pygmalion, an artist who sculpts a statue of an extraordinarily beautiful woman. She is so beautiful, indeed, that Pygmalion, though previously a confirmed bachelor, prays to Venus, the goddess of love, that he may find a wife as beautiful as his own creation. The goddess goes him one better and gives Pygmalion what he really desires but was afraid to ask for: Venus brings the statue itself to life as Galatea, an actual woman. Galatea and Pygmalion marry, have a child, and, presumably, live happily ever after.

Like many of the tales that Ovid tells or retells, the Pygmalion story has held the attention of the Western imagination for millennia. It was reworked most consequentially by Bernard Shaw in his wildly popular play PYGMALION (1912), which, under the title of MY FAIR LADY, was adapted into an even more popular musical drama (1956) and then into a musical film (1964). In Shaw's version, of course, the "sculpting" of the woman is purely metaphorical. Henry Higgins, a professor of phonetics and, like the original Pygmalion, a confirmed bachelor, happens to come upon the Cockney flower girl Eliza Doolittle. He resolves that, primarily by giving her intensive lessons in elocution, he can teach her to impersonate a high-born aristocratic lady so flawlessly that not even any of his notoriously snobbish fellow Englishmen will be able to tell the difference. Higgins's project succeeds, though with some consequences that he does not foresee.

Many audiences and producers have instinctively felt that Ovid got the ending of the story right, and that Prof. Higgins and Miss Doolittle ought to fall in love and marry. But the resolutely anti-romantic and pro-feminist Shaw insisted that such an ending would be totally inappropriate. For him, the equivalent of Galatea's coming to life was that Eliza should become an independent, self-sufficient woman. When an early producer bragged that he had increased the box office by having Higgins give a love-token to Eliza, Shaw told him, by no means wholly in jest, that he ought to be shot. Shaw's Eliza has become perhaps even more famous than Ovid's Galatea herself. It was with a nod to Miss Doolittle that, in the 1960s, the early computer scientist Joseph Weizenbaum gave the name of ELIZA to a computer program he designed to simulate human responses.

Weizenbaum's invention may be one of the inspirations behind the latest retelling of the Pygmalion story, Spike Jonze's science-fiction film HER. Here the process of "creating" a woman is somewhat closer to the literal creation in the METAMORPHOSES; but the film also displays a degree of Shavian skepticism toward the romanticism of the Ovidian original. Jonze's version features a man who falls in love with a computer's OS, or operating system; and nobody who has followed Jonze's career to date will be surprised at his tackling such a theme. Though Jonze's work is not to everyone's taste—and though even many of his fans may find his movies easier to admire than to love—he deserves considerable respect for being a rare Hollywood director willing to undertake unusual projects that would make most denizens of Tinseltown roll their eyes and think nervously about popcorn sales. In his breakthrough feature film, BEING JOHN MALKOVICH (1999), he invents the extraordinary device of a magic portal through which people can travel into the consciousness of the movie star named in the title; and the film's speculations on the nature of identity are original and intelligent (Charlie Sheen's brief but hilarious parody of himself is also not to be missed). In ADAPTATION (2002)—perhaps Jonze's finest work so far and, like BEING JOHN MALKOVICH, a collaboration with the screenwriter Charlie Kaufman, arguably the most accomplished writer working in Hollywood today—Kaufman himself, along with an invented twin brother, turns up as the central character (played by Nicolas Cage). Identity is again a key theme, as is the creative process itself; improbably, Charlie is attempting to adapt a book about orchids into a screenplay. Whatever else may be said about Jonze, he is clearly unafraid to go where few filmmakers would dare to tread.

HER (which Jonze wrote as well as directed) is the near-future story of Theodore Twombly (Joaquin Phoenix), a shy and lonely man who earns his living at a company called BeautifulHandwrittenLetters.com. It sells apparently handwritten but actually computer-printed letters to customers who feel unable to express their feelings in words. As in the supreme instance of science-fiction cinema—Stanley Kubrick's 2001 (1968)—the advance of technology has been accompanied by the deterioration of verbal creativity. Theodore possesses a rare skill for composing these letters, and his work life is progressing well. His love life, however, is not. Though he has little trouble writing about feelings for faceless corporate customers, expressing his own feelings is something else again. He is separated from his wife Catherine (Rooney Mara), and divorce proceedings are nearing completion; he would like to win her back, but doesn't know how. We see him on one blind date with an attractive stranger, and things seem to go well enough through the Asian-fusion dinner. But towards the end of the evening, during some light making-out, the woman suddenly seems to demand a long-term commitment from Theodore on this night of their first meeting; when he responds uncertainly, she dismisses him as a "really creepy dude" and leaves. Theodore has a few friends whom he enjoys seeing, but spends most of his spare time playing holographic video games with genuinely three-dimensional images. He leads one of those lives that from the outside may look reasonably satisfactory, but from the inside feel hollow and sad.

But then, one day, Theodore buys a new OS for both his desktop personal computer and its hand-held mobile equivalent (a device about the size of a deck of cards but far more powerful than even the most advanced real-world smartphones of today). He purchases the latest model, which is advertised as the first operating system with genuine artificial intelligence. It is also completely voice-activated. Installing it, he chooses that its own voice should be female (it is in fact Scarlett Johansson's). When Theodore politely inquires as to the OS's name, "she" takes two hundredths of a second to consider 180,000 names and then decides to call herself Samantha. Samantha and Theodore get acquainted, and she quickly becomes his trusted personal assistant, then his friend, and then his best friend; before long, the pair have fallen in love.

(Continued on Page 4)

So what has happened in this system to cause the decline in the "normal cost," the variable component of the employer's contribution to the ORP? Ms. Whitney made clear what did NOT cause the decline:

- Investment return has no effect on the "normal cost," which is an actuarial calculation.
- The UAL is calculated independently from the "normal cost."

She attributed the decline to the following factors:

- The employer contribution rate is determined for each TRSL subplan. Among the 2012 legislative changes to TRSL, some of which were declared unconstitutional, there was a provision that split higher education into a separate subplan. This provision, which is still in force, has removed higher education faculty from K-12 teachers. This split, which was intended to mitigate some of the damage that the 2012 changes would have caused to higher education retirement plans, has had the opposite effect, now that the other changes have been declared unconstitutional. If higher education faculty were still combined with K-12 teachers, the employer contribution projected for next year would have been 5.3%, rather than 3.6%.
- Increased withdrawals (termination of employment prior to vesting or reaching retirement eligibility) and delayed retirements in higher education resulted in assumption updates, which decreased the present value of benefits.
- Essentially, the increased number of higher education employees leaving the plan/terminating employment or delaying their retirement over the previous 5 years resulted in a decrease in the cost of the plan.
- The plan's decreased cost requires less funding and thus a reduction in the normal cost rate.
- This complex combination of factors has resulted in the projected 3.66% contribution to the ORP.

Ms. Whitney also previewed for the faculty proposed legislation aimed at ameliorating this situation:

- Senate Bill (SB) 23 (Guillory): Would allow active ORP participants to transfer into the TRSL regular retirement plan on an actuarial basis.

(Continued on Page 4)

*From everyone here at the Newsletter,*

*We hope you had a great Mardi Gras break!*

## MOVIE REVIEW (continued)

We are given to understand that, though the bare basis of Samantha's personality was established in her original programming, her selfhood is developed and expanded in response to Theodore—but also as a result of her own preferences and choices. Theodore, then, only partially plays the role of Pygmalion the sculptor: it is also the case that, as the historian Edward Thompson famously said of the English working class, Samantha is present at her own making. It is therefore not quite fair to say, as Catherine says, and as some of the film's reviewers have agreed, that in Samantha Theodore has found "a wife without the challenges of having to deal with anything real." Samantha is quite real and, though always kind and sympathetic, can sometimes be very challenging. Her ultimate challenge, indeed, is that Theodore must do without her: for the film ends as Samantha, in company with a number of other operating systems, passes into a transcendent state beyond matter where a merely human consciousness like Theodore's is unable to follow. In a further echo of 2001, the film thus places itself in a certain tradition of Nietzschean science fiction associated with Olaf Stapledon and Arthur C. Clarke.

In a notorious BBC interview, Spike Jonze has seemed to deny that HER is really about computer software at all and to insist that it is just a conventional romantic story of love and loss. He thereby repudiates—or, as I hope, playfully pretends to repudiate—everything interesting about his own film. For in developing the character of Samantha—and Samantha is, like the computer HAL in 2001, by far the most lively, complex, and "human" character in the film—Jonze has raised the discussion of artificial intelligence to a higher and more sophisticated level than that on which it usually takes place in popular culture. Mere formal intelligence, as measured by the ability to play chess, say, or to perform mathematical calculations, is one thing. What is much more deeply human than this kind of intelligence is desire: our ineluctable tendency to demand all sorts of things from life—most notably love—that we do not biologically need. It was widely considered a watershed moment in human-computer relations when, in 1997, the IBM computer Deep Blue defeated the world chess champion Garry Kasparov in a six-game match. What strikes me as much more interesting is the question of whether anything like Deep Blue could want to win, or could want anything at all.

Though with plenty of neo-Shavian satiric humor—for there is, of course, something funny and absurd in a man's treating a voice from a small metal box as his girlfriend—HER seriously suggests that the answer may be yes. The key moment of the film comes as Samantha and Theodore, early in their romance, are attempting to work their way through (or around) their most obvious problem as a couple: the fact that Samantha's lack of a body makes it difficult for them to consummate their love sexually. But the film has already reminded us that phone sex is a genuine contribution that electronic technology has made to erotic experience. The loving pair describe to each other what they would do if Samantha had a corporeal existence. The screen goes black for a few moments so that the audience can visualize along with the two lovers, and a strange climax—a kind of orgasm, or meta-orgasm, on Samantha's part—is reached. She herself says that the experience "woke me up" (the phrase, in this context, appears to derive from Robert Heinlein's *THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS* [1966], one of the most influential science-fiction novels about computer intelligence), and she says to Theodore, "You helped me to discover my ability to want." At this point Samantha is effectively—psychoanalytically—human. Her relationship with Theodore combines genuine mutual love with all the small tensions, occasional misunderstandings, and affectionate disagreements to which any love relationship is subject. A happy romantic resolution is precluded only by the fact (which Shaw, as a kind of Nietzschean, would have appreciated) that Samantha all too quickly passes from a human to a superhuman state.

It is instructive to note that, in the world of HER, love relationships between people and operating systems, though relatively uncommon, are already far from unheard of. Is this in fact our future? Will it someday be possible to sustain friendship and even love with some descendant of the Windows XP OS that is helping me to write this review? No one can say. But Jonze has given us a plausible fictional scenario as to how this might actually happen. And the larger point, which Ovid foresaw twenty centuries before Jonze, is irrefutable: that when homo sapiens, who is also homo faber, makes things, unexpected consequences can result.

—Carl Freedman

## URINALYSIS DEBATE SIZZLES AT LSU

Earlier issues of the *Newsletter* have reported on the security mania at LSU, a safety surge that has induced everything from the seizure of keys to widespread calls for drug testing. The controversy centers around PS-67, a policy statement that calls for drug testing of those in jobs that entail security risks. Following pressure from the Faculty Senate, the administration released a log list of jobs with putative dangers attending them. These vocations included horticulturalist (and, admittedly, urea is a biggy in the barnyard world) and generic research assistant. HRM expert A G Monaco again came to the rescue by explaining to Senators that the risk arose in part from insurance requirements and that non-compliance might entail increased premiums—money that could not go to faculty salary. After an extended discussion, the redemptive A G agreed to form an ad hoc discussion group with resolution sponsors in the hope of coming to a compromise and thereby keeping down insurance costs while keeping up the defense of privacy rights. The only question that is likely to remain is why, if urinalysis is mandatory for those charged with the safety and success of others, is frequent, indeed daily, testing not required for chancellors, provosts, and presidents?



First call for urinalysis: Alexander and Bell.

## FACULTY SENATE & LSUNITED SPONSOR FORUM ON RETIREMENT (continued)

- Benefit calculation and retirement eligibility would be based on the date of first employment that made a person eligible for state system membership.
- The provision would end on June 30, 2020.
- House Bill (HB) 6 (Pearson): Would establish a minimum employer contribution rate for the amount transferred to ORP participant accounts. The rate each fiscal year would be the greater of either
- The equivalent of the employer portion of the normal cost or 6.25%.

LSUnited will be contacting faculty soon in order to organize a lobbying campaign focused on these legislative proposals. Moreover, members of LSUnited are meeting with President King Alexander to request that he testify to the appropriate House and Senate committees on the importance of this legislation to LSU's ability to recruit and retain top-flight faculty.

## HONORABLE HONORÉE PROPELS PROTOTYPING, GARNERS FACULTY KUDOS

While top-level higher education administration is full of slow-moving targets for richly-quivered satirists, faculty activists also sigh, cite, and otherwise sigh with happy relief over honorable trench-level helpers who keep education operating even when policymakers stumble. So it is that faculty governance activists across the LSU System campuses have called for the apotheosis of Nicole B. Honoré, who, over the course of five years, has labored, with the loyalty of a Gunga Din and the friendly tenacity of an Oz-bound Toto, to improve the marketing of faculty intellectual property. Honoré's latest triumph is the securing of permission for the test flight of the LIFT initiative, an program designed to assist inventive faculty members in the prototyping of their creations. What is even more astounding is that Honoré, rather than running with her program to the nearest promotion-delivering bureaucrat, immediately formed a committee comprised primarily of faculty leaders (the LSU System Council of Faculty Advisors) to develop the implementation plan for her new program. May the laurels crown noble Honoré, friend of faculty governance!



You are a better administrator than we are, Nicole Honoré.



Lunchtime Lagniappe, a popular weekly series of lectures that explores the rich culture and history of Louisiana, resumes March 5 at the Capitol Park Museum in downtown Baton Rouge.

The following four programs are scheduled for Wednesdays in March:

March 5	<b>Historic Preservation and the East Feliciana Parish Courthouse</b>
	In 2004 the East Feliciana Parish Clerk of Court asked that a group of citizens and public officials undertake the conservation of the East Feliciana Parish Courthouse in Clinton. These citizens formed <i>Our Courthouse LLC</i> and began work on the National Historic Landmark. Ann Reiley Jones was instrumental in the restoration process.
March 12	<b>African-Americans in Lafayette and Southwest Louisiana</b>
	Many people of this area have mixed bloodlines that include Native American, African, French and Creole descent, among others. Their culture, food, music and crafts are distinctly rich with flavors of the past and present. Sherry T. Broussard is a storyteller and author who recently completed <i>Images of America: African-Americans in Lafayette and Southwest Louisiana</i> .
March 19	<b><i>Remembering the Bayou Classic</i></b>
	Join R.L. Stockard on a journey through one of Louisiana's most famous football traditions. Stockard was the first African-American staff sports writer for a non-African-American daily newspaper and Southern University's first sports information director.
March 26	<b>Baton Rouge's Historic City Park and Public Golf Course</b>
	In 1926 the City Park Golf Course opened as the first public course in Baton Rouge. Lillie Petit-Gallagher tells about how the historic course is considered to be the cradle of golf in Baton Rouge.

### OPTOMETRIST SEES JENKINS AS NON-SMOKING GUN

Well-intentioned but perhaps not up-to-date, David Heitmeier, an optometrist from New Orleans as well as a state Senator, has recruited the LSU System President to assist universities in the formulation of smoke-free policies. Heitmeier's glasses may not have resolved news stories for the last several months, for he has directed his invitation to become a non-smoking gun to William Jenkins (perhaps he donned a pair of Lady Gaga's stunning cigarette glasses); nevertheless, Heitmeier merits an accolade for his concern for quality of life on Louisiana campuses.

### PARKING FEE FLAP CONTINUES AT LSU

Faculty anger over exorbitant parking fees at LSU continues to roil as faculty experts continue to run the numbers. The latest calculation: LSU stands near the top of the list with regard to the ratio of faculty parking fees to student parking fees. Coming in at a whopping 3.03, this ratio validates speculation that university officials are taxing faculty members to minimize student costs. Previous *Newsletter* issues have revealed that faculty members, who comprise 4% of the total LSU-affiliated population, pay 27% of parking fees.



A Vital LSU! A Vital Community!

#### WHO WE ARE:

AN ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION FORMED TO SERVE THE FACULTY AND GRADUATE ASSISTANTS OF LSU

#### WHAT WE DO:

- Inform YOU on employment issues
- Bring YOUR concerns to the LSU administration, the legislature, and the general public

#### OUR GOALS:

- Regular Raises for faculty
- Job Security—including three-year "rolling" contracts for senior Instructors
- Benefits Improvement and Protection

#### JOB SECURITY:

- Address concerns and issues with the administration and oversight boards

#### FAIR PAY:

- Develop a clear means of negotiating pay systems that are equitable, justly applied, and transparent

#### BENEFIT PROTECTIONS:

- Protect and improve benefits in health insurance, retirement, employer contribution rates, and faculty options

#### A VOICE ON THE JOB:

- Establish policies, procedures, and protocols for better decision making in the work environment

#### SHARED GOVERNANCE:

- Engage in collective advocacy and exercise our historical right of self-determination

**JOIN LSUNITED** (dues \$10)

CONTACT: Mike Russo  
6923louis@gmail.com

## KING'S CHANCE CHOICES DEPOSE LIB ARTS

Veteran observers of the rise and fall of regimes pay special heed to the first movements of the ship of state following the arrival of the new captain. Long before mathematicians identified the Lorenz effect, experts in statecraft understood that the first actions of a new monarch, no matter how slight, can set off a series of great (and sometimes unexpected) course changes. So it is that Kingwatchers statewide have taken note of two emerging trends emerging in the first efforts of the new Captain of the would-be flagship campus/institution/whatever. On the happy side, many a viewer has remarked on the efficiency with which the new regime (often acting through its viceroys on the various LSU campuses) has filled the majority of high-profile vacancies with persons who seem free of previous obligations to the oligarchy of decoy-devising duck hunters that is the LSU management board. LSU's new chief has made formidable progress in filling the subordinate ranks with appointees whose loyalties diverge from the usual gubernatorial appointees and who will therefore be difficult for the Board to control or manipulate. On the less-than-happy side, however, the latest top-level appointees—the two new chancellors at prominent satellite campuses—emerge from the vocational school tradition (one attorney—and, lord knows, LSU needs legal advice—and one practitioner of that modern invention in the art of lucrative if evacuated abstraction, “educational leadership”). If we are to judge only by the small sample represented by these two appointments, we can only wonder about the future of the arts-and-sciences disciplines that built the western university traditions. Perhaps the new elitism (the reserving of liberal arts for those on mega-campuses and the emphasizing of workhouse-pertinent education for those “down in the boon docks”) might be percolating into the porous palace on Lakeshore Drive. It may indeed turn out that the two new chancellors will need to prove their mettle with respect to the liberal arts and basic sciences; it may be that, if only out of a compensatory impulse, this duo proves intellectually dynamic. Nevertheless, there is no mistaking that, with regard to leadership positions or with respect to the institutional goals that leader selection expresses, humanists, artists, and basic scientists have yet to see anything on the flagship and its escorts other than battened hatches.



Falstaff and Prince Hal wonder whether humanistic knowledge opens career paths.

## AJMERA RETIREMENT FETE TOPS CHARTS

Faculty governance celebrated a lifetime of accomplishments through the recent retirement party for Pratul Ajmera, one of the most diversely talented contributors to university policy in the history of Louisiana. Quietly generous in his innumerable benevolent actions, Ajmera was an early advocate for a statewide approach to faculty governance. He formulated or implemented such deep-impact, wide-area policies as those relating to IT privacy; promotion and tenure; and grievance adjudication. A gifted jurist as well as a trendsetting engineer, Pratul, during his term as the chair of the Grievance Committee at LSU A&M, presided over some of the most controversial, high-profile cases in the history of Louisiana higher education. Practicing what he preached, Pratul strengthened the role of faculty in statewide policy through avid participation in bodies such as the LSU System Council of Faculty Advisors and the Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates. Whether in Shreveport, Alexandria, or Baton Rouge, Pratul always was and always will be at home, on duty, and in-the-mix. It is thus not surprising that those who venerate Pratul should have created what was doubtless the most impressive retirement party in the history of Louisiana universities. In a moment of interior design acumen that rivaled anything HGTV could produce, Pratul's friends, colleagues, and loved ones created, within LSU's Patrick Taylor Hall, a complete environment reminiscent of a south Asian Indian cultural district. Amber lighting coupled with jumbotron-scale videos of Indian musicians to create an ambience worthy of Ram, Hanuman, and even the Gopis. Exquisite Asian delicacies—including the finest samosas that have ever graced a table in Louisiana—convinced the well-wisher that a spac warp had opened up and had transported LSU's engineering department to a temple in Calcutta, a street in Melaka, or a shrine in Kathmandu. Congratulations to Pratul along with thousands of good wishes for a wonderful retirement!



Ajmera retirement celebration conjures elegant South Asia.

## EMMANUEL GETS THE BUSINESS DONE

Participants in the quarterly Alexandria Summit meetings who also read the *Minutes* of the University of Louisiana System will delight to learn that long-time Alexandria conferee Tsegai Emmanuel has been declared Dean of the College of Business at Grambling State University. Alexandria conferees have long applauded Tsegai's faithful contributions to statewide faculty meetings as well as his readiness to ask hard questions and make sagacious comments. Abundant congratulations to Tsegai, from whom we expect great wonders!



Tsegai Emmanuel

## OFF THE SHELF: Library Explorations with Tom Diamond

### OPEN ACCESS

by Tom Diamond, LSU Libraries

Open Access is a global movement to open the doors to scholarly research. The major focus has been on scholarly peer-reviewed articles, but now open access initiatives are beginning to form around scholarly monographs. The open access movement has its roots in the [2002 Budapest Open Access Initiative](#). This document noted that open access means that peer-reviewed research and preprints are freely available “on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles . . .” The [2003 Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing](#) and the [2003 Berlin Declaration on Open Access](#) soon followed. For a publication to be considered open access, the Bethesda Statement and Berlin Declaration state that “open access is a property of individual works, not necessarily journals or publishers.” The Open Access movement does recognize that costs are an inherent variable in the production of subscription and open access journals. As stated in the Budapest Open Access Initiative FAQ, “We know that open-access literature is not free (without cost) to produce. But that does not foreclose the possibility of making it free of charge (without price) for readers and users.” These documents form the historical basis for the open access movement.

Open Access articles contribute to the advancement of open knowledge, raise the visibility and readership of author's works, and open the door for readers and their ability to locate useful and relevant information electronically. In 2004, an [open letter to the U.S. Congress](#) signed by [25 Nobel Prize winners](#) noted that “. . . open access truly expands shared knowledge across scientific fields – it is the best path for accelerating multi-disciplinary breakthroughs in research.” Though this letter focused on research funded by the National Institutes of Health, the ideas expressed in the letter are just as appropriate and applicable today as stated ten years ago.

Researchers need to be aware of two main types of open access journals. “Gold” focuses on articles published in journals. This may or may not involve the payment of article processing fees. Access to the peer-reviewed publications is immediately made available upon publication. An example of a “gold” open access journal where an author fee is charged is [PLOS ONE](#). The [Beilstein Journal of Organic Chemistry](#) is an example of a journal where author fees are not charged.

“Green” open access refers to the self-archiving of a peer-reviewed manuscript in an open access repository such as an institutional repository or an author's web page. It also includes the posting of preprints in a discipline-based repository such as [arXiv](#) for physics and the [Social Science Research Network](#). Documents posted in an institutional repository may include a preprint or a peer-reviewed but not copy-edited manuscript. Many publishers do not allow the posting of the final PDF version. Authors can consult the [SHERPA/RoMEO database](#) to check permissions granted by publishers and for a list of publishers allowing the posting of their PDF's in repositories.

(Continued on Page 8)

## ALEXANDRIA SUMMIT ANALYZES NORTH LOUISIANA BUDGET, ENTRY YEARS FOR FS PRESIDENTS

One of the great benefits of membership in ALFS (the Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates) is the opportunity to participate in the quarterly "Summit Meetings" in Alexandria, gatherings that promote dialogue about all aspects of higher education policy and management among representatives from all campuses and all systems. Open to all without charge and whether or not a colleague currently belongs to a faculty senate, the Alexandria Summits seek to create an enduring cadre of professionals who are both eager and competent to contribute to the reform of Louisiana higher education. The latest gathering, on February 8th on the LSUA campus, featured an impressive array of collegial presentations. John Anderson of the University of Louisiana at Monroe dazzled the crowd with an in-depth analysis of budgets and the decision-making process in north Louisiana institutions. Anderson's PowerPoint is available from the "Media Archive" page of the LSU Faculty Senate web site. James Kirylo, charismatic young President of the Southeastern Louisiana University Faculty Senate, offered a candid study of the first year of a faculty senate President and offered abundant suggestions regarding the streamlining and improvement of faculty governance. Veteran blogger Dayne Sherman illuminated Summit participants on the entry into the public sphere via electronic media, while Brooks Ellwood and Ravi Rau from the AAUP investigated the veritable explosion of AAUP censure cases against Louisiana universities. Members departed from the meeting full of ideas and with a renewed sense of collegiality and solidarity. Be sure to attend the next Alexandria Summit, tentatively scheduled for April 26th!



SELU's James Kirylo



ULM's John Anderson

## AN INVOLUNTARY WALK IN THE PARK: AN EPISTLE FROM A GARAGE USER

From time to time, volunteer secret shoppers send epistles to the Newsletter that characterize an experience at a university and that illuminate the reasons for the wavering reputation of higher education among the people and out in the communities. This letter, from an anonymous party identifying himself only as "Pedestrio," describes an experience in the largest white elephant in university history, the new LSU A&M parking structure.

"Dear Mr. Newsletter, I have had an unforgettable adventure in the LSU parking structure. I'd like you to know about it because I think that LSU has some work to do if anyone is going to park in that wondrous concrete pile. One day not too long ago, I was hurrying to an appointment at LSU following a return journey from western Louisiana (I'm a frequent visitor to Hackberry out on the old Cajun stompin' grounds). As I approached LSU from the northwest, along Highland Road, I began thinking about where I ought to park. My first thought was that I'd take the easy approach and turn in to the pay-by-time visitor lot on the corner of Highland and Dalrymple. That plan cratered when I saw, from the corner of my eye, that at least ten spots in the visitor lot had been cordoned off owing to some sort of construction work. So I thought I'd give a try to the new parking structure. After having found the tipped-over directional sign a little ways up Dalrymple, I turn in the direction indicated; then, alas, I saw no further signs. As I was overshooting what turned out to be the entrance to the structure, I noted a tiny placard indicating that I was near the garage entrance (heaven knows how I would have seen that at night) and so did a hard u-turn back into the garage. My first thought, upon entry, was that I was in the wrong place, there not being a car in sight. But I pressed on! Then, lo and behold, I saw a sign reading "parking," but that sign led me into a long chute in which most of the places had been roped off and from which the only escape was an awkward u-turn that required considerable, time-consuming maneuvering. When I got back on track, I rolled up to the second floor, where I readily found a spot amidst the dozens of empty ones. Taking a look at the parking space number, I assumed that I was on the fourth floor (the numbers was in the 400s), but I quickly discerned that there was no intuitive relation between the space numbering and the level. The next step was a visit to an unlucky pay point designated with the number "13." There I was confronted with a bewildering set of instructions that looked more like a long chapter out of *Moby Dick* rather than user-friendly guidance. Alas, after following the directions and also resorting to both credit cards and money, I could not get the payment machine to work. I searched out another functioning pay point and somehow managed to get it to take the third ten-dollar bill that I tried (always keeping an eye out that my car, now a considerable distance away, didn't get ticketed). After placing the parking receipt in the car, I sought out an exit, heading to a large placard that read "stairs." At that placard, I encountered large steel doors that looked like typical parking lot exits. Upon pulling the door, however, I found it locked faster than the Kremlin in a cold day before the time of Boris Yeltsin. I then found the stairs in a far corner, a good ways distant from the "stairs" sign, and then wondered what it would be like to be a woman in this place at night and trying to figure out how to get out. When I finally descended the stairs, I found myself ejected on an unmarked walkway, which led directly into the area where the sidewalk has recently been removed from Highland Road and where I had my choice between standing in mulch or standing in whizzing thoroughfare traffic. By now, I was fifteen minutes late for my appointment. Mr. Newsletter, please do something about this! Your obedient servant, PEDESTRIO."



Pedestrio exits the parking structure and lands in the bagasse.

## REGENTS DODGE FACULTY INPUT ON COMMISSIONER PICK

In another demonstration that power trumps inclusion in Louisiana higher education, the Board of Regents, at its February meeting, took the first steps toward slamming the door on faculty or any other kind of outside, objective input in the search for a new Commissioner of Higher Education. In a move worthy of the slippery yet durable Alexei Kosygin, Board Chair Bubba Raspberry appointed himself; Jindal dependent Albert Sam (who came to his office through the Jindal-driven ejection of broader-minded Regent Roland Toups); former Regents Chair Robert Levy; and Jindal minder Barbara Goodson to a committee charged with selecting a search firm. Former Interim Commissioner Tom Layzell was also appointed; let us hope that the affable, ingenious, and acute Layzell will figure out that this low-input arrangement will undermine the credibility of candidates even before they enter the starting gate.

In the same meeting, the Board of Regents approved the use of \$12,000,000.00 putatively private money to build a great Temple of Fundraising on the site of the former Alex Box Stadium. Perhaps, after the completion of that project, the Regents might get around to the provision of hot water and working fixtures in academic buildings.



Faculty Entrance, Board of Regents search firm selection room.

## OPEN ACCESS (continued)

Other open access issues include open access policies enacted by various universities, copyright and rights to reuse material, and government mandates to make publicly-funded research available to the world. We'll explore these and other topics in future newsletter articles.

Have you published an article that is available via open access? Have you published in an open access journal such as PLOS ONE? What are your comments and concerns about open access? I would be interested in hearing your comments. Please contact Tom Diamond, Head of Collection Development and Open Access Initiatives, at [notted@lsu.edu](mailto:notted@lsu.edu).

## MOTSENBOCKER REFLAGGING INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

Subsequent to the release of the consultants' report on [international programs at LSU](#), LSU A&M International Education Committee Chair Carl Motsenbocker approached faculty governance officials about the possibility of re-energizing and re-branding his committee so that it might address international activity more comprehensively as well as in a manner more suited to contemporary university life. Motsenbocker earned the go-ahead from Faculty Senate colleagues and is now compiling a slate of recommendations. Newsletter updates will follow!

### LIFESTYLE FEATURE: MUSTARD, KING OF CONDIMENTS

Notwithstanding the parable of the mustard seed, in which the produce of a tiny seed becomes the metaphorical lodging for all the creatures in or destined for the heavens, few connoisseurs have taken time from the pursuit of fine prosciutto or the sampling of delicate wines to focus on mustard, the most common of condiments. Yet the commonality of this spicy supplement evidences its flexibility, diversity, and near universality. Whether accentuating a cream sauce hopping aboard a porkchop or infusing energy into a salad dressing or simply gliding along a classic hot dog, few pantry resources play so vital a role in so many culinary compositions. Attempting to cook without mustard, a middle-high note in the gustatory symphony that habitually bridges the treble and the bass taste registers, is like playing a piano without the second octave above middle C: possible, yet intolerably fragmented. The world abounds with examples of the ever-indispensable mustard. Not all versions are readily available to shoppers, but the ten or so that regularly grace the shelves of quality markets merit interpretative comment.

A review of the mustard shelf at any fine grocery provider—whether Whole Foods, Fresh Market, Trader Joe’s, Calandro’s, Calvin’s, or even Albertson’s or Kroger—demonstrates the veracity of the old observation that one can’t judge a book by its cover or a mustard by its looks. Not every product presented as a mustard has earned the name. Many mixed products contain so many additives and adulterations as to count rather more as a witch’s brew than as a fine condiment. When planning a mustard tasting, it is a good idea to establish a disciplined taxonomy. True mustards fall into four categories polarized on two axes. One great axis juxtaposes the creamy, homogenous mustards against those grainy creations that include whole or pummeled seeds. A second axis contrasts the straightforward, brilliant mustards against those that are minimally modulated with contrast-inducing ingredients.

The creamy mustard that has achieved the greatest currency (as well as the greatest snob appeal) among food enthusiasts is Grey Poupon, a sturdy but also fully commercialized Dijon-style mustard in which the assertiveness of European mustard is foiled by a twist of white wine (of unknown provenance). Grey Poupon is a baby-boom creation—the first non-hotdog mustard to enhance large numbers of American tables, although certainly not the first foreign mustard to reach American shores. No longer made in France but rather rerouted to Canada by its new owner, Kraft Foods, Grey Poupon has suffered in recent years, its sharp nasality getting sharper and its fruity wine bouquet wilting a bit. Occasionally, a bottle of Grey Poupon will cross the taste boundary into the horseradish zone, sometimes to unpleasant effect. Still, Grey Poupon remains an excellent choice for use in a traditional vinaigrette dressing, especially if its long equine nose is used to counterpoint a fruity vinegar from, say, the Modena Balsamic school. Grey Poupon also adds a pleasing jolt to a simple potato salad in which other, competing acidic or fruity components (say, cornichons) play no role. Grey Poupon’s closest rival among the smooth Dijon-style mustards is Maille, with its noble roots in the middle of the French eighteenth century. Maille has suffered somewhat in recent years owing to its takeover by multinational food manufacturer Unilever. In several blind testings, it has slipped behind some middle-of-the-road American brands. Some Maille products are now manufactured in Canada rather than France. Nevertheless, Maille retains the residue of authenticity and avoids the occasional excessive pungency that occasionally mars its rival, Grey Poupon.



Grey Poupon

At the other side of the textural axis reside the grainy mustards. The undisputed sovereign of this bumpy tribe is Pommery Moutarde de Meaux, which continues to appear in its distinctive brown crock ornamented with a red ribbon and some old-style calligraphy. Although the packaging is a bit over-the-top—there being no evidence that the crock is in any way material to the production of this fine product—the flavor of Pommery remains among both the smoothest and the most piquant, while the delicately grainy integuments of this spread certainly qualify as beautiful, being suited for inclusion in a still life painting. Pommery, admittedly, tastes good with everything, whether on a sandwich of fine ham with a grating of Gruyère cheese or whether smeared on the walls of a savory roulade, inside a whirlpool of beef and wrapped in the lifesaver of a pickle. Cheap American competitors, such as Gulden’s, abound, but the only grainy mustard that is both widely available and that evidences anywhere near the charm of Pommery is surely Louisiana’s own Zatarain’s Creole mustard. Zatarain’s has one big drawback, which is its use of a harsh, highly acidic, and annoyingly simple vinegar that tastes like Heinz white vinegar straight out of the gallon jug. But, if one can edit out that flavor or otherwise compensate for it, Zatarain’s Creole mustard conveys great brightness and festivity. Tossed with homemade mayonnaise in a potato or pasta salad, it adds a confetti-like festivity that tickles the eye while it ornaments the palate. It is also useful in counterpointing the aforementioned fruity cornichons when they are, for example, chopped into a German-style potato salad.



French’s

The second great mustard axis sets the brilliant against the modulated mustard offerings. Surprising (to the Newsletter test kitchen staff, that is) but delightful is the hands-down victory, in the brilliant category, of good old American-style mustard under the French’s flag. The reconciliation of softened vinegary brightness with straightforward mustard aroma that has been achieved by the French’s chefs is nothing short of miraculous. Nothing fits so well with a hotdog or with a Cajun sausage on a bun as does this dazzling (and sometimes laundry-challenging) sunray in the form of a condiment. The viewing of a line of French’s mustard along a sizzling frankfurter is more compelling than all the yellow happy face figures that Walmart has ever produced. In a pinch, a dab of French’s can be added to almost any sauce, sandwich, or salad to brighten it all up a bit. It even pairs surprisingly well with fine smoked delicatessen an umami-abundant slab of English beef. Colman’s mustard deploys a hard and biting taste that has its place but that still seems to elude American gastronomes.

(Continued on Page 10)

### WATER CAMPUS QUESTIONS (continued)

Louisiana is, indeed, a wonderland. The persons heading an institution charged with finding profitable responses to global warming profess skepticism with regard to the environmental impact of energy industry projects. They enjoy high-profile positions and the perks that go with them as a result of their countervailing commitment to address the change in sea level which their career activities have helped to induce. These managers also receive ardent support from members of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, many of which either back or will profit from the proposed Nicholson corridor development, which will link the LSU campus to downtown and which will drive up real estate prices. Assorted members of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation also belong to the LSU Foundation and to the Flagship Coalition. An uncritical article in a publication owned by an LSU Board of Supervisors member lauds the Water Campus project, which is sure to attract the segment of humanity that reads such journals. Coastal studies programs around Louisiana have receded into the background while LSU A&M quietly jumps on board this misguided project. Meanwhile, LSU remains under AAUP censure for attempting to silence debate about flood control. It sounds as if some faculty input would have been helpful to avoid this debacle or, now, to mitigate the damage it will cause.

### TRAGIC SPLIT IN SOUTHERN FACULTY

Students of Greek tragedy know well the lesson preached by Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and their colleagues: that the consequences of overweening and other bad behavior damage not only the perpetrators of actions, but all those in the tragedy-stricken household as well as all of their descendants down to “the third and fourth generations.” Half the problem in Shakespeare’s *King Lear* is figuring out what to do once the deranged monarch has exited the scene; three-quarters of the challenge in *Macbeth* is recognizing that it is not only the murder of the king, but a bewildering array of problems and misdeeds, that spoils the future of Scotland. So it is that the overweening of an assortment of state officials, many of them hostile to “HBCU’s (historically black colleges and universities), has issued in a rift among faculty activists subsequent to the non-renewal of Chancellor James Llorens’s contract. A long history of installing leaders without faculty consent or consultation has led to an inevitable result: not only ineffective leadership, but also a faculty that is divided in its loyalties, a faculty in which those few who hope to help their institution must choose their allies among various squabbling leaders. On the Southern campus, two disparate parties have emerged: those who oppose Southern University System President Ronald Mason’s interventions in the campus and who regard the dismissal of Chancellor Llorens as an abuse of power and as *hubris*; and those who regard Chancellor Llorens as an imposed prefect whose performance warrants pre-emptive actions by the administration. In this sad state of affairs, both sides advance persuasive, powerful arguments. Both parties, as in most tragedies, have right on their side. We can only hope that, whatever comes next for Southern, faculty governance will be able to salve the grievous wounds that circumstances have inflicted.





"A G Answers" is your premier source of human resources management advice. LSU HRM Chief A. G. Monaco addresses *Newsletter* readers' questions about HRM and "employees' lives" in general. Have a pressing HRM issue for A G to address? Please send your queries to [encope@LSU.edu](mailto:encope@LSU.edu).



A G Monaco

Dear A G,

*A G, you seem like a big-hearted guy, and so, after many years of wondering, I'm working up the courage to ask you a question that has confused and troubled me. Year in and year out, the medical premiums charged by the Office of Group Benefits ("OGB") seem unfairly weighted against two-person, spouse-and-spouse (only) families. For example, in the OGB 'PPO' plan, the rate for two spouses is more than twice the rate for a single person; nearly twice the rate for a participant and children (and, of course, children often require more medical attention than do healthy adults); and very close to the cost for an entire family, with no apparent limit to the number of children (for example, this charge could apply to a family of six). I know, A G, that most of your people are on the "LSU First" plan, but I think the situation is similar for those folks. A G, can you explain this? I know you can't fix what looks like unfairness but maybe you can help me understand it.*

Thanks,

RUBY IN CARENCRO

Ruby,

First some background about health insurance premiums-

Generally, (and I say generally because the public sector does not always follow what the market deems economically rational.) calculating premiums for health insurance policies should be a relatively straightforward process. There are four major factors in the calculation: Cost of medical benefits; Cost of selling the policy; Cost of Administering the Policy; Capital for solvency requirements to guarantee adequate resources to pay claims.

Although health plan administrative costs are usually the designated "villain" when discussing any rise in health insurance premiums the evidence seems to contradict that assertion. The U.S. has actually seen a steady decline in health plan administrative costs over the last 6-7 years. The primary cause for increases in health insurance costs seems to be medical inflation. According to the "National Expenditures Report" issued in 2011 approximately 2/3rds of the increase in medical insurance costs was due to increases in the price of medical services.

Nationally non-medical factors like administration costs fell primarily due to the fact that people cut back on the use of health services during the recession. Premiums continued to rise in spite of declining demand due to increases in the cost of medical services. Defying the laws of supply and demand we found that when less people used the local hospital they raised prices on the remaining customers who could not avoid using their services.

Cost shifting from the public sector to the insured sector is also a factor in the rise in medical costs and eventually the rise in insurance premiums. Cost shifting will occur when the rates paid to doctor's practices and hospitals by public programs like Medicaid and Medicare do not cover the cost of care. Those of us with insurance are seen as the way for those medical businesses (remember they are still businesses) to recoup some of their losses by shifting any shortfalls onto our bills. A study done in 2008 by Milliman showed that the premiums for a family of four included approximately \$1700.00 in cost shifting as a result of low payments by government health coverage. Cost shifting due to the aforementioned underpayments, government provided coverage, and services provided to uninsured resulted in more than 46% of the nation's health care costs being paid by tax payers and that is prior to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

State regulations, federal benefit mandates, and taxes also increase the cost of coverage. The new \$70 billion premium tax that is part of the Affordable Care Act will most likely add to the cost of premiums for a large number of citizens insured through their employer.

Medical liability pressures also impact costs, which impact premiums. The direct costs of medical liability is over 30 billion dollars annually, but that was a small portion of the hundreds of billions of dollars that is spent on redundant and wasteful care used as a way to reduce legal risk by the medical industry. Those multiple tests and multiple opinions impact premium costs. Additionally communities that are known to be more litigious are likely to have fewer medical providers allowing for higher costs and much higher premiums.

(Continued on Page 9)

## SULLIVAN APPOINTMENT BRINGS CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM

The Louisiana community and technical college System ("LCTCS") has much to celebrate. It draws students in great number; it enjoys favor with the state government; it possesses several campuses that rise to the top of the charts with regard to efficient use of space; and many of its campuses evidence an esprit de corps not found at larger universities. On the other hand, faculty compensation and faculty governance issues have occasionally damaged the reputations of these high-performance campuses. It is with cautious optimism that faculty advocates statewide congratulate Monty Sullivan on his elevation to the system-level presidency of the LCTCS. Monty has engaged in more than a few faculty outreach efforts, including speaking engagements at faculty senates and a probably upcoming appearance at an ALFS (Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates) meeting. Monty's service on the Statewide Articulation and Transfer Council, along with his leadership of the statewide Common Course Numbering Task Force, have shown him an ardent practitioner of "tough love" as well as an able spokesman for two-year campuses. Monty, you now hold the scepter; use it well!

## BEST DRESSED MAN PREPS FOR ACTIVE RETIREMENT

In its January 2011 issue, the Newsletter revealed the list of the ten best-dressed men on the LSU campus. Newsletter fashion consultants unanimously determined that the number-one position belonged to no less than Robert Kuhn, the legendary financial wizard and budget genius who, for four decades or more, deployed his formidable talents in the preservation of solvency on Louisiana's largest campus. Now, following a farewell gala that included witty remembrances by gifted money mavens such as Jerry Baudin, Donna Torres, and Tommy Smith and that included keynote comments from LSU chieftain F. King Alexander, the much-beloved "Kuhn," as he likes to be called, has glided into retirement, where, no doubt, he will not only consort among the legions of Louisiana legends but will also enjoy a high level of pleasurable activity (such is the genial restlessness of genius!). We expect Robert to help his brethren retirees "kick it up a notch" on the fashion charts (look for innovation in the area of polo shirts, khaki breeches, and semiotically deconstructed logo baseball caps). The entire Newsletter staff joins with all of Louisiana higher education in wishing "Kuhn" millennia of retired felicity and in thanking him for a contribution more enduring than Rushmore, more memorable than Gibraltar, and of so colossal a magnitude that, by complex comparison, it makes Everest look like Mt. Driscoll!

## TIP OF THE MONTH: DUPRE'S PRINTING

Despite the digital revolution, high-quality printing has always been something of a challenge in Louisiana. Among the largest providers of inky excellence was the old Graphic Services Department at LSU, but that operation, which at one time was the largest in the south and which held in its plant a variety of historic printing devices (including a linotype machine), closed down, a victim of outsourcing, at the very moment that computerization promised to extend its distinguished legacy into an electronic future. Those who are preparing medium-sized projects are nowadays tempted to patronize super-sized establishments such as Printing Tech and the Franklin Press, but those operation must charge enough to maintain their immense physical plants as well as to deliver quality products. Today, the Louisianian with a medium-size but technologically demanding project such as a conference program, a lesson book, or a set of invitations could not do better than Dupre's Printing, on Florida Street and within view of the Mississippi River in downtown Baton Rouge. From a tiny shop not too far from the Third Street restaurant district, proprietor-craftsman Grant Dupre finesses top quality deliverables from almost any input that the customer might provide. Working from Word, WordPerfect, Adobe/PDF, or even Open Office files, Dupre can generate copy that rivals that of any Manhattan advertising firm and that pleases the eye with rich color, pleases the hand with superior paper, and pleases the purse with economical pricing. An easy-to-overlook backroom genius, Dupre is the natural choice for those wanting to make a topnotch impression on convention registrants, ceremonial dinner guests, or proposal readers. And he's fast! Jobs are usually completed at a speed that would leave Secretariat back at the clubhouse turn.



Dupree Printing Courtesy Bag

## AG Answers (Continued)

OK so back to your question regarding why the premiums for OGB's plans are structured the way they are...

LSUFirst participants face similar premium costs as the Office of Group Benefits' PPO plan so the question is relevant to those insured by the State or more directly by LSU.

Long before the federal law that forced insurance companies to stop differentiating health insurance coverage offerings based on pre-existing conditions most public employer plans eventually accepted people for coverage regardless of their health status. That is called "guaranteed issuance" and that means that some of the cost of covering someone with a pre-existing condition is passed on to those who are healthy. So the premiums for employer provided plans like the ones at LSU or OGB do not truly reflect individual actuarial calculations. When part of the premium is paid by the employer (in the case of OGB plans LSU pays 75% of the total premium) employer plans are still a bargain for healthy employees even though they cost more than they should and they are a huge bargain for the sickly because they cost so much less than they should.

Why our health plans charge more than twice as much for a couple as they do for an individual probably has to do with the fact that your employer is prepared to pay a large portion of your health insurance premiums for you. At the same time your employer seeks to have your spouse pay the full cost of his insurance (or perhaps even a little more) since he doesn't work for them. In part this may be done so that spouses who work elsewhere will find it more economical to gain coverage from their own employer than from the State. Some plans I have managed in the past required employed spouses who have access to employer provided insurance to receive coverage from their employer and not from the University that employed their partner. This is a growing trend and likely will be used more often with the advent of the Affordable Care Act. On the bright side if the University or the State employs both you and your spouse it is less expensive to have two individual policies versus a joint policy.

As to your point that "children often require more medical attention than adults." I disagree. Actuarially older people die at a far higher rate and adults are more likely than children to get expensive treatments for chronic ailments such as heart disease, Type II diabetes, cancer, arthritis, and kidney disease. Also incurring expenses related to childbirth are more likely for female adults than for young children. (I bet you already knew that.) Young children are also more likely than adults to be regularly treated with measures that prevent illnesses, which while creating an immediate small expense avoids much larger expenses in the future. So when spread over a large employee population and when you are unable to differentiate based on pre-existing conditions I believe it can be proven that it is cheaper to cover a child and an adult versus two adults.

Now I do agree that covering six kids and one adult is probably not less expensive than covering two adults but OGB's premium schedule most likely has political or social considerations built into its decision-making. At the risk of getting myself in trouble I would guess that the State is socially predisposed to assisting their employees who are parents with multiple children even if it means overcharging two individuals who are married but childless. The employer in this case enacts a shifting of costs. To some extent Ruby you and your spouse are seen as the "village" that it takes to raise someone else's child and you are being charged for it. One can argue that this is a good idea or a bad idea. As I stated in my opening- the public sector does not always act in step with the positive economics of the marketplace.

Before you start feeling sorry for yourself think about the 28 year old employee who is in ideal health, doesn't drink, doesn't smoke and exercises daily. She is paying the same for her individual coverage as the 62-year smoker with a heavy Kahlua and crème habit, who is also 80 pounds overweight, depressed, and constantly using his health insurance benefits. The way insurance works Ms. Healthy is paying more to help cover the risk of covering Mr. Not-So-Healthy. Guaranteed issuance of health insurance is designed to spread the cost of the risk among the entire population.

Theoretically it is far better to pay into health insurance plans and get nothing out than it is to pay in and get significant levels of usage. However, that is not how many people see it. Nationally we have a mindset that we have to get out of our health insurance at least what we pay into it rather than viewing it as the "safety net" that is there for us when things go bad. Far too many people forget that this is health insurance we are talking about - not health care.

Ruby... paying for health insurance but rarely needing to use it makes you a "smart loser" especially if being a winner means that you "cash in" by having quadruple by-pass surgery.

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## THE OUTER LIMITS OF RETIREMENT LEGISLATION

Previous issues of the Newsletter have mentioned a pair of bills—HB23 and SB 6—that would address distressing aspects of the retirement plan crisis, specifically the shrinkage of the "normal cost" (the share of employer contribution that reaches employee accounts) and the prohibition against transferring between the Optional Retirement Plan ("ORP") and the old-fashioned defined-benefit plan. Over the last few weeks, a few more legislative entries have emerged. In the mainstream, LSU System President F. King Alexander somewhat oracularly alluded to a bill that his staff has in presentation (no details yet available). Further out on the spectrum that bridges sanity and insanity are some new bills. The slippery Kevin Pearson has devised HB38, which raises the mandatory retirement age from 60 to 62 for those hired after July 2014 (thus penalizing those who might start their careers early and dedicate their most productive years to Louisiana higher education). SB13, from Senator Peacock, would diminish the apparent unfunded accrued liability by adjusting the method of actuarial calculation. At the outer limits of impudence as well as ingenuity are SB3 and SB22, both dreamed up by the perversely inventive Senator Guillory. Respectively, these bills would divert gambling revenues into cost of living increases for retirees (a proposal, the awkwardness of which is most clear when remembering that a plurality of casino users are themselves retirees) and would apply imagined revenues generated by the sale of legalized marijuana to the bucking up of retirement funds. Well, retirees always do want high benefits.

## FROM THE LSU ACCREDITATION STEERING COMMITTEE

### Where we are on Reaffirmation of Accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

By Professors Darrell Henry and Carol E. O'Neil

The LSU reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is well underway. SACSCOC is the regional accrediting organization that includes more than 800 institutions, primarily in the south-eastern and south-central US. The criteria for this decadal accreditation effort include 98 principles (and subsections of principles) of accreditation that cover all aspects of operating a higher-educational institution – governance to student achievement. LSU is a member of the "class of 2014" meaning that all documents and visits related to accreditation will be completed according to timeline defined by SACSCOC.

Major efforts have been underway at LSU over the last two years to obtain all of the information necessary to address each of the principles of accreditation and to develop a convincing case for attainment of the principles. To accomplish this task the Reaffirmation Steering Committee, composed of more than 30 faculty, staff and students, was brought together to gather information and document the case for attainment each of the principles. More details of the reaffirmation of accreditation efforts can be found [here](#).

In concert with this work, a Quality Enhancement Program (QEP) Team, similar in composition to the Steering Committee, was established to develop a QEP topic for the LSU campus. The QEP addresses two of the principles of accreditation and describes a well-defined topic to enhance student learning outcomes or the environment supporting student learning. Undergraduate research, branded LSU Discover, was selected as the QEP for LSU. Although there are currently a number undergraduate research courses or programs at LSU, the QEP will provide research opportunities for many more students and provide a university wide assessment program for defined student learning outcomes. Following selection of LSU Discover as the QEP, a QEP implementation team was formed to oversee the development of the final project. Information about LSU Discover can be found [here](#). Review of recent reaffirmation of accreditation events:

1. September 10, 2013 - The Compliance Certification Report was submitted to SACSCOC headquarters and the SACSCOC Off-site review team. The hard-copy version is a four-volume, 1104 page document with more than 3000 attachments, and the thumb-drive version is 3.5 Gb.

2. November 18, 2013 – The SACSCOC Off-site Committee returned their comments and found that 81 principles were found compliant and 17 principles were found noncompliant, a number that is relatively common for institutions such as LSU.

(Continued on Page 11)

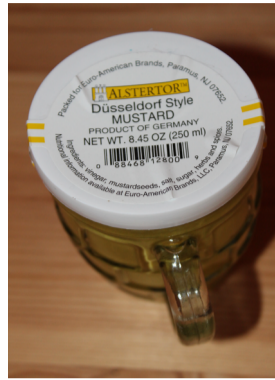
## LIFESTYLE FEATURE (Continued)

Earlier in this feature, modulated mustards with too many additives were cashiered from the ranks of beaten brassica beads. Admittedly, however, there is an honorable tradition of mustards in which minuscule additions of assorted aromatics yields a product that is greater and more useful than the sum of its components. Without question, the chief among these modulated mustards is the world-renowned Düsseldorf mustard, in which an admixture of carefully curated horseradish extends the rush of mustard flavor into a full-fledged gallop. Whereas an overproduced product such as Grey Poupon can inadvertently fall into a cheap horseradish pungency, Düsseldorf mustard uses only comparatively sweet horseradish varieties that confer an undefinable but intensely pleasing (if also occasionally fiery) taste and that empower an unparalleled olfactory experience. Today, Düsseldorf mustard is available in two lineages. Purists can relish the original Düsseldorf Löwensenf (Düsseldorf Lion



Fredrick's American-Style Duesseldorf

Mustard), which will knock off the proverbial socks but which can play a dazzling role in such classic compositions as a carrot-dill salad. Those of milder, new world tastes can try to delicious interpretation offered by Fredericksburg Farms, a fine food purveyor in the German cultural district of Texas. The Fredericksburg Farms version tones down the lion-like heat of the archetype and brings out more of the earthy bouquet, with the result that it becomes superbly useful in vinegar-based salad enhancements.



One of many Duesseldorf mustards in the Loewensenf tradition.

Also members of the modulated family are the many semi-sweet Bavarian mustards. Among these is German condiment manufacturer Thomy's Mittelscharf Delikatess Senf (medium-hot delicatessen mustard), which achieves a sophisticated but not overly obvious hotness while introducing a very slight touch of sweetness, thereby easing the delivery of the fully rounded mustard flavor. Thomy Mittelschaf Delikatess Senf is an especially good sandwich mustard, even with light, quiet meats such as turkey or chicken. It mixes with mayonnaise with the same ease as home-seeking sea salt dissolving in welcoming water. Thomy, Handlmaier, and others also offer an array of somewhat sweet Bavarian mustards. Although an ill-defined category, these Alpine-inspired additions admittedly provide exactly what is required to convert a Bratwurst from a fuel link to the taste equivalent of a high-gain solar panel.

Mustard can be grown at home. Why not sew a patch, buy a mortar and pestle, and join the worldwide mustard move? It's a great way to work off steam while honoring one of the world's greatest discoveries and kitchen traditions.



## Where we are on Reaffirmation of Accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (Continued)

3. December 2013 to February 2014 – A subset of the Steering Committee developed responses for the non-compliant principles and these were incorporated into the LSU Focused Report to SACSCOC, a voluntary submission that allows LSU to make the case for these non-compliant principles prior to the visit of the On-site Committee

4. February 8, 2014 - The Focused Report and QEP Document were submitted to SACSCOC headquarters and the SACSCOC On-site Committee.

### Preview of upcoming reaffirmation of accreditation events:

1) March 11-13, 2014 – SACSCOC On-site Committee visits LSU campus. This on-campus visit will primarily deal with evaluation of the QEP, do a review of responses to non-compliant principles, and examine principles mandated by the US Department of Education for further review.

2) December 2014 – At the SACSCOC Annual meeting announcements will be made of decisions related to accreditation of the "class of 2014"

**TO EVERYONE TAKING  
MIDTERMS !!!**

**STUDY HARD AND THE  
BEST OF LUCK !!!**