



President's Welcome



Throughout Louisiana and across several generations of administrators, it can easily be observed that an uptick in enthusiasm for student events and interactions inevitably precedes the end of a regime. When a president or chancellor begins appearing in student forums or develops a taste for dormitory chats, seasoned observers know that the end is near. Why?

The correlation of concern for the budding youth with the end of the reigning generation points up what might be called the sometimes genial, sometimes tedious "childishness" of Louisiana higher education. Rather than calling for the political equivalent of extreme unction, declining administrators cling to whatever provides the most traction with their constituencies. Sympathy and last-gasp support seldom arises from the declaration of new discoveries in the Bach canon, but chatting with youngsters about student loans or about career opportunities is certain to shore up public support.

Very few doubt that the education of promising youth should absorb a good share of the collective university effort. Conventionally and euphonicly if not actually, teaching has always appeared first in the trio of "teaching, service, and research" that comprises the fundamental promotion and tenure requirement. After decades under the influence of this three-part formula, we have now arrived at a curious and unstable condition in which, de facto, research determines the course of careers (and also makes up a good part of university funding); service, at least at the level of consulting and government advising, is sexy and lucrative; while teaching—attending to the needs of educable youth—takes center stage in the slightly propagandistic presentation of universities to the public. On the one hand, faculty believe that their main job is to win grants or to heighten their profiles or to make connections while, on the other hand, the public hears that avant-garde writers, artists, and researchers want nothing more than to promote student retention.

University leaders hesitate to proclaim the correlation between the racheting up of public rhetoric about such student-centered operations as workforce development or promotion of high-impact retention activities with the overall decline of American research, innovation, and leadership. The new discourse of student retention—the relentless affirmation that a university will do almost anything to show concern for and to retain students—has subtly shifted emphasis from the promotion of excellence to the advancement of comfort.

Emblems of and metaphors for this subtle childishness can be found most everywhere in Louisiana higher education, whether in recruitment and retention programs or whether in what LSU System President King Alexander correctly identifies as a return to the age of universities that act *in loco parentis* or whether in the condoning of activities such as cheerleading and beauty pageants that bypass critical thinking in order to showcase "cute kids" or whether in buildings designed and decorated to look like parents' snug homes rather than modern architectural compositions or whether in the powerful presence of quasi-parental entities such as fraternities and sororities or whether in the less than urgent topics that occupy many Louisiana student government associations.

What we need from higher education leaders is a re-examination and reassertion of the multiplicity of purposes in universities. It would not hurt to remind the public that the great value of a higher education institution is its transcendence of the human lifespan: its ability not only to move people past the formative childhood years but also to maintain the long-term quest for knowledge. Of course, idealistic phrases such as "the quest for knowledge" have gone out of fashion, but, then, they are somewhat better than phrases such as "high-impact retention activities" and somewhat more durable than the career of the latest teen idol. Childishness, after all, is all about the now: what we think we want now, what we are doing now, who is helping or hurting us now. Durability and durable goals might not be bad alternatives.

INNOVATION STUDY EMERGING FROM REGENTS

One of the most heartening stories in Louisiana higher education has been the emergence of Commissioner of Higher Education Jim Purcell as a champion of faculty leadership and as a thoughtful investigator of innovation. A surprise that came as no surprise was the discovery that Purcell is developing a questionnaire regarding the faculty role in, perception of, and thoughts concerning innovation. As is usually the case with the panoramic Purcell, "innovation" is understood in its most comprehensive sense, as a process that includes both teaching and research as well as public service. Purcell has consulted with faculty leadership in an effort to develop a survey that will ask the right questions and that will engage faculty in the innovation process in an encouraging rather than clinical or punitive fashion. Purcell's survey is still in the incubator, but release to university systems is anticipated within a few weeks. Watch for it and participate!

DEAN TRAINING SUBURBANIZED

What do Indiana, Texas, and Kentucky have in common (other than horses and large prison populations)? These are among the states that have provided "terminal" degrees to candidates for the dozens of searches for administrative and executive positions around Louisiana. A systematic search of finalists for in Dean, VP, and VC competitions reveals a remarkable shortage of candidates trained at Ivy League, independent, private, religious-affiliated, or otherwise diverse or prestigious institutions. Man/woman-on-the-street interviews have drawn varied explanations for this phenomenon. Some have opined that the absence of candidates representing the rich variety of American education indexes the plodding parochialism of state schools; others have noted that the independent or inventive thought encouraged by the best schools dooms their graduates with regard to leadership positions in conformity-encouraging state schools; others have suggested that incumbent executives suffer from fear and envy; others note that past studies have shown that the receipt of salary and other "goodies" correlates with a perceived tendency toward obedience; and still others note that any candidate from a sophisticated large city—especially one in the northeast—is sure to be fired sooner rather than later, as recent experience clearly shows. One way or the other, there is no mistaking the suburbanizing trend. Those who want to get ahead in state schools had best leave Yale behind and enroll in Oklahoma State!



A Milepost on the Road to Success in Louisiana

OGB FALLS BEHIND IN MEDICAL PAYMENTS

The privatization of the previously profitable and efficient Office of Group Benefits is already producing results. Those results: a six- to eight-week delay in payments to medical providers. Blaming a software upgrade—which, presumably, should improve rather than worsen service—Blue Cross, the new manager of OGB, had at least enough word-processing and emailing software in place to ask the Jindal administration for a waiver of penalties attached to late payments. Blue Cross, however, has not been slow in collecting its estimated \$37,000,000.00 fees for its service. Meanwhile, LSU continues to build a billion-dollar medical facility in New Orleans for the purpose of training doctors who presumably will not receive timely payments. To paraphrase comedian Will Rogers, you can know about this from what you read in the newspapers.

Higher Education Headliner

Dr. Michael Walker-Jones, Executive Director of Louisiana Association of Educators

By Daniel Board and Emily Ward

For this edition of the *Newsletter*, we were privileged to meet Dr. Michael Walker-Jones from the Louisiana Association of Educators (LAE). A very straightforward man from Louisville, Kentucky, Dr. Michael has been in education – either Higher-Ed, K-12, or policy making – since 1971. After obtaining his doctoral degree from the University of Rochester, New York he made his rounds as a faculty member at both Louisville and Boston universities in addition to working for the Massachusetts Teacher's Association 20 years before deciding to make the move down to Louisiana.

Dr. Walker-Jones' job entails representation of K-12 teachers, support personnel, and administrators, as well as trying to get faculty from both LSU, Southern and a number of other LA universities to organize for the purposes of collective bargaining at the Higher-Ed level. This call to organization was started around three years ago and Dr. Walker-Jones confesses, "We've met with resistance here, of course, and professionally it's been very disappointing because-- united, I think the faculty can make great strides in terms of improving, not only their economic situation but can also help improve policy and the attention paid to higher education. But at this point it's still sort of a growing endeavor." LAE focuses its resources towards issues such as, funding, tenure, anti-bullying practices. Dr. Walker-Jones agrees with this multi-functionality; "One of the misconceptions that is perpetrated, I think upon not only the people but also the faculty staff of anywhere from preschool to Higher-Ed is this idea that unions are only there to do two things – 1: collective bargaining and 2: protect those who are incompetent. That couldn't be further from the truth in terms of our mission."

Dr. Walker-Jones advocates how LAE is geared towards advancing the profession of teaching while protecting both the craft and academic freedom at both K-12 and Higher-Ed levels. He expresses great interest in the cooperation of faculty and administration believing the weakest approach to Higher-Ed is, "...when you don't have faculty that want to stand up and be a part of administration, when the administration dominates over the faculty."

On a policy level, Dr. Walker-Jones is working to overturn state legislation passed in 2012, known as Act 1. Dr.

Walker-Jones explains that Act 1 is "...an anonymous bill that [is] designed to take away teachers right to due process. To water down the induction process in terms of number of people coming into the profession and how they come in to the profession. Taking away your due process procedural rights..." He explained there is a difference between tenure for higher education faculty who achieve tenure through peer-review, and tenure for K-12 instructors; "Tenure at k-12 means you have a right to due process which means you have a right to face your accuser and they have to prove their case against you when they bring you up on charges." It is the right to due process for tenured instructors in K-12 schools that Dr. Walker-Jones means to defend. Dr. Walker-Jones is very passionate in his conviction that teachers have the right to fair procedures when determining the guilt of a teacher who has been charged with such acts as, "incompetence or willful negligence." He also includes that 2012 was a rough year for education and that on top of protecting due process for tenured teachers, there is also a need to fight for "raises for teachers and resources for school districts."

As Dr. Walker-Jones has resided in Louisiana for only a few years, we were curious to know what he liked most about the Baton Rouge and the state of Louisiana as a whole. He provided us with the "yin and the yang" of his opinion, "I absolutely love the eclectic nature of the city; the fact that you can find just about any kind of restaurant. There's a little bit of theatre but not much, but I love the movies made here. Phenomenal. And being a college town it has a real unity that you only see in college towns." However, there is a darker side of Baton Rouge that Dr. Walker-Jones would like to see spoken of more frequently; "The drawback is I'm looking at large enclaves of people living in the shadow of a chemical mess. I have no clue what long term [damage] the chemical plants and petrol refineries are doing to people here. The river is not a source of recreation, it's solely a source for moving goods... Southern students especially have to be considered due to their proximity to those plants." He goes on to say, "But all in all the people are great. There's a statistic 80% of people born in Louisiana stay in Louisiana. I'm not at all timid about talking to people here because they're all so friendly."



Executive Director of LAE, Dr. Michael Walker-Jones

"My favorite part of the job is that I get to work with our members to advance the craft whether it's through technology or through improved methodologies and teaching practices."

SHERMAN SIX-STEP BLOG PROGRAM

Blogger Dayne Sherman, who, through his creative as well as genially relentless use of social media, keeps the Louisiana higher education not only on its toes but also on its smart phones and other devices, has taken another step toward the political enablement of the Louisiana professorate. In an invited address at the "Progressive Voices, New Media" blogging summit at LSU, speedy Sherman accelerated the usual twelve-step into a hard-hitting, efficient six steps. Available for free [online](#) and eventually scheduled for release with the conference [video](#), Sherman's program allows anyone and everyone to participate in the democratic process by acquiring the kind of thoughtful audience that will rally behind a good cause. Sherman was joined on the panel by such top-level bloggers and journalists as Zack Kopplin, Lance Porter, and Bob Mann.



Dayne Sherman

MANN: PRESIDENTS DOGS

Eighteenth-century poet Alexander Pope explained his dangerous habit of challenging the rich, powerful, and influential by citing "the strong antipathy of good to bad." So it is that LSU journalist, columnist, and blogger Bob Mann has accomplished the intellectual and journalistic equivalent of what sports enthusiasts call "taking it to the next level" by publishing an eyebrow-raising column in *The New Orleans Times Picayune*. "Tail-raising" might be a more accurate description of this editorial than might be "eyebrow-raising," for Mann opens with a daring assertion that Louisiana's higher education executives resemble trained dogs. Chancellors and Presidents in our state, Mann explains, will perform almost any trick that the governor requests in order to get a few "kibbles" for their institutions. Starved and obedient by nature, these execs, Mann quips, "wagged their tails over Jindal's generosity because they had no choice" when commanded to applaud the governor's latest face-saving proposals for funding higher education. Mann exposes the lack of imagination among higher education spin doctors by noting that the LSU press release was written by the governor's office.

From everyone here
at the Newsletter,
we hope the snow days
left you trouble-free!

MONTHLY MOVIE REVIEW

MASTERS OF SEX (Showtime, 2013-present), Reviewed by Carl Freedman (2013)

The twentieth century saw at least three major moments in the systematic study of human sexuality. Beginning around the start of the century, Freud drew on a combination of therapeutic practice, literary insight, and philosophical speculation to discover the unconscious and to try to map out the dominant role, as he saw it, that sexual desire plays in it. Several decades later, Alfred Kinsey and his colleagues at Indiana University conducted thousands of interviews to try to find out precisely what people did in their sex lives (though H. L. Mencken, reviewing *SEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN THE HUMAN MALE* [1948], the first volume of the so-called “Kinsey Report,” quipped that the interviews only proved what everyone had always known: that men lie about sex). But neither Freud nor Kinsey—though both were professionally trained in the biological sciences—displayed much interest in a physiologically straightforward question: What, exactly, goes on in the human body during sexual experience?

Investigating that question on the basis of laboratory observation was the contribution of William Masters and Virginia Johnson. Beginning in the late 1950s at Washington University in St. Louis, they revolutionized the understanding of how sex works; and their most famous book, *HUMAN SEXUAL RESPONSE* (1966), was a major cultural event of the 1960s. Probably the greatest impact of the book, at least on the public at large, concerned the female orgasm. Before Masters and Johnson, the common wisdom, derived largely from Freud, held that the female orgasm came in two varieties—clitoral and vaginal—and that the latter was superior, the mark of a more maturely genital sexuality. The obvious corollary was that there was something wrong with women (or with their partners) who could attain sexual climax only through clitoral stimulation. Masters and Johnson claimed to prove that the vaginal orgasm was a myth, that all female climaxes derive from stimulation of the clitoris. Few scientific findings can ever have alleviated so much anxiety.

In reviewing Showtime’s *HOMELAND* in this space last year, I commented that the best work being done on American television these days (especially, though not only, on the premium cable channels) is, for the first time ever, as good as or better than anything to be found in feature films. No longer can television be considered the aesthetically poor relation of cinema. Largely on account of such live dramatic anthology series as NBC’s *KRAFT TELEVISION THEATRE* (1947-1958) and CBS’s *PLAYHOUSE 90* (1956-1961), the 1950s used to be known as American television’s “golden age.” But the real golden age is happening right now.

I regret to report that *HOMELAND* itself, which for its first two seasons was one of the better examples of this new golden age, deteriorated so badly in its third season that I doubt it will even be worth watching in its fourth. But Showtime has at least partly made up for this loss by launching a new series of relatively high quality: *MASTERS OF SEX*, which presents a lightly fictionalized version of the Masters-and-Johnson story. Generically, the series is a bit more difficult to classify than is usually the case with TV drama. It is basically a dual biopic of William Masters and Virginia Johnson, and one that mixes elements of serious and comic drama. Since, as is widely known, Masters and Johnson became sexually involved with each other and (after Masters’s divorce from his first wife) eventually made a marriage that lasted more than two decades, the show has ample scope to combine the personal story of these two individuals with the larger narrative of how laboratory research proceeded in the most sensational and controversial of areas.

As we first meet Bill Masters (Michael Sheen), he is in early middle age but already at the top of his profession. A brilliant surgeon, he is also one of the leading fertility doctors in the Midwest; innumerable couples revere him for having helped them to become parents. But he is ultimately more interested in research than in clinical practice, and what he really wants to do is to study human sexual response. The show finds this drive rather ironic, since, outside the laboratory, he is generally portrayed as not much interested in sex at all. He doesn’t seem to relish lovemaking with his pretty young wife Libby (Caitlin FitzGerald)—they even sleep in separate beds—and, indeed, he seems uncomfortable even talking to women (not that his interpersonal skills with men are any good either). During a conversation with a prostitute who has been allowing him to measure her bodily responses during sex, the sex worker expresses amazement at how utterly clueless Masters seems to be about what women feel and want and do in bed. She suggests that, if he is truly serious about his research, he had better start working with a female collaborator. Without exactly meaning to, he takes this advice.

Enter Ginni Johnson (Lizzy Caplan), a person in some ways very different from Bill Masters. In contrast to his sterling academic and medical credentials, she doesn’t even have a college degree. A twice-divorced former nightclub singer, she is trying to find work as a secretary in order to support herself and her two small children. She seems an unlikely candidate to become the professional partner of the man who is beginning to make himself into the world’s leading sex researcher. But Dr. Masters happens to need a new secretary, and Mrs. Johnson is not without her own qualifications. Though lacking much formal education, she is extremely intelligent and soon discovers in herself both a passion and an aptitude for scientific research. She also has a warm, outgoing, approachable personality; unlike Bill Masters, she is skilled at making people, including research subjects, feel at ease. In addition, Ginni has a great deal of first-hand practical knowledge of sex, acquired in ways hardly considered lady-like in the 1950s. When she meets a man who attracts her, she doesn’t mind making the first move; and, once in bed, she’s not a bit shy about making clear exactly what she wants to happen. Far from considering sex and love the same thing—as she’s convinced most women believe them to be—Ginni Johnson doesn’t think they need even have anything to do with one other.

If this were a wholly invented story, you might find it contrived and formulaic that the two sex researchers wind up in bed together. But real life does not need to be probable in the way that fiction generally does; and *MASTERS OF SEX*, though not a documentary, is close enough to one to get away with what must, after all, be the central plot element of the series, the developing personal relationship between Masters and Johnson. By the end of the first season, they have not yet become a couple, though the final scene of the final episode strongly implies that their romantic involvement is soon to come.

(Continued on Page 4)

TIP OF THE MONTH: LOUISIANA SPIRITS DISTILLERY

The underfunding of the Louisiana Department of Tourism leaves many a candidate Cajun uninformed with regard to the countless new touristic opportunities that seem to pop up everywhere and every month. The latest premium destination and the latest accession into the cultural archive of southwest Louisiana is the new *Louisiana Spirits* distillery in open-sky-abundant Lacassine, only a few miles east of Lake Charles. Offering an array of specialty products, two varieties (regular and spiced amber) of boutique rum, and providing distillery tours, this easy-access destination just off Interstate 10 exit 48 will reward children of all ages and adults of all inclinations. A compact but nevertheless spectacular campus includes a magnificent, Acadian-style visitor center that upgrades traditional, regional architecture through modern amenities and through the enlargement of old-fashioned structures to contemporary scales; an old country house, drawn to the premises for future uses, is under rehabilitation; and, best of all, an hour-long tour occurs under the direction of no less than the proprietor himself. Visits culminate in a tasting of the two signature rums as well as of a buttered rum punch. Louisiana Spirits Distillery



Louisiana Spirits Distillery

FOCUS GROUP TO PROBE INSTRUCTOR FLIGHT

With its move to the mainstream—with its transformation from a shadowy outlet for terrorist videos to a Qatari investment vehicle—alternative news vendor *Al Jazeera* has been taking an interest in the grimy little secrets of American academe. Recently, this much-controverted journal has published an opening investigation of the fate of “adcon” (adjunct and contingent) labor in American universities, where instructors often get by on food stamps and reception food. As if in response to the muezzin’s cry, LSU A&M (or whatever it might be called this week) has created a new focus group that will convene an assortment of long-serving instructors from a variety of disciplines to discuss a “path forward” from the present lamentable arrangements for non-tenured colleagues. According to LSU A&M Vice-Provost Jane Cassidy, “low pay, increasingly larger classes yearly contracts, and regular notices of non-reappointment” have rung the warning gongs in Provost Stuart Bell’s office. Cassidy’s focus group will include input from *Newsletter* columnist A G Monaco and will come packaged with a \$75.00 stipend and with OAA-caliber refreshment morsels. Congratulations of Cassidy, Monaco, and Bell for cracking open the door of the gulag.

MOVIE REVIEW (continued)

Yet, ironically enough, before Bill and Ginni have so much as held hands or gone out on a date, they have already had sexual intercourse numerous times. They both pretend to be doing so simply in order to gather more data for their joint research project; but there are unmistakable, if subtle, hints that each secretly wishes their relationship to be more than just professional and scientific. In this way, *MASTERS OF SEX* slyly adopts a venerable convention of much romantic comedy: namely, the way that the two people destined to become lovers spend a lot of time denying—perhaps even to themselves and certainly to everyone else—that they feel strongly attracted to each other. The twist, of course, is that in the traditional romantic comedy the lovers-to-be do not typically spend this waiting period lying naked together, penis thrusting into vagina, with numerous electrodes attached to their bodies in order to measure what is happening in the most ruthlessly quantitative terms.

The screenplays for *MASTERS OF SEX* are thoroughly and delightfully competent, if not always a great deal more than that. The acting by the supporting players is generally pretty mediocre—with the exceptions of Beau Bridges as Barton Scully, the provost of Washington University and Bill Masters's old mentor, though one who has decidedly mixed feelings about his brilliant protégé's sex research; and Allison Janney as Scully's wife Margaret. Both give powerful, complex performances as an older couple with complicated sexual issues of their own. But the most vibrant life of the series lies in the work of the two leads. Michael Sheen comes to the series as an established star, but here he does something rather unlike what we've usually seen from him before. Though Sheen specializes in representing characters from real life, he has generally played extroverted, outgoing types who are professionally skilled at presenting themselves to the public: the politician Tony Blair, the talk-show host David Frost, and, in by far his best performance of all, the legendary football (i.e., soccer) manager Brian Clough. As Bill Masters, he has a very different task: playing a socially awkward introvert who struggles to express his powerful ideas and his strong emotions. Sheen plays the part almost flawlessly, and, for a British actor, with a quite creditable American accent to boot (though I don't think he quite lives up to the gold standard in this regard, Hugh Laurie as the title character in *HOUSE M.D.* [Fox Television, 2004-2012]).

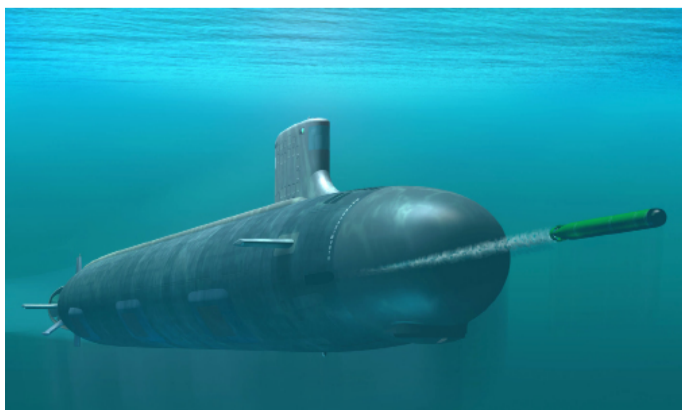
Lizzy Caplan, however, is for me the chief glory of the series. Though her acting credits go back to the turn of the century, it is as Virginia Johnson that she has found her real breakthrough role. With apparent effortlessness, she projects exactly the qualities that the scripts attribute to Ginni: brains, charm, compassion, lustiness, and almost endless sexual warmth. The only comparison I can think of is audacious but, I believe, justified: I do not know of any actress who has done precisely this sort of thing so well since the young Katharine Hepburn in such comic masterpieces as *THE PHILADELPHIA STORY* (George Cukor, 1940), *WOMAN OF THE YEAR* (George Stevens, 1942), and *ADAM'S RIB* (George Cukor, 1949). Moreover, Caplan must manage without the young Hepburn's truly spectacular physical beauty; though she is very attractive by any normal standard, Caplan's looks approximate more to the stereotype of the pleasant-looking girl next door than to that of the Hollywood bombshell. Nonetheless, she very nearly rivals Hepburn in projecting a femininity that is tough, generous, and (despite Ginni Johnson's economic and professional insecurity) thoroughly self-confident. Above all, she strongly recalls Hepburn in conveying an irresistible sex appeal that is in large part based on her character's powerful and clear-eyed intelligence. When Lizzy Caplan is on screen, it can be difficult to pay attention to anyone else.

Were I to continue in this vein, it might sound as though I were smitten with Lizzy Caplan to a degree unreasonable in a professional critic, especially one of my age and happily married state. So I will just conclude by saying that Caplan is the main reason—though not the only one—that I am very much looking forward to the second season of *MASTERS OF SEX*.

—Carl Freedman

WATER CAMPUS FLOATS UNDER RADAR

As the Governor polishes up his image in anticipation of a presidential bid, Louisianans are seeing more putatively pro-education projects. The latest in these is the proposed "*Water Campus*," an array of public and private facilities that, the announcements allege, will consider water and coastal management around the world. Several numbers have been bandied about, but \$45,000,000.00 seems to be the approximate level of investment. An assortment of higher education executives immediately jumped on the bandwagon—or, perhaps, given that the *Water Campus* will address sinking, the band-submarine—with enthusiasms concerning the brilliant future of research into coastal- and river-related topics. But is this flood of capital as fresh, clear, and clean as a mountain stream? Some questions remain unanswered. Why is the aforementioned vast sum being sluiced into Baton Rouge's halfhearted attempt at a downtown area when coastal studies programs in universities around Louisiana abound with bright colleagues who must beg for support? How did this project end up in Baton Rouge, when so many other municipalities, including New Orleans, seem more eligible venues? In facilities that are owned by private investors but "operated" by universities, what will guarantee academic freedom, especially considering that one university, LSU, is under AAUP censure for a water-related scandal? Has it not been noticed that the sponsoring body, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, features a Board of Directors comprised largely of gubernatorial supporters and members of the LSU Flagship Coalition, an organization that has never met with faculty and that includes an array of industrialists who profit from the causes of global warming and coastal decay?



Time for a Deeper Look at the Water Campus

SWEATS OR SWEATSHOPS?

Analogies between success on the field of play and success in the American economy have long served as the mantras of athletic programs. Acquisition on the field of team, strategic, and motivational skills will, the story goes, lead to accomplishments in life, especially in the business world in which the university-developed workforce flourishes. That commitment to the American success narrative, however, reaches its concluding chapter not in the full extent of economic life, but at the end zone. A recent series of visits to vendors of university, sports-inspired souvenir goods and wearing apparel failed to turn up a single example of items made in America. Rather, *Newsletter* investigative reporters (and secret shoppers) uncovered wares emanating from such fine examples of safe workshops and good labor practices as Bangladesh, Vietnam, Indonesia, and a host of central- and south-American banana-coffee-pineapple-organic blueberry "republics." Not only are these venues notorious for dangerous working conditions (consider the recent catastrophes in Bangladesh), but, owing to their poor management of substances associated with garment manufacture, at least two have made the *Scientific American* list of the top ten polluting nations on earth. One cannot help but wonder at the paradox of a hypertrophic patriotic sports garment emerging from a sweatshop in Da Nang.



Part of an All-American Story

TURNITIN TURNING IT ON AT LSU

Thanks to the leadership of Prof. Gundela Hachmann, who has spearheaded a committee on anti-plagiarism software, Turnitin and its fraternal package iThenticate are now permanently available at LSU. Turnitin reviews billions of extant documents so as to determine the degree of originality of a submission; iThenticate performs a similar task for graduate- and post-graduate papers, with an emphasis on the STEM disciplines. Now that this important tool is ensconced in the computing framework of the Old War Skule, Hala Esmail, a former contributor to the Alexandria Summit meetings, is organizing an array of instructional offerings that will enable faculty members to make maximal use of these new resources. Potential Turnitin and iThenticate users may register for workshops at <http://training.lsu.edu> or may arrange for individual and group consultations directly with Esmail.



Hala Esmail

OUTDOOR SUPER-PAVILION TO ENHANCE MCNEESE

Reporters at the Newsletter never cease to marvel at the ingenuity of our colleagues in southwest Louisiana. The latest innovation to come from the McNeese State think tanks is a super-sized outdoor pavilion: a permanent building-style structure that will allow as many as 270 guests to enjoy outdoor activities while partaking of the advantages of shade, shelter, and assorted amenities. Funded by Lake Charles tycoon Robert Noland, the “Robert Noland Alumni Pavilion” will feature an array of weather-tolerant audiovisual equipment, ceiling fans, and university-logo wrought iron gratings. The Noland Pavilion thus achieves a high level of at least three-season comfort while preserving the outdoorsiness of Louisiana culture and while minimizing the footprint on the beautiful terrain of the moist Calcasieu prairie. Congratulations to the Mcneese “Cowboys” on a brilliant stroke of architectural innovation



Proposed Nolan Pavilion at McNeese.

ALEXANDRIA SUMMIT INCLUDES ALEXANDER

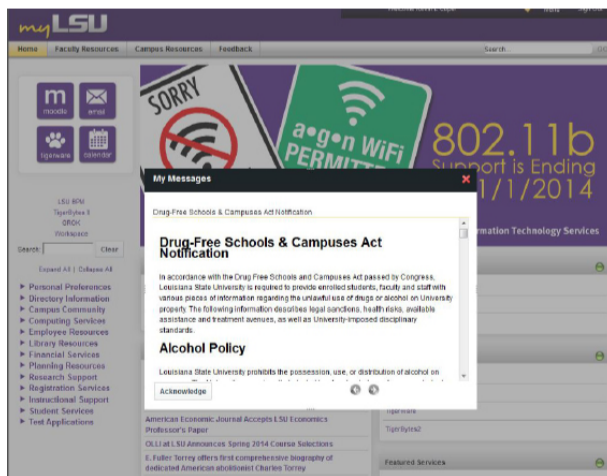
The question, “what’s in a name” might yield more than an aphoristic answer with respect to the recent “Alexandria Summit” meeting, the quarterly gathering of Louisiana faculty with a concern for faculty input into higher education management and policy. A packed house comprised of academic professionals from all four Louisiana higher education systems enjoyed a nearly two-hour presentation and discussion by and with LSU System President F. King Alexander, who covered the gamut of higher education issues, from the evolution of the Morrill Act to upcoming legislation to plans for the redemption of Louisiana universities through inter-system cooperation. Alexander’s frank and engaging presentation marked a change for the better in the previously tense relations between the “flagship” institution and the rich variety of campuses that honor and serve our state and its people. Participants in the Alexandria gathering also heard enlightening presentations from the Regents’ online education coordinator, Darlene Williams; from LSUS chemist and energy activist Brian Salvatore, who scrutinized the possible economic gains, for Louisiana campuses, of ambitious energy efficiency policies; and from River Parishes Community College computer whiz Savitha Pinnepalli, who reviewed the uses, status, and future of technology-enhanced education throughout Louisiana. Applause and thanks are owed to all who sustain the Alexandria meetings and who thereby strengthen the faculty voice in Louisiana.



King Alexander addresses the Alexandria.

DRUG-FREE POP-UP RANKLES PROFS

Tempers flared on the LSU A&M campus when access to Moodle course management software as well as to assorted other key university functions was seemingly blocked by a pop-up window containing more wind than marijuana smoke. Presented as a “notification” concerning the “Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Act,” this multi-paragraph harangue abounded in an assortment of warnings, chastisements, and evangelisms, all written in a bizarre style that combined bureaucratic soddenness with prohibitionist zeal. Worse, the text in the window concluded with a clickable consent link that required not only acknowledgment of receipt of the “notice” but agreement to it. Adverse reaction to this revival of the Carry Nation campaign tidal-waved into faculty governance offices. Although the pop-up window included a tiny red-x box that allowed for its closure, this exorcism-resistant box continued to reappear, giving the impression that work could not be continued until consent had been conferred. Fortunately, HRM czar and Newsletter columnist A G Monaco again came to the rescue, promising to remove language requiring agreement (rather than merely receipt) by the end of the current semester. Monaco’s salutary intervention put a temporary hold on plans to publish a list of incidents in which higher-education decision makers had been observed enjoying judgment-impairing substances.



Drug Notification Story

HEALTH SCIENCES SHREVEPORT PINGS FRINGE RATE

With the decline in contributions to retirement funds and with the puzzling vacillations in the Office of Group Benefits rates menu, colleagues statewide have begun asking questions concerning assessments to grants. A few years ago, for example, faculty governance activists discovered that, on some campuses, colleagues who paid a full share of benefit costs during the nine-month academic year were paying a second time out of what scientists like to call their “summer money.” Vigilant if not alarmed, an ensemble of investigators at the LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport has formed a committee to examine the issue of escalating fringe benefit rates charged to grants. The Chair of this panel notes that excessive charges encumber not only faculty members, but also federal grants, thereby raising an assortment of legal issues. Early planning by the panel calls for an on-site presentation on the retirement problem by HRM experts.

CONSULTANTS RECOMMEND INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM REVAMP

International programs at most Louisiana universities have long suffered from a lack of organization and motivation. Those universities that mount international initiatives often take a scattershot approach, mixing a bit of overseas student exchange with a smidgen of grantsmanship and with the occasional USAID intervention. The lack of internationalism has led to sad paradoxes such as the decline of music programs in America’s most melodious state. Under the leadership of LSU Executive Director of International Programs Hector Zapata, the big but previously unrepentantly local A&M campus has taken a step forward by commissioning a report by two consultants, one from Illinois and one from ever-over-the-rainbow Kansas. That report, which is available online, recommends sweeping changes. Included in the recommendations: elevation of the campus international czar to associate vice-provost level; consolidation of widely dispersed international operations into one administrative unit; creation of a campus-wide international advisory committee; creating incentives for faculty leadership in international teaching and research; and creation of a database of faculty international engagements. All good wishes to Professor Zapata as he attempts to win administrative support for a much-needed upgrade that would also inspire other campuses across our state.

MILES MUNCH-OUT MINIMIZES HEALTH, CULTURE, ECONOMY

Those who pour donations into Pennington, LSUHSC, and assorted foundations by way of combating diet-induced diseases lost some ground on the field of propaganda when the popular press took LSU’s Outback Bowl appearance as an opportunity to celebrate the unreasonable ingestion of excess protein. According to eyewitness reporters, the opening gambit in the animal eating orgy began with “a sirloin steak, softball-sized potato, chicken breast and half a rack of ribs.” Given the sums expended by Louisiana health researchers in the quest to convince our people that blueberries and rice bran confer benefits that fatty foods undercut and given that sport is a healthy enterprise, it is bewildering that LSU’s premier athletic team should confer prestige and implicit endorsements on a butcher-block diet. Given that LSU presents itself as a kind of boutique ball club, it is confusing to find the footballers collaborating with a lowbrow restaurant chain that does little to probe the questionable conditions at big-volume factory farms in its supply line. During LSU’s bowl exploits, culture took nearly as much of a hit as agriculture. LSU’s “scholar athletes” were feted to attractions such as the Busch Gardens amusement park, a bowling outing, a hockey game, and a beach bash (the juxtaposition of the hockey game and the beach play, some speculate, led to a discussion of climatology and global warming). Given that similar excursions are available within Louisiana—it would be quite possible to enjoy the beauties of Holly Beach and then finish up at the Outback location in Lake Charles—it is hard to understand why football revenues, which could help higher education, should be diminished by the cost of a full week of hotels, buses, banquets, and boasting.

TRSL BOARD CHAIR LASHES OUT AT NEWSLETTER

In one of the most bizarre episodes to date, a recent issue of the Newsletter drew a mass-distributed rebuke from the Chair of the TRSL (Teachers Retirement System of Louisiana) Board of Trustees. Rather than rushing to the aid of faculty members who suffer under an imposed retirement plan manager that provides them with no help, no advocacy, and no plan to escape a system that sluices huge sums of money into an unfunded accrued liability, the Chair of the TRSL Board jotted a letter justifying both the retirement plan and the politically-attuned, faculty-unfriendly practices of TRSL. Among the Chair's assertions is that TRSL is within its rights in denying voting privileges to faculty who are forced to use its management services; that ORP participants owe a share of an unfunded accrued liability that they did not create; and that an actuarial committee composed of Louisiana representative, appointees, and bureaucrats (but not one faculty member) results from following the laws, or, as an old phrase has it, from just following orders (heaven forbid that a Board member should challenge or criticize laws that damage constituents). Faculty members statewide may take some solace in the resolve by faculty governance officers statewide to find a TRSL member who is faculty-friendly who will run for the higher education seat when the present Chair's term expires in December 2014. If you are interested and eligible to run for this office and if you would like to serve as a voice for faculty, please contact the *Newsletter* office at the address shown at the email address shown at the end of this issue.



Eject and Elect--Candidate for TRSL Board Chair sought.

FISCAL OFFICE SOUNDS ORP WARNING SIREN

Those who became fans of the video link to the undersea spout that muddied the Gulf waters during the Deepwater Horizon crisis recognize that murk eventually rises into view even from the abyss. So it is that the Fiscal Office of the Louisiana Legislature has rung the alarm bell with regard to the impending dramatic cut in the "normal cost" for Optional Retirement Plan ("ORP") participants. The "normal cost" is that portion of the employer contribution that reaches employee accounts; currently, that share is slated to plunge from 5.18% to 3.66%, a whopping 30% cut. In the December issue of *Focus on the Fisc*, the newsletter of the Legislative Fiscal Office, state financial experts remind legislators that the ORP normal cost is tied by law (but not by any explicable reasoning) to the normal cost for the defined-benefit plan, where savings resulting from a decrease in retirements, by lower end-of-career salaries, and by good portfolio performance have led to lower costs. The aforementioned phenomena are unfortunate enough for members of the defined-benefit plan, but, with respect to the ORP, they trigger a colossal \$7,800,000.00 reduction in the sums paid to ORP participants. In effect, ORP members are penalized for the inadequate salaries of defined-benefit members and for the good investment strategies of defined-benefit portfolio managers despite having neither caused the lowering of wages nor benefitting from the defined-benefit portfolio. The fiscal experts warn legislators that failure to upgrade the ORP offering "could have a detrimental impact on recruitment of new faculty" and "may decrease employee morale and increase turnover of existing faculty and staff." A table within the report shows legislators that retirement contributions in Louisiana institutions fall far behind comparable regional institutions and that the compensation-package gap is even greater when Social Security contributions at most other institutions are included. The report is available [here](#); see pages 7-8.



Exploited Instructors Emerge from Closet

COKE MACHINE FLIPS LID, DISQUIETS PHILOSOPHERS

Ardent followers of the *Newsletter* may remember the strange story of the talking Coke machines. Early in 2013, these vending devices seemed to have passed the sentience barrier—the one that Arnold Schwarzenegger so aptly describes, in *The Terminator*, when he recounts the takeover by SkyNet—and began to petition bypassing consumers while playing videos with slightly salacious overtones. First to sound the alarm was communication expert Graham Bodie,



who reported that some of the subject matter in the aforementioned videos might slip beyond a "G" rating. Working with the then-chief of LSU Auxiliary Services, Jason Tolliver, the LSU Faculty Senate succeeded in gagging these most effervescent of carbonation peddlers. Now, over a year later, the familiar plot line of many a Japanese monster-movie has come true. Like Dracula or Sigourney Weaver's Alien, two voluble Coke machines have escaped their imposed dormancy. The first, in Engineering, was quieted by Dean Richard Koubek's team, which team is now ready to take on anything from the Creature from the Black Lagoon to the Werewolf; the second, which continues to babble, sprang to life in Coates Hall, where it disturbed the celebrations of the Philosophy Department. Fortunately, new and ever-congenial LSU Auxiliary Services Director Margot Carroll has sprung into action. With stake, silver bullet, or whatever it takes in hand, Carroll has vowed to stop this meance once and for all. Good luck, Margot!

Mysterious Case of the Clamorous Coke Machine

SOUTHERN UPENDED BY SEXLESS SCANDAL

Those who follow the criminal history of Louisiana institutions know that the top level of academic administration could easily compete with the lower rung of museum practice that is *Madame Tussaud's Dungeon*, a repository of waxen representations of assorted atrocities which successfully distracts low-living tourists from the finer galleries in England's capitol. Purloined airplanes, appropriated (and lost) funds, and a certain grotesquery are far from unknown in the precincts of what are usually the largest and finest buildings on campus. Sometimes, however, the old adage that "crime does not pay" requires footnoting. Occasionally, *crimelessness* does lead to substantial sums. The Lakeshore-enabled persecution of Pennington researcher and John Ashcroft fall guy Stephen Hatfill, for example, set in motion a legal process that culminated in a multi-million dollar settlement that lightened federal coffers. So it is that the lower corner of the *local newspaper* has revealed that Southern University has reached a \$150K settlement with former Athletic Director (and former LSU Athletic Department mainstay) Greg LaFleur, who was wrongly accused of sex solicitation after *rejecting* propositions from a supposed itinerant sex provider who turned out to be an undercover Houston police officer charged with setting up targets. Alleging that the speedily acquitted LaFleur's proximity to temptation "stigmatized" the program, Southern University, where outrage over police abuses against minorities is *de rigeur*, overleaped due process and summarily scuttled LaFleur's contract. Capitalizing on sexual temptation is, of course, unknown at Southern University, where cheerleaders at football games wear attire appropriate for devoted socialist workers. Thus, the equivalent of salary for three assistant professors (plus, doubtless, even more in legal fees) was sacrificed to a bizarre appropriation by an HBCU of American Puritan culture.



Scarlet Letters and Red Ink at Southern University

COURT RULING PAVES WAY FOR RETIREMENT SUIT

Those who argue for legal action against the dubious practices of Louisiana's higher education retirement plans may see a glimmer of hope in a ruling by a Louisiana district court. When state government swept several millions of dollars from the retirement reserves of the Louisiana Probation and Parole Officers Association in order to cover state obligations, the aforementioned association sued. State district court subsequently ruled that the conversion of retirement into general fund monies was, in a word, illegal. Although gleaning funds from reserves in order to pay the state's bills is not exactly analogous to the practice of sweeping funds earmarked for retirement into the unfunded accrued liability, the district court ruling clearly establishes the principle that money designated as a private retirement resource is not an open smorgasbord for other costs.

Lifestyle Feature

LIFESTYLE FEATURE: Menswear

The retailing of clothing in America is on at least its eighth generation, having gone through an amazing number of customer-contact modes: downtown and street-side storefronts; enclosed malls; strip malls; open-air super-malls; legacy mail-order such as Sears and Montgomery Ward; specialty mail-order; online ordering; and, now, sector-targeted online ordering. The result has been as much bewilderment as access as customers attempt to track favorite products through an overplus of distribution systems. Worse, the gender stereotypes that plague America having made many men uncomfortable or impatient with the search for clothing and have connected the cultivation of taste with a faint suggestion of dandyism. A reality of Louisiana higher education, however, is that dress standards are rising. The linkage between quality dress and, if not power, then at least the ability to determine one's fate is strengthening. To that end, the *Newsletter* aims not so much to rank as to analyze the offerings so that the gentlemen of the library and the laboratory may make informed choices.

Should tasteful customers patronize Louisiana storefronts? Unfortunately, the local scene in Louisiana's capitol, Baton Rouge, epitomizes the limitations that beset the entire regional menswear industry. One upper-end shop, Cohn-Turner, has been sold to Perlis Marketing of New Orleans, with the result that the inventory has taken a decided turn in the direction of the informal. On the positive side, Perlis fills a need for the many "business casual" events that spangle the upcoming academic's calendar. Admittedly, the old Cohn-Turner was characterized by nothing so much as an unchanging inventory and aggressive as well as eccentric sales personnel. Nevertheless, the new Perlis covers a smaller span of the fashion spectrum, thereby losing much of its utility. McLavy Clothiers, across the street from Whole Foods and adjacent to the ever-survivable Calvin's Market, likewise tries to import the Newport Yacht Club look to Baton Rouge. Its success in this project might be improved were its proprietors to stock a full range of sizes (a tall or generously proportioned person might as well not squeeze through the door). Also in the penumbra of Whole Foods lies Martinez Custom Clothiers, which, although a touch of class in a middlebrow city, verges on satire, selling, as it does, the kind of exaggerated caricatures of old-fashioned dress clothing that have made more than a few university executives look ridiculous (there being nothing more silly than an academic who is trying to make it to the top of the academic ladder who chooses to look like a cross between Fred Astaire, Adolphe Menjou, the Godfather, and Nello Bock).

Perhaps the most promising zone for the aspiring masculine top-dresser would be the old-line quality retailers who have succeeded in filling in the geographical gaps in their storefront coverage with well-articulated web sites. Surely the king among these contenders is good old Brooks Brothers, which, despite the stifling, almost comically American-aristocratic look of its print catalogues, offers a web site that covers the full range of deluxe taste and that can easily, with the help of express delivery, accomplish the overnight conversion of a bumpkin to a fashion-plate. Recently acquired by an Italian firm, Brooks Brothers fields hundreds of shirts in the full range of sizes and covers the dress taste spectrum from the near-Tuxedo starched shirt to the faintly rustic tattersall and on to a full line of sportswear. Although Brooks



Brooks Brothers offers dress shirts in every color and style.

Brothers is making the mistake of vending too many treated non-iron fabrics, it nevertheless maintains an abundance of high-quality goods as well as a matching, if not exciting, selection of ties and other accessories. Purchasers should be warned that Brooks Brothers now offers a slightly overpopulated selection of "fits" with metaphorical names such as "traditional" (often enough, a euphemism for "fat"); consulting the sizing chart is imperative. Shoppers in the Brooks Brothers demographic might also like to visit the well-developed [Ralph Lauren men's shop](#). Like Brooks Brothers, Ralph Lauren operates an urban-centered array of storefronts and allows segments of its selection to reach independent retailers but still must complete its market penetration through online interfaces. Ralph Lauren offers a complete "look" that may be getting a little dated (how often can we bear to see that polo pony logo?) And that some may find a little too casual for business wear. Lauren, however, continues to offer visually refreshing design that will take away a few wrinkles thanks to its muted "youth" look.



Ralph Lauren is looking a bit dated.

The rush to expansion and the competition for market share has produced what might be called a subset of prosperous victims. *Newsletter* readers who are shopping for that special fellow (even if that special fellow happens to be oneself!) should steer clear of [L. L. Bean](#), [Eddie Bauer](#), and [Lands End](#). In its rush to go national and also owing to dynastic wars among the Bean descendants, L. L. Bean has resorted to the sale of dubiously produced goods from notorious sweatshop-condoning nations. Its look has grown more conservative and mainstream, with inky admixtures to colors that recall the cleaning rags in a British redbrick university maintenance department. Bankruptcy and corporate takeovers have reduced Eddie Bauer to little more than a trademark for miscellaneous goods. Landsend has been absorbed by the new Sear-KMart conglomerate, with predictable outcomes.

(Continued on Page 8)



LSU SUPERS HEAR DRUMBEAT OF COMMERCE

Other than the delay in preparing a portrait of LSU System President John Lombardi for the gallery in the LSU System office, no act of gratitude could be more overdue than a recognition of the extraordinary services and philanthropies of Laura and Buddy Leach. For nearly twenty years, Laura Leach served on the LSU Board of Supervisors, her long-running term concluding only when Governor Jindal swept non-allied persons from the management boards. Long the only female board member and long an advocate for equity for women in collegiate sports, Laura Leach exemplified diversity long before it was fashionable. Buddy Leach, too, did his quiet part to promote free debate on educational policy. Now, in a remarkably stereophonic and possibly bipartisan way, the LSU Supervisors have approved the naming of two facilities, a classroom in the LSU Business Education Complex and a percussion practice room in the Tiger Band Hall (which arose in large measure owing to fellow Lake Charles philanthropist and former LSU Supervisor, the late Ben Mount), after "Laura A. and A. Claude Leach, Jr." Congratulations to the Leaches (who can occasionally be spotted at the Pujoe Street Café in the downtown Lake Charles cultural district) on the receipt of this pair of honors.

BEST CHRISTMAS CARD OF 2013

Although the ghost of Christmas present is in the process of turning into the ghost of Christmas past (at least with regard to the 2013 Yule season), the *Newsletter* staff never stops wondering at the abundant artistry that emerges from the season of greeting cards. So it is that the LSU Office of Research and Development has once again smashed through the horizons of design with a splendid ultra-minimalist but mega-semantic "word cloud" tree comprised of references to the units and projects associated with "ORED." Up at the top of a tree is a shining golden star that has enough convex whimsy about it (looking, as it does, as if it were an illustration in St. Exupéry's *The Little Prince*) to constitute a kind of jolly satire on the standard stellar purple-and-gold routine. True, there are some telling missteps. As is usually the case, the branch that represents the humanities is sinking down into the bowl of the water stand, presumably mingling with high-tech chemical fertilizer; and, as has been the case a little too often, one twig converts all the arts into "communication and expression," an act of condensation which is analogues to renaming the STEM disciplines "test tube and petri dish." Nevertheless, the most charming trees are those that show off a few cherished irregularities. Applause and congratulations to ORED for showing that modern design is possible and that we need not live forever inside an Audubon painting.



2013 Holiday Greetings

2013 Christmas Card of the Year.

"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.



A G Monaco

Dear A G,

I know that I ought to be posing this question to my retirement vendor's service representative, but, truth be told, yours is the advice that I trust the most. I'm planning to retire in a year or two and am considering what to do with the money that has accumulated in my defined-contribution plan (I'm an "ORP" member). When I read the material from or talk to my retirement plan representative, all of the options sound equally good. All have pluses and minuses. All are dressed out in equally glitzy packaging. I'm baffled as to whether I should go for an annuity, a lump-sum cash-out, incremental payouts, or any of a half-dozen other arrangements. Honestly, A G, sometimes I'm tempted just to put it all down on one big roll of the roulette wheel! I've laid up somewhere around \$700K and will need to live on that for the rest of my days (I'm not Social Security-eligible). I have a wife (who has another \$100K in her IRA) but I no longer have dependents; I want to live well but am not especially concerned about leaving an estate; my house mortgage is about two-thirds paid. A G, what would you do?

HAROLD in Shreveport

Harold –

First the disclaimer – I am not a financial planner and so while I appreciate your confidence I caution you to do a lot of research on your own and to engage some real experts in conversation.

With that warning in mind and to keep our lawyers from yelling at me I thought it might be helpful to make comments on how I am planning for my own retirement rather than directly answering your questions.

1. I intend to keep saving until the last day of work.-

Even as I near retirement I will keep putting money away for retirement. Money invested in the final days of my career may not accumulate as much interest or returns on the day of my retirement as money saved years earlier but remember that a retirement is a decades long event. Returns from money saved in my final days of work will still bring me important returns during the 25 years of my retirement. It is important to seek opportunities for your money to grow even during retirement.

2. I will need to know my retirement needs and carefully plan for them to be met. -

Forget the on-line calculators and "rule of thumb." Prior to my retirement my spouse and I will need to sit down and discuss in an honest fashion how we want to live and how much it will cost. That discussion and resulting calculations will determine how we will handle our money and in what manner we will need to invest our money for our post retirement years. Everyone says they want to travel following retirement and your amount of savings will determine if you can afford the high cost of visits to the French Riviera or a lovely stay in the more affordable capital city of New Mexico. Don't scoff Santa Fe in the fall is lovely and the experience can be just as stimulating as a trip to Europe but at a much lower price. Most important you must be realistic in how you plan to live after retirement.

3. I intend to learn everything I can about my retirement options. –

I will do enormous amounts of research on retirement and investment strategies. Two years before retirement I plan to discuss matters with TRSL, and my ORP vendor representative. I intend to get a complete and total understanding of my options under the plan, my eligibility for health insurance coverage, and the costs associated with that coverage. I intend to make a "pest" of myself and I will demand answers to every question I can think of because retirement decisions require that I fully understand every possible option I have. I also intend to bring my spouse along for any meetings since this decision impacts her as well. My wife will need to know what decisions have been made because in part she is smarter than me and in part because she will likely live longer. She needs to know the logic behind all of the decisions because at some point she will be managing the portfolio. If I have trouble getting TRSL or my ORP Vendor to respond I will contact the HR office on campus and they will help me to get the service I require.

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LIFESTYLE FEATURE (Continued)

A more promising venue for those seeking a menswear vendor whose line is integrated with other offerings or inventories might be one of the super-retailers such as Nordstrom or Amazon. Of all the department stores of yore, only Nordstrom has maintained a consistent level of fashion and quality at a reasonable price. It is true that browsing the Nordstrom web site can be a daunting experience involving the perusal of hundreds upon hundreds of items, it is seldom the case that adequate fashion solutions cannot eventually be found in its vast electronic precincts. Nordstrom offers its own line—"John W. Nordstrom"—that has its ups and downs, but it also amalgamates (and pre-selects among) the best products of dozens of manufacturers, whether Hugo Boss or Calvin Klein or top-tier designers. Especially commendable at Nordstrom is the collection of ties and also the collection of shoes. Visitors can find neckwear from Robert Talbott and healthful but attractive footwear from European sources such as Ecco, Mephisto, and Josef Seidel. Better still, Nordstrom always offers free shipping and free returns with no questions asked. Amazingly, a gigantic selection of menswear can also be found at mega-retailer Amazon, although the somewhat ungainly presentation of these items in the standard Amazon template-format tends to reduce the shopping excitement that arises from seeking something that looks special.

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LSU Summer Scholars Class of 2014 Accepting Applications

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LSU University College's Summer Scholars program is accepting applications for its Class of 2014. LSU Summer Scholars is an eight-week summer program that prepares high achieving under-represented, minority students to make a successful transition from high school to college. The program is only open to 2014 high school graduates who have applied and are eligible for enrollment at Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College.

LSU Summer Scholars are provided with a structured environment conducive to building the fundamental skills necessary to enhance the likelihood of successful completion of a bachelor's degree. The program includes:

Enrollment in six credit hours of coursework

Study/discussion groups with supplemental instructors and tutors

Social and cultural enrichment activities
Residence in on-campus housing for the entire summer term

Academic, self-improvement, and leadership seminars

Academic advising, course scheduling, and career goal development.

LSU Summer Scholars awards SCHOLARSHIPS covering tuition, housing, meal plan, and cultural and enrichment activities. APPLICATION DEADLINE: MARCH 7, 2014. To apply for LSU Summer Scholars Class of 2014, visit our [website](#). View the postcard [here!](#)

Complete **applications** must include all of the following from the student to be considered:

- A completed Summer Scholars application coversheet
- A copy of high school transcripts, including ACT or SAT scores
- Two letters of recommendation (at least one letter of recommendation should be from a high school representative)
- A Personal Statement: This should be autobiographical, and no more than one single-spaced typed page. It should explain your reason for applying to the Summer Scholars program, as well as choosing LSU, and your course of study/career goals.

For more information follow the conversation.

AG Answers (Continued)

4. I will remind myself of the basic investment principles. -

When deciding what to do with my retirement savings I prefer to stick to the basics. If anyone tells me that he can put me into investments that will regularly return 20% per year – guaranteed... I will pick up my chair and hit him across the face.

You must take some risk, you must expect that the marketplace will give and will take but you cannot afford to go after “pie in the sky” this late in life. Do not waste your time and money discussing finances with crooks, charlatans and brother-in-laws from New Jersey who have a “get rich quick” scheme.

5. I will focus on my asset allocation more than on individual picks. -

How I divide my portfolio between stocks and bonds will have an important impact on my long-term returns. -

One-way to lower the risk of running out of money during retirement is to be careful but not overly cautious. Jane Bryant Quinn the well-known financial writer calls it the “Three Bucket Strategy.” In retirement you should have approximately 30% of your money in stocks and 70% distributed between cash and bonds accounts. Not evenly of course, but you do need access to enough cash to cover your bills for a year. The remainder of the 70% should be left in bonds to provide you with the ability to sell off bonds on a budgeted and scheduled basis to replenish your cash. Selling off bonds to replenish you annual cash reserves should occur for the first 15 years of retirement. During that time the other 30% of your assets will need to be invested in equities with growth in mind. Assuming a 25 -year retirement I expect that as my bucket of bonds grows low my bucket of stocks will have grown substantially and then hopefully carry me for the remainder of my years.

There are a substantial number of books and articles all suggesting this conservative but not overly cautious strategy and I suggest that everyone start reading up on the idea.

6. For me stocks are best for long-term growth. -

Bonds guarantee a return but not a very high one. When I was younger the rule was to subtract your age from 100 and that should be the percentage of your investments you place in stocks. So if a person was 50 he should have half his investments in bonds and half of his investments in stocks. Due to longer life spans and lower interest on bonds the rule of 100 is no longer effective. Now they talk about the rule of 120. So if you are 50 you should have 70% of your investments in stocks. I will not abandon investing in stocks, as I grow older.

7. I will not move too heavily into bonds.-

To beat this dead horse a little further too many of us stash our portfolio in bonds for income as we retire. Inflation over a 10-25 year period can have a devastating impact on the purchasing power of a bond’s interest payments. You cannot rely only on bonds.

8. I will carefully manage my withdrawals and I will make tax-efficient withdrawals to extend the life of my retirement funds. -

Once I retire I will be faced with deciding what accounts to withdraw from first. Assuming all else equal, by drawing down on my taxable accounts first and letting my tax –advantaged accounts compound for as long as possible I will get more “mileage” out of my retirement accounts.

9. I will be creative in getting the most out of my assets. -

For starters remember, “location is everything” or at least it is important. If I can make a profit off the sale of my house and relocate to another location that offers greater tax advantages and /or a lower cost of living then retirement is the time to do it. The idea of a reverse mortgage might be something I will consider as well. Being creative means looking at all of the possible angles to stretch my funds and improve my quality of retirement life.

10. Working part-time in retirement can help in several ways-

Finding a low stress, part-time position can provide additional funds and help stretch my money a little further. Taking into consideration the fact that some folks are not eligible for Social Security at retirement then a post retirement part-time position could provide a person with eligibility for some benefits in the future. Finally a part-time job can help to extend my social circle and should my spouse pass away it will provide a low cost and safe way for me to meet women or even better make friends with someone who has a boat.

In addition to those ten items I believe you have to think hard and long about whether leaving behind an estate is important. Since everyone started watching Downton Abbey it seems like you all have become preoccupied with maintaining an estate for the next generation.

Beyond my obligations to my spouse I believe I have done all that needs to be done to support the rest of my family during my lifetime. Think what you could have saved if you never paid tuition or car insurance for your children? With that in mind I have suggested to my wife that depending on which one of us lives longer we should manage our resources in a way so that the last check we write is returned for insufficient funds. Trying too hard to leave an ample estate behind could work to deprive you of an enjoyable time while you are alive.

Hip-Hop and R&B Lessons About ‘Mama’

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LSU University College’s McNair Research Scholars, in partnership with the LSU Women’s Center, presents “Is Black Motherhood A Marker of Oppression or Empowerment? Hip-Hop and R&B Lessons About ‘Mama,’” a presentation by Cassandra Chaney, PhD and Arielle Brown on Tuesday, February 25, 2014 at 6 p.m. at the LSU African American Cultural Center (located at 3 Union Square in the new parking garage complex). A reception will follow the research presentation at the LSU Women’s Center.

This presentation is the kick-off event for the LSU Women’s Center honoring Women’s History Month (March 2014). Brown offers an insightful analysis on how hip-hop and R&B artists describe “motherhood” in their lyrics. “We are thrilled to have the opportunity to kick-off our Women’s History Month programming with Arielle Brown’s exceptional presentation that highlights LSU’s commitment to fostering excellence in undergraduate research,” said Summer Steib, director of LSU Women’s Center. The talk will be open for public dialogue, with reception to follow.

For complete details of all Black History and Women’s History activities and events, visit [here](#).

Chaney, associate professor of Child and Family Studies in LSU’s School of Social Work, supervised and submitted a peer-reviewed manuscript with Brown on the research topic. Chaney noted that the McNair Research Scholars program provided her the opportunity to acclimate Brown to the methodologies associated with qualitative methods as well as a greater understanding of the impetus behind academic writing. Brown, a LSU senior majoring in psychology will be graduating in May 2014 and is currently preparing for graduate school through the McNair Research Scholars program.

McNair Research Scholars is funded through the U.S. Department of Education TRIO Programs. LSU has three TRIO Programs – McNair Research Scholars, Student Support Services, and Upward Bound – whose combined efforts bring more than \$850,000 of annual federal funding for the purpose of supporting postsecondary education opportunities at LSU and in the Baton Rouge community.



Arielle Brown and Dr. Cassandra Chaney

LIFESTYLE FEATURE (Continued)

The greatest progress in upscale men's apparel is occurring in what might be called the "deep niches": those ultra-specialized corners of the market where special needs merge with multitudinous buyers—where the American dream of universal connoisseurship is realized. Among the greatest weaknesses among storefront retail clothiers is men's business-casual pants. Blue jeans and work trousers may abound even at Baskin's Western Wear (now re-branded as "Boot Barn"), but refined easygoing weekend pants could not be chased down by even the speediest legs. Filling this niche is a big way is **Bill's Khaki's** of Reading, Pennsylvania, which expertly targets its market with plenty of mountain-climbing and adventure-trekking imagery while offering slacks that suit the corporate skybox environment. Bill's Khakis offers a superb array of non-aggressive colors, from golden British khaki through Navy blue, thus ensuring a match with that sharp casual tartan shirt that everyone likes to wear at Christmastime. **J. Peterman**, similarly, juxtaposes sepia-tone drawings against exotic item titles such as "Ghurka Pants" to tease out that secret desire to chuck the pursuit of a position as an Associate Vice-Provost for Asphalt Repair" in order to run off on a career of adventure with the Foreign Legion. **Orvis**, which operates storefront locations in Louisiana, likewise maintains the façade of an outdoor adventure supplier in order to provide the club-oriented man with an array of apparel in muted secondary colors such as Umbrian rust, meadow cornflower, and Sierra spruce (admittedly, Orvis evidences a genius with frontier-evocative plaids).



Orvis explores muted secondary colors.



Pendleton's Sir Pendleton plaids lure the connois-

highly attractive and expertly woven and printed shirtings. Not far behind is that venerable old weaver, **Viyella**, with its luscious merino-cotton blends. Viyella releases its products through an array of distributors, chief of which is that sturdy haberdasher, **Hansen's clothing**. Not only Viyella, but a very broad range of delightful business-casual shirts can also be found at a new entrant into the bigtime men's market, **Patrick James**, an aggregator of products whose long reach allows for the delivery of shirts that fit, and fit admirably, every conceivable physique.

Those who treasure greater subtlety in their special-occasion apparel might seek out the hidden catalogue of **Ben Silver**, a somewhat overpriced South Carolinian merchant who presents himself as a perpetually wise perennial sixty-something clothing advisors. Silver's buyers have a remarkable knack for finding fabrics that combine beauty with masculinity, a combination that has proven more elusive than many would allow. A visit to Ben Silver online can turn the customer, sartorially, into anything from a refined version of Sherlock Holmes to the captain of the royal yacht to an heir to a plantation home. Those who want a remarkably well-made silk tie might try **Charles Tyrwhitt**, most of whose highly tapered clothes would fit only a 1960s British rock-and-roll star but whose ties congregate an entire rainbow in a strong but subtle silk band. And, of course, there is also that perpetual profusion of pastel productions, **Vineyard Vines**, which successfully suggests that the wearers of its clothing never stop smiling at summer sunsets while planning trips to Aruba from backyard decks in Myrtle Beach.



Soft and surprising Viyella plaids always amaze.

In exploring the world of men's fashion, there are only three rules: don't spend too much, for excellence is usually available online for under \$200.00; don't go to Joseph A. Banks unless you are trying to move up the administrative ladder before having the means to live large; and remember not to try to prove yourself either to your subordinates or your supervisor by wearing a tie in your school color every day (a favorite vice of recently-advanced top executives). Otherwise, the racks are wide open for your browsing!

Ben Silver provides that wealthy librarian look.



Ben Silver provides that wealthy librarian look.



Tyrwhitt ties always delight.



Perpetually pastel with Vineyard Vines.



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