

Louisiana State University in Shreveport
Faculty Senate Correspondence

Minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting held November 15, 2010, in the Webster Room of the University Center.

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m. by **Faculty Senate President Mary Jarzabek**.

Present: Mary Jarzabek, Carl Smolinski, Rhonda Failey, Raymond Taylor, Harvey Rubin, Chris Hale, LaWanda Blakeney, Lonnie McCray, Julie Bergeron, Emre Celebi, Robert Miciotto, Elahe Mahdavian

Absent: Larry Garrison, Marjan Trutschl, Matyas Buzgo

Approval of the minutes as amended for the October 13, 2010, meeting was unanimous. Julie Bergeron was added as a member of the Project Crisis Call ad hoc committee.

President's Report: **Faculty Senate President Jarzabek** gave the following report.

"On Thursday of last week I attended a "town hall" meeting called by Gov. Bobby Jindal. Unfortunately, this was more of a speech than a meeting and no questions were allowed from the audience. The dynamic, uplifting, and energetic speech touted what Louisiana (and this Governor) has accomplished in recovering from Katrina, the BP Oil Spill, and the recession economy. The main point of interest to this body is his mention of his "commitment" to higher education. This commitment statement comes after a repeal of the Stelly Tax that assisted education budgets, by the way. His commitment appears to be to "work force ready" degrees. This is code for Community College degrees in this administration. There seems to be concern that this governor still sees 4 year degree campuses and their professors as fat and lazy; folk who should work harder for the money they get. While I was somewhat impressed with the speech...I have grave concerns about this administration's focus and commitment to us here at LSU-Shreveport. I don't think any salvation is planned for ANY 4 year degree granting campus. And so the budget cuts keep coming. The latest has been handled deftly by our administrators! We owe a special thank you to the Chancellor, Provost, vice-chancellors, and the staff president for working so diligently to keep taking money away from the general fund without hurting JOBS! Even through this last round of cuts...saving jobs has been their top priority. However, with each cut, the options are dwindling and that priority gets harder to realize! This last round of cuts cut into Library funding and unused scholarships. Scholarships that might have attracted new or transfer students to LSUS. Scholarships that would have added to enrollment. All of this leads to the importance of the work of the Ad Hoc Budget Crisis Planning Committee being chaired by Larry Garrison. They will have an impressive report later in our meeting, but I want to thank them for the work they have accomplished thus far. I urge all faculty to submit their ideas to this committee for consideration as we continue to face financial challenges now and in the upcoming years. But since the budget crisis is far from over, this Senate has an important task it must undertake. The attitudes of our faculty must be determined about what "options" our administrators

will have when facing the crushing blow that is forecast for fiscal year 2011-2012. We MUST answer a KEY question. IF more cuts come – will the tenured faculty take a voluntary furlough? This option has been avoided until now; but it may become our only option in the near future. I support this option for several reasons: It will limit the Board of Supervisors dictates on how we can save our campus. It makes any departure from an LSUS position VOLUNTARY. It saves programs which were hard to implement in the first place. It prevents us sliding backward 3 full decades of growth. It allows LSUS to “hold on” until our state economy is fixed or improves. So – with your support – I will charge Larry’s committee to set up a means by which we can get a clear answer to the question; Will we all stand together on the furlough idea? We need to be ambassadors for this idea. We need to “sell it” if necessary. We need to work together to get through the tough times that are ahead of us. So let’s stand together to help LSUS survive this continuing crisis.”

Administrators’ Reports:

Provost Paul Sisson: Dr. Sisson commended President Jarzabek on her efforts as senate president. He reported that the GRAD Act has finally been approved by the Board of Regents. The 10% increase in tuition fees collected this fall has been held in escrow awaiting this approval. Dr. Sisson stated that the webpage for the Board of Regents has a button near the bottom of the page labeled GRAD Act. This button will redirect you to a webpage which has three columns of documents for the campuses around the state. One of the columns contains information on the financial structure of every campus. The GRAD Act goals for LSUS can be found here and Dr. Sisson urges all faculty to look at this information. Dr. Sisson stated that Governor Jindal is currently considering taking money from the K-12 school budget and giving it to higher education. He said that finding ourselves in a battle with our K-12 colleagues is not a position we want to be in. There are questions as to whether this is even legal as this is federal money. Dr. Sisson reported that the last information he had was that Governor Jindal had turned the discussion of this proposal over to the senate finance committee telling them to figure out how to handle this. Locally, the higher education imperative remains active, with our community leaders continuing to be proactive and supportive in trying to help solve our budget problems. A report being written by the consultant for the higher education imperative should be available soon. The report will let people outside the education system know what is happening in higher education. Dr. Sisson noted that some of the facts currently being circulated concerning the state of higher education are incorrect. Governor Jindal at one point suggested that the budget shortages in higher education could be handled by eliminating all sabbaticals. There are no sabbaticals at LSUS, and only about two dozen in the entire state. The LSU system has 20 sabbaticals this year. Nineteen of those are at the Baton Rouge campus and one is at UNO. The UL system has one sabbatical. Dr. Sisson does not know the number of sabbaticals in the Southern system. Eliminating those sabbaticals will not solve our current problems. The governor has also criticized teaching loads. A recent overview of all teaching

loads in the LSU system shows that LSUS looks very good in comparison to the other schools. Only LSU Eunice beats us on this point. Dr. Sisson said that the criticism concerning sabbaticals and teaching loads is unwarranted. **Senator Blakeney** asked a question about our graduation rate. **Dr. Sisson** stated that the statewide graduation rate is 38%. LSUS falls below this percentage. He explained that the rates are being calculated using an obsolete metric. For the 2008-2009 academic year LSUS awarded 527 bachelor's degrees. Only 159 of these were included in the graduation rate. 70% of the degrees were not counted because the majority of our students do not fall into the "first-time full-time freshman beginning in the fall semester" classification that is used to calculate graduation rates. Many of our students attend school part-time and many of them transfer to us from other campuses. Dr. Sisson stated that Governor Jindal believes that the 38% graduation rate means that 62% of the college students in Louisiana are dropouts. This is yet another example of misinformation held by our governor. **President Jarzabek** reported that when Trey Gibson spoke to Governor Jindal at the recent town meeting about the formula for computing graduation rates, the governor replied that he did not realize that was how the rates were figured and that he would look into it. **Senator Celebi** asked why LSUS was not aggressively pursuing international students. **Dr. Sisson** replied that LSUS is very interested in these students, but it is an expensive undertaking. He stated that we need to hire an international student director to handle the visa issues and to help these students acclimate to the U.S. and to Shreveport. He continued that we cannot do that right now because of the budget deficits, but the interest is still there.

Vice Chancellor Mike Ferrell: **Mr. Ferrell** reported that the Senate Finance committee had met the previous Friday and wanted the schools to report on which programs were going to be cut and which faculty would be laid off. The schools do not want to do this because once these announcements are made students will transfer to other schools and faculty will begin looking for new jobs. Mr. Ferrell said that when President Lombardi last visited LSUS in June he announced that a decision would be made in August, and then that decision was pushed back to November. Two weeks ago President Lombardi said the decision would be in December. The Friday before the Senate Finance committee met the timeframe was moved to late December or January. Mr. Ferrell announced that on a more positive note we passed our risk management audit. He stated that responding to the safety notices that are sent out is vital and reminded everyone that the penalty is high for not passing a safety audit – around \$90,000. He said that the audit is every two years, but the auditors can come annually and perform spot checks. Mr. Ferrell reported that the audits are going to be passed from state control to a private entity, so we are not sure what to expect in the future, and he urged everyone to continue participating in this important endeavor.

Associate Vice Chancellor for University Development, Glenda Erwin reported on the Phone-a-thon effort to contact alumni for scholarship contributions. This was undertaken with the help of faculty and will hopefully continue and expand in the future. **Dr. Gustavson** asked if the alumni association was made up largely of older students. Ms. Erwin replied that the alumni association is typically run by students who have been out of school for 25 years or more unless a school has an active athletic program. She stated that we need better data on and communication with our younger alumni. **President Jarzabek** commended Ms. Erwin on the efforts to build alumni connections.

There were no other Administrators' reports.

Senator Failey made a recommendation that discussion between the senators be kept short and to the point. It has been brought to the executive committee's attention by some of the senators that the faculty senate meetings have been quite lengthy, running past 5:00 p.m. She asked that, rather than pass a formal motion, we all try to be brief.

Old Business:

Instruction and Professional Development Committee (IPDC): Sibylle Mabry reported on the results of the recommendations made at the November 3, 2010, special meeting of the faculty senate to discuss the course evaluation form that will be used for face-to-face classes. The IPDC implemented all the recommended changes discussed at that meeting. The revised version of the evaluation has been emailed to all faculty members. A motion was made by **Senator Taylor** to approve the use of the current version of the on-site course evaluation for this semester. The motion passed. **President Jarzabek** thanked Dr. Mabry and her committee for their work on this project.

Distance Learning Council Report on Online Course Evaluations: Sibylle Mabry reported on some of the changes that were made to the proposed online course evaluation. **President Jarzabek** recommended that the senators ask their schools for input and comments. This form has been emailed to all faculty members. We will vote on this form at the December faculty senate meeting for possible implementation in Spring 2011. President Jarzabek added that this evaluation form can be revisited and changed in the future if it proves unsatisfactory, and commended the committee for their work on this form.

Distance Learning Council Report on Online Courses: Sibylle Mabry gave the following report.

In response to LSUS's mission to "create and maintain a stimulating and supportive learning environment", as well as to recognize the diversity of students, their lifestyles, and their approach to learning, the university decided seven years ago to create an online program by offering internet-based distance learning courses.

Since the online program is not growing at the desired rate, the faculty senate is now trying to encourage and support the expansion of online offerings at LSUS. In this report, we inform the senate about the strategies the DLC employs to ensure quality online courses and to increase their attractiveness to faculty and students. Specifically, in the report, we (1) explain the reasons the DLC was formed, (2) describe the council's duties, (3) show actions and changes implemented to encourage teacher training, and (4) provide recommendations regarding the expansion of LSUS's online courses and programs.

Formation and Purpose of the DLC

Today's distance learning programs are seeking to satisfy high-quality education expectations as well as our students' quest to create a diverse and rich learning environment. To address these expectations and needs, LSUS has formed the Distance Learning Council (DLC) as a body that would provide guidelines for the academic and technological standards of online courses and would ensure continuous process improvement.

However, distance education requires an extensive amount of faculty and institutional groundwork, including the instructional design of online courses, the effective usage of course management systems, faculty training in pedagogy and technology of online systems, and the planning of delivery systems for student support services. Hence, to meet these needs and successfully manage online offerings, as well as to support student access to diverse online environments, the DLC was formed.

Duties of the DLC

Council members have the authority to make decisions concerning meeting procedures, the course review process, review teams, and training courses for faculty. Members may create additional functions as may be deemed necessary or desirable. The DLC develops, reviews, and recommends **policy** regarding the planning and delivery of online courses. In addition, the council evaluates **proposals** for various online courses and makes recommendations. Regarding the **training** for prospective online instructors, the DLC has the responsibility to review and assess it. With respect to the **delivery** of the online courses, DLC members observe the instructors in their online class during their first semester of teaching the course. The observers use evaluation criteria developed by the DLC to appraise the quality of the online instructors and their delivery of the course. Instructors who teach previously approved online courses are periodically (usually every two years) reviewed. After two reviews, no more reviews are necessary unless the department chair or dean requests additional reviews. The DLC reviewers submit their **evaluations** to the DLC chair in a written report that contains a quantitative and qualitative assessment, recommendations, and guidelines for the instructor and the department chairs. The Center for Online Learning and Faculty Development (COLFD) and the DLC have begun establishing policies that govern both the COLFD and the DLC. These policies will further legitimize the duties of the DLC and provide a good foundation for moving forward.

Changes in Instructor Training and Certification

To ensure the delivery of quality online courses, the DLC employs strict standards with respect to preparing course content and developing the pedagogical skills of online instructors. Written and unwritten rules have so far guided our approach to handling instructor training and certifications. Typically, before being allowed to teach online courses, faculty members are first required to receive formal training from the Center for Online Learning & Faculty Development (COLFD, the former TLTC). Under extenuating circumstances, simultaneous teaching and training is also possible. Moreover, an instructor who received documented, formal online training from another university is allowed to teach online courses at LSUS. He or she does not need to go through the COLFD training

course. The LSUS training certificate obtained for successful completion of this eight-week training course allows instructors to immediately develop and teach online courses at LSUS. Until this academic year, instructors were also permitted to delay, perhaps for years after they obtained their teaching certificates, the development and delivery of online courses. This semester, the Online Instruction Program (OIP) provided by COLFD has expanded the training to include mandatory course development for those seeking to teach online within the next year. Course development is not required for those who enrolled in the program for informational purposes. To complete the OIP successfully, participants must take the online training course, participate in course development, and teach an online course within one year of completion of their online training. Allen Garcie, who leads the OIP, has added Tulin Melancon as an assistant instructor because of her significant experience with online teaching. He is also changing the format of the training course to replace the lectorettes currently used in the course with video and audio clips.

Increasing the Number of Online Offerings at LSUS

The number of online offerings can only be increased if more faculty members are willing to be trained to become online teachers. Further, faculty and administrators must embrace the culture of online learning and convey their commitment to our students. Enabling the DLC to increase and improve our online programs and giving it the credibility and power to deal with SACS requirements is another way to embrace an online culture and to become more competitive. This approach entails effective collaboration among course developers, faculty members, administrators, and course reviewers. Creating and teaching online courses take a considerable amount of time and energy. Since monetary compensation or downloads may be out of the question, merit-based and intrinsic rewards should be advanced to increase faculty's enthusiasm for online teaching.

Recommendations

The growth and transformation of our online programs are a work in progress. The DLC will take into consideration everyone's ideas and suggestions along the way. Here we make initial recommendations related to our goals.

- 1. Require the online instruction program.** Prospective online instructors must go through the entire OIP to make sure that they are able to provide quality online and hybrid courses. To increase the chances of more instructors being ready to teach an online class and to boost the number of potential reviewers, we may need to consider requiring every faculty member to take the eight-week training course. Finally, deans and chairs need to be required to complete the OIP so that they may effectively evaluate online reviews from the DLC and students.
- 2. Provide academic support for online faculty and students.** The COLFD will support the growth of online courses by providing increased academic support for online faculty, students, and the DLC. For example, documents and processes (e.g., syllabi and course templates) will be standardized for online instructors and students. Course development help and mentorship will be provided to new online instructors.
- 3. Coordinate and promote online courses.** With respect to online programs, the official role of the COLFD is to coordinate and promote online courses in collaboration with the DLC and the academic departments. In this role, the center can strengthen the bond between the academic entities and industry, as well as promote the growth of online course offerings at LSUS. To ensure that Moodle is being used effectively as a tool to conduct online teaching, the COLFD and the DLC need to work closely with Scott Hardwick, Assistant Director of IT Services.
- 4. Create a profile of an effective online institution.** Branding for the LSUS online programs is a focus of the COLFD (e.g., designing the Moodle home page for online programs and giving it an LSUS branded look). Regarding student support, getting more information on the LSUS website is another goal (e.g., putting general education requirements online).
- 5. Create a student profile.** Since many students are not yet familiar with the online learning environment, they may be positively influenced by profiles of students who show what it takes to be a successful online student.

6. Streamline the review process. The DLC will continue to streamline its online faculty review process and make changes if necessary. Updated policies and procedures will guide instructors in the most effective way possible.

LSUS ID Use at Local Restaurants: President Jarzabek reported that our student and faculty IDs do not have a set range of dates that some local merchants insist on before giving students and faculty a discount at their establishments. There are only one or two places, one of them IHOP, that reject the LSUS IDs. The director of student activities spoke to the manager of IHOP, explaining how our IDs were formatted, and was assured that LSUS IDs would no longer be rejected. However, rejection is still occurring. The cost of reformatting our IDs is prohibitive, especially in the current budget climate, so there is no resolution to this problem at the current time.

Planning Committee for Budget Reductions: Vice-President Carl Smolinski presented the following written report.

While the committee has not officially met as a group, two of the members, Carl Smolinski and Larry Garrison, met with Provost Sisson on Thursday, Nov. 4 to discuss the current budget situation and methods by which the budget could be equitably reduced.

Provost Sisson stated that the “easy” cuts had been made and there was no more “fat” that could be trimmed from the current budget to absorb the projected mid-year budget cuts. He emphasized that a final amount to be cut from our budget had not been established by the state. The LSUS administration proposes that furloughs for **all** LSUS employees will likely be the only way to deal with the mid-year budget cuts. Each day of furlough for the entire university produces roughly \$75,000 in savings. It is anticipated that we will need to have three furlough days in order to absorb the projected mid-year cuts. Provost Sisson also suggested that the furloughs could be spread out so that only one day of furlough hit in any given pay period to minimize the financial impact on all furloughed employees. Provost Sisson emphasized that all LSUS employees would likely receive a furlough.

At Provost Sisson’s suggestion, we asked Computing Services to setup a web page where anyone in the university community may submit money-saving suggestions or recommendations for a budget reduction process. The web page is under construction. Submissions will be sent to Larry Garrison who will compile and distribute the results.

We then discussed an institutional effectiveness process in place at McNeese State University that engages the entire university community in studying the current state of all academic and administrative units within the university. The process at McNeese is aligned with the requirements of the GRAD Act and serves as a multi-faceted method for measuring the effectiveness and productivity of all units within the university. Provost Sisson expressed great interest in studying the possible establishment of a similar process here at LSUS.

Action Requested:

As chair of the ad hoc committee, I request that the Faculty Senate expand the scope of the committee to include the study and development of an institutional effectiveness process for future adoption at LSUS. To accomplish this goal, the size of the committee may need to be expanded. Current members of the committee are Carl Smolinski (Business), Matyas Buzgo (Math & Science), Chris Hale (Humanities & Social Sciences), and myself (Education). Should we add a member from Human Sciences? Others?

New Business:

Resolution from Planning Committee for Budget Reductions: Vice-President Carl Smolinski presented the following resolution.

**A Resolution Supporting the Use of Furloughs
To Absorb the Mid-Year Budget Cuts**

Whereas, the Faculty Senate of LSUS recognizes the dire financial situation faced by the university as a result of the proposed mid-year budget cuts imposed by the state, and that previous budget cuts have resulted in the elimination of discretionary budget funds throughout the university,

Be it therefore resolved that:

1. The Faculty Senate commends the administration of the university and the Budget Crisis Committee for their efforts to minimize the impact of budget reductions on students, faculty, and the core mission of the university;
2. The Faculty Senate supports the use of furloughs for all university employees as a way to absorb the proposed mid-year budget cuts with the following stipulations:
 - a. That only one furlough day be charged to employees in any one pay period to minimize the financial impact on paychecks, and
 - b. That employees earning \$25,000 per year or less be exempt from the furloughs unless they voluntarily choose to participate;
3. The Faculty Senate urges the tenured faculty of the university to support the use of furlough days to absorb the mid-year budget cuts for the current fiscal year.

Respectfully submitted by

Larry Garrison, Ed.D.
Chair, *ad hoc* Planning Committee for Budget Reductions

President Jarzabek commended the committee for their work and for getting the website established. She charged the committee with developing a way to poll the tenured faculty to determine the level of support for using furlough days to absorb mid-year budget cuts. It was suggested that Survey Monkey be used to maintain anonymity.

Observations and Concerns:

There were no observations and concerns.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:15.