

Louisiana State University in Shreveport
Faculty Senate Correspondence

Minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting held October 13, 2010 in the Webster Room of the University Center.

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. by **Faculty Senate President Mary Jarzabek**.

Present: Mary Jarzabek, Carl Smolinski, Larry Garrison, Rhonda Failey, Raymond Taylor, Harvey Rubin, Chris Hale, LaWanda Blakeney, Lonnie McCray, Marjan Trutschl, Matyas Buzgo, Julie Bergeron

Absent: Emre Celebi, Robert Miciotto, Elahe Mahdavian

Approval of the minutes as written for the September 14, 2010, meeting was unanimous.

President's Report: **Faculty Senate President Jarzabek** stated that the state budget crisis is going from bad to worse, however, there are some positive activities taking place on campus which need to be acknowledged. The MASH project, spearheaded by Kenna Franklin, has been implemented to help first-time freshmen who have been identified as at-risk after the first four weeks of the semester. The alumni association is starting a phone-a-thon to try and build up scholarship monies. Project Crisis Call is continuing. The Just Say No Resolution was unanimously approved by all senators, and the LSU faculty senate is writing a similar resolution. Local businessmen will meet on Wednesday, October 20th, at 10:30, at the Bossier Civic Center to discuss the budget cuts to higher education in our area. Faculty and students are encouraged to attend to show their concern and support. President Jarzabek strongly urged all senators to keep their schools and faculty co-workers informed of the issues discussed during the faculty senate meetings, and encourage them to attend when possible.

Administrators' Reports:

Chancellor Vince Marsala: **Dr. Marsala** urged attendance at the Shreveport Bossier Higher Education Initiative on October 20th at 10:30. He reported that this initiative is an outgrowth of the work of Phillip Rozeman and the Committee of 100. Legislators will be present. He asked that faculty encourage students to attend. The Chancellors from the area schools will not speak at this meeting. Chancellor Marsala stated that he had received an email from the education reporter for The Shreveport Times which stated she was doing a rumor story on the closure of LSUS. He responded to her by stating that the current budget scenario being discussed by the Board of Regents will have a significant impact on the range of programs and services that LSUS will be able to provide to the Shreveport Bossier metropolitan area, but

that there are no ongoing conversations related to the closure of LSUS. He stressed that the budget cuts, while severe, do not threaten the integrity of the university. Dr. Marsala contacted Dr. Lombardi asking him if he knew anything about this rumor and Dr. Lombardi replied that he did not. Dr. Marsala stated that these kinds of rumors are detrimental and impede our efforts. The Committee of 100 was upset that The Times was going to run an article like this without any substantiation. Dr. Marsala reported that on Friday, October 8th, they received an announcement of a \$167,000 budget cut from the 09-10 fiscal year. This cut is due to the state having a deficit at the end of that year. Normally the state would have absorbed this deficit, but this time they did not. They have passed it on to higher education and health care. Our share of this end-of-year deficit is \$167,000.

Provost Paul Sisson: Dr. Sisson has met with all the schools and faculty to talk about the GRAD Act goals and objectives. These are still not official because the Board of Regents has not met this month. This is the month that they are supposed to approve the objectives for all the campuses. They have put this off twice so far and may do so again. They will meet on October 27th and hopefully approve our proposed objectives. Dr. Sisson mentioned the MASH initiative for first-time freshmen and encouraged the continued development of programs to help with retention. **Senator Garrison** asked about the push to get all degree programs down to 120 hours total, and whether there had been any thought given to changing the Freshman Seminar courses to Pass/No Credit, removing them from the degree program hours. **Dr. Sisson** replied that this is not being considered, and gave a brief history of the program, noting that this had been tried in the past. He stated that we are gaining some flexibility in some other areas as far as total hours required. Most of our degree programs are now at 120 hours, although the education degrees are among the ones statewide that are still above the 120 hour number. The State Department of Education announced last week that they would grant some flexibility which should allow the education degrees to fall to the 120 hour number and still include the three-hour FS classes.

Chancellor Marsala reminded everyone that the Willis Knighton Health System will again provide free flu shots and that an email has been sent out with the dates and locations.

Vice Chancellor Mike Ferrell: Mr. Ferrell reported that there are new regulations on state travel. An email will be sent out in the next few days explaining this. He urged that one person from every department be designated to attend the training for these new regulations. Mr. Ferrell announced the possibility of two additional budget cuts based on 1) a lawsuit regarding the use of rainy day funds, and 2) the state treasurer announcing that corporate and personal income taxes are down. The revenue estimating committee should meet the first part of December. If a shortfall is announced at that meeting, the governor has 30 days to announce

measures to balance the budget. We have a risk management audit coming up next week. If we pass the audit we will continue to receive a 5% discount on our insurance premiums. If we do not pass we will incur a 5% penalty (\$80,000). Mr. Ferrell encouraged everyone to support our athletic teams. Basketball season begins on October 30th.

There were no other Administrators' reports.

Old Business:

Just Say No Resolution: President Jarzabek reported that she is pleased that LSU started a similar initiative to our Just Say No Resolution, and also that the Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates is trying to get as many faculty senates as possible to join in with similar resolutions so that we can have a single voice to gain the attention of our legislators.

Teacher Evaluations: Sibylle Mabry reported on the work of the Instruction and Professional Development Committee (IPDC) regarding the new teacher evaluations. Her written report follows.

In April 2010, the Instruction and Professional Development Committee (IPDC) invited faculty volunteers to attend its meeting to discuss the formation of a task force that would be responsible for the development of a valid and workable alternative to the SIR II survey. From the group of volunteers Emre Celebi, Chengho Hsieh, Jean Hollenshead, Rebecca Nolan, and Helen Wise agreed to develop the instrument. To track and support the progress of the development of the homegrown instrument, the IPDC met with the task force throughout the months of April and May.

At the end of the spring semester 2010, the survey was ready to be administered. Kathy Lynch, Data Coordinator for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, uploaded the instrument into the Moodle classes of volunteering faculty members. Kathy made the survey available to students for two weeks, including the finals week. Fifteen (15) professors volunteered to be evaluated via the pilot instrument. Of 1289 students enrolled in 39 classes, 775 (493 women, 250 men) filled out the survey, which is a response rate of 60%.

In August of this year, Helen Wise and Joe Andary began the analysis of the raw survey data, using the statistical software SAS. To analyze and interpret the results of the survey, they employed ANOVA and the Kruskal-Wallis test. The remainder of the report is an overview of the results of the statistical analysis.

Summary of the Statistical Analysis of the Evaluation Instrument

The pilot survey covered three main areas, (1) *course organization*, (2) *course content*, and (3) *instructor*. There were three questions on course organization, four questions on course content, eight questions on instructor rating, and an overall question for each of the three areas as well as an overall comprehensive (global rating) question. The task force had decided that the instructor should make up the majority of the survey because he or she is at the heart of the evaluation. Additionally, the survey contained eleven demographic questions. Fifteen professors were evaluated by sixty percent (775) of their students. Of the 775 respondents, 691 students (89%) gave the courses an excellent (61%) or good (28%) rating. Since all the instructors who were evaluated by the students were volunteers, these numbers and percentages are probably higher than those of the entire population.

Course-related Questions

The analysis tested whether individual questions were good indicators or predictors of the overall rating for each of the three survey constructs. Regarding the first construct of the survey, course organization, the results show that none of the questions is seriously out of line. In other words, the responses to individual questions of the construct agree with the overall construct rating.

The second subject area was course content. The results suggest that the individual questions have a distribution similar to the course organization construct, except for the question "this course is challenging", which has the lowest correlation and no internal validity. The question may therefore not be a good predictor of how students rate course content.

With respect to the third construct of the survey, the instructor, "instructor knowledge and their enthusiasm" received the highest ratings (88%); "effective communication of material" received the lowest ratings (65%). Approximately 50 students did not answer the questions "uses full class time," "uses class time to help students learn," and "available during office hours."

Responses to the global questions agree with every individual response in the three main areas. They hover around 60-70% strongly agree and .3-.4% strongly disagree, which suggests that the last overall course organization question is not necessary. Cronbach's alpha shows that there is internal consistency among the questions in all three areas. Hence, for the sake of conciseness and statistical clarity, it may be wise to drop the "overall" questions for each individual area.

Another question that does not seem to give us much useful statistical information is "uses full class period." The item's correlation with its construct *instructor rating* is very low, which suggests that the item is not a good predictor of instructor evaluation.

The overall course ratings by instructor ranged from a mean of 47 (78%) to 57 (95%) out of 60. ANOVA demonstrated that significant differences could be discerned among instructors, which suggests that the evaluation instrument is able to detect variation.

Demographic Questions

The demographic questions provide useful information. However, the statistical analysis suggests that differences in course evaluations are not related to gender, age, or the student's year in school. The factors that do appear to affect students' assessments of a course are as follows. ("Low *n*" indicates low response rate.)

1. Whether the course is an elective or not
2. The grade a student expects
3. Whether the student is satisfied with the grade
4. Whether the student remains in the class due to financial aid (low *n*)
5. Whether the course is perceived to be useful to the student's future career
6. Student attendance (low *n*)

Specifically, if the course was an elective, students ranked it more highly than a required course. Conversely, student ratings of a course were low when students expected a low grade (C or lower) and when they were not satisfied with their grade. Students who received a C or lower gave the lowest ratings.

Students who had to stay in class due to financial aid gave their courses lower ratings too. Yet, when students had the impression that the class may be useful to their career, they rated the class higher than average.

Another interesting statistic is student attendance. Students who attended a class poorly gave the instructor lower ratings than those who attended the class regularly. For example, students who came to class 75% of the time or more gave their courses the highest ratings.

Conclusions

Overall, the alternative instrument appears to establish reliability, internal consistency, and variability if we remove all the global ranking scales and use the rank sum instead. To get consistent results, we should also remove the items “this course is challenging” and “uses full class period.”

Although some of the demographic questions (e.g., “class level” “age”) have not yet given us answers regarding the differences in course ratings, they should be retained because they give us useful information about our students.

Based on the results of the analysis, the IPDC recommends deployment of the instrument this fall for faculty evaluation and its incorporation into the FPR. Of course, we recommend taking into consideration the lower rankings related to the required courses and other student demographics.

Members of the IPDC were assured that the survey would be administered anonymously via Moodle.

Questions and discussion followed Sibylle Mabry’s report. Members of the Distance Learning Council will be invited to the November meeting of the Faculty Senate to address issues regarding the implementation of the evaluation for online or hybrid courses. **Dr. Sisson** stated that the SIR-II costs \$20,000. He stressed that we need to begin using the new teacher evaluation form this semester as we cannot afford the SIR-II. **President Jarzabek** thanked Sibylle Mabry for her comprehensive report and announced that this evaluation form must be approved before our November meeting. **Gloria Raines** stated that the number of students on financial aid has increased greatly in the past four years. This means that students are staying in classes that they dislike in order to maintain their financial aid. This has a huge impact on faculty evaluations. Student loan default rates are going up. Students are sometimes in classes they really do not want to be in and that may be expressed in the evaluations. **Senator Taylor** stated that he needed to go back to his department to discuss the new evaluation form and get feedback from his colleagues. **President Jarzabek** proposed calling a single-agenda-item faculty meeting the first week of November to get campus-wide feedback on the evaluation form. The meeting was unanimously approved for Wednesday, November 3rd, at 3:00 p.m. Our next regular meeting is November 15th. The senate must vote on the implementation of the teacher evaluation form no later than November 15th. The IPDC report will be emailed to the entire faculty within a day or two.

Project Crisis Call: **President Jarzabek** announced that the ad hoc committee consists of herself, Trey Gibson, Julie Bergeron, and Kenna Franklin. Two additional members will be chosen. The website will be running for the next eleven months. (Projectcrisiscall.com) Approximately 60 signatures have been recorded in the first fifteen days. A Facebook page will be also be established to get this message to the public. BPC has a faculty member interested in mimicking this idea. A news button will be added to the website to keep everyone updated on all the budget issues. Faculty will be asked to allow students into their classrooms to talk about Project Crisis Call. We need 80-90% of LSUS students to sign this petition before we move

into the community. **President Jarzabek** encouraged everyone to look at the website and provide comments and ideas.

New Business:

Budget Cap Restructuring: **Senator Garrison** announced that the committee has not met yet, although they have communicated via email. The scope of the committee has changed somewhat from investigating how cuts have been carried out at other universities and then coming up with a process that we could recommend to our administration to handle such cuts, to examining the structure of the university and possibly looking at the advantages of becoming a private university or initiating a partnership-oriented operation of the university. **Senator Buzgo** reported that we need to discuss how to increase productivity on campus and that we need to know which decisions are coming from Baton Rouge and which are coming from LSUS. **President Jarzabek** stated that the initial focus of the committee was to give faculty input before budget cuts are made, and this should remain the primary focus. The secondary focus can then be how we help ourselves deal with the problems that ensue after the cuts are made, making this a two-tiered approach. The committee will report again in November.

Observations and Concerns:

Four-Day Academic Week: **Provost Sisson** stated that there has been no discussion recently for moving to a four-day academic week in the regular semesters. He is interested in hearing faculty viewpoints on this. Discussion followed concerning restructuring class times if we moved to a four-day academic week. Several senators noted that 50-minute classes are almost too short, and that they preferred 75-minute classes. The issue of having enough classrooms available would have to be discussed, and there would likely have to be more afternoon classes than currently exist. It was noted that common hour would have to be changed. **President Jarzabek** asked the senators to poll their colleagues for their ideas on this subject and we will finalize this discussion in November and make a recommendation to the administration.

Online Courses: **President Jarzabek** has asked Sibylle Mabry to come to the November senate meeting, representing the Distance Learning Council, to make a report and also field questions about online courses. The topic of entire programs online was also mentioned for discussion. **President Jarzabek** asked that this item be moved to old business on the November meeting agenda. This was unanimously approved.

Web Page Redesign: **Jennifer Cook** assured the senate that the faculty web pages will return. A schedule for taking faculty pictures has been set up. A template has to be built for the new faculty pages. It was asked if we can access the old faculty pages until the new ones are built. **Shelby Keith** stated that a link would have to be placed for each faculty member because the former URL is now dead. The new web pages will roll out in January. **Shelby Keith** stated that the URL could be reawakened through the month of January to keep old web pages alive on a temporary basis. **Jennifer Cook** stated that the new web pages need to be cohesive and professional, which is why a template is being built.

Library Funding: **Alan Gabehart** reported on library funding. He stated that in the 08-09 fiscal year there was a \$50,000 cut to the library. In the 09-10 fiscal year the cut was \$108,000. In the 10-11 fiscal year the cut was \$108,000. He does not know what the library cut will be in the 11-12 fiscal year. He asked that we encourage the LSU System and the Board of Regents to support LOUIS which serves 47 academic libraries. The Board of Regents has been paying 2.7 million dollars each year towards the operation of LOUIS. The member libraries paid the remaining cost. The cost to the member libraries was doubled when the Board of Regents' budget was cut, so LSUS's contribution went from \$27,000 to \$54,000 for the fiscal year. Next year, if the Board of Regents cannot pay again, the libraries will not be able to pay the double costs and LOUIS will be lost. **President Jarzabek** suggested a senate resolution to support LOUIS. **Alan Gabehart** will work with **Lonnie McCray** to write the resolution.

Senator Taylor suggested that the November 3rd meeting be held in the UC or SLA to accommodate a larger turnout.

Senator Trutschl asked if we still have a Beautification Committee. He suggested that there are improvements that can be made around campus without funding. He said that things can be cleaned or fixed, in many cases with little or no money, to make them look nicer. **President Jarzabek** commented that a work order to the physical plant can be initiated to cover small improvements.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:12.