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### Faculty Senate Newsletter, October 2010

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LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

# LSU FACULTY SENATE

Monthly Newsletter

October 31, 2010



## *President's Message*

The collective jury of humankind is still deliberating President Franklin Roosevelt's affirmation that there is nothing to fear but fear itself. Fear, after all, is something. There is plenty of it around the campus nowadays, most of it instigated by the prospect of budget cuts and job eliminations but some of it elicited by the endangerment of previous resources. Lurking in the corner of all but the most numb academic mind is the thought that commerce and its seductive appeal might undermine support and sympathy for the traditions of free inquiry that have animated universities for several centuries or the anxiety that this or that Provost or Chancellor might pull the

plug on a favorite program or the worry that an aggrieved student might start a complaint or lawsuit—or worse. What is remarkable about the current epidemic of fear is that it lacks both a venue and a target. Few will confess a particular fear of the Chancellor or the Provost or the Commissioner or the President or anyone at all other than perhaps the governor, who is himself a perpetually absent figure.

The experience of this newly epidemic fear tempts anyone to look upward on the command chain in a university system that clings to an organizational scheme reminiscent of a military academy. Unfortunately, the top officers at any one Louisiana institution cannot deliver the required answers or solutions precisely because there is no "top" within campus reach. Above the Chancellor looms the System President, the Regents, the Commissioner of Higher Education (when that office is occupied), an array of legislative committees, the full legislature, and the governor, to name but a few. The "top" at LSU is barely half way up the ladder; it has measurable but not unlimited power and is historically deficient in the art of consolation, let alone problem-solving.

"Fear itself," to borrow FDR's locution, might well be something closer to self. Although any "upper administration" always attracts a certain amount of criticism, it may well be that the majority of miseries, including fear, emerge much closer to the ground level. When railing against the excess layers of administration in Louisiana higher education, the most natural target is the upper echelon, yet most obstructions, damage, and intimidation occur at the bottom of the food chain. Among the dirty secrets of every institutions are the numerous tales of colleagues who have gotten on the wrong side of department chairs or who have otherwise been marked as pariahs in departments, with the result that their efforts, no matter how fervid, lead only to roadblocks, whether, say, being ranked perpetually third in applicant pools comprised of four candidates for awards requiring an endorsement by a Chair or being blocked from engaging in interdisciplinary efforts owing to trumped-up curricular needs or otherwise being kept in an under-the-glass-ceiling position.

The emergence of modern universities and the birth of international cooperative research in national academies such as the early Royal Society were characterized by a mix of top-down patronage (such a royal charters or grants) and a reduction in ground-level barriers. The spirit of interdisciplinary virtuosity that rumbled through these early research combines may no longer be attainable, but wits as apt as those in Tiger Town can surely devise affiliation pools that allow for some mobility and that overleap disciplines that lack coherent or defensible borders. Allowing faculty to choose affiliations with a variety of groups on a short-term rather than a lifelong, departmental basis might be an excellent start. Getting rid of the greatest source of fear—that one might be forever under the thumb of one department—would allow for clearer thought concerning the many other troubles that confront the university as a whole and that stretch beyond the buildings that partition the quadrangle.

With all good wishes,  
Kevin L. Cope, Faculty Senate President

## JAZZ FUNERAL DRAWS MAJOR ATTENTION; MEDIA COVERAGE AVAILABLE ONLINE

Congratulations go out to student organizers, to LSUnited, to Faculty Senate members, and to a host of faculty and well-wishers for organizing the recent Jazz Funeral for Higher Education, which, without doubt, drew more media attention than any other initiative on the LSU campus or throughout higher education. Reporters from New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and national television and radio outlets swarmed the campus; comments and images blazoned across The Chronicle of Higher Education and other national news outlets; even LSU Media Relations deployed a reporter and photographer. How sad it was that, in a burst, nay, an epidemic, of courage, the major administrative officers of LSU chose to fight other battles at just the moment of this media triumph. Those who would like to review this powerful statement will find an abundance of new material in the [Faculty Senate Multimedia Archive](#). Also new to that archive: links to Chronicle of Higher Education coverage of LSU's budget woes and to a National Public Radio story including comments by the LSU Faculty Senate President. (Photo provided by Angelika Roy-Goldman)



## FACULTY GOVERNANCE VOTES "NO" ON RETIREMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

Colleagues from around the state have sought LSU Faculty Senate guidance with respect to Amendment 6 on the November 2nd ballot. Benefits experts in the Senate strongly oppose this measure and urge a "no" vote upon it. Amendment 6 requires that any adjustments to state-affiliated retirement plans that entail a measurable cost pass by a two-thirds vote of the legislature. The scandalous history of retirement programs for higher education professionals may be reviewed, in all its ugliness, on the ["Optional Retirement Program Controversy"](#) page of the Faculty Senate web site. It is well known that faculty governance officers around the state have been fighting a furious, uphill battle for over a year against an unresponsive and corrupt retirement bureaucracy. Increasing the required vote for improvements to the present, disastrous retirement program would render it all but impossible to provide respectable retirement offerings for education professionals and would guarantee an impoverished retirement for many faculty members, especially at the poorer institutions in our state. It will be worthwhile to make a special trip to the polls to stop this worrisome amendment.

## NEW IT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE ROLLED OUT

Earlier issues of the Newsletter have reported on the emergence of a new, progressive, and faculty-empowering IT governance structure. The Newsletter rejoices to report that these committees have now been formed, charged, staffed, chaired, and charged. Heading the Research IT Advisory Committee is Barb Dutrow; atop the Teaching and Learning IT Committee is Larry Rouse; and at the helm of Infrastructure Committee is Faculty Senate stalwart Andrew Christie.

## SENATE MEETING VIDEOS TO GO ONLINE

Thanks to resourceful thinking by Chief Information Officer Brian Voss and User Support and Student IT Enablement Director Melody Childs, on-demand video of past Senate meetings is now becoming available on the Faculty Senate web site. Senate videographer and now Executive Committee Member-at-large George Stanley is working backwards through the Senate video archive, converting Senate video resources to manageable formats and gradually completing the manifest of "taped" Senate meetings. Meetings from 2010 are already available on a dedicated page on the [Senate web site](#).

## NEW FEATURE: RED STICK RESTAURANT REVIEW BY CARL FREEDMAN

Editor's note: The Faculty Senate Monthly Newsletter is delighted to report the signing of Professor Carl Freedman, former Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of English and an expert in the areas of science fiction and of critical theory, as our new restaurant critic. Freedman's column will appear at irregular intervals but at least several times per year. We welcome this most knowledgeable of cuisine experts to our stable of feature writers and we look forward to the enhancements to our quality of life that his judgments will produce! (See page 3 for full article)

## ADMINISTRATOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### Ann Whitmer, Associate Dean, Humanities and Social Sciences

Ann Whitmer knows how important research can be to recovery efforts in Louisiana. She comments, for example, that, after the explosion of the Deep Water Horizon rig last April, LSU faculty began focusing on how they could best use their academic strengths to aid those in need in the aftermath of the disaster.

An Assistant Dean, Whitmer handles all aspects of grant writing for the various departments in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. These duties give Whitmer a unique insight into seeing the critical yet sometimes overlooked contributions faculty outside the hard sciences have made to society, including studies of the effects of manmade and natural disasters. Various grant applications that have come across her desk have proposed to study which social organizations and communities



most effectively help people recover from a disaster, what constitutes community resilience, and how media flows in communities during and after a disaster. Yet, due to the lack of attention studies like these sometimes receive, Louisianans may have an inaccurate picture of the impact research in the humanities and social sciences can have on the world today. "The research our faculty do is sometimes less visible," Whitmer says, "but that doesn't mean we're not doing it."

Like many people in the LSU community, Whitmer has seen some of the effects budget cuts have had and are likely to have on Higher Education in Louisiana. For instance, Whitmer feels that, faced with uncertainty about their future in the LSU system, faculty are less likely to apply for grants. At the same time, however, Whitmer stresses that cuts have also led people in Higher Education to pay more attention to funding outside the university system. "The general push is to sponsor more programs," Whitmer observes.

Whitmer's time in Louisiana, stretching back to the eighties, has given her a keen appreciation for the cultural experiences the state offers to its people. "It's the most different place I've ever lived," she admits. A graduate of Carleton College in Minnesota, Whitmer came to Louisiana not yet knowing that it would become her permanent home. After holding various jobs, she joined the then College of Arts and Sciences, where she has she worked since 1997.

Whitmer is also an avid gardener. One of the many attractions of living in Louisiana, she confides, is being able to work on her garden for ten months out of the year. "Something's always blooming," she says with a smile.

*"It's the most different place I've ever lived."*

The business of grant applications, which is to raise funds for research, has also given Whitmer an acute awareness of the effects the current economic climate may have on the state's cultural richness. Apart from the film industry, she notes, "there's not a lot of willingness to invest in it." Yet Whitmer's dedication to a job that focuses on how research in Higher Education can help the people of Louisiana even in the face of so many challenges comes through loud and clear. Such research, Whitmer asserts, is ultimately about "how we can help communities plan for the future."

## LSU YOUTUBE CHANNEL A BIG HIT

Although still on the periphery among on-campus audiences, LSU's new constellation of YouTube channels continues to grow, with a recent count showing nearly 35,000 visits to the core LSU channel, nearly 2,500 to Mike the Tiger's personal channel, and a walloping 179,000 to the LSU Sports channel. The [core LSU channel](#) has benefitted from the presence of several marquee video events, including the easy-to-assimilate highlights of the recent Chancellor-Senate Forum on the budget, all done up in high-quality video. The array of sub-channels contains a wealth of worthwhile views, including interviews by Music and Dramatic Arts Dean Larry Kaptain, nostalgic films from the early days of Tiger Town, and even a beguiling video from the Department of Mathematics on the construction of colorful and mind-expanding Turaev Surface Borromean rings. The site continues to evolve and is in need of a search mechanism of some sort (the main channel celebrates that miscellaneousness that is ever an LSU attribute but that will become labyrinthine as the site grows) and is clearly a transitional venue until a more adequate technology can be provided in-house (unless, of course, our administrators covertly enjoy the occasional pop-in advertisement from Victoria's Secret flashing beneath their statesmanlike visages).



## COMMENCEMENT INSIGNIA EXPLAINED

Student Government representatives have expressed concern about the clarification of policies relating to the wearing of honorary insignia such as cords, ribbons, and stoles during LSU commencement exercises. Student media has misreported Senate action in this arena. The Senate has made no new policy relating to Commencement but has only sustained a policy established by the Senate and affirmed by the administration in 1992. The purpose of that policy was to ensure the dignity of the commencement ceremony and to tamp down attention-grabbing that was threatening to deprive rank-and-file students of proper recognition of their academic accomplishments. Regulations pertaining to college degree-conferring ceremonies also remain unchanged; Deans or college commencement committees may allow any kind of honorary insignia that meet college criteria. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at length with Student Government representatives and also offered to visit with the entire Student Government Association, but that offer was not accepted. The Executive Committee is working with the Office of Academic to revamp aspects of the commencement and also to create a separate ceremony on "commencement eve" in which honorees may be recognized—a practice that is consistent with graduation customs at other major research institutions. Look also for improvements in the commencement regalia for achievers at all levels!

## PRINTING SERVICES TO BE OUTSOURCED

Those of us who have grown up on books, who have not yet chucked the pamphlet in favor of the iPad, and who know that a scroll is something more than an item in the Charmin Bear's cabinet regret to see the end of an era at LSU with the anticipated outsourcing of printing services. For decades, LSU printing services outweighed and out-produced any printing house in the southeastern United States. Hidden in its murky recesses are vintage letterpress machines that should find their way to adoptive museum homes. Highly visible in its historical portfolio are world-class productions ranging from vibrant sports calendars to fine boutique impressions. Printing Services, the annals of Tiger history have tumbled through your races, chutes, platens, and rollers! We salute you.

## FACULTY SENATE WEB SITE STREAMLINED, MORE USER FRIENDLY

Users of the [Faculty Senate web site](#) may have noticed the new buttons that lead to additional menus. As the web site expands and as its holdings enlarge and diversify, simple text links could become too numerous and difficult to navigate. The new design features text-based links for the most commonly-used items (names and addresses of Senators, committee rosters, agendas, minutes) and large buttons for resource banks such as the multimedia archive or news reports. Attentive users will notice that these rollover buttons, when grazed by a mouse, will flash information concerning the distinguished military history and personnel of "The Old War Skule," including tributes to our two fundraising generals, Ron Richard and Bill Bowden.



## STATEWIDE ARTICULATION AND TRANSFER COUNCIL TO ADDRESS SPECIAL-CASE TRANSFER DEGREES

Act 356 of the 2009 Louisiana Legislature, commonly known as "the Nevers Bill," mandates the development of a program by which Louisiana students may complete a specified two-year, sixty-hour program in the expectation that their efforts will secure admission with junior standing at any Louisiana four-year institution. Unfortunately, the "Nevers Bill" says little about the peculiar needs of students in "accredited" curricula who, if they wish to take advantage of "The Louisiana Transfer Degree," must satisfy both the requirements of that program and also the expectations of accrediting agencies (and, third, must earn entry into a specific college at the receiving four-year school). Senate President Kevin L. Cope serves as the Chair of the General Education Committee of the Statewide Articulation and Transfer Council ("SATC"). Along with SATC Chair and LSU System President Michael Gargano, Cope and his colleagues have appointed members of and provided LSU representation for four statewide panels that will develop transfer degree programs for the areas of Nursing, Engineering, Criminal Justice, and Mass Communications. The Louisiana Transfer Degree Program is expected to provide a steady flow of students into LSU, It requires careful monitoring so as to ensure the college readiness of students entering our ranks via the Act 356 mechanisms.

## LSU ALEXANDRIA EXTENDS RETIREMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Confronted with declining resources and trying to offer options to beleaguered faculty, LSU in Alexandria Chancellor David Manuel has obtained permission to extend the LSUA early retirement incentive program for another year after only a handful of employees accepted the first edition of the pyrite parachute. Those willing to eject from the LSUA campus will be offered half their salaries up to a cap of \$25,000.00, with state law prohibiting any sum greater than one-half the anticipated annual salary savings. Faculty governance officials statewide appreciate the efforts of Chancellor Manuel to come up with something—anything—to make life better for tired if not quite retired colleagues, but few anticipate that such meager incentives will lead to anything more than a wry smile like that adorning Houdon's famous statue of Voltaire. Meanwhile, LSU and the LSU System added another \$359,000.00 plus benefits (roughly \$467,000.00 total) per annum to the finance and management side of the administration, admittedly in necessary jobs that had been vacated but, given the perversely optimistic retirement policies of this state, putatively enough, at the aforementioned rates, to retire no less than eighteen LSUA colleagues per year!

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## REDSTICK RESTAURANT REVIEW: MAISON LACOUR

### BY CARL FREEDMAN

Ever since it opened in 1986, Maison Lacour has been my favorite restaurant in Baton Rouge—and one of my favorites in the world. The creation of Jacqueline and John Gréaud (as chef and maître d', respectively), the restaurant is now run by the Gréauds' daughter Eva, who serves as hostess, and her husband Chef Michael Jetty, who began cooking under Chef Jacqueline in 1991. Maison Lacour continues to offer excellent food in an atmosphere of quiet charm and family warmth.

The cooking is mainly French, with some emphasis on nouvelle cuisine, so that those intent on healthy eating can easily avoid undue worry about their arteries; there's even a generous selection of vegetarian dishes. The influence of the Cajun and Creole culinary traditions of southern Louisiana is unsurprisingly in evidence, though more in ingredients (e.g., shrimp and crawfish) than in preparation. Carnivorous diners can choose among beef, veal, lamb, game, pork, chicken, fish, and shellfish; and, in decades of occasional dining at Maison Lacour, I have never found it possible to make a mistake with the menu. But there are a few starters and main dishes that might be singled out for special mention. The "saumon fumé" (smoked salmon in a spicy cream sauce) is an ideal appetizer, and the "soupe Jacqueline" (made with brie, crab, and asparagus) is quite simply the best soup of any kind that I have ever tasted. The "canard du chef" (broiled duck with raspberry sauce) is probably the main dish I've ordered more often than any other, and seems to me exactly what duck ought to be. Steak lovers cannot do better than "John's favorite," a grilled beef filet with béarnaise sauce that's garnished with crabmeat in a pastry shell (with hollandaise sauce) and with shrimp in a butter sauce. Food of this caliber goes best with good wine, and the wine list at Maison Lacour, though not particularly extensive, is intelligently chosen (a 2008 French sauvignon blanc—"Les Fumées Blanches"—is one notable bargain).

The dessert menu deserves a review of its own: suffice it to say that the soufflés merit their considerable local reputation, and that chocolate does not get much better than the chocolate mousse here.

Atmosphere and service are nearly as important in judging a restaurant as the food itself, and here too Maison Lacour is outstanding. Instead of the one immense, loud dining room that many restaurants offer, here you find five quiet, cozy, tastefully decorated rooms that almost give the feeling of dining in an elegant private home (which the building, I believe, once was). The servers are friendly, knowledgeable, and attentive without being intrusive; their timing is usually perfect—neither so fast that you feel rushed nor so slow that you get impatient.

And what does a meal here cost? Less than you might think—and less than at a number of other local restaurants that feature more pretension and noise with inferior food and service. The main dishes on the dinner menu are about \$30 each, with only one or two significantly higher and several (mainly seafood) a bit lower. The budget-conscious might try the package for "early diners": a complete four-course meal for \$27.95, served between 5:30 and 6:30 p.m. The options are more limited than on the main menu, but otherwise all is just the same.

Maison Lacour is located at 11025 North Harrell's Ferry Road in Baton Rouge; phone: 225-275-3755. Reservations are recommended but not required.

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## SHREVEPORT, NEW ORLEANS CAMPUSES PASS "JUST SAY NO" RESOLUTION

In an unprecedented act of faculty pluck, the Faculty Senate of LSU in Shreveport (LSUS) has passed, under the leadership of LSUS Faculty Senate President Mary Jarzabek, a singeing "Just Say No" Resolution. The LSUS resolution calls the question on posturing politicians by instructing the LSUS administration to stop cooperating with state officials who make preposterous and mercurial demands for budget plan after budget plan or who sponsor unproductive proposals at the expense of time and effort for university professionals. This "Just Say No" resolution was quickly affirmed in locally adapted form by the University Senate of the University of New Orleans. A version of this resolution with an LSU inflection will come up for consideration at the November Faculty Senate meeting under the sponsorship of Senator Kenneth McMillin.

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## UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA C100 PRESENTATION EXPOSES HEALTH-MORTALITY-JAIL-EDUCATION LINK

Among the lowest of the would-be high-profile development groups is the Cajun-flavored Committee of 100, a group of Louisiana business enthusiasts and education officials campaigning for better educational support of industry and its ambitions. University of Louisiana President Joe Savoie stole the show at the early October "C100" meeting with a presentation revealing an inverse correlation between educational level and incarceration, a direct correlation between education level and health status as well as lifespan, and a direct correlation between educational level and earnings (and taxes paid). The difference-maker between an aging convict in a prison hospital soaking up resources and a flush taxpayer bulking up the state treasury is a university education. In effect, Savoie's presentation suggest that state policies damaging higher education shorten the lives of children, even despite all the beautifully propagandistic pictures of Bobby and Supriya Jindal surrounded by prancing schoolchildren.

## FACULTY SENATE PASSES RESOLUTIONS ON INSURANCE AND NAMING RIGHTS

At its October meeting, the LSU Faculty Senate passed two resolutions. [Resolution 10-11](#), "Concurrence with the Revision of PS-70," affirms Senate support for the reworking of the policy governing the attribution of building or structure or other naming rights to donors. It establishes safeguards relating to faculty consultation, minimum donations, and the character of those commemorated. [Resolution 10-12](#), which was passed after one reading and on an emergency basis, expressed faculty chagrin at the needlessly penurious and morally pedantic decision by the state Office of Group Benefits to delay the provision of medical coverage for adult children of employees who are attending college until July 2011. Following up on the resolution, Senate President Kevin L. Cope has issued a [letter to Office of Group Benefits Director Tommy Teague calling for a reconsideration of this decision](#) and warning that university employees will follow the lead of Ascension Parish in seeking to leave the "OGB" program.

## BOARD OF SUPERVISOR DONATIONS TO CHARITY RAISE EYEBROWS

A lamentable aspect of the present budget crisis is that even the best and most admirable efforts of educational leaders raise questions. Attempts to improve the life and culture of a region would seem to be in keeping with the mission of any university, yet the timing of some expenditures will inevitably raise questions. So it is that the latest batch of actions by the Board of Supervisors reveal an inclination toward Mother-Theresa-level charity—toward giving the last rupee to deserving extended hands. The University of New Orleans, for example, has floated a deal to provide \$140,000.00 per annum (roughly half the amount required to un-sink the "Foreign Language Fourteen") to support the World War II Museum in New Orleans. Admittedly a bright jewel in a benighted city, that museum will be tarnished by the toxic green ink of LSU money. In another action, the Supervisors endorsed a deal to allow a donor to construct a \$1,425,000.00 educational building at the LSU Arboretum, admittedly a beautiful and useful facility but perhaps not the only possible focal point for charity as the university faces downsizing. In yet another, subtle bit of economic legerdemain, a new deal allows another \$5,000,000.00 of the CBS television sports contract to bypass the visible budget of LSU and proceed directly to the Tiger Athletic Foundation to fund the eventual replacement of the scoreboards that generate advertising revenue. Moving that big chunk of change off the budget gets a few more shekels out of the governor's sight, but we can only wonder whether its use will be monitored with a clarity appropriate to a high-tech scoreboard. We likewise wonder whether now might be the time to "rightsize" down to a smaller scoreboard that would force fans who withhold support from higher education to squint at the vanishing image of their penury.



## FACT: GRADUATES OF LOUISIANA UNIVERSITIES SEE HIGHER INCOME

Hot off the press from the media spools of LSU legislative liaison Jason Droddy: Going to college really pays, even in Louisiana! According to Droddy's sources, the median annual earning of a high-school graduate comes in at \$26,071.00, while the median income of the holder of a baccalaureate degree hones in on \$42,706.00. Even without the reestablishment of the Stelly plan, that differential means a lot of income tax revenue for Louisiana.

## SPECIAL FEATURE: THE BEST AND THE WORST OF LSU ARCHITECTURE

The beleaguerment that we all feel during these challenging times is expressed in as well as partially triggered by the physical environment in which we work. The social, economic, and cultural values that have led to the current crisis in Louisiana higher education is anticipated and even promoted by the attitudes implemented through our architecture. Because all solutions begin with knowledge and recognition, The Faculty Senate Monthly Newsletter has undertaken a preliminary survey of not only the very worst but also the very best in LSU buildings and interiors. The survey aims to identify those offerings that are something more than just a little bad or a little good. It brings to light those that hammer home, in an articulate or even aggressive way, either happy and hopeful or harrowing and horrifying messages. Our surveyors managed to locate—*à la* lagniappe—a few structures that are both bad and good at the same time! And so we unveil our masonry with a message.

### THE SEVEN WORST BUILDINGS AT LSU

7. The Campanile --- Looking rather like a Scud missile erected atop a loaf of banana bread, the Campanile is the kind of building one loves to hate and hates to love. Scoring as the “least worst” owing to its heroic defiance of any utility (oldtimers will remember when this edifice was an absurd “Anglo-American Museum”), this preposterous *jeu d’esprit* takes an “in your ears” if not “in your face” approach to its hard extravagance, peeling the Anglican Westminster chimes in Catholic Louisiana and sometimes going haywire with an unstoppable amuscade of Christmas tunes.

6. The Union Theater Renovation --- A view of the façade of the new Union Theater leads to a sigh of relief. At least, the viewer opines, LSU has caught up with clean modern architecture and has managed to avoid creating yet another heap of Huey-long-era aggregate. For a moment or two, the somewhat playful decks behind the translucent glass recall the great modern European concert halls. Unfortunately, the spaces are too small—the lobby decks suggest the corridors aboard Star Trek’s Enterprise rather than venues for social conversations about the arts—and the building materials and fixtures fall on the cheap and tacky side. The interior of the theater remains dark and cramped, with minimal leg space fronting the chairs and an inexhaustible supply of grim, dark wooden paneling everywhere.

5. The New Basketball Practice Facility --- The first building on campus to bear a plaque commemorating Bobby Jindal, this structure reeks of derivative neo-conservative nostalgia disguised as modernism. Rolling out like some menacing spore swelling from the biophysical spaceship of the PMAC, this reinforced concrete outgrowth hardens the gentler curves of the mother arena into a slamming flat facade stressing repetition, uniformity, and rejection of compromise. At the center of the front elevation looms a gigantic dark eye of a door that seems to open into chasms of mental oblivion.

4. Middleton Library --- Decades of top-flight librarians have struggled to rescue this monstrosity from itself, trying everything from shared study spaces to vast displays of future development plans to art from faculty spouses. Nothing that these Samsons and Samsonesses of indexing try can overcome the strident blandness of the Middleton mess. Originally intended to be two stories taller than the present wreckage, the Middleton seems to have attempted to decapitate itself only to find its ferocious mediocrity unstoppable.

3. South Campus --- What was to have become Sean O’Keefe’s emergency services mall but what is in fact the leftovers of a succession of failed businesses, the South Campus, once the great hope of an expansionist LSU, is now barely bedecked by what appears to be either a spare piece of the LSU Union (perhaps chipped off during the renovation) or a stray bungalow from the Rapides Parish Learning Center. The visitor is greeted by an entryway sign comprised of nothing but acronym-originated letters—and it’s downhill from there in a facility that, in so many ways, is barely above sea level.

2. Williams Hall --- Not even a \$1,778,000.00 renovation can conceal the fact that this building is auditioning for a second life as the LSU campus prison. Lowering behind a front elevation that could double as corrugated cardboard, the boundary-embracing Williams Hall leaves viewers wondering whether their vantage point is in three- or two-dimensional space. Approaching the building, visitors feel the mildew and overall bad karma reaching out to them, perhaps to help them don biohazard suits. No rational creature should be condemned to enter such a monstrosity.

1. The Cox Center --- Although a “new” or at least renovated building, the Cox Center monumentalizes all that is vulgar and ridiculous about public institutions. Emblazoned with a Roman-style inscription suggesting that student athletes will become intelligent by watching cable television, the Center invites visitors into a gigantic white marble lobby that cannot be used for receptions (perhaps, owing to its vampire-like sterility, IV bags would be acceptable substitutes for hors d’oeuvres) and that suggests nothing so much as a temple of vanity. Gigantic doors, seemingly designed by Leni Riefenstahl, lead to a colossal inner chamber that remains in a perpetual twilight, with shafts of burning light occasionally pouring in from prison-like slits far beyond the excessively sloped seat bank. The predictable LSU love of wood paneling—a standard taste for arrivistes—darkens this heroidal torture chamber to the point that even the Tiger Mike medallions seems to slip into inky dullness.



LSU’s Campanile



The Cox Center

## FACULTY SENATE TO CO-SPONSOR FRIENDS OF SPANISH STUDIES

Given the beleaguered state of cultural and foreign-language studies nationwide and given the long-term penalties that provincialism will inflict on Louisiana’s youth, the Faculty Senate has offered co-sponsorship to and has been accepted as an “amigo” of the Friends of Spanish Studies. Guided by worthies such as President Jairo Alvarez, Humanities and Social Sciences Dean Gaines Foster, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education consultant and former Arts and Sciences Dean Guillermo Ferrera, and the inexhaustible Hector Zapata, “F.O.S.S.” has ignited its 2010–2011 program with a presentation by Julio Melara, publisher of the cheeky yet entrepreneurially informative 225 Magazine. Citing Coach John Wooden’s aphorism, “what really counts is what you learn after you know everything,” Melara stimulated his capacity crowd with the suggestion that “time” is an acronym signifying “talent, inspiration, motivation, enthusiasm,” the ingredients in the recipe for success.

### LSU FOUNDATION SEES GROWTH TO PORTFOLIO

While economists debate whether we are in the second trench of a double-dip recession or whether we are simply on the horns of assorted dilemmas, the LSU Foundation, under the leadership of General Bill Bowden, has apparently turned the corner, traveling up and away from the slough of hard times. Latest indications show an eight percent increase in the value of the Foundation portfolio. Surely there could be no more vigorous a demonstration of the importance of diminishing LSU’s dependence on state funding and of cultivating a private endowment.

**Tartuffe: Born Again**  
Adapted by Freyda Thomas  
Directed by Richard Holden

September 22 October 10, 2010

11/10 (PWYC), 11/11 (Preview), 11/12 (Opening),  
11/14, 11/16, 11/17, 11/18, 11/19, 11/21 at 7:30pm  
Sunday 11/14, 11/21 at 2:00pm

Reilly Theatre

(See full details on page 6)

### BOARD OF REGENTS PROPOSAL TO REDUCE GEN ED REQUIREMENTS RECEIVES MIXED REVIEWS

The buzz downtown suggests that the Board of Regents is positioning for a reduction in the minimum number of general education credits required for receipt of a degree from a Louisiana higher education institution. Currently pegged at thirty-nine hours, the extant general education requirements put a hitch in plans to standardize degree requirements in all disciplines at or around 120 credit hours. Experienced bookmakers should be wagering that the three hours allocated to courses in the area of Fine Arts will be folded into the nine hours assigned to the Humanities, possibly with a distribution requirement stipulating exploration of multiple areas of the new hybrid field. Reception of initial proposals by general education enthusiasts around the state has been mixed, in part owing to inconsistent partitioning of disciplines from campus to campus (for example, a campus where Art History counts as a Humanities subject would feel no change or pain under this arrangement, but those at which Art History belongs to Fine Arts might see some enrollment perturbations). The Regents only set minima; it will remain within the power of faculties to set more rigorous requirements or even retain the original thirty-nine hour standard if that is possible within 120-hour degree programs.

## THE SEVEN BEST BUILDINGS AT LSU

7. Parker Coliseum --- Flung out on the perimeter of the campus like some giant planet beyond Jupiter, the Parker Coliseum seems full of happy ghosts. Recalling the heroic agrarianism of the early twentieth century, this graceful and muscular building conjures up generations of rodeo colleagues, prize hogs, and 4-H scholars. Now surrounded by a kind of pleasing melancholy owing to the decline in the prestige of honest labor, the Coliseum reminds visitors of an age when natural foods were found someplace other than The Fresh Market.

6. Dairy Science --- The Bauhaus architects taught us that form follows function. This building may have missed that mark just a bit, for its unrepentant angularity and eager rectangularity suggests a chicken coop as much as a milking station (indeed, such a habitation might be the state-appointed dwelling for the chief executioner in Bobby Jindal's highly funded chicken processing plant). What gives this building its charm is that, like Popeye, it is what it is. It makes no apologies, kisses up to no one, and goes about its business in a way that cannot but elicit twisted admiration.

5. The New Softball Stadium --- Best seen at night, when its gables and overhang seem to brighten into shimmering white sails winging through cool ebony skies, the softball stadium shows that LSU can come up with a building that plays to something other than the local taste for plantation imagery and Greco-Roman bric-a-brac. Welling out of a hillock in a way that suggests strong shoulders on the brink of swinging a home run, the softball stadium evidences a modest freshness that brings a smile and savors of popcorn and hot dogs.

4. Mike the Tiger's Habitat --- Animated by a circus-like bounciness that juxtaposes well against the roar of a predator, Tiger Mike's encampment offers a modern version of what Seven-Up manufacturers once called "the pause that refreshes." Especially admirable in Mike's dwelling is the interplay of historical elements (including the pseudo-Italianate tower) with the Romper-Room feel of this feline playground. Ditto for the freewheeling satire of LSU's architecture, including the campanile. A few points had to be deducted from this winner owing to the awkward genesis of this project as the attention-grabbing charitable project of a former chancellor's spouse—but, as Bernard Mandeville once said, "private vices, public benefits."

3. LSU Faculty Club --- Year in and year out, this graceful and easygoing building reaffirms its quiet elegance and amenable atmosphere. Possessing that special *je ne sais quoi*, the Faculty Club seems to acquire ever more of a patina with each passage of the dessert trolley. Redolent of the good old days at LSU and saturated by a million secret utterances and quietly whispered rumors (and even a few aspersions), the Faculty Club is a study in seasoning and a resource in the history of culinary art and custom.

2. The Renovated Music and Dramatic Arts Building --- including the Shaver Theater. All over the LSU campus, there is still the architectural memory of the totalitarianism of the 1930s and 1940s. The conquest and conversion of that legacy, including its 10% admixture of toxicity, is no small challenge. The design team that reworked the "M&DA" building seems to have overcome history to create a palace of future delight. The idea of piping music into the restrooms during performance evenings—a Larry Kaptain exclusive?—is a genuine stroke of genius that creates an elegant steakhouse or pre-theater ambiance. This oasis in an architectural desert leaves all visitors feeling happy and hopeful, especially after having frolicked in the ruby-slipper-land of the Shaver Theater.



LSU Faculty Club

1. The Landolt Observatory --- atop Nicholson Hall. Everything that is LSU is summed up in this high and elusive yet probing dome. Gymnastically springing up to the stars as a kind of heroic afterthought to the usual clumsy LSU faculty barracks, this optimistic eye captures the mix of outrageously excessive and laudably impractical ambition that always appears at LSU as a semi-unconscious afterthought. A secret of insiders and yet an expression of populist moxie, the observatory would fit well on the coat-of-arms of an "A&M" chancellor and reminds us that, even if every man may not become a king, most anyone can become a dictator, or maybe at least a bossy assistant vice-chancellor. And, even better, the heavenly orientation of the telescope—its lunge into supernal vastness—shows that the idea of modesty cannot be completely erased. Even the upper administration realizes, upon a view of the outer planets, that Saturn and its moons have not yet expressed interest in the latest white paper or action plan.

## LAGNIAPPE: BUILDINGS THAT ARE BOTH BAD AND GOOD AT THE SAME TIME!

The Design School and its Atrium. A triumph in the development of a cultivated and cultivating social and culinary as well as intellectual space, the atrium café of the School of Design is an achievement unrivaled on the LSU campus. At least for a moment, visitors, especially art students, can feel transported to the refectories of the Louvre, the Boston Museum of Arts, or better. Sadly, the Design School—which has the courage to orient itself off the quadrangle grid—is showing its age, with its simple international style looking a bit haggard and its building materials showing more than a little grime and decay.

Alex Box Stadium. What a shame! The stadium in its original, unalloyed form greeted the world with a seemingly smiling face and a playful evocation of the great midwestern and northeastern ballparks. Its frolicsome deployment of gratings, terraces, staircases, and ornamental paraphernalia nominated it as a permanent architectural winner. Unfortunately, the erection of the "Gerry Lane Championship Plaza" has blocked the view of this marvel and has planted an ugly stamp of commercialism and personal vanity directly in front of the best baseball stadium south of New York.

The New Business School. On the one hand, this enterprise is the biggest thing to come along at LSU in years: not just one building, but a complete "concept" and mini-village. Unfortunately, the design, which was foisted on naive administrators by mediocre architects, seems to combine Lego-Land bunkers with worker-bee hives and perhaps a bit of penitentiary regularity, all superintended by a colossal, all-seeing guard tower to be occupied by the B-School administration. Free of ventilation, the hot-spot of a quadrangle will surely become a literal incubator or perhaps will host start-up business specializing in fried eggs. The project offers delight and shows a certain gutsiness but it also shows LSU's timidity and nervousness in its inward-looking, consultation-exempt design.

## SECAC ENTERTAINS BOARD OF REGENTS STAFF AT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The Southeastern Conference Academic Consortium ("SECAC"), a sports-endowed project of the SEC, in admiring imitation of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation ("CIC"), itself a football-funded undertaking of the occasionally academic Big Ten, conducted the latest installment of the Academic Leadership Development Program ("ALDP") at LSU in early October. The ALDP draws together promising, sort-of-young scholars seeking to hone administrative skills, all by way of supplying the emerging leadership gap in colleges and universities nationwide. Orchestrated by Vice-Provost Stacy Haynie, the workshop drew thirty-three participants from eleven SEC schools (for unknown reasons, Vanderbilt refuses to participate) and showcased hot local administrative talents such as Associate Vice-Chancellor and money-maven Bob Kuhn and Kinesiology chair (and Merlot expert) Gil Reeve. The event climaxed in an evening at Boutin's Cajun restaurant, where conferees were astonished to discover that Board of Regents Vice-Commissioner Karen Denby, a longtime supporter of LSU, led a Cajun dancing ensemble charged with teaching the art of the Cajun two-step to college teachers. Conferees were dazzled by the interdisciplinary prowess of the very top level of Louisiana higher education administration.

## TIGER ATHLETIC FOUNDATION DONATES MORE THAN REPORTED

At the October Faculty Senate meeting, General Ron Richard, leader of the Tiger Athletic Foundation, reported that the TAF made an annual payment to the University of nearly \$6,500,000.00 as well as one-time donations summing to nearly \$4,500,000.00. Faculty Athletic Representative Dydia Delyser advises the Newsletter that the General underestimated TAF productivity. TAF also anted up over \$8,500,000.00 in support of scholarships. Thanks to Professor Delyser for correcting the record and for reminding us of the substantial contributions made by the athletic fundraising battalion.

## ADMINISTRATIVE LEXICON: ASPIRATIONAL

Regular readers of the Newsletter remember the administrative lexicon, in which favorite administrative words (for example, "conversation") received proper definitions and etymologies. A new entry has been added to that worthy tome. "Aspirational" has come into circulation to signify a category of institutions that LSU attempts to emulate. That, however, is but one resonance of a term that also has a historical dimension. One conjectural definition of "aspirational" might be "a paradoxical locution used only by a person who does not hold a degree from an aspirational institution."

## TIP OF THE MONTH: BARGAIN BEE

Our new Vice-chancellor for Student Life and Enrollment Services, Kurt Keppler, is abuzz with new ideas—and not only for the recruitment of students. Keppler has drawn the attention of the Newsletter staff to "Bargain Bee," a Louisiana startup company (based in Sulphur, a petrochemical paradise near the Texas border) that distributes daily voucher specials for higher-end consumers and epicures. Most often, Bargain Bee flies into your mailbox with the offer of a \$15.00 restaurant voucher for \$7.00. Bargain Bee ranges far and wide, finding new and wonderful restaurants and other consumer and indulgence outlets hither and yon. Faculty Senate President Kevin L. Cope has already joined the hive and is living high off the hog owing to Bargain Bee's perspicacity. Give Bargain Bee an audition at <http://bargainbee.com>.

**Tartuffe: Born Again Opens LSU Mainstage Season!**

LSU Theatre starts its Mainstage season with a holy hit in TARTUFFE: BORN AGAIN, running November 10-21, 2010 at the Reilly Theatre - LSU campus. Set right here in Baton Rouge, adapted by Freyda Thomas from Moliere's comedic masterpiece, and directed by Richard Holden, this show is sure to bring the congregation to its feet!

In this modern re-telling of Moliere's classic comedy, which premiered on Broadway in 1996, Tartuffe is now a shamed televangelist who uses his charismatic charms to scam a Louisiana family. Set in a local TV studio, theatre's most devilish hypocrite comes to Baton Rouge in this fast-paced and hilarious production.

TARTUFFE: BORN AGAIN begins its run with a Pay-What-You-Can Preview on Wednesday, Nov. 10th, followed by a Sneak Preview, Thursday, Nov. 11th with a ticket price of \$12. The production opens on Friday, Nov. 12th, and runs through Sunday, Nov. 21st. Tickets are \$12 for students, \$15 for senior citizens and LSU faculty and staff, and \$18 for adults. Discounts are available in advance for groups of 10 or more.



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On Tuesday evening, November 2, 2010 in the LSU Union Theatre, the very popular national NPR program "From the Top" will do a live taping. The program will be broadcast nationally to over 250+ NPR stations, heard by over 750,000 listeners, rebroadcast and archived for downloading on the Internet.

This is a defining moment for LSU-and important exposure that is coming at a crucial time for the institution.

The permanent program host for "From the Top" is LSU's James M. Syler Visiting Distinguished Artist-Christopher O'Riley. He has already fulfilled the first of 4 residencies this year on the LSU Campus.


A local high school student won an audition to appear on the show. Five other talented students (and their parents) will come to Baton Rouge from across the nation.

We hope that the LSU community will respond to fill the seats in Union Theatre, as we anticipate an audience of students, faculty, staff members, alumni, community partners, political leaders, and generous philanthropists who believe in LSU and the power of the performing arts to touch, move and inspire.

This evening is also an opportunity for LSU leaders to host influential who by their presence will better understand the regional leadership, national impact and international reach of our campus.

*Laury Kestain*

Tickets: <http://tinyurl.com/2ae3ocd>



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