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Faculty Senate Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

In times like the present, the offhand suggestion that “it doesn’t really matter” comes across as crude and unfeeling, a kind of cheap cynicism voiced by a privileged person in the midst of other people’s struggles. Such a flip remark seems doubly dubious when attached to questions so pressing as the current budget crisis. Yet, in some sad sense, this idiom applies exactly to the situation in which fund-starved universities find themselves. Momentarily setting aside the stress and anxiety experienced by thousands of nobly-intentioned professionals and other university employees, one can, without callousness, affirm that no sum of money will solve the budget crisis until the fundamental management problem of all Louisiana public institutions, what might be called the “topless pyramid” challenge, is addressed.

Although the proportions of the current fiscal crisis exceed all preceding threats to public education, that crisis has had many predecessors, whether those arising from boom-bust cycles in the chemical industries, those related to natural disasters, those arising from national economic crises such as the mortgage-driven recession of 2008, or those triggered by the insouciance of Louisiana’s education-unimpaired leadership. In all these earlier upheavals as in the present perturbation, university management has adopted a sometimes shrill and reactive, sometimes passive and placating approach to dealing with both lawmakers and governors. Worried that too aggressive or assertive a posture will irritate the top level of government—as clearly occurred when former LSU System President John Lombardi peppered the capitol halls with his special brand of erudite invective—system presidents, campus chancellors, and all those under their sway have avoided overt disagreement with or attacks on those who, through their actions, bring universities to, if not ruin, then at least dereliction. The result, of course, has been decades of partial formula funding owing to a reluctance to bite the hand that feeds only starvation rations.

The rhetoric of caution is not uncommon among the current tribe of hothouse academic leaders, most of whom have received a hybridized education from questionable programs either in “educational leadership” or in some pruning-ready branch of public policy studies. What is unique to Louisiana is a persistent vacancy at the top of the pyramid of deference (and sycophancy). Louisiana higher education is highly pyramidal, with clear command lines ranging through definitive ranks all the way up to the governor himself or occasionally herself, yet the peak of the pyramid is usually absent. In recent times, this absence

has manifested itself in the form of a traveling, ambitious governor who is never present to make decisions or provide direction, but, in past times, what might be called the “buck stops here point” has also been empty, whether through corruption, in which unseen interests replace the sovereign authority, or idealism, per the administration of Buddy Roemer, where nothing happened owing to faith in a future that never arrived. Louisiana, after all, is the last state modeled after the French monarchy and the Roman imperium. When the last step in the command chain is god (or the gods) but the state itself is secular, the top is, perforce, missing.

In the day-to-day life of academic administration, the “absent top” phenomenon works itself out in configurations such as the new “oneLSU,” which has resulted not in the emergence of a single academic powerhouse but in a captain-free flagship campus that everyone regards as rudderless, a flagship that is surrounded by an array of lesser vessels—the regional campuses—waiting for the big ship to make some kind of move. At Southern University, the absent-top disorder appears in the form of the thought-abjuring desire to imitate what LSU has done so badly. At the LCTCS, the inability to find the top authority appears as the frantic drive to get money from miscellaneous industrial donors while coming up with whatever program will please a workforce development authority that is itself barely in view of a governor who is busy chasing an elusive top position.

As a first step toward resolving the chase after an invisible top, universities need to flatten their own pyramidal structures. One option might be an interlocking system of accountability. Instead of a single chain in which a chair answers to a dean who reports to a provost who tries to stay in favor with a president who dangles from the governor’s yo-yo string, universities might ask a council of deans to evaluate financial services and auxiliary services while asking auxiliary services and the business college to evaluate the performance of an assortment of departments—and so forth, in a multifaceted, interlocking arrangement that creates multiple perspectives on the various units and that keeps the top of the pyramid in view, that converts the administrative into a kind of Mobius strip where the surface—reality—is always in view. Such an arrangement might or might not work with state government, but it certainly could help institutions that, in any case, receive less than half their resources from public funds.

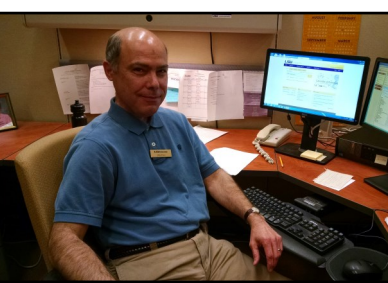


Kevin Cope

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Higher Education Headliner



Mike Russo

A lot of people have the idea that all librarians do is sit around and read books all day. If those people had met Mike Russo, they would not make this mistake. Russo is a man who likes to stay active, so he needed a job other than his previous position as a paralegal in New Orleans where he felt like he was doing, as he says, “exactly nothing.” With this in mind, Russo consulted a career counsellor and found that he “had to do something with books.” That meant basically one of two things, attempting to make a living at writing, using his MFA, or becoming a librarian by earning his MLIS. The former seemed an unlikely career path, as he was not blessed with the surname of Clancy or Rowling, so he settled on librarianship.

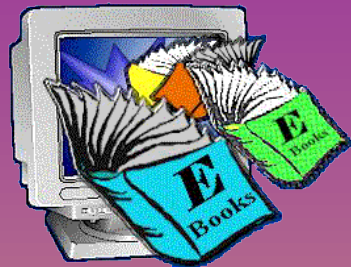
Long before extended learning was popular, Russo did his MLIS remotely through Louisiana State University (LSU) while living in New Orleans. He was then able to apply for two positions, one through the public library system in New Orleans and one through LSU. Russo chose LSU, where he is currently an Instruction Coordinator and developer for the English collection. The information literacy teaching instruction part of his job keeps him very busy, as do his many other duties, such as manning the reference desk, collection development, including weeding, purchasing, liaising with departments, keeping the English department up-to-date on new materials, and completing his duties to remain on the tenure track, such as publishing and being on a committee for a professional organization. Russo currently serves on the mentoring committee of the Association of College and Research Libraries. Being surrounded by books and teaching young people how to use the library’s resources effectively was, “the next best thing,” to being a writer, he says.

Russo speaks optimistically about the future of libraries in this age when many prognosticate the demise of the hard-bound book, much the way television was supposed to sound the death knell of radio. Instead, he sees a future for libraries in the form of information literacy, helping people differentiate good information from bad. In generations past, the library provided a repository of information, where the common citizen could go for merely the price of a library card and have access to an entire collection, realizing Benjamin Franklin’s dream of a lending library. This

mission of education and access has not changed; only the medium has. Russo sees the advent of electronic databases and online catalogs as a great improvements over the bad old days of 3x5 cards in the often confusing drawers of a card catalog. In addition, distance learning gives students far greater access to life-enriching information than they could have in the days when one had to venture inside a library’s physical domain to research topics of interest. The challenge now is not so much how to read a card catalog, but how to wade through the vast morass of information. “People don’t know what they don’t know,” he says. With the library’s mission of education and access clear, Russo believes that the institution will endure.

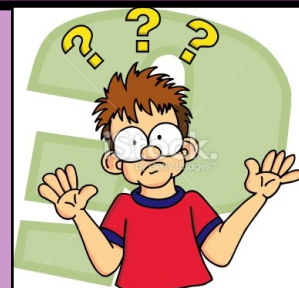
In addition to his work for the library, Russo is a believer in the collective power of labor to create positive change, and he has been the principal force behind LSUnited for some time now. Once a labor union associated with the Louisiana Association for Education (LAE), today, after disassociating with the less than effective LAE, the new version of LSUnited acts as a lobbying organization of sorts, working toward the best interests of the faculty. Russo speaks passionately about the need for faculty to work together against the “forces of evil.” It is maybe fitting, then, that Russo’s favorite book is Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, a story of unassuming mortals trapped in the web of shadowy and maleficent threats, using modern technology to foil the forces of greed and corruption. While he admits that the tangible power of LSUnited is small compared to the powerful economic and political forces with which they often contend, he explains with pride that LSUnited members have been able to win some very real victories during his time at LSU, including salary raises, greater job security for instructors, improvement and proper maintenance of the faculty retirement package, and the campus-wide tobacco ban. “We are the sand that gets inside the oyster,” he says. Russo plans on continuing in his tireless duties to make LSU a better place for all members of the community, as, after all, it is the people working on this campus who make it such a rich and unique environment.

— By Amy Catania and Nate Friedman



FUNK-INDUCING FACTOID

So far as anyone can determine, Louisiana now holds the record for the greatest number of simultaneous faculty votes of no confidence in administrative entities. Currently under votes of no confidence are the LSU Board of Supervisors; the President of the University of New Orleans; the interim President of Grambling State University; the Northwestern State University administration; Southern University System President Ronald Mason; and maybe a few other stray CEOs. This, in addition to laboring under more AAUP censures than any state in higher education history. Anyone who knows of a state that presently features or previously recorded more simultaneous votes of no confidence should provide that information to the *Newsletter* office.



ANSWER EXPERTS ANTICIPATE EFFICIENCY

Readers of the *Newsletter* know and love everything that A. G. “Answers” Monaco does! And so it is that we congratulate A. G. and his energy-imbued HRM Department for anticipating the improvement of business systems through the release of a new web site explaining a new set of opportunities to interact with the oncoming Financial Systems Services. A brief forecast of things to come, A. G.’s new answer-everything [web page](#) already includes an abundance of tutorials about new business processes—processes that, in time, will extend throughout the entire LSU System and that will set efficiency-driven precedents throughout the entirety of Louisiana higher education. Now, it is an old saw that “even the Bard [Shakespeare, the Bard of Avon] nods” now and then, and so it is that even the Avon-worthy A. G. has forgotten to include, on the new web page, the very application for tuition exemption for employees that is both the showpiece of this business systems revolution and also a new gem in the tiara of faculty governance, which pressured the LSU System into granting this concession to its underpaid employees. Fortunately, the resource-rich A. G. has more than made up for that oversight by cutting a [video](#) that takes business-system instruction into magnificent futures full of pedagogical wonders!



BELL RINGS IN ON INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL CHANGE

Statewide readers who follow the endless drama centered on Louisiana’s arcane travel procedures (and, often enough, backroom vendor deals) experience joy whenever progress is made on any campus. Loosening of restrictions and rationalizing of procedures on any campus create pressure on the other campuses either to improve their own regulations or to lobby the state for relief from onerous regulations. Good news has erupted on the LSU A&M campus in the form of action by Provost Stuart Bell, who, in a top-level meeting with business and accounting officialdom, has determined to make the most of LAGRAD-related autonomies by charging the business wing of the university with simplification of procedures for international travel. Long-term LSU Accounting Services head Donna Torres will lead a reform effort which faculty regard as long overdue.



SPACE-CARVING CAMPBELL CARES FOR FACULTY CARS

For more than a few years, LSU A&M faculty governance officials have negotiated with LSU A&M Traffic and Parking experts to achieve temporal congruity in reserved faculty parking: to ensure that paid faculty parking spaces are available and protected at the times faculty including the evening first round project was cation of an signed spots at aslots around campus; the was the gatthe West Campus Lot until 7:00 pm; and, now, undisputed parking genius Jeff Campbell has agreed to maintain gating on the Thomas Boyd Lot until 6:00 pm. Better, caring Campbell has asked the LSU A&M Registrar to provide an accounting of the location of night classes so that protected parking may be allocated scientifically. Thank you, Jeff, for setting an example of informed leadership!



REVOLVING DOOR TO SUCCESS WHIRLS IN MIDDLETON

Anyone familiar with medieval literature remembers the original, iconic version of the wheel of fortune: the rolling cycle of prosperity that, in the fourteenth-century imagination, would cyclically hoist leaders up to the top and then, rolling onward, quickly hurl them back down again. It appears that this wheel has continued rolling into the modern precincts of LSU A&M’s Middleton Library, where the iconographic gaffe of the year has occurred. A door leading to the Middleton staircase holds a poster warning that access to the top and bottom floors (down where grassroots leadership begins and up where success reaches it apogee) is forbidden during the very hours when round-the-clock leadership flourishes. As if to hammer home the mixed message, the very same poster carries a bragging claim about LSU and the “access to excellence.” Those who want to be excellent (or at least to access excellence) should make sure to do it during normal working hours lest they otherwise loiter below the glass ceiling.



Access to success encouraged but also prohibited!

LEGISLATOR'S PLEDGE SPROUTS FROM PROFESSORIAL GRASSROOTS

Irritation with the cautious ways and complicated but not always efficacious strategies of top-level administrators has induced Louisiana faculty members to launch a grassroots campaign against the defunding of Louisiana's higher education institutions. Conceived by University of Louisiana at Monroe Political Science Professor Joshua Stockley, a new pro-universities web site, <http://www.savelahighered.info>, has flashed into Internet view. The snazzily colored web venue invites visitors to perform two easy actions by way of demonstrating their support for higher education: first, copying or printing out a "legislator's pledge" and then postally or electronically asking State Senators and State Representatives to sign the vow; second, reading and endorsing the "citizen's pledge," then electronically registering that endorsement with initiative organizers. Reading "I, _____, believe that higher education is a vital investment in the future of Louisiana and its people. Therefore, I pledge to oppose any and all efforts to reduce funding for higher education in our state," the "Legislator's Pledge" asks state-level decision-makers to protect and to provide adequate support for higher education. The "Citizen's Pledge" calls for a similar but also easy commitment from individual voters: "I, _____, pledge not to vote for any legislator who defunds higher education."

According to the ingenious Professor Stockley, the two pledges will provide voters with an alternative to and a way of constructively rejecting the "no new taxes" pledge contrived by conservative activist Grover Norquist. More than a few ambitious politicians, including Louisiana's governor, have taken the Norquist oath, thereby preaching local control of government while swearing fealty to the ideas of a resident of Washington, D.C. Louisiana's governor has frequently cited the Norquist pledge when allowing the precipitous decline in university funding. Participation in the two pledges is building, with Gannett newspapers *The Advertiser* and *The News Star* carrying stories on the emergence of the two pledges. All those who care about higher education are urged to visit the pledge web site, to send the pledge to their legislators, and to share the pledge web site on their various social media feeds and outlets.

The Legislator's Pledge
and the Citizen's Pledge
in Support of
Louisiana Higher Education

Legislator's Pledge web site calls
for legislator commitment

ACTIVIST OTT ORGANIZES COUNTER-ASSAULT

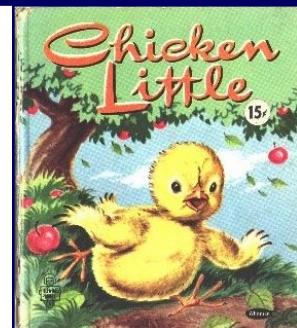
A blessing of life in Louisiana is that the boundaries between town and gown often shrivel down to less-than-membrane status. In many states, the concerns of the academy remain turreted within the castles of learning that comprise campuses. In Louisiana, for better or worse, the public routinely pries beyond the bricks beneath the ivy. So it is that the current budget crisis has stimulated a degree of community engagement seldom seen in more placid settlements. Activist Brad Ott, well-known for his dogged defense of charity hospitals and his frequent appearances before the LSU Board of Supervisors in support of proper medical care for the indigent, has temporarily switched gears and directed his energies toward the economic calamities besetting higher education. Ott emerged as the head chef behind the latest [Gillespie Memorial Community Breakfast](#) in New Orleans, which offered as a keynote presentation Vern Baxter's "Towards a Strategic Response to the Assault on Higher Education." Baxter, the Chair of the Sociology Department at the University of New Orleans, offered his presentation under the auspices of the Community Church, has graciously allowed his entire presentation to appear as a free online [video](#).



Sociologist Vern Baxter
addresses the Gillespie
Breakfast crowd

MANN FIRES SHOT HEARD AROUND OUR PART OF THE WORLD

Our "Blast of the Year Award" has already been won by *Times Picayune* columnist Bob Mann, whose latest editorial thundered with a roar that, by comparison, would make Tiger stadium on an autumn Saturday night sound like a handheld transistor radio with a flat battery. Fed up with the utter failure of the LSU Board of Supervisors to use its position and its influence to better the situation of the sinking Flagship campus, Mann, in his March 27th [editorial](#), called for the next governor to demand the resignation of each and every member of the negligent LSU Board of Supervisors. Mann lobbed an especially robust volley in the direction of throwaway tabloid publisher Rolfe McColister, who, he reports, regards the higher education finance crisis as nothing more than a "chicken little" situation, and at family-financed chicken wing magnate Scott Ballard, who celebrates the efficiencies emerging from the present budget emergency. Nor did Mann favor chicken over pork, for he drew a bead on former Supervisor Chair and Manda Meats heir Bobby Yarborough, chiding the sausage king for his failure to live up to his own words about courageous leadership. Now let us see what we can do to redeem the reputation of Chicken Little, who at least repented of her erring judgments by disassociating from the current flock of geese who rule the LSU System.



Chicken Little seeks
reputation repair after linkage
to blundering LSU Board of
Supervisors



A.G.'s Corner

LSU HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER, CHIEF A. G. MONACO, ADDRESSES QUESTIONS ABOUT HRM AND "EMPLOYEES' LIVES" IN GENERAL. IF YOU HAVE A PRESSING HRM ISSUE FOR A G TO ADDRESS, PLEASE SEND YOUR QUERIES TO ENCOPE@LSU.EDU.

The Letter

Dear A G,

I'm a long-term reader of your column who has long been wishing that I were as smart as you. I've got a string of publications on my CV and even a medal or two around my neck, but, when it comes to money, I'm a dunce while you're an Einstein. Now, here's my uniquely happy problem. I'm getting to the point in life—I'm forty-three years old—where I'm beginning to think about maximizing my resources. I've come into a few hundred thousand from an inheritance and I've been putting money into my ORP and allied 403(b) plans at about the same rate as everyone else in my age bracket. Unfortunately, I don't know anything about investing, although I do know enough to have been underwhelmed by the retirement vendor advisors. In fact, one of those advisors hoodwinked me into letting my retirement money sit in a money-market account equivalent for about ten years before I wised up. So, A G, what is the best way for someone like me to learn about investing and money management? Should I hire a financial planner? Should I go to one of those investment storefront operations? Or are there books that you recommend? Should I read the finance and investment sites on the internet? Or should I go back to the retirement vendor helper? In other words, what is the best way for an affluent but vulnerable novice to become as smart as you?

Thanks so much, A G, for all the help that you give!

*With best wishes,
Preston (in Carencro)*



The Response

Preston,

Did you know that the original name for Carincro was St. Pierre. The name change to Carincro was the result of an Indian legend that claimed that in early times many buzzards would congregate there to eat the remains of Mastodons. (CARRION CROWS)

In order for you to have enough to eat in your retirement, I strongly advise you to gain as much knowledge as you can about investments and financial planning. We all learn differently, but in regard to what you can read that will help you gain knowledge, I always recommend *Money*, a magazine. It is rather broad in its content, heavily skewed editorially toward retirement planning, and its reporters follow tight ethical standards.

Many sites on the Internet are good, but quite a few also are fronts for the sale of financial products - I always try to investigate who the site is affiliated with before buying into them very deeply. I myself really like "YahooFinance" and "The Motley Fool" sites and most rankings place them in the top ten. If you like to invest in individual stocks "Morningstar.Com" is invaluable because they can provide a tremendous level of background information about companies that can help you decide whether they are the right stock for you to invest in. You are still too young to join the organization, but the AARP does pretty well with their coverage of retirement finances, and much of their material can be found on line.

There are a number of good books out there and some have been in print a long time and others are recent publications. Books that I recommend include the classics like:

Think and Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill

The Intelligent Investor by Warren Buffet's mentor Benjamin Graham.

And some more recent books such as:

The Truth About Retirement Plans and IRAs by Ric Edelman

The Compound Effect by Darren Hardy

The Financial Advisors Guide to Investing & Managing Clients Assets by Harold Evensky & Deena Katz

That last title is a text book used to train Certified Financial Planners (CFP). I suggest reading it before engaging a CFP for advice. Because you have a large sum of money to invest at one time, utilizing the services of a good CFP can really help you develop an effective investment plan. Pick one that will bill you by the hour to help develop an investment plan with several options. Do not utilize one that sells mutual funds or represents insurance companies since they will be more likely to steer you toward investing that "windfall" in their products instead of the best product.

Regarding brokerage offices, much more depends on the person inside the office than the trademark on the sign. So again, knowing the basics before talking to a broker helps you separate out good advice from the nonsense. For the last few years the company that has had the highest level of customer satisfaction has been Edward Jones. They tend to have small offices throughout the country, and they are considered adept at "conservative" investments. Whether or not that customer satisfaction translates into good returns is something you should research before investing through them.

—Continued on p. 6

—Continued from p. 5

At 43 you might assume you have 22 more years before you retire. Your investment of two hundred thousand dollars today will only need to average a return of 6.26% annually to leave you with \$ 800,000.00 on your retirement day. Averaging 6.26% annually is an achievable goal, and 800K when combine with your 403b investments and your ORP can provide for a stable and comfortable retirement. Study hard because a lot of money depends upon it.

The Council of Student Body Presidents Presents

STATEWIDE HIGHER EDUCATION DEMONSTRATION

APRIL 15, 2015
Noon-3pm

Join us at the Capitol to protest the budget
cuts threatening OUR colleges!



Mstephanie.travis@selu.edu

(985)549-2296

NoFunds NoFuture

CORRECTION AND APOLOGY

The *Newsletter* staff apologizes to our faithful movie-review critic, Carl Freedman, for inverting the order of two paragraphs near the end of his review of the film *Calvary*, which appeared in our February 28th, 2015 issue. The paragraph order has been corrected in the version of the review that is currently and permanently accessible [online](#). The *Newsletter* regrets the jumbling of Professor Freedman's evaluation and will ensure the proper ordering his many future reviews!

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DEBATE BOTH HEATING AND COOLING

What administrators like to call “conversations” (a synonym for outrage that is in the process of containment) continued on the LSU A&M campus as colleagues discovered that the Alexander regime had quietly rescinded two major policies, PM-16 (on technology transfer) and PM-64 (on intellectual property) without breathing a word to or consulting with anyone, stakeholder or otherwise. This, on top of a peculiar letter concerning a project covered under PM-11 that seems to suggest, contrary to the push toward entrepreneurial and privatizing behavior, that any product of a colleague’s thought, imagination, or expertise belongs to LSU. Fortunately, the administration seems to have recognized that it has overreached, with the result that faculty-administration collaborations are now underway with regard to the revision of an assortment of invention-, income-, ownership-, and royalty-related policies, most notably PM-11 and PS-69. This story is only beginning to unfold, but it is indeed a good thing that the LSU top-level administration has decided to change course.



OVER THE RAINBOW GOES SALT AND A LITTLE LEMON

Food as well as social historians delight in the story of the grazing expert who lived for years by gathering herbs, fruits, foliage, and berries from the vast array of plants growing in New



Grazers delight as rainbow chard sprouts before LSU Student Union

York’s Central Park. Upon eventually discovery, the grazer faced no sanctions but was, rather, offered a contract as a nature guide and park interpreter by the local authorities. This, in order to avoid offending ecology activists while also coopting the grazer and getting control over his provisioning projects. Those who would like to live off the grounds of the LSU A&M campus and also those who have hoped that Louisiana colleges would promote better nutrition among students are rejoicing at the sprouting of rainbow chard directly in front of the LSU Student Union, only a few feet from the monumental marker designating arrival at this most central of buildings. The *News-letter* has been unable to identify the gardener who made this bold leap toward the decorative as well as educational use of edible foliage, but congratulations are due to that innovator.

JINDAL PRAYER RALLY PROVES NET LOSER FOR STATE

“Follow the money” might well be a credo not only with respect to chasing down the line of influence within power structures but also for American Puritanism. Fans of the good old Protestant work ethic affirm a relation between sanctity and solvency, often enough suggesting that worldly prosperity signifies the operation of grace. Unfortunately for the American Family Association (“AFA”) and for Louisiana’s ever-upward-looking governor, the prayer rally in January that created so much of a stir on the LSU campus—a rally in which the governor temporarily abandoned his role as head of higher education agencies in order to pose as a pastor—proved to be a net loser. According to [the Times Picayune](#), the AFA-driven and Jindal-anointed prayer shindig netted LSU (or, rather, the LSU Athletic Department, which controls the PMAC) \$3,500.00 in profit from rental and related fees. Unfortunately, “The Response” (the title of a rally that answered a question that no one asked) [cost the state \\$10,000.00 in security costs](#). Subtracting the \$10,000.00 security cost from the \$3,500.00 LSU Athletics Department profit leaves a net loss of \$6,500.00 for the state and its agencies overall. As for the governor’s strict literalist, fundamentalist reading of the American Constitution—whatever happened to the “establishment clause”?



Providence turns no profit on the Jindal prayer rally

GRAMBLING COALITION CALLS FOR CONSERVATOR

March opened up with another igneous moment at beleaguered Grambling State University. Four groups—The Grambling Legends; Friends of Football; Partners for Fair and Equal Treatment of GSU; and unnamed “other” Grambling Alumni—issued a letter to University of Louisiana Board of Supervisors Chair E. Gerald “T-Boy” Hebert pointing out the calamity-ridden recent history of this distinguished HBCU and calling for the appointment of a special conservator to manage the affairs of Grambling outside of the normal line of administrative responsibility, with the special purpose of conducting a successful search for a permanent campus President who can earn the respect of the Grambling community. No word yet on how the remarkably denominated “T-Boy” plans to respond.



FOREIGN LANDS BUT NOT FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Few sane colleagues spend their evenings reading the plethora of job announcements that emerge from universities even amidst these economically troubled times. Reading the average HRM job offer page is rather like reading the *Reader's Digest* abridged edition of the telephone book. Those with the persistence to plow through these announcements occasionally discover a gem in the midst of their diggings. Such a distressingly comical gem has broken to the surface in the form of a job announcement from the LSU A&M College of Humanities and Social Sciences, which is searching for a "Rector" for its "Global Connections Residential College." Perusing the list of ten "responsibilities" that substitute for qualifications, one finds parental duties such as coordinating study sessions and one finds culinary assignments such as eating two to three times per week in a favorite student refectory. What one does not find is any hint, trace, or alloy of foreign languages. Apparently it is good enough, for the purposes of this globally-connected job, to chatter away in colloquial English. One wonders what "connection" will be made when dialing that number with a monolingual speaker of Farsi on the other end of the line.

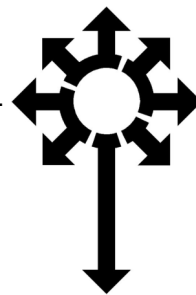


**SPEAK IN
ENGLISH
OR
DON'T
SPEAK**

Global connections require global language proficiency

LSU REVEILLE RENEWS SALARY LIST, TELLS THE FULL STORY

For years, faculty activists at LSU have wrangled with the administration over the posting of salary and budget information. Although the big campus along the Mississippi River complies with the "sunshine laws" by providing budget and salary information in a public venue, it does so in a way that discourages discovery and use of this information, stuffing print versions of the budget and salary information into little-known crevices in the Middleton and sometimes the Hill Libraries, far away from large-scale or high-speed copies and scanners. Requests for the posting of this same information in electronic form have resulted only in claims that the administration needs time to find formats in which to present this information in usable form (whatever that might mean). Now the LSU A&M student newspaper, *The LSU Reveille*, has embarrassed and exposed the LSU A&M administration by publishing its own version of the [salary data](#), data which not only show the current compensation of employees but also the raises received over the last few years. And what an interesting story these data reveal! While remembering that few if any faculty members received the full 4% and 3% raises promised by LSU A&M President King Alexander during the last two years—a large share of that money was diverted to the making of counter-offers and to the delivery of equity adjustments to favored parties—we discover that everyone holding top-level appointments in such venues as the Office of Academic Affairs, in Budgeting, or in the Graduate School received either the full 4% and 3% or an even greater dollop. Now there is data in a usable format!



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An independent advocacy organization formed to serve LSU faculty and graduate assistants

OUR GOALS:

- Securing regular, periodic raises for faculty
- Improving starting salaries for Instructors
- Protecting and improving health and retirement benefits

CONTACT:

Mike Russo, 6923louis@gmail.com

Lifestyle Feature

THE WHITE LINEN RESTAURANTS OF BATON ROUGE

Near-celebrity New Orleans restaurateur Donald Link, the Chef-Proprietor of Herbsaint and Cochon as well as a string of mid-level eateries, recently raised eyebrows among capitol city food enthusiasts by lamenting that the only way to succeed in the culinary industry in Baton Rouge was by making pizzas and hamburgers. Certainly the abundance of venues in which the aforementioned circular scrumptuosities can be enjoyed suggests that the aforementioned tart of a gastronome may be correct. Nevertheless, Baton Rouge offers more than a half-dozen restaurants that, if not fully within the white-linen bag, nevertheless hold to the refined textures and deluxe practices that at least nominate them as potential venues for either that special evening or for a dinner following a recruitment visit or to soften up a delegate from an accrediting agency of any other evaluator. True, Baton Rouge has not yet engendered a world- or even national-class restaurant—which is all the more reason to enumerate the pluses and minuses of the would-be top-level options that do grace our habitat.

Oldest and most legendary among the ambitious beaneries is Juban's, which has always suffered from its location in a coarse strip mall along Perkins Road but which has also always done an astounding job of creating a New Orleanian-style atrium environment. Juban's is in love with textiles—not only with white linen, but with drapes, napkins, wall hangings, and whatever might emerge from the weaver's ingenuity. The effect is both picturesque and slightly suffocating, as if the diner were stuck in the middle scenes of some vampire drama. Juban's food, likewise, remains somewhat artifactual. Its signature dish, "crab hallelujah," a deep-fried softshell crab atop a bed of mixed rice with a slightly over-spiced hollandaise drizzle, appeals to the eye and also conjures memories of classic seafood houses such as Mike Anderson's or Ralph and Kacoos, but its day may have passed, as has the day of forename-identified fish meals such as "The Adrian." Juban's remains a restaurant at which to be seen and also offers a high level of sophisticated service, but it is somehow stuck in a perpetual culinary loop.

An early competitor to Juban's was Mansur's, which, in recent years, migrated from its old strip mall location near what is now the super WalMart at Perkins and College to a somewhat trendier Perkins Road venue. Mansur's has, on and off, attempted to enhance its envi-

ronment by the introduction of sometimes live, sometimes recorded music, which can make for a pleasant and classy experience on those few occasions when the proprietors manage to get the volume right—when the sound wall is not crashing down around the diner. Mansur's early on bypassed Juban's with regard to its reputation among cognoscenti owing to its superior inventiveness; unfortunately, it, too, seems to be caught up in its own tradition, with very little menu variation during the last decade. Mansur's shares in a common enough Louisiana vice, which is enamored with cane syrup. An overplus of dishes such as the Napa salad feature some degree of sweetening, apparently to appeal to *arriviste* diners who have yet to realize that "sweet" does not always mean "good." That tendency toward sweetness is also found at one of Mansur's charming outposts, the French Market Bistro, which is situated at the far end of Highland Road, not too far from the Country Club of Louisiana. The French Market Bistro has always benefited from a fresh, art-intensive environment that eludes its older cousin over on Corporate Boulevard. Better, the resident chefs seem to enjoy more liberty to innovate, perhaps owing to their recreational clientele, which may have more flexible expectations than the business people who gather at Mansur's. French Market Bistro has always been good with small appetizers. Its cream of brie and crabmeat soup tickles and yet also soothes the tongue while its bistro crab cakes outpace any crustacean on Louisiana shorelines. Main courses are a bit less inventive—how long are we going to experience slabs of fish on turpentine-reeking cedar planks?—and oriented toward seared slab of meat, yet daily specials ensure a lively if limited variety.

French Market Bistro has escaped one trap into which apogee-level restaurants often fall, and that is the affectation of being "French." The only top-level restaurant in Baton Rouge that should be outright avoided is one that blows out its French connection: Maison Lacour. Tucked away in an old arts-and-crafts era house on Harrell's Ferry Road, Maison Lacour presents itself as a country *auberge* that is less than a mile from Interstate 10. The core of the problem, however, is not propinquity to traffic, but, rather, the perpetual replay of Julia Child and Paul Bocuse and Jacques Pépin—or maybe even Escoffier. There is just too much bearnaise sauce and too many escargots to satisfy anyone other than a wannabe diner on one of Aristotle Onassis's mid-century cruise ships.

—Continued on p. 13



WHERE THERE'S FIRE, THERE'S SMOKE: LSU'S TOBACCO WARS

Elation rippled through the community of health enthusiasts when the legislature encouraged Louisiana campuses to establish policies relating to the use of tobacco on their premises. To date, no campus has developed a pro-tobacco policy. All have elected either to discourage or forbid the use of the aromatic herb in the environs of academe. The all but universal success has not, however, wafted through the Flagship LSU A&M campus, where an informal brush (or perhaps bush, given the format in which tobacco grows) war has erupted. Each day, at an assortment of hot spots—the portico of the Middleton Library; the EA Sports building; and the Veterinary School, to name but a few—loosely organized bands of resisters have staged concentrated smoking bouts, often within inches of signs proclaiming the smoke-free status of the campus. An initial effort by the LSU A&M Provost to create benevolent bands of students charged with reasoning the insurgents into obedience seems to have failed. Lately, faculty who have attempted dialogue with the incendiary groups have encountered rude and even rough rebuffs. What the LSU A&M administration intends to do about this surly behavior and about this mockery of university policy remains to be seen.



FLETCHER TECHNICAL COLLEGE TAKES THE PLUNGE WITH BP

If there were ever an instance of dealing not only with the devil but also with the deep blue sea, it is surely the “Deepwater Center for Excellence” that opened last year at Fletcher Technical Community college with the help of four million in funding from the would-be rehabilitated, post-Deepwater Horizon petrochemical giant, [BP](#). Now BP has begun capitalizing on its alleged philanthropy with respect to Louisiana higher education. Pop-up and targeted video advertisements featuring Fletcher personnel and the Fletcher campus have begun erupting on sites across the Internet. Viewable on BP’s own [web site](#) but also all but unavoidable for anyone surfing the web, these advertisements range from short spots in which Fletcher Technical College is quickly mentioned (and also shown from camera angles that make it look as large as an airliner assembly plant) to [longer features](#) in which students, faculty, and administrators talk about Fletcher as if it were primarily a training facility for BP. Especially disconcerting is Fletcher Chancellor Earl Meador’s breathless praise and uncritical endorsement of the Gulf of Mexico’s most notorious polluter. So, what does it cost to buy a campus?



Fletcher Technical community College Chancellor Earl Meador-I Love BP

State of (Dis)Repair: Louisiana AND Higher Education in 2015

Place: St. Albert’s Church (Dakota St. in Hammond)



5:15 pm: Greetings and Opening Remarks (James D. Kirylo, Moderator)

PANEL DISCUSSION ONE

5:20-6:15 pm: *The Louisiana Higher Education Crisis* (To be followed by questions from the audience)

Panelists

Dayne Sherman - SLU Faculty
Kevin Cope - LSU Faculty
Sonya Hester - SUSLA Faculty
Albert Samuels - Southern U Faculty
Justin DiCharia - LSU Student

(Each panelist will begin with opening remarks of three minutes or less.)

10 minute break

PANEL DISCUSSION TWO

6:25-7:20 pm: *The Louisiana Budget Crisis* (To be followed by questions from the audience)

Panelists

John Bel Edwards - La State Rep
Lemar Marshall - Hammond City Council
Tom Aswell - La. Voice
Bob Mann - LSU Faculty
Mary-Patrica Wray - Lobbyist and Attorney
Steve Spires - La. Budget Project

(Each panelist will begin with opening remarks of three minutes or less.)

7:30: Adjournment

HIGHER EDUCATION FORUM BAGS KUDOS FOR SONYA HESTER

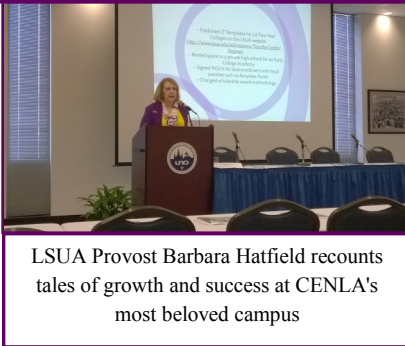
Eyes were wide-open in astonishment as Southern University Shreveport (SUSLA) leadership prodigy Sonya Hester organized what is doubtless the greatest event to date in the history of Louisiana higher education policymaking. Swimming upstream against a tide of nay-sayers and yet never without a smile of thanks for her supporters, Hester organized, on March 5th, a major forum on the future of higher education: a forum that included every possible variety of leader, lobbyist, activist, or decision-maker and that lifted the SUSLA campus from quiet if productive obscurity into the very focal point of the public affairs limelight. Mounting her forum in a beautiful auditorium in the splendidly rehabilitated former industrial building that is the SUSLA Metro campus, Hester opened the evening with words of encouragement as well as wisdom, then allowed the show to go on as a local professional newswoman moderated a panel comprised of gubernatorial candidate John Bel Edwards; LSU Faculty Senate President Kevin I. Cope; Grambling Faculty Senate President Herbert Simmons; Southern University Alumni Federation chief Preston Castille; Southern Strategy Group Managing Partner Markey Pierre; State Representative Patrick Jefferson; faculty activist and environmentalist Brian Salvatore; and Southeastern Louisiana University Faculty Senate President James Kirylo. The first seventy-five minutes of this enriching forum were devoted to questions posed by the moderator, questions that ranged over everything from the privatization of K-12 education to the higher education budget crisis to the prospect for historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) to questions of efficiency, economics, and ecology on college campuses; the concluding forty-five minutes of this blockbuster event featured questions from the audience, including posers from Shreveport-Bossier Business Alliance outreach expert Johnette Magner and from Grambling State University Professor Hugh Wilson. The event is now viewable in its entirety on [YouTube](#) and is well worth the free price of admission. In a recent interview, Hester expressed a desire to take the forum statewide, a visionary hope that will play itself out next in a forum slated for Hammond on April 23rd under the direction of James Kirylo.



Panelists assemble for Shreveporter Sonya Hester's Forum on the future of higher education

CLCU RESTORES NEW ORLEANS TO PINNACLE

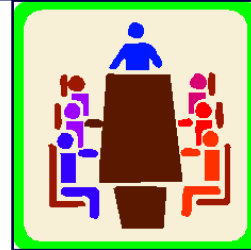
Every year in the early spring, one of Louisiana's most pioneering organizations, the Conference of Louisiana Colleges and Universities, convenes a one-day conference on the campus of one of the state's three-dozen institutions. Unlike other rank- or vocation- or discipline-specific organizations, the CLCU is open to everyone interested in higher education. Sponsored by the Board of Regents and expertly organized by the indefatigable Emily Saleh, the CLCU attracts administrators, faculty leaders, media representatives, legislators, students, and community activists. This year, hosting duties fell to the University of New Orleans, where controversy-adoring campus President Peter Fos joined with UNO Faculty Senate officers Pamela Jenkins and Wendy Schluchter to unveil a full and lively day of debate about higher education in Louisiana. Following a charming welcoming address by President Fos, ALFS officers James Robinson and Kevin L. Cope unfurled an array of questions and challenges, all of which received gingerly answers from such diverse parties as a team of higher education system Presidents; Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph C. Rallo; an ensemble from UNO's student success center; nationally renowned political commentator James Carville; and LSU of Alexandria Provost Barbara Hatfield. Hatfield in particular wowed the swelling crowd—McNeese President Philip Williams and Northwestern Louisiana University President James Henderson were among the erudite onlookers—with a report of the extraordinary increases in student recruitment, retention, and success on the central Louisiana super-campus. Also meriting ovations were Brett Kemker and Sarah Debacher of UNO, who described their truly extraordinary one-stop shop for student success on the UNO campus.



LSUA Provost Barbara Hatfield recounts tales of growth and success at CENLA's most beloved campus

CONVINCING KIRYLO ANNOUNCES EDUCATION FORUM IN SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA

Faculty governance enthusiasts around Louisiana marvel at the endless innovations of talented Southeastern Louisiana University Faculty Senate President James Kirylo, who has tackled challenges ranging from travel regulations to higher education budgeting to the privatization of public education. Never at the end of his ingenuity, inventive Kirylo has announced a new Forum on "Louisiana AND Higher Education in 2015." Kirylo's latest event that will feature two panel discussions and that will bring a dazzling array of higher education supporters to neglected southeastern Louisiana. Always seeking to engage the community, Kirylo has moved his forum off the premises of his native Southeastern Louisiana University, transferring the locus of attention to St. Albert's Church on Dakota Street in Hammond. Assisting him in this recruitment of dedicated citizens into the cause of higher education will be a bevy of precocious panelists: blogger-activist Dayne Sherman; Southern University Shreveport Faculty Senate President Sonya Hester; Southern University Faculty Senate leader Albert Samuels; LSU Faculty Senate President Kevin L. Cope; LSU Student Justin Di Charia; State Representative and gubernatorial candidate John Bel Edwards; Hammond City Council member Lemar Marshall; *Louisiana Voice* blogger Tom Aswell; *Times Picayune* columnist Bob Mann; lobbyist and attorney Mary-Patricia Wray; and Louisiana Budget Project spokesman Steve Spires. The first of the two interrelated panels will address the "Louisiana higher education crisis"; the second will focus on the "Louisiana budget crisis." This not-to-miss town hall event opens at 5:15 pm with greetings and opening remarks from impresario Kirylo and is expected to run until 7:30 pm. Be there or be unheard!





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—Continued from p. 9

Three next-generation restaurants fill out the future of Louisiana fine dining. Way out on the curiously named Petroleum Boulevard, just up the street from one of those modern super-churches, stands, or, rather, sits in a strip mall, Le Creole, an effort from the proprietor of The Village. A lively mixture of Cajun-French fusion with a bit of Asian influence, Le Creole comes as close as anything in Baton Rouge to a new-wave food venue. Here one will find updated versions of classics such as turtle soup or Cobb salad, but one will also discover imaginative efforts such as boudin spring rolls or paradoxically blackened semi-sushi tuna. True, the chef at Le Creole also suffers from occasional cane-syrup obsession, but the imaginative force and vivacity of the menu ensures that the main line of his or her cuisine leads toward success. Similar in format and habit to Le Creole is Beausoleil, which also takes unexpected advantage of its glassed-in strip mall venue to create a remarkable fusion of a French inn with a New York bar. Beausoleil invokes the French tradition with-

out, as does Maison Lacour, hammering the diner with it. The Beausoleil chef excels at blending classic preparations with both gulf fish and regionally inspired sauces and is expert with regard to the local sourcing of foods. A bit of whimsy comes into play

with multi-referential dishes such as boudin balls with red bean hummus, accent pieces that dispose the diner to enjoy such seasonally varying and yet locally pertinent inventions as grilled salmon over bok choy with a corn tomato relish.



In this trio of promising venue, Stroube's, downtown, is always if surprisingly a go-to venue. Disguised as a steakhouse, Stroube's offer an amazing variety of both lunch and dinner items, items that indicate a piquant imagination in the kitchen. Daring combinations such as charred mahi mahi over gouda-saturated grits—an apparent challenge to the cheese-fish taboo—will alarm the diner with joy, as will courageously upgraded renderings of bistro classics such as the iceberg-bacon-blue cheese wedge salad. Stroube's occasionally suffers from confused table service—waiters are good-natured but sometimes nervous—yet its food packs a gentle, even affectionate punch.

Baton Rouge has a long way to go before it competes with metropolitan restaurants and before it develops a clientele that can support genuine culinary inventions. Yet it has at least a small sampler-plate of houses that can deliver a respectable and occasionally exciting meal while providing the atmosphere required for that special occasion. Help Baton Rouge move up the culinary ladder by patronizing one of these restaurants today!



LSUNITED BUDGETING FORUM DRAWS FULL HOUSE

LSUnited performed another service for the entire higher education community by organizing a Forum, on March 9th, on the topic of budgeting. The combined presentation and Q&A session, under the emcee-ship of Anna Nardo, opened with presentations by Revenue Estimating Committee Chair James “Jim” Richardson, who explained how the budget emerges and how higher education got into its present economic pickle, and by LSU Faculty Senate President Kevin L. Cope, who explained the complex process by which budget (and budget emergency) decisions evolve at the LSU A&M campus and by extension at most Louisiana campuses. The event, which was catered by the LSU A&M Faculty Senate, was carried around the state on live stream, drawing viewers on campuses from New Orleans to Shreveport. A video file containing the entire event is now in the production process (receiving close-captioning so as to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act); the availability of that video track will be announced in the next issue of the *Newsletter*. The PowerPoint supplement to Kevin Cope's presentation is already available online. To see it, go to the LSU Faculty Senate “[Media Archive](#),” where it is currently accessible through the second link in the main menu.



RETIREMENT PLAN LAWSUIT UPDATED AND AMENDED

Faculty members across Louisiana have been following the lawsuit filed against the Teachers Retirement System of Louisiana (“TRSL”) and against the LSU Board of Supervisors.



That suit seeks justice and equity with respect to the inadequate Optional Retirement plan, which was billed as an adequate substitute for Social Security and to which inadequate contributions have been made owing to the diversion of private retirement monies to the servicing of the public unfunded accrued liability (“UAL”). That lawsuit has now been revised and upgraded so as to address the possibility that the aforementioned diversion may count as a “taking” under the American Constitution and so as to highlight the illegally inequitable treatment of employees in the two (defined-benefit and defined-contribution) retirement plans. The latest version of the lawsuit may be viewed [online](#).

STATE FUNDING – WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

STATE FUNDING – WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Did you know?

Since the fall of 2008, there has been a \$105M reduction in Total State Funding, a \$4M reduction in Interagency Funds, and a \$103M increase in Self-generated Funds to make up for those reductions, resulting in a net dollar decrease of \$6M in operating budget.

* To partially make up for the loss, the cost of undergraduate Tuition and Fees has increased by 37% for residents and 61% for non-residents since 2008. For graduate programs, there has been an increase of 58% for residents and 70% for non-residents. On-campus Room and Board have increased nearly \$3,000 since 2008.

Revenues from Tuition and Fees have increased by 87.2% since 2008. Tuition and Fees now comprise a total of 67% of the revenue from General Fund and Tuition and Fees, whereas in 2008 it generated 41% of the total revenue.

In addition to raising Tuition and Fees costs, LSU has admitted 1,234 more incoming freshman in the fall of 2012 than in 2008.

There are currently 1,355 more full-time and part-time students enrolled than there were in 2008.

The number of in-state students has decreased by 170, and the number of non-resident students has increased by 1,525 since 2008.

To offset a portion of the increased tuition and fees burden, Financial Aid received by students last year totaled to \$242,117,136, which is 58% more than students received in 2008.

LSU offers a total of 5,141 courses. Each year since 2008, programs have been eliminated and some new programs have been created, resulting in a net downsizing of 6 degree programs: 1 Baccalaureate, 1 Master, and 4 Doctoral.

LSU currently has 1,219 full-time instructional faculty positions. This number has decreased by 43 since fall of 2008.

Salaries of Professors and Instructors have decreased 1% and 3% respectively. Assistant Professors are the only instructional faculty to have a salary increase. Their average salary has increased by \$972, a 1% raise since the fall of 2008.

Since the 2008-2009 academic year there has been a \$28.5M net increase in expenditures.

Instructional, Public Service, Institutional Support, and Operations & Maintenance expenditures collectively decreased \$18M.

Research, Academic Support, Student Services, Scholarships & Fellowships, Transfers & reappropriated expenditures collectively increased \$47M.

83% of the \$47M increase accounts for Scholarships & Fellowships and Transfers & reappropriated expenditures.

MONTHLY MOVIE REVIEW

Ida (Pawel Pawlikowski, 2013)

—Reviewed by Carl Freedman (2015)

Though Polish cinema is very nearly as old as cinema itself—feature films have been made in Poland for well over a century—it has never seemed, at least from an English-speaking perspective, to have had quite the same sort of global impact as the national cinemas of (for example) Italy, France, or Japan. In this country, perhaps the only Polish filmmaker whose name is truly a household word beyond rather specialized cinephile circles is Roman Polanski; and Polanski has done the great majority of his work outside of Poland and in languages other than Polish. (There are, however, those who maintain that even such English-language Polanski masterpieces as *Rosemary's Baby* [1968] and *Chinatown* [1974] do not truly surpass his early Polish film, *Knife in the Water* [1962].) Nor is Polanski by any means the only important Polish director who has chosen or been forced to work, sometimes, in exile. Krzysztof Kieślowski's *Three Colors* trilogy (1993-1994), which might arguably be the supreme aesthetic achievement by any Polish filmmaker, was shot mostly abroad; the three colors of the title (blue, white, and red) are taken from the French flag, and two of the three films are made in French and set in French-speaking countries. Agnieszka Holland emigrated to France after the 1981 imposition of martial law in Poland, and her most internationally renowned film, *Euroopa Euroopa* (1991), is made mainly in German. Even Andrzej Wajda, who is known primarily for such made-in-Poland works as *Man of Marble* (1976) and *Man of Iron* (1981)—and who, like Polanski and Kieślowski, is an alumnus of Poland's prestigious Łódź Film School—spent some time abroad, where he made at least one of his finest films, *Danton* (1983). To a striking degree, much of the best in Polish cinema is only partially or ambiguously Polish.

This generalization applies with particular force to the career of Pawel Pawlikowski. Born in Warsaw in 1957, he relocated to London with his mother when he was 14 years old; he has spent most of his life thus far in the UK, and most of his work is in English. In the late 1980s, he began to become known for a series of rather unconventional documentaries, but a decade later he switched to making fiction films. Prior to *Ida*, he was best known in the US for *My Summer of Love* (2004), starring Natalie Press and Emily Blunt, and *The Woman in the Fifth* (2011), with Ethan Hawke and Kristin Scott Thomas. The former is the story of Mona and Tamsin, two deeply unhappy teenage girls in Yorkshire, who form an improbable friendship across the vast gulf that separates their class, family, and educational backgrounds. Their relationship is erotically intense and important for each girl, though it ultimately turns out to be something rather different from what both the viewer and the working-class Mona suppose. *My Summer of Love* deservedly won a BAFTA, the Michael Powell Award for Best British Film, and other prizes.

As for *The Woman in the Fifth*, it is perhaps less perfectly finished but even more ambitious and memorable than the earlier film. It centers on Ethan Hawke as an American novelist and literature professor who moves to Paris in the hope of being re-united with his French ex-wife and their young daughter. One thing after another goes wrong for him—including some things that at first seem to be going quite well—and the ending raises at least as many ques-

tions as it answers. Narrative ambiguities linger after the final credits—I am myself fond of the interpretation that holds all the apparent events of the film to be fantasies in the mind of the Hawke character, who is actually confined in an institution for the criminally insane—but the film's emotional power and hallucinatory vividness are unmistakable. Not the least of Pawlikowski's achievements here is getting infinitely better acting out of Ethan Hawke than Richard Linklater has ever managed to do.

Despite his success in his adoptive homeland, Pawlikowski left Britain after his wife died and after their two children reached the age at which they went off to university. He moved first to Paris, but then returned to Warsaw, where he now resides near his childhood home. *Ida*, his most deeply Polish film to date, has attracted a degree of international attention quite rare for films made in Poland (or any other country in Eastern Europe). Its various awards include an Oscar for Best Foreign Film.

The film begins as the story of one Anna (Agata Trzebuchowska), a young novice nun in Poland during the 1960s, who has grown up in a Catholic orphanage. As Anna is about to take her final vows and make an irrevocable decision to devote her life to the Catholic Church, her Mother Superior informs her that she has one living relative, her mother's sister. Anna's aunt has known of Anna's whereabouts for years and could have chosen to raise her niece herself—but has declined to do so. The Mother Superior tells Anna to pay a visit to her aunt, and implies that she should take a little time to think things over before deciding about her vows.

When Anna meets Aunt Wanda (Agata Kulesza), the older woman at first seems as cold and offhand as her years of deliberate non-contact with Anna might lead one to expect. Wanda does, however, share with her niece one important piece of information that the nuns have always withheld: Anna was born Jewish and is actually named Ida Lebenstein. Wanda soon warms up a (little) bit, and a friendship of sorts develops between the two women, who embark on a road trip together to investigate exactly how Ida's parents died and what became of their bodies. Along the way, Wanda introduces Ida to her own way of life, a way quite different from anything that the cloistered virgin has experienced: Wanda lives in a world of jazz and Mozart, of dancing, booze, cigarettes, and casual sex—none of which initially seems to have any appeal for Ida. Wanda also transpires to be a person of political influence. She is a locally powerful judge; at one point on the road trip, she is arrested and jailed for drunk driving, but, by the next morning, the police are not only releasing her but apologizing profusely and assuring her that they acted strictly out of concern for her own safety. Wanda mentions to Ida, almost *en passant*, that she was once even more powerful than she is now. She served as a state prosecutor popularly known as “Red Wanda,” and as such prosecuted many “enemies of the people,” sending some to their death. Whether these “enemies” were actual fascists and pro-Nazi traitors, or just honest Polish nationalists who for one reason or another fell afoul of the Stalinist bureaucracy—or, as seems most likely, a mixture of both—is never made clear.

—Continued on p. 16



Somewhat surprisingly, Wanda and Ida's investigation is successful. They learn that Ida's parents, along with Wanda's young son and with the very young Ida herself, were for a while during the war sheltered by a family of Catholic peasants, who hid and fed them. But this protection came to an abrupt end. Ida, who did not look particularly Jewish, was delivered to the Church (which is how she came to grow up in the orphanage), but the peasants murdered the other three members of the family: apparently out of greed for their property, though probably also out of fear that shielding Jews was becoming too dangerous (the Gestapo generally treated such shielding as a capital crime). Both women are deeply affected by their discovery. Ida decides not to take her final vows just yet. Instead, she begins drinking, smoking, wearing sexy clothes, and going to nightclubs; she winds up in bed with a young male admirer, a jazz saxophonist whom she and her aunt had earlier picked up when he was hitchhiking. Wanda would doubtless have wryly approved of her niece's transformation but does not witness it. She has already stepped out of the window of her comfortable apartment and deliberately plunged to her death.

Ida is a beautifully and austere photograph black-and-white production—one feels that this must be exactly what Poland in the 1960s looked like, even while the cinematography has a quiet intensity not usually associated with cinematic realism—and amounts to a hauntingly subtle character study of two women who at first seem utterly different from one another but who are perhaps, in the end, not as different as all that. Yet comparatively little of the discussion of the film has focused on its aesthetic properties. *Ida* has proven hugely controversial, especially in Poland, where the English-bred Pawlikowski is regarded by many as an interloper. Polish nationalist groups have attacked the film as a slur on Poland's honor. They point out that the only murder of Jews acknowledged by the film is committed by Polish Catholic peasants rather than by Germans—and that, indeed, a viewer of the film could not even infer, strictly from internal evidence, that Poland during World War Two and the Holocaust was under Nazi German occupation. They have also maintained that many Polish Catholics really did shelter Polish Jews from the Nazis, despite the deadly and well-advertised risks of doing so. Meanwhile, many Jewish groups have not liked *Ida* any better. They have complained that the portrayal of the Jewish Wanda—a slutty, alcoholic Stalinist hack who condemned some of her fellow Poles to death—plays on common stereotypes of Polish anti-Semitism.

Pawlikowski could argue that he is particularly well placed to understand the deeply troubled and often violent history of Catholic-Jewish relations in Poland. He was raised in the Catholic Church, of which he continues to be a member, but learned during his teenage years that his paternal grandmother was a Jew who perished at Auschwitz. In fact, however, the filmmaker, in defending his film, has said relatively little about either personal or public history. He has preferred to talk in banal clichés about “common humanity” and the supposed universality of the situations represented in *Ida*; and he has bragged that audiences from Brazil to Finland have responded to his film without bothering about the details of Polish history. The function of the critic, as D. H. Lawrence said, is often to defend the work of art from the artist; and there are better justifications of Pawlikowski's movie than Pawlikowski himself has made.

It is of course true that the death camps of Poland, in which most of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust died, were built and operated by the Germans, and that the Nazi genocide resulted pri-

marily from policies devised in Berlin over which no Polish citizen had any real control. It is also true that some Polish Catholics did indeed take heroic risks to protect their Jewish neighbors. Those honored at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial as “the righteous among the nations”—that is, non-Jews who did what they could to protect Jews from the Nazis, often at terrible risk to themselves and their families—include more Poles than individuals of any other nationality. But such heroes were a small minority. The virulence of Polish anti-Semitism has been notorious for centuries, and there is abundant evidence—for instance, in Claude Lanzmann's definitive Holocaust documentary, *Shoah* (1985)—that the zeal for slaughtering Jews was sometimes even fiercer among Polish peasants than among Hitler's own storm troopers. Some Poles who fought against the Nazis on purely nationalist grounds murdered Jews at the same time. Anti-Semitism in twentieth-century Poland was usually (though not always) closely associated with anti-Communism; and many Polish Jews were attracted to the Communist Party as the least anti-Semitic and most resolutely anti-Nazi force available—though, for complex reasons, Jews were better represented in the national apparatus of the Polish CP than among local functionaries like Pawlikowski's Wanda.

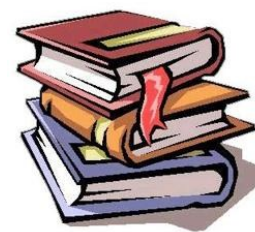
It seems to me that *Ida* engages these complexities admirably: not, however, in the manner of historical realism that overtly offers to represent great public events, but in its own quieter, subtler, and more lyrical way, as the complexities and ironies of history are refracted through the personal story of Ida and Wanda. The Catholic peasant family is seen only in relatively brief glimpses but is unforgettable in the way it condenses so many contradictions of twentieth-century Poland. The peasants begin by displaying extraordinary nerve and compassion in sheltering the Lebensteins: but ultimately are led by ordinary greed and ordinary fear, presumably spiked with the Jew-hating ideology that is all around them, to murder three innocents, one of them a young child. Even then, though, they take the trouble to save the young Ida, who is rescued by the Catholic Church, on other occasions itself the source of so much anti-Semitic theory and practice. Wanda is perhaps more complex still. A political career that evidently began with exemplary courage and socialist idealism in the anti-Nazi resistance has declined into sometimes thuggish careerism in the Stalinist bureaucracy. But the Wanda in the time present of the film retains traces of her earlier self, mainly as sublimated into an amiable but finally despairing hedonism. Her suicide ratifies her as a figure of ultimate guilt: not only guilt for what she did as prosecutor and judge, but, perhaps even more, survivor's guilt at having escaped dying with her son, her sister, and her brother-in-law.

Ida herself emerges from her literally cloistered past to come to terms with all these agonizing complexities. She functions almost as a kind of perceptual sensorium attempting to orient itself in response to multiple new shocks and stimuli, from her aunt's sexual promiscuity to the unmarked gravesite where her parents and cousin lie buried. As Ida struggles to acclimate to the modern world, she can be understood as a figure for Poland itself—which may be why she gives her name to the movie's title, even though Agata Kulesza receives top billing as an actress over the less well-known Agata Trzebuchowska. In the final scene—which takes place immediately after her night with the saxophonist—Ida, again wearing nun's garb, strides quickly down a country lane. Pawlikowski here employs a hand-held camera, and the painting-like stillness with which most of the earlier shots in the film are composed is replaced by a sense of restless, undirected energy. As Ida moves intently toward an entirely uncertain destination, she is, again, perhaps no bad representative of Poland today.

GUEST COLUMNS

BOOKS GET THEIR DUE: LSU LIBRARY NEWS

LSU Libraries recently initiated a plan where print books authored and/or edited by LSU faculty members are automatically received from the library's book vendor YBP. The plan started on July 1, 2014. Prior to July 1, 2014, the LSU Libraries and YBP identified print books published by current and former LSU faculty members and not owned by the LSU Libraries. The LSU Libraries purchased these materials for the collection. Combined, the LSU Libraries has purchased over 180 titles at a cost of \$20,000. Faculty having questions about this plan can contact Tom Diamond, Head of Collection Development (notted@lsu.edu).



LSU Libraries recently launched the e-textbook initiative to provide students free access to required textbooks. The Libraries identifies required textbooks that are available in the collection and adds them to www.lib.lsu.edu/ebooks. These e-books can be read and downloaded by an unlimited number of LSU students simultaneously. So far this academic year, the initiative has had the potential to save students \$450,000.00, helping to offset the escalating cost of higher education while ensuring access to materials critical for student success. Faculty interested learning more should contact Emily Frank, Instructional Technologies/Engineering Librarian (efrank7@lsu.edu) or attend the "[Using LSU Libraries E-texts](#)" training on April 14 in Himes Hall, room 133, from 1:30-2:30.

—By Tom Diamond and Emily Frank

STUDENTS AND FACULTY PLAN LETTER-WRITING CAMPAIGN

"Be annoying," Chancellor F. King Alexander told LSU students at the March 18 forum on higher education.

Two groups of LSU students and faculty are responding to the Chancellor's challenge by organizing a letter-writing campaign to state legislators during the legislative session that begins on April 13. LSUnited is a faculty advocacy group, and Geaux Vote LSU is the student group that hosted the forum. The two groups are joining forces to make it easy for LSU students and faculty to tell their representatives and senators what they think about proposed cuts to higher education. Since there is a real possibility that state funding for higher education will face a nearly 80 percent cut--well past half a billion dollars--students and faculty should have a lot to say.



The letter-writing campaign will kick off the week after Spring Break, from April 13 to the 17th. For two hours each day, 11 am -1 pm, volunteers will set up shop in front of the LSU Union. They will provide stamped postcards and a few sample talking points—e.g. SAVE LSU! They will also help students and faculty locate the names and addresses of their legislators. All that letter-writers will need to do is hand-write the address and a brief message. LSUnited will mail the cards each day.

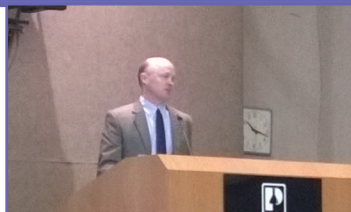
Personal letters have the greatest impact when communicating with legislators. But, in order to reinforce the letters and emphasize the urgency of legislative action, Geaux Vote LSU may launch an on-line campaign as well.

According to Chancellor Alexander "Sometimes, you don't have to be so polite. This is a time when you need to fight." So LSUnited and Geaux Vote LSU are joining the Chancellor's army and will be signing up recruits at the letter-writing table in front of the Union, 4/13-17.

-By Anna Nardo

RALLO RALLY ROLLS

Continuing his quest to become the most visible Commissioner of Higher Education in the history of that formerly cloistered office, sleekly-dressed pin-stripe enthusiast Joseph C. Rallo has embarked on another much-needed Louisiana listening tour, this time in south Louisiana. Concentrating on the Baton Rouge and New Orleans Northshore areas, this latest Rallo Rally is rolling down the greater Mardi Gras Boulevard, from the Baton Rouge Pennington Center to the Southeastern Louisiana University campus. The Baton Rouge installment of the tour, wisely positioned at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center rather than at the standard four-year-plus campus at the end of Nicholson Boulevard and thereby highlighting the variety of higher educational efforts, included presentations not only by Rallo but also by Baton Rouge Area Chamber President Adam Knapp; Louisiana Economic Development consultant Jeff Lynn; and Regent Joseph Wiley. Notable among the many turns taken during Rallo's odyssey was a new tilt from the business community (as articulated by Adam Knapp), which is now calling for the discovery of new revenue streams to



Baton Rouge Area Chamber President Adama Knapp exhorts universities and businesses to find a revenue stream for higher education

support higher education (at the same time that it is somewhat hypocritically damning and damming an assortment of possible revenue sources such as a reduction in tax concessions or a reimposition of inventory taxes). Rallo's own wide-ranging presentation, which ventured from anecdotes about the diversity of student post-graduate careers to the startling implications of the underfunding of universities and which even included a comical yarns that would have raised the envy of a Henny Youngman, was followed by a brisk question-and-answer session in which faculty leaders from LSU and from Southern University as well as delegates from alumni associations peppered the combo Colonel-Commissioner with the full range of interrogative ordnance. Congratulations to Commissioner Rallo for having taken another step toward visible, accountable leadership.



Southern University Faculty Senate President Thomas Miller fires a question during the Rallo Rally

VLOSKY REPORTS AWARDS BONANZA

Appreciations to LSU A&M Phi Kappa Phi Chapter President Richard Vlosky, who offers the following report regarding the recent Chapter awards ceremony: The Louisiana State University Chapter of the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi held its 2015 Awards and Induction Ceremony on Tues-



Phi Kappa Phi holds awards ceremony

day, February 24th at the Lod Cook Alumni Center at Louisiana State University. Richard Vlosky, Chapter President, presided over the ceremony. The guest keynote speaker was Ann Duplessis, Chair, LSU Board of Supervisors. Nearly 100 students, faculty and staff became members this spring. The following students received awards at the ceremony: Outstanding Junior-Zachary Faircloth; Outstanding Senior-Christopher Sylvester; Outstanding Masters Student-Justin Guy; Outstanding Terminal Degree Student-Christie Cognevich; 2015 National Graduate Fellowship Nominee- Christopher Sylvester; National Graduate Fellowship 1st Runner Up-Matthew Landry; The following faculty members received awards: Non-Tenured Faculty Award winners (co-sponsored by the LSU Alumni Association) Isiah Lavender (English); Bryan McCann (Communication Studies); Kehui Xu (Oceanography and Coastal Studies); Outstanding Instructor (co-sponsored by the LSU Alumni Association)-Dottie Vaughn (Department of Mathematics); Outstanding Alumnus Award- Missy Korduner and, Phi Kappa Phi Chapter Appreciation Award, Mary Bowen (School of Renewable Natural Resources). Phi Kappa Phi is one of the oldest and most prestigious honorary scholastic societies in the United States upholds high standards of academic performance embracing all academic disciplines.

TIP OF THE MONTH: PARTY CENTRAL MINIATURE GOLF, SHREVEPORT/BOSSIER

During the innocent days of the 1960s, miniature gold, in which both the elite world of the country club and the multicultural, multi-class world that was growing America were reduced into diminutive playland landscapes, enjoyed a heyday, with some facilities offering as many as six eighteen-hole courses and with youthful imagination being stirred in children of all ages. For decades, miniature golf courses fell into disrepair, but, here and there, evidences of the resuscitation of this delightful sport (or, rather, diversion) have appeared. The most recent recrudescence has transpired in Shreveport, where [Party Central](#) has created a splendid new course full of sparkling if comical sculptures, (miniature) buildings, and fountains. Located out on Viking Drive in bubbling Bossier City, this clean and friendly facility offers a fresh air as well as humorously shrunken experience. Don't wait for the fun! Drive up to Shreveport today and play several rounds!



SHREVEPORT-BOSSIER BUSINESS ALLIANCE DRAFTS PRO-HIGHER-EDUCATION ONLINE PETITION

Not every businessman or businesswoman in the state believes that the way to eternal prosperity in Louisiana is the training of chemical engineers who will work for below-standard wages in order to remain in lovely Louisiana. Many persons in the business community have expressed chagrin at the lack of diversity in the state's economy and have suggested that it is not only oil-rich south Louisiana that has business-related educational needs. To distance itself from the would-be titans who rule both the budget and higher education from the little beltway of the I-10 corridor, the Shreveport-Bossier Business Alliance, which represents an admittedly smaller but proudly more complex economy than its counterpart organizations at the sea-level end of Louisiana, has developed a petition urging lawmakers to ensure that solvency and indeed success of Louisiana's universities. The petition may be read, signed, and sluiced over to social media [online](#). Thanks go to the SBBA for introducing a new note in the chord of statewide higher education controversy.



Shreveporters create new pro-higher-education petition

READERS SUBMIT REPORTS, ASK NEWSLETTER TO ADVANCE INQUIRIES

One of the most rewarding developments in the ever-lengthening history of the *Newsletter* is the increasing frequency with which readers submit story leads and also ask the *Newsletter* investigative team to probe stories. This month, no less than three such epistles have crossed the transom (if you would like to submit a lead, send it to The Faculty Senate Office, 3194 Pleasant Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70803). The *Newsletter* relies on the eyes, ears, and intuitions of its readers. If you have any additional information about the following three reader-initiated stories, please submit that information right away.

Reader number one, whose missive appeared in an anonymously addressed plain white envelope, asks a pair of questions. Noting that outgoing Louisiana Department of Economic Development Director and incoming LSU Foundation President Stephen Moret is working on a doctoral degree in educational leadership at the University of Pennsylvania and further detecting that, at \$350,000.00 per year as the LED Chief, Moret must be a busy man, the reader wonders, first, where someone who is working hard enough to earn that kind of money finds time for the intensive research required to obtain a doctoral degree and, second, whether there might be a plan afoot to insert Moret into the top-level position at LSU following LSU's Alexandrian period?

Reader number two, who amusingly identifies himself or herself as someone living on the elegant dead end of Cul-de-Sac Drive, perked up over the story in the last *Newsletter* issue about Mustapha Marrouchi, the former LSU Professor who has recently been dismissed owing to charges of plagiarism from the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. Puckishly wonder-

dering why a great university such as LSU A&M would fail to detect the fraud that came to light in America's number-one sin city, the reader then peruses an assortment of dubious entries in the credit list for faculty in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and then smilingly as well as sweetly suggests that the far more solid offerings in the *Newsletter* would seem to merit a Boyd Professorship!

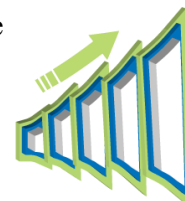
Reader number three, who offers up his initials a "K. L." and who submits his thoughts within a splendid envelope drawing motifs from topographical maps, offers up a simulated news release in which a gigantic underwater subsidence deep below the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, a muddy landslide known as the "Louisiana Fan," has led to the partial immersion of most of (financially as well as geographically) underwater Louisiana. The reader, astounded at this phenomenon, offers two theories: that of an assortment of pseudonym-protected experts who attribute the sinking to "the rapid loading of financial debt, ignorance, and toxic wastes" upon the state and that of Governor Bobby Jindal, who, along with the American Family Association attribute the slippage to gay marriage, abortion, and possibly religion-driven terrorists. The reader seeks input from the knowledgeable as to which of these theories might be correct!



Anonymous reader #3 seeks explanations for the sinking of our state

GRADUATE SCHOOL MEDICAL INSURANCE COSTS SKYROCKET

The up-and-down history of the graduate program at mighty LSU A&M once again found itself on the wrong side of "up" as *Newsletter* investigators uncovered evidence of price-gouging hikes in medical insurance rates for graduate students at the agricultural and mechanical campus. *Newsletter* detectives discovered that, in the 2013-14 academic year, basic insurance rates for graduate students gauged in at \$1,353.00; in 2014-15, however, that same basic individual rate had zoomed to \$1,936.00, a whopping increase of 43%, nearly fifty-four times the rate of inflation during the same period. Heads were shaking as those who care for graduate education (and for its promotion in Louisiana, where advanced degrees remain scarce) wondered why no price-smart shopping had occurred and why no community discussion about this issue transpired.



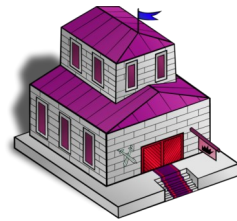
GUEST COLUMN

NOT SUFFERING IN SILENCE: TOWN HALL MEETINGS AT MCNEESE

McNeese State University's Faculty Senate hosted two town hall meetings with members of the Southwest Louisiana Legislative Delegation. We invited all the eleven legislators (members of the Louisiana House and Senate) whose districts are located in the five parishes in southwest Louisiana whose residents support McNeese. Eight legislators accepted our invitation. Most of the legislators attended the first meeting on February 25, 2015 in Bulber Auditorium. There were about 120 attendees. The American Press and KPLC covered both meetings. McNeese University Faculty Senate President Dr. Vipin Menon (College of Engineering) began both meetings by introducing Dr. Philip Williams, President of McNeese State University, who then introduced all of the guests at both meetings.

A local attorney, Mr. Michael McHale moderated the first meeting. All of the legislators described their history with McNeese and professed to bleed blue and gold. The Faculty Senate wanted to create a dialogue with the legislators and show them the human element in higher education. We believe that we were successful in that regard. The February meeting began with brief statements from a faculty member (Dr. Matthew Butkus, Philosophy), an administrator (Dr. Debbie King, College of Education), and the editor of the student newspaper, the Contraband (Mr. David Ryan Palmer). All of them described how the budget woes have been affecting their time at McNeese. Everyone was polite and courteous. Even the fire-brand newspaper editor was calmer speaking than he usually is with his eloquent weekly editorials. The seven legislators in attendance on Feb 25 were Mr. A. B. Franklin (Representative, District 34), Mr. John Guinn (Rep, District 37), Mr. Dan Morrish (Senator, District 25), Mr. Mike Danahay (Representative, District 33), Mr. Ronnie Johns (Senator, District 27), Mr. Chuck Kleckley (Speaker of the Louisiana House of Representatives, Representative from District 36), and Mr. John Smith (Senator, District 30). After the legislators responded to these statements, the floor was open to questions. The dialogue was optimistic on the whole. All of the legislators agreed that higher education was suffering beyond compare. They promised to look for ways to reduce the pain. They specifically referenced the state's tax policies, and answered many questions from the audience. Attendees were requested to fill out a satisfaction survey before they left. There were ten

questions including the obligatory 'add any comments you wish to share with us.' The feedback was positive for the faculty senate for organizing the event. While attendees decided that they have a better understanding of the budget process and legislative politicking in general; they reported that the meeting did not improve their feelings.



The second meeting on March 11, 2015 also in Bulber Auditorium had fewer attendees. The total count of attendees was about eighty. The distinguished guests on the panel were Mrs. Dorothy Sue Hill (Representative from District 32), Mr. Mark Abraham (Member, Louisiana Board of Regents), Mr. Gray Stream (Member, LA Board of Regents), Mr. Jim Beam (former Editor of the American Press), and former State Senator Mr. Vic Stelly (who authored the Stelly Plan in 2002), besides McNeese State University President Dr. Philip Williams. Dr. Menon again began the session by welcoming the audience and introducing Dr. Williams, who then introduced everyone else. Dr. Menon moderated the session. The panelists were encouraged to make an opening statement about their connection to the McNeese Community. The Regents especially gave an interesting view of higher education.

The audience was appreciative that they could attend on such short notice. There were two brief statements by a faculty member (Dr. Steve Thompson, from the department of Social Sciences) and an administrator (Dr. Michael Buckles, Head of the department of Performing Arts). The panelists addressed a wide variety of questions from the audience. The feedback was again positive. Everyone present at the meeting was appreciative of McNeese State University, and of the need for increased funding for McNeese in the Louisiana State Budget. The open question and answer session was shorter than at the first meeting. Attendees expressed the need for McNeese and the MSU Faculty Senate to organize such events in the future, so that the community would be more closely knit together, be better informed, and could participate and engage more fully in democratic processes and discussions regarding Higher Education.

—By Vipin Menon and Walter Fontane
Lake Charles