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### Faculty Senate Newsletter, May 2017

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

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# Faculty Senate Newsletter

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Followers of the headlines relish big events, whether mammoth economic downturns or raging battles or colossal storms. Leaders, especially those of the academic kind, most often deal with small events, whether the rotation of Chairs in a tiny department or the bursting of a water main on a satellite campus or declining enrollments in an unfashionable curriculum. Those seeking the reasons for the troubles faced by Louisiana higher education institutions might be well-advised to narrow their inquiries: to consider the role of the incremental in building or dissolving the grand—in, as it were, gradually pushing up or eroding Gibraltar.

What makes a university great, not so great, mediocre, or shabby is less often the level of external funding or the number of institutes it houses or the size of the faculty or student body than its tolerance for small deviations and respect for detail. The worst damage of the nine-year Louisiana higher education budget decline has been an epidemic of frustration (and eventually apathy) concerning small matters. Terrorized by the prospect of catastrophic funding cuts, academic folk have become accustomed to making modest concessions, tolerating minor faults, and acquiescing in seemingly trivial matters. Not even the most rigorous moralist would recommend flying into a rage owing to the discovery of a bent paperclip or a scratch on a desk chair, but Louisiana higher education professionals—especially those in politically sensitive leadership positions—have learned not to complain about much of anything short of a building collapse.

The list of small concessions that occur every day is a long one. Everyone knows the obvious examples such as working in dilapidated, moldy, or crumbling rooms or going one more year without a raise or stumbling over the pothole in the parking lot. Other concessions are subtler. Consider an excerpt from the inventory: pretending that we can overlook the bad behavior and preposterous ideas of donors, who support a political caste that devastates higher education, in the hope of getting a few more gift dollars; looking the other way when an Athletic program constructs yet another facility by way of entertaining rather than instructing the public; flinching and carrying on when students, who wield the power of the teaching evaluation, present bogus or hypochondriacal excuses for non-performance; accepting a soggy muffin asphyxiated in plastic wrap from a campus coffee shop; sitting in a library chair that is about to disintegrate; logging into a business enterprise system that will not work; sneaking access privileges from another institution to get to a database that Louisiana cannot afford; quickly clicking past a university web site that shows nothing but children frolicking in student activity centers; trying to find a non-flea-bag hotel that rents a room at the official state rate; explaining to graduate students that their medical insurance has been outsourced to a dubious provider so that premiums will not consume the totality of an assistantship. These and a thousand other seemingly minor faults add up to a surprisingly large negative sum, making the difference between a great and a merely aspirational institution.

Historians might wonder whether the history of Louisiana predisposes its people to accept compromise. Louisiana, after all, offered a safe (or, in the case of enslaved populations, hostile) haven to an astounding array of refugee groups, people who were surely glad to get the little bit of good that they could find in a cruel world. Louisiana found itself on the losing side of the civil war and continues as the ideal stage for dramatized conflict, whether the Alexandria Maneuvers prior to World War II or the mock combat of college football or the tragedies of 2005 and 2016 that filled television screens nationwide and that condensed an assortment of nationwide debates. One might daringly conjecture that Louisiana is a “national small concession,” the place that America at once overlooks and uses to play out its problems.

Educators need to be a little less tolerant, to get back in the habit of making judgments and occasionally uttering daringly critical statements. Just as any reasonable person would demand a clean napkin at a restaurant table, higher education professional should instruct both their leaders and their students to speak up: to enjoy the opportunity to correct rather than concede.



Kevin Cope

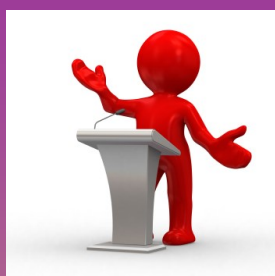
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# Higher Education Headliner



Dr. Jim Robinson



Rarely do the writers of this column have an opportunity to follow up with a previous “Higher Education Headliner,” but we were very fortunate to do so for our last time writing this particular column. Dr. Jim Robinson was kind enough to agree to a second interview. We first interviewed him in January of 2015, and the “Higher Education Headliner” appeared in Volume 6, Issue 4. Since then, Dr. Robinson has continued to demonstrate a passion for teaching and guiding his students toward success.

Dr. Robinson received an excellent grounding in education via his father, an international expert in the field of analytical chemistry, and through his father’s friends, some of whom were Nobel Laureates. When Dr. Robinson’s father took a job at LSU, he liked the climate in the area and suggested that his wife and children join him. What they thought would be a one year “vacation” ended up being a permanent move. They lived by the campus lake and by observing the effects of rain on the fish in the lake, his father was able to discover acid rain, a very important environmental find, especially in such a sensitive ecosystem as Louisiana’s. This move to Louisiana ended up not being problematic for Dr. Robinson in the least, as he attended Highland Elementary School, where most of his classmates’ parents were professors at LSU. As early as the fourth grade, Dr. Robinson knew that he would earn his PhD.

Dr. Robinson, now a professor at LSU Eunice, the chair of the LSUE Faculty Senate, and president of ALFS, is a life-long learner, and he tries to instill this quality in his students. One of the most important lessons he can teach his students is how to educate themselves. Many people will have to retrain for careers in their lifetimes and go through constant professional development. If an individual is a life-long learner, then that individual will be able to adapt to changes and will be more successful than a person who has not internalized such a valuable lesson. This is one of the reasons that Dr. Robinson likes teaching online classes, as the format helps students figure out how to educate themselves. For example, in one of his sociology classes taught online, there are twenty-four chapter tests. These can be taken as many times as the student needs in order to learn the material. Although Dr. Robinson gives students a timeline, they may take these exams whenever they choose. Such freedom allows students the opportunity to acquire time management skills, which are an invaluable part not just of academic life, but

of life in general. In fact, Dr. Robinson believes that, in the next twenty years, eighty-five percent or so of classes will be taught completely online.

The best part of Dr. Robinson’s job, however, is helping to facilitate a student’s success. In fact, he considers his greatest accomplishment the number of students who have gone on to four-year universities and graduate schools, earning their degrees. Their achievements keep him motivated, despite the long commute to the Eunice campus from Baton Rouge.

As for incoming faculty, he does have some words of wisdom to impart. The bottom line is to get one’s career started and prepare to devote up to seventy hours per week to one’s duties. This not only includes teaching duties, but those other duties that are required for one to advance along the tenure track. Yet, such hours should not scare a new faculty member off, especially at an institution like Eunice where the leadership is “very dynamic” and believes in shared governance. The community is close-knit and everyone is focused on making Eunice the best institution that it can be. Of course, like any other funding starved university, a nice infusion of cash would make that job a lot easier.

Building on the contributions of his father before him, Dr. Robinson has indeed provided a second generation of distinguished service to Louisiana’s higher education, even earning a coveted spot in the 2012 edition of *Worldwide Who’s Who*. His passion and verve for pedagogy is evident, and throughout the course of his career, which is dedicated to the expansion of knowledge and the betterment of the institutions that make up the LSU system, he has trained the next generation of Louisiana academics with humility and grace.

We were very honored to be able to interview Dr. Robinson this last time, and we are also grateful to have had the opportunity to highlight the achievements of many unsung heroes and heroines working tirelessly to improve Louisiana’s higher education system. We wish all our past “Higher Education Headliners” great success in their endeavors to help shape the educational opportunities for the next generation of Louisianans.

— By Amy Catania and Nate Friedman

## LSU SYSTEM FACULTY COUNCIL OPENS DIALOGUE WITH NEW SUPERVISORS

Over the last eight years, the five higher education management board units—the four system boards and the Board of Regents—have been composed of appointees from only one governor. The result: a stunning uniformity of opinion, experience, vocation, and ideology that has become the occasion of national amazement. At long last, the horrifying homogeneity of the not-so-assorted supervisors and regents is ebbing before the tide of political diversity. In the case of the LSU Board of Supervisors, already twenty percent of the Board emanates from the Edward administration. Recognizing an opportunity for change, the LSU System Council of Faculty Advisors, the parliament of all LSU campus Faculty Senate Presidents, opened a dialogue with the three new LSU Board members (Glenn Armentor; James Williams; and Valencia Sarpy-Jones). On May 5<sup>th</sup>, the Council members huddled with the three newbies in an attempt to acquaint them with the history of Board-Faculty relations as well as with an avalanche of problems that had been rolling over LSU and its faculty for the last decade. The first fruit of this unprecedented interaction: a list of needs for the LSU campuses that is prioritized by anticipated cost and difficulty. The three new Supervisors have also agreed to discuss the initial faculty-Supervisor conversation with their colleague Supervisors and to meet again with the Council of Faculty Advisors.



New LSU Supervisor  
Glenn Armentor

# Tiger's Den



## SUMMER CAMP

LSU UREC Tiger's Den is a recreational experience that provides fun and comprehensive camp programming for children ages 6 to 12. Each session is filled with sport activities, structured games, arts and crafts, and interactive educational activities.

Pre-Registration (LSU Affiliates): Feb. 1    Open Registration: Feb. 15

Prices: LSU Affiliates \$160, Community \$180

*Per Child / Per Week*

Session	Dates	Register By
Future Tigers	5/29 - 6/2	5/24
Under the Sea	6/5 - 6/9	5/31
Sports Extravaganza	6/12 - 6/16	6/7
Zootopia	6/19 - 6/23	6/14
Adventure Awaits	6/26 - 6/30	6/21
Water Week*	7/5 - 7/7	6/28
Reality Game Show Mania	7/10 - 7/14	7/5
Mad Scientist	7/17 - 7/21	7/12
Backyard Fun	7/24 - 7/28	7/19
Never-Ending Summer	7/31 - 8/4	7/26

\*Prorated price for holiday

Ages 6 - 12 | For registration and more information, please visit [lsu.edu/urec](http://lsu.edu/urec)

**LSU** | University Recreation



## 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,

Your column last month, about the advantages and disadvantages of renting or owning a home in retirement, got me thinking about my own long-range plans. Like many academic people, I'm accustomed to living everywhere for a while and nowhere in particular for long. I don't have a "home town," I've worked in a dozen universities, and I've always believed that university professionals are hard-core transients. I'm spoiled; I like to have access to museums, concerts, restaurants, and whatever else one can find in a fine-living venue. I'm therefore thinking about going all the way in the quest for mobility and spending my retired, golden years abroad. Maybe I won't go to a Caribbean beach, but maybe I'll find some low-cost European town where clever foreigners are still welcome (or at least where I can get decent baked goods).



My question: Based on your experience—as someone who knows seemingly millions of past, present, and future retirees—how much of a hassle is it for a retired American academic to live overseas? Is medical insurance a huge problem? Are the difficulties in piping annuity or similar retirement payouts abroad? Do people end up losing a lot of money in moving and otherwise making the transition? Is real estate in the world's sunny or cultivated spots totally out-of-sight cost-wise? Do you think it would work for me, or am I chasing a pipe dream and setting myself up for calamity?

Thanks, A G—you're better than the cat's pajamas, you're the cat's tuxedo!

Your fan,  
Lawrence in Ruston

### The Response

Dear Lawrence,

Glad you are a fan. Just my luck I have one fan and he is preparing to leave the country.

O.K., so the United States is a great country but it is not the only good place to live. Just like any major investment, your retirement location should be heavily researched. List your basic needs, then your desires and really review many locations. What is great for vacation might not be right for everyday living. So we need to look at some of the parameters you have set for me....

**1. Health Care.....**Well actually there are a number of countries that do it just as well as the U.S. and quite a bit cheaper. The U.S. ranks 41<sup>st</sup> in affordability and number 23 in overall quality. Austria ranks number three in low cost and number 1 in overall quality. Germany is 22<sup>nd</sup> in affordability and number 10 in overall quality. Most of those countries have insurance rates that are low by U.S. standards. Hungary, Argentina, France, and the Czech Republic all rank better in affordability and as good as or better than the U.S. in overall quality. Italy's average health care costs are about half that of the U.S. and rank very closely in quality.

Many U.S. health insurance plans only cover emergencies outside the country, (such as LSUFirst), but some like Blue Cross and Blue Shield will reimburse you for out of country care. In most of the coun-

tries listed you can also purchase insurance through the government or private sector at affordable rates. Panama is a country that gives pensioners easy access to permanent residency and significant discounts on most purchases including insurance.

**2. Moving money around the world....** This one is easy. Many American's have accounts and investments abroad and many international residents bank and invest in the U.S.. Money no longer has boundaries. The United States does banking better than anyone else in the world. Deposits are insured, currency is widely accepted, and even its most risky markets are relatively stable. Those retirees that I know who live abroad keep the great bulk of their assets in the United States and draw on them as needed. Throughout the Caribbean and Latin America the America dollar is widely accepted. Generally, exchange rates may vary but private transfers where legal will often give you a better return. Where private exchange of currency is illegal you will probably get an even better exchange but there might be some legal risks involved. Unless I was living on Grand Cayman Island (which has a cost of living 75% higher than Baton Rouge) and I could shelter all assets from taxes I think I would leave my funds in the U.S. and just live abroad. Financial firms and banks will make arrangements for periodic transfers at low or no costs for larger account holders.

—Continued on page 8

# Guest Column

## CLCU ALFS Meeting April 6 at Northwestern University

Dr. Jim Henderson, President of the UL system, gave some opening remarks welcoming participants and attendees. The ALFS president, Dr. Robinson provided another fractured fairy tale to demonstrate the need for shared governance.

Kevin Richard of the Department of Revenue provided the “Keynote address” which amounted to: Louisiana has no money so we will expand the tax base to include on things like cable, landscaping, massage parlors, escort services. Additionally the state may unify tax collection, eliminate some deductions, and eliminate the federal income tax deduction and various other revenue enhancing measures.

As always, Commissioner Rallo provided a very informative presentation, talking about the “cheating economy” (takemycourse.com), bulldozer parents (not helicopter anymore), and the Title IX mandated voluntary survey with less than a 5% response rate. He noted that 66% of state money for higher education goes back to the state through unfunded mandates. The proposed governor’s budget includes not just a 2.5% reduction, but a mandate to hold between 2% – 4% for the “rainy day fund – which goes back to the state’s general fund. He advocated removing all statutory dedications & then prioritize spending accordingly. He also wanted tuition fee autonomy, efficiencies through institutions and systems collaboration in purchasing, increased classroom rigor, and free E books through LOUIS. He additionally recommended policies on dual enrollment to insure quality faculty, qualified students (some would not be eligible for university enrollment), and compensation.

The State legislative panel included Larry Bagley (district 7), Terry Brown (district 22), and Gerald Long (district 31). Once again we heard how the state has no money. Additionally we heard (from my perspective), campaigning – how they support education followed by how they “made it”: milking cows, walking barefoot, washing dishes to get through university, and additionally, they only get paid \$18,500/year As elections cost more than their salary, legislatures are dependent on lobbyists – which determines legislation. The faculty panel included Christof Stumpf, Ph.D. from the LSU system, Thomas Miller, Ph.D. from the Southern system, Matthew A. Butkus, Ph.D. from the University of Louisiana system, Woukeenia Cousins, Ph.D. from the Louisiana Community and Technical College system and Steve Shelburne, Ph.D. from the Private Institutions. The topics covered included funding, shared governance and changing technology.

A couple of years ago, I read that Louisiana is 27<sup>th</sup> in taxes and fees (ex. you will pay \$25.00 to file state taxes electronically or nothing if you prepare them by hand and mail them in – for which the state has to pay someone to enter the data). Secondly, Louisiana is number one in the **world** in incarceration rate. A majority of inmates are housed in

“for profit” institutions costing \$182 million / year. Sheriffs receive \$24.39 / day per inmate. Louisiana’s prison population doubled in the last two decades while the homicide rate in New Orleans leads the nation in homicides (Cindy Chang: Times Picayune, April 6, 2016). Historically, when one includes all costs (prison construction is expensive), it costs less to send a person to Harvard than to prison – and those attending college pay taxes when they get out, yet ¾ of those leaving prison are re-arrested within 5 years. Thirdly, Louisiana’s flagship university is 3<sup>rd</sup> from the bottom nationally in funding. This indicates the economic capacity of the state and the priorities in spending it by the legislature. Shared governance involves the degree to which administration takes into consideration the ideas and concerns of workers. A quick example involves a local paper plant with a new high speed process to produce paper but ended up with white paper with a brownish sheen – worthless. In desperation they contracted to have it analyzed molecule by molecule. The consultant started his work by talking to the workers on the line, only to find that, according to one of the seasoned workers, that the rollers spun so fast that they “really heated up”. The paper was being singed, which had top administrators asked for input from these workers, rather than only giving directives, the company would have saved both time and money in their paper production.

Changing technology has brought about new concerns. Intellectual property rights of online materials should be viewed the same as books and articles. The material generated should be under the control of its creator. When usurped, the information may not necessarily be kept current – a particular problem in medicine and fast moving fields. Yet the material may remain associated with that professor. Secondly, online instruction will change the nature of universities and colleges. Less costly adjuncts can be hired part time from across the nation to replace tenured faculty as they leave or retire. This may reduce the influence of existing faculty on new hiring, promotions, tenure and shared governance.

Dr. Hadel presented a program that they have just initiated at Dillard University intended to make students more aware of their lack of impulse control they exhibit and the consequences following.

A CLCU Trailblazer award was presented to Dr. Daniel Reneau. Dr. Wainwright was elected president of the CLCU organization for 2018.

—Written by Dr. James Robinson, LSU Eunice

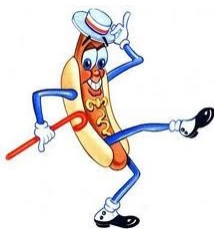


ALFS President James Robinson admires new LSUA signage



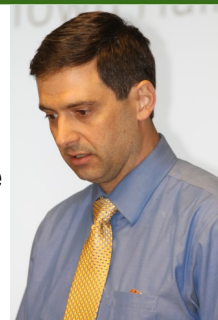
## HOT DOG DEBATE TOPS LSU BOARD PRIORITIES

Those who had thought that controversies over the pertinence of sausage to politics (or its lesser cousin, academic administration) had ended with the Anthony Wiener scandals (if those scandals ever ended) would have revised their opinions after the May meeting of the LSU Board of Supervisors. During morning and afternoon meetings that, in the amalgam, lasted approximately four hours, a full eighty minutes, or thirty-three percent of the effort, expired in debates over a proposed contract for control of the concession stands in the various Tiger-Town stadia. Despite the fact that, if not Rome, then academic funding is burning to the ground, LSU's overly vast ensemble of gubernatorial appointees—sixteen in all—spent the bulk of their time puzzling out who would dish up the Fiddle-Fiddle and other typical ball-game delicacies. Very far in the background of this debate remained the question as to why LSU, which has food innovators and food scientists and food connoisseurs in no short supply, seems unable to maintain quality food service without help from multinational corporations such as Aramark. Said Aramark comes off as the big winner in a ten-year deal that remains somewhat short on incentives for good performance during a period equal to the favorite captivity term for Louisiana leadership (Edwin Edwards and Ray Nagin being the best-known members of the jailhouse decade club). One can only wonder whether the Supervisors, were they to hear that faculty spent one-third of their time debating the feeding of fans, would continue to regard LSU as a premium institution.



## BORDEN REVEALS NOVEMBER 2 D-DAY

Thin and dispersed, the population of Louisiana is hard to mobilize. Whether facing down the military in its attempts to incinerate toxic propellant in Minden or whether battling the barge cleaning plant proposed for Baton Rouge, faculty activists have a hard time convincing people separated by hundreds of miles that they should cooperate in a common cause. That problem is all the more acute for Louisiana faculty, who, strung out across three dozen campuses, seldom achieve the level of communication required to achieve what are, in fact, their mutual goals.

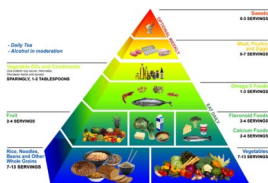


Jacob Borden unveils statewide forum plan

Into this communications and action breach is rushing Jacob Borden, an ambitious novice activist on the faculty at McNeese State University. During the recent Alexandria Summit Meeting, Borden unveiled a plan for a statewide day of dialogue and discussion. Borden proposes that, on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, faculty governance units throughout the state organize a panoply of town halls, forums, seminars, and similar public outreach activities. Either individually or in small regional groups, faculty senates around the state should simultaneously engage both leaders and citizens in robust public, preferably on-campus discussions of education and related issues. Already, a steering committee has formed; more details will be coming!

## GRAMBLING, PENNINGTON—AND COKE

It is easy enough to read the newspapers and therein to see the obvious social ills—violence, crime, broken families—that beset Louisiana. Less flashy among the evils that scour our people is the polarization of nutrition across our population. Quality food and wise dietary practices correlate with the economic and educational status of groups, settlements, and generations. Sadly, wet Louisiana hosts more food deserts—zones without access to quality food or the provisions required for a balanced diet—than most any other state. How lamentable it is, then, that Grambling State University should decide to finance the repair of its beleaguered football field with money from Coca-Cola, America's number-one purveyor of intensely sweetened, nutritionally worthless beverages. Under the deal, approved at the recent University of Louisiana System meeting, Grambling will lease its field to the Grambling Foundation, which would then lease the field back to Grambling, with payments coming from "capital improvement contributions" (i.e., "cash") delivered by Coca Cola. Given that athletic programs are intended to promote the soundness of body that undergirds a sound mind, given that the state hosts a superb biomedical research campus (Pennington), given that the last director of that institute has gone on to serve as the science director for the American Diabetes Association, and given that soft drinks play a role in the poor overall public health of Louisiana, this arrangement looks just a little too sweet.



VS



# THE Pharmacy AT LSU

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- We can fill for your family members as well!

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FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK: [facebook.com/lsurx](https://www.facebook.com/lsurx)

Pharmacy Manager: Toni Scott ([tscot62@lsu.edu](mailto:tscot62@lsu.edu))



### 3. **Difficulties in moving or making the transition....**

There are plenty of places outside the 50 states that are easy to move to, affordable to own property in and likely to provide a lovely lifestyle. However, remember it is not the U.S. and the same rules and culture do not exist. Americans living outside the United States should stay home if they hope to replicate their native land. Still some lovely cities that could provide great opportunities for retirement and which have awesome bakeries are places like Prague, Budapest, Lisbon, and Warsaw which all have cost of living averages at least 40% less than Baton Rouge. Their suburban and neighboring country towns are also quite wonderful. How about bucolic....Ravenna (not Ravenna, Ohio.. that is a suburb of Akron , this one is in Italy) which is 14% cheaper to live or if you want a larger city then Rome, Barcelona, or Vienna which still averages out around 9-10% less than Baton Rouge. The beauty of European residency is also the connection to the world's cultural centers via relatively inexpensive train rides.

How about South America... Buenos Aires is 14% cheaper to live in than Baton Rouge and in addition to having Spanish, Italian, French and German influences they also have TANGO!

4. **Sunshine...you want sunshine.** How about living in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is still technically the U.S. but international in its flavor. It is 4% cheaper than Baton Rouge; your health insurance will still work, they have Chase Banks on every corner, only use American currency, they have many beautiful beaches, a great music scene, great rum, and they love baseball!

A little further from home but still Latin, could put you in Panama, Belize, Acapulco, Cancun, Roatan Island in Honduras, Montego Bay, Jamaica and Costa Rica where the real estate costs range from 11% to 38% cheaper than Baton Rouge.

If you want adventures in paradise, well Michener and I might recommend a Pacific paradise like Fiji. Fiji is around 35% cheaper overall to live in than here in the "red stick."

5. **Making your money stretch...** A rule of thumb to follow when looking for an affordable place to live outside your home country might be to look at where older British ex-pats congregate. Usually on government pensions these folks are looking to avoid taxes, stretch their money, escape bad weather, but enjoy life.

**My personal recommendation....takes you a bit off the beaten path.**

If I was going somewhere outside the U.S. to live and I wanted sunshine, a vibrant culture, English speakers, accessible and good healthcare, dependable financial systems, and affordable housing I would choose **Malta** on the European side of the Atlantic. This lovely island chain nation is a short journey to all the wonderful venues around the Mediterranean Sea, with a good political system, quality banking and affordable real estate and at least 25% less expensive to live in than Baton Rouge. They also have great bread and cookies.

Runner-ups might be ...

In the Western hemisphere Costa Rica and Panama have a great deal to offer. In Asia, I think perhaps Phuket, Thailand might be a good place to kick back and enjoy growing older but not necessarily growing up. There the dollar and a party last a long time.

My number one international choice **not** to live in would be Canada. Our neighbors to the North endure terrible cuisine, weird football, crummy beer, 11-month winters, and a population so annoyingly polite you eventually hope to meet a New Yorker for some rude relief. While their health care is often boasted about, it is not really as good as most European venues and the entire country is so boring you probably would want to die young to escape. OK, OK, please no angry letters that was just a joke. I am sure Canada is fine for those of us who enjoy clubbing baby seals and eating cheese curds and gravy on our French Fries.

A good Internet resources to start with can be found at <http://www.investopedia.com/retirement/best-countries-to-retire/>

While that website agrees with me and list Mexico, Panama, Spain, Portugal, Costa Rica, and Malta in their top ten spots to retire to they also name Nicaragua and Malaysia. Both of those two countries are quite affordable but in my book not suitable at this time for Americans to live in for the long term. Health care is spotty, financially their system is undependable, politics are an issue, and overall security is not as strong. While parts of Mexico are certainly questionable regarding security those are generally not the areas of that country that retirees flock toward. Cancun, Acapulco, Cozumel are generally safer than New Orleans. Communities that rely heavily on tourist and retiree dollars tend to have the best security in Mexico.

Wherever you end up I am sure it will be better than Ottawa.

## CAPTIVE TIGER FORUM MOVES TO AUTUMN

Friends of sentient creatures rejoiced on learning that the LSU A&M Office of Academic Affairs would co-sponsor, along with the LSU A&M Faculty Senate, a forum on the topic of animals in captivity, with special emphasis on the use of animals for entertainment, iconic, trademarking, and totemic purposes. Originally slated for late spring of this year, the forum fell victim to delay upon the strange discovery that the various experts who had been nominated for service as panelists were themselves in a kind of temporal captivity. It seems that the topic of captive animals has become so popular that said candidates were all locked in to heavily booked schedules. In the hope of producing an informative event, faculty and administration organizers have decided to postpone the forum until the early autumn semester. Given that the Tiger Mike habitat had been slated for a renovation with a completion date in April, it appears that the forum will convene before any new large animals arrive on the big Baton Rouge campus.



## EMAIL FLAP COMES TO HAPPY ENDING AT LSU

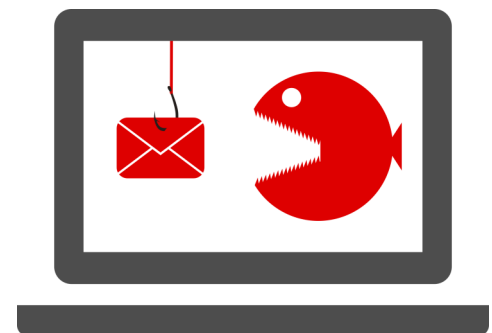
When email first entered common experience in the early 1990s, a few naive colleagues, untutored in the dimensionlessness of electronic emissions, wondered where they might find an envelope suitable for this new form of communication. Once that email wrapper was opened, a thousand evil genii flew out, leaving us with a perverse heritage of viruses, phishing attacks, frauds, and hacks. IT Service personnel in public institutions face an endless task when it comes to defending academic computers against malevolent forces, including political groups eager to pester controversial professors with “freedom of information” demands. A few weeks ago, a flap broke out on the LSU A&M campus when a draft plan for an email policy slipped through the transistorized cracks and came into public circulation. On discovery of the dramatic if not drastic measures needed to protect IT infrastructure, several faculty and indeed several departments protested, perhaps unaware that the proposed policy was only preliminary. Fortunately, the flap has now fluttered away, thanks to intervention from the Office of Academic Affairs and the injection of the draft policy into the normal channels for policy approval, channels which ensure extensive evaluation and input from the academic community. While the policy ripens, colleagues should continue to take care when clicking on links embedded within email or in responding to unfamiliar email epistles.

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# Lifestyle Feature

## MAGAZINES FOR LEARNED LEISURE

As the academic year winds down and as even hard-headed professionals consider the possibility of a vacation, the prospect of what was once called “leisure reading” or even “summer reading” opens before the amazed eye. Nowadays, the media world, whether the book reviewers on National Public Radio or the geni who fill the weekend hours of Book TV, remains preoccupied with the standard, multi-hundred-page hardbound volume (or its electronic facsimile in the buzzing world of tablet readers). Fifty years after the last days of Bennett Cerf, the idea if not the reality of the blockbuster book or the life story or the great American novel still enjoys considerable traction. In their monumentality, books draw awe, but they may not make for the best light summer diversion. For that role, the traditional magazine, with its limited page count, its spangling of pictures, and its focused as well as accessible articles, is eminently suitable.

Academe being a lifestyle as well as a calling and an institution, university professionals never completely stop learning. What they seek, when lounging on the beach or pausing from trampling over mountains, is an occasional recreational exposure to a branch of learning for which they need not be accountable. An expert in textiles may not want to read about flax production, having gotten a fill of that while in pursuit of tenure, but that same fatigued learner may relish reading about botany, recognizing that he or she will never need to fill out an annual report relating to achievements in the study of flowers. What follows is a small slate of America’s best magazines: periodical publications that still emerge in paper form, that contain the best that is known and thought in the world, but that convert study into occasional recreation for educated persons in all walks of life and belonging to all affiliation groups.

One of the first tiers in the pyramid of survival requirements is that of shelter, and so it is that our first selection is *Dwell* magazine. *Dwell* popped into existence at the turn of the millennium as a popular alternative to both highbrow design publications such as *Architectural Digest* and traditional women’s “home” magazines such as *House and Garden* or *Better Homes and Gardens*. The genius of *Dwell* abides in its reduction of esoteric aesthetic movements—mostly of the minimalist variety—into renditions of a kicky, splashy, happy lifestyle. *Dwell* has played an important role in upgrading American design sensibility and in steering decorators away from clumsy “American” and “Mediterranean” (or worse) styles, all in a non-threatening way. True, *Dwell* has had its low periods. During the first decade of the current century, it went through several years of black, white, and grey ultra-modernism mania, but the periodical has shown an amazing ability to right itself and to explore all the registers of design. One can also become a little tired of the endless pictures of and stories about seemingly easily affluent people who seem to do little other spend a great deal of money on furniture, yet the lightness of touch and the clarity of the imagery in the



magazine removes some of this onus. *Dwell* also provides myriad routes to suppliers for almost every design, decoration, or even home repair item that one might need—and, with its bold photographs, it is easy to read on the bright beach!

*Dwell* is about interiors, but our next selection, *Sky and Telescope*, soars beyond even the outdoors into the expansive unknown realms of outer space. *Sky and Telescope* comes with a heritage longer than the focal length of a research telescope. Beginning in the early twentieth century as two magazines—*Sky and Telescope*—this merged publication offers a mix of articles appealing both to those who wonder at the heavens and those who enjoy grinding lenses (and, after all, summer’s beach is made largely of silicon!). Modern astronomy is not altogether unlike college football in that it has advanced and enlarged to such a degree that ordinary citizens seldom practice it. On one hand, *Sky and Telescope* does a marvelous job of presenting sophisticated but prose (rather than mathematical) renderings of advanced cosmological research; on the other hand, it weeds out the pathways that lead ambitious amateurs into the domes and around to the eyepieces. Like *Dwell*, *Sky and Telescope* abounds in spectacular photography as well as accessible guides to observing. Integrating the narrative with the technical, it includes an assortment of historical articles showing how scientists moved from the techniques and instruments of Galileo and his cohort to the deep-sky probes of our time. A carousel of light and the last stop for photons that began their journey to earth millions of years in the past, *Sky and Telescope* is an enlightening experience.

In the area of publications concerned with that which is above the ground, another, perhaps more specialized entrant is Bonnier Publications’ *Flying* magazine. Now in its ninetieth year of continuous publication, *Flying* boasts an archive dating back to the time of Jackie Cochran and Amelia Earhart. Today, it is the only popular magazine that covers the full spectrum of aviation, from the adventures of private jet pilots to the foibles of the wizened snuff-dipper repairing his aged Piper Cub and on to the exploits of Alaskan bush pilots. *Flying* abounds with popular recurring features and columns such as *Never Again*, the monthly account of recovery from an amazing variety of perilous airborne situations. *Flying* is also at pains to demythologize aviation: to show the multitudinous ways in which even a modestly prosperous amateur may take to the air and consort with the eagles. Aviation, although an all-year avocation, is at its best in summer, when few joys rival those of sailing through the air in the left seat of the cockpit. True, *Flying* can be a bit visually melodramatic, with its occasionally overly masculine fuselages zooming and zipping across its pages and with what aviators might call its “unusual attitudes.” *Flying* editors, however, have gone to great lengths to reach out to new populations and to create an aviation journal that invites as well as impresses all.

—Continued on page 13

## Institutional Repository Open for Business

LSU joined the ranks of many other universities when it launched the institutional repository **LSU Digital Commons** last year. ORED and the Libraries are collaborating to fund and manage the online repository.

The LSU Digital Commons institutional repository is designed to showcase all the university's intellectual and scholarly output. This means faculty may archive and make accessible to a global audience journal articles, presentations, pre-prints, working papers, creative works, datasets, etc. Departments and units may also add content such as newsletters, white papers, conferences and events, and student work. Works in LSU Digital Commons are indexed and ranked

GoogleScholar and network of institution-

As of May 2017, LSU contains over 16,630 been downloaded The Graduate theses and disserta-

migrated to LSU Digital Commons in January and over 7,000 dissertations were added in March. LSU Digital Commons is home to the *Journal of Latin American Geography* and will soon be home to the journal *Communications on Stochastic Analysis*. As noted in a previous newsletter, it is also host to the entire Faculty Senate newsletters and resolutions archive.

The Libraries can assist any LSU affiliate with adding materials to LSU Digital Commons, providing usage and download data, and addressing copyright questions. Visit <http://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/> or contact [ir@lsu.edu](mailto:ir@lsu.edu) for more information.

Content Courtesy of Gina Costello  
[gcoste1@lsu.edu](mailto:gcoste1@lsu.edu)



high in Google and are linked to a global al repositories.

Digital Commons documents that have over 64,700 times. School's electronic tions database was ital Commons in Jan- historical disserta-

## BALLINGER, BUTKUS, AND BORDEN TOP ALFS-ALEXANDRIA BILL

April 29, 2017 will surely go down in faculty governance history as a legendary day. The reason: On that date, not only did the Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates (ALFS) host a spectacularly successful “Alexandria Summit Meeting” on the campus of LSU of Alexandria (LSUA), but it also embarked on a new direction. To date, the Alexandria Summit has limited its selection of keynote speakers to top-level decision-makers such as system presidents, campus chancellors, and major public officials. The April meeting, however, emphasized the hands-on and the constructive, with the buoyant Andrea Ballinger, the new LSU A&M Chief Technical Officer, unveiling a vision of the IT Services future, analyzing the services that ITS can provide to faculty members, and promoting shared governance of university information operations. Additionally, Ballinger astonished attendees with tales of the challenges faced by IT systems and of the threats that hammer at university computers no less than 2,500 times per day.

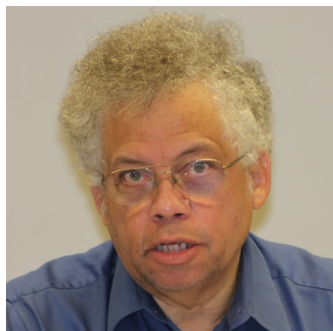
Following Ballinger’s personal plenary presentation, McNeese’s Matthew Butkus and Jacob Borden offered a keynote workshop in which they reviewed, step-by-step, the procedures, techniques, and secrets pertaining to the organizing of high-profile public events. Renowned for their precedent-setting “Town Hall” featuring prominent legislators, Butkus and Borden, like Vipin Menon before them, have compiled a formidable record for the fostering of public engagement even despite occasional opposition from administrators. With a high level of granularity and with occasional wit and humor, they explained exactly what to do, from the selection and placement of chairs to the recruiting of prominent personalities, to create events that will place the faculty in the public eye and that will advance the cause of public higher education.

The program was rounded out by presentations and blitz discussions by talented ALFS members. Librarian, blogger, columnist, and media personality Dayne Sherman (Southeastern Louisiana University) offered a wonderfully ferocious view of higher education from the perspective of “the last generalist” while proposing an assortment of initiatives described elsewhere in this *Newsletter*. Sonya Hester (Southern University Shreveport) and Brooks Ellwood (LSU A&M) orchestrated a group discussion on future directions for ALFS and on the sharing of program planning tasks as the ALFS and Alexandria movements grow. Matthew Ware (Grambling State) and Brian Salvatore (LSU Shreveport) guided conferees toward the development of a proposal for a statewide faculty panel, per a recommendation from former Governor’s Chief of Staff Ben Nevers. And, of course, LSUA catering chief Charles Casrill provided another litany of delicacies!

All of this was accomplished in the five hours of the Alexandria assembly. The next Alexandria Summit will take place in September; very likely, the Governor will be the keynote speaker. The date will be announced soon!



Andrea Ballinger at ALFS



Matthew Ware leads an ALFS discussion



Bernard Gallagher speaks at ALFS



Joe Mirando responds at ALFS

—Continued from page 10

After an airborne day, an appetite ensues, and so it is that our fourth selection in this review of summer diversionary reading is the perdurable *Bon Appétit*, the distinguished survivor among the two great legacy food magazines (the other, now out of regular publication, being *Gourmet*). The bookstores and kiosks and grocery aisles are piled high with food magazines aimed at diverse audiences, but only *Bon Appétit* consistently inhabits the goldilocks zone of the culinary world: the upper-middle-to-lower-upper-class professionals and near-professionals committed to a combination of elegance, trendiness, and taste. *Bon Appétit* is the most recipe-rich of food magazines. Competitors such as *Saveur* or *The Food Network Magazine* or *Cook's Illustrated* devote too many pages to celebrities and lifestyles rather than fine food or feature too many shortcuts. Additionally, *Bon Appétit* offers a nice layout in which food-related stories are presented in con-

**bon appétit**



sistent blocks while recipes congregate either at the end of articles or in the back pages. An especially appealing feature is a guide to specialty tools or ingredients used in the various recipes. *Bon Appétit* has successfully broken through the French atmosphere of *haute cuisine* by mixing stories about high-level ethnic and fusion cuisine

with more traditional explorations of European dining traditions. Better still, subscribers receive a daily slate of delectable recipes, making experimentation easy, frequent, and doable in the vacation context.

And what might be the fifth selection in this smorgasbord of readable dainties? No less than the alumni magazine of your *alma mater* college or graduate school. True, alumni magazines can be daunting as they unveil success story after success story and leave one feeling left behind in the endless parade of success. On the other hand, they provide, as does a vacation, a new perspective on one's own employer-institution, helping one make comparisons and judgments and also raising questions about the alleged uniqueness of this, that, or the other campus, problem, or goal. Such magazines are filled with advertisements for vacation and recreational activities—advertisements that tell the real story about what alumni do with their time and that stand in tickling contrast to the printed pageants of prosperity in which alumni magazines specialize. And you don't even have to pay for it, for your college or university will send it to you, wherever you are, even if you are summering on Mount Everest (just be sure to return the donation envelope with foreign postage paid!).

Enjoy the summer! Or at least read up about it!



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Membership Fee: \$10



## LSU SUES GOUGING PUBLISHER BUT HIDES FROM LIMELIGHT

One of the happiest and at the same time puzzling developments in the history of academic heroism occurred in late April, when LSU A&M filed suit against publishing giant Elsevier, which has lately earned international criticism, even infamy, for its rapacious pricing practices. The unwilling poster-child for the open-access movement, Elsevier has drawn criticism for its use of minimally compensated professorial labor to review scholarly studies for which it subsequently charges those same (and many other) academics substantial access fees. The LSU dispute centers around an attempt to double-charge the university for subscription databases. Elsevier contends that the Veterinary School should purchase its own independent subscriptions, while LSU A&M contends that its campus-wide agreement covers the users among the veterinarians. Heading straight to the 19<sup>th</sup> State Judicial Court—the same venue that is hearing the hushed-up lawsuit against the retirement plans and their providers—LSU A&M is asking the court to unblock the embargoed LSU access to Elsevier publications and to pay compensation for the havoc induced by the intellectual property blockade.



LSU A&M has already won plaudits from the scholarly and the library worlds. A [write-up](#) in *Inside Higher Ed* presents the university in gleaming gladiatorial armor and mentions ovations from the Association of Research Libraries, the premier fraternity of academic information caches. Which leaves us wondering why LSU has been so shy about an initiative that could easily establish the big Louisiana campus the belle of the bibliographical ball. Why are Louisiana institutions so nervous about doing controversial deeds when it is boundary-breaking behavior that makes universities great? Where is the publicity campaign that puts LSU at the head of library systems fighting for the unimpaired flow of information?

## UL ATHLETIC SALARY CASH REGISTER KEEPS RINGING

Public discussion of collegiate athletics and its finances tends to center on the big D-1 schools with near-professional football programs and gigantic television contracts. A few such programs, including that at LSU, come close to making money; all of them certainly produce a plenitude of prosperity for an assortment of non-academic media moguls. Less visible in the big-time gridiron world are the myriad athletic programs at regional, comprehensive, and plain old beleaguered institutions. In Louisiana, the cumulative loss by NCAA-affiliated athletic enterprises is in the neighborhood of \$45,000,000.00, more than six times the \$7,000,000.00 purportedly “given back” by the LSU A&M Athletic Department (yielding a net statewide loss of roughly \$37,500,000.00, enough to give a six percent raise to every employee in the University of Louisiana System).



Despite these gigantic losses and despite the dire financial need of Louisiana higher education, Louisiana's higher education leadership continues going to the cash box whenever a new coach is needed. This month, the magic number is \$90K. UL System schools handed out at least three \$90K contracts—one to the Grambling State Women's Basketball Coach; one to an Associate Head Football Coach at Northwestern; and one to the Women's Basketball coach at Southeastern. Additionally, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette dispensed a \$295,000.00 annual contract to its Athletic Director. By contemporary standards, a salary of \$90,000.00 (which, with benefits and assorted perquisites such as a “vehicle allowance,” costs something closer to \$150,000.00) may not seem enormous. Salary data for UL System professors, however, provide an alarming contrast. The most affluent of the UL campuses, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, delivers an average salary of \$64,000.00 to its top-ranking academic personnel (full professors with research duties) while instructor salaries hover in the mid-forties. UL campuses thus value their most experienced and wisest faculty members at roughly seventy percent of the rate at which they value a middle-tier coach. Is it any wonder that legislators have their suspicions about higher education institutions?



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## SOUTHERN FACULTY CAN'T CRACK DOCUMENTARY CEILING

Most everyone is familiar with the term “glass ceiling,” which connotes an invisible barrier to the promotion and advancement of persons in a certain dis-empowered group, caste, or class. Louisiana universities top this devilishly transparent structure with what might be called a “documentary ceiling.” All of the four systems have established a compensation level at which a new appointment requires promulgation of pointment and management

At LSU A&M, that astounding quar-Southern, a mod-These ceilings” are two-documentary one hand, they ceilings in that trators are reluc-



aries that, in going above these strata, require Board approval; on the other hand, Board members, when looking down from their high perches, may look the other way and need not focus on sometimes questionable salary favors that are beneath a specified threshold. What is perhaps most revealing about the March 31<sup>st</sup> Southern University Board meeting agenda and minutes is that not a single faculty member appears on the list of salary actions requiring Board approval. On the admittedly short list we find an associate dean; a second associate dean; an athletic director; an interim coach; and a director of a physical plant. Words such as “physics,” “music,” “history,” or “literature” (as in “professor of”) are nowhere to be found.

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## POP-UP WORKDAY FORUMS REFRESH ENTERPRISE SYSTEM DEBATE

LSU System Faculty members who have attempted a business process, whether travel expense reimbursement or purchasing or appointment of assistants, have run into and usually up against Workday, the new business enterprise system implemented by LSU with minimal preparation and testing. For months, faculty have complained and often howled while faculty governance activists have arranged forum after workshop after tutorial in an attempt to make Workday workable.



Probably the greatest and most surprising chapter in the Workday saga is the new series of faculty-led forums aimed at the discussion and resolution of Workday-induced obstacles to research productivity. In the April issue, the *Newsletter* reported on Professor Tracey Rizzuto’s startling survey concerning the adverse effect of Workday on faculty initiatives. Now Rizzuto and her colleagues have inspired a groundbreaking series of workshops in which faculty explain to administrators what has gone wrong and elicit solutions from the leadership cadre. Amusingly, advertisements for the workshops feature dramatic, insurgency-inspired imagery—for example, well-dressed professionals kicking computers to smithereens. Congratulations to all faculty involved in this robust action to regain control of the professional work environment.

## TIP OF THE MONTH: MAUS AND HOFFMAN

Have you ever had that secret desire to dress in the manner of Mr. and Mrs. Howell, the comic plutocrats in the cast of the campy 1960s sitcom *Gilligan’s Island*? Has that urge been accompanied with the desire to acquire either Thurston’s or Luvi’s persona in a truly quality way that is neither costume-like nor merely cosmetic? If so, betake yourself immediately to the [online catalogue](#) of Maus and Hoffman, a Florida-based e-tailer specializing in upper-end casual clothes for a slightly hyperbolic, unashamedly imaginary world of yachts, croquet, and Pimm’s on the lawn.



Maus & Hoffman, a little known clothing treasure.



Maus and Hoffman is especially strong in the area of lightly comical but ultra-designed more-than-business casual shirts, shirts featuring astounding motifs and patterns, whether drawn from vintage aviation or 1960s ski resorts or an upgraded rendering of the regimental strip tradition. It is perhaps the last bastion of the fine linen pastel sport coat. Maus and Hoffman also excels in women’s clothing. Its carefully curated collection of Liberty of London blouses and of Swiss and Italian women’s wear always leaves the browser smiling. No one can dress 24/7/365 in the Maus and Hoffman collection without looking insanely festive, yet the interspersing of a few of their items in the wardrobe makes the difference between sartorial pedantry and peppy proficiency as a post-preppy. Set aside a few hundred and splurge on that one piece that is sure to state a conversation!

Maus and Hoffman specializes in festive top-quality resort apparel



# **LSU TO HOST SPRING 2017 MIDWEST MACROECONOMICS CONFERENCE**



**MAY 19-21, 2017  
BUSINESS EDUCATION COMPLEX**

## **KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

### **JOHN HALTIWANGER**

**DISTINGUISHED UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR AT UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND  
PROF. HALTIWANGER HAS MADE SEMINAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN RESEARCH ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP, BUSINESS  
DYNAMICS, AND JOB CREATION AND DESTRUCTION IN THE US.**

### **MARIA CRISTINA DI NARDI**

**PROFESSOR AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON  
SENIOR ECONOMIST AT THE FEDERAL RESERVE BANK IN CHICAGO  
PROF. DINARDI IS KNOWN FOR HER INFLUENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE STUDY OF SAVINGS, WEALTH INEQUAL-  
ITY, SOCIAL SECURITY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND TAXATION.**

This is the largest conference devoted to macroeconomics and related topics in North America. Traditionally hosted by Carnegie Research 1 universities in the mid-west and the Federal Reserve Banks, the conference usually has about 125 papers and two keynote lectures. In the past, participants included faculty from major research universities in the US and overseas, as well as research economists from the Federal Reserve Banks, Central Banks of other countries, multilateral organizations, such as the IMF and World Bank, and US government agencies such as the US Census, Congressional Budget Office, etc.

This will be a unique opportunity for LSU to showcase its commitment to research and the facilities of the Business College. LSU will be only the second Carnegie Research 1 University outside the mid-west to host the conference in its 23 year history. It will also be the largest economics conference hosted at LSU.

**THE CALL FOR PAPERS IS NOW OPEN!!!!**

**THE CONFERENCE WEBSITE IS: [HTTPS://BUSINESS.LSU.EDU/MM2017](https://business.lsu.edu/mm2017).**

The conference organizers are Areendam Chanda and Fang Yang in the department of economics. Financial support for this Conference is being provided by the LSU Economics Department, the Economics & Policy Research Group and the E. J. Ourso College of Business.

Further details about the previous conferences can be found here:  
<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/econ/conference/midwest-macro-group/>

# MONTHLY MOVIE REVIEW

## SILENCE (Martin Scorsese, 2016)

—Reviewed by Carl Freedman

Though it is well known that Martin Scorsese, perhaps America's greatest living filmmaker, comes from an Italian-American Catholic background, and though it is the general public understanding that Scorsese has maintained a complex, ambivalent relationship with his church—neither adhering strictly to its doctrines nor bidding those doctrines a cool, final farewell—he has never been widely thought of as a primarily religious filmmaker. Overtly religious themes and motifs tend to be few and perfunctory in most of his work. One can, however, argue that Scorsese's Catholicism makes itself felt in his films in subtler ways. For instance, the late, great Roger Ebert, who was Scorsese's first and most important critical advocate, always felt a deep affinity with Scorsese on account of their having both received traditional Catholic upbringings in the period just prior to Vatican Two; and Ebert believed that, in such early, typical Scorsese films as *Who's That Knocking at My Door* (1967), *Mean Streets* (1973), *Taxi Driver* (1976), and *Raging Bull* (1980), a deeply Catholic attitude toward women is clearly on display, particularly in the difficulty that these films or their principal male characters seem to have in understanding female sexuality in terms other than those of the classic Virgin/Whore polarity. There are, however, a few exceptional films in the Scorsese oeuvre that tackle religious matters much more explicitly. The most outstanding is *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), Scorsese's adaptation of Nikos Kazantzakis's celebrated 1955 novel of the same name. Though by no means a work of strict Biblical orthodoxy, the film draws on three distinct Christian traditions—Scorsese's Roman Catholicism, the Greek Orthodoxy of Kazantzakis's background, and the severe Calvinism in which the screenwriter Paul Schrader was raised—in order to produce what is arguably the most powerful cinematic retelling of the life of Jesus since Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (1964). Somewhat less successful—perhaps at least partly because it engages a religious tradition so much more remote from the director's own—is *Kundun* (1997), Scorsese's biopic about the fourteenth Dalai Lama. But the film is visually sumptuous, and does succeed in representing some elements of Tibetan Buddhism more memorably than one might expect to find in a Hollywood movie.

*Silence* harks back to *The Last Temptation* in that the overt religious orientation is once again Christian. But it also recalls *Kundun* in its Asian setting—though here the setting is Japanese, rather than Tibetan and Indian. The film is based on the 1966 novel *Silence* (which I have not read) by Shūsaku Endō, a well-known Japanese novelist and a convert to Roman Catholicism. Scorsese—so the story goes—read Endō's book in the late 1980s and was so impressed that he determined at once to film it. Since he persevered for more than a quarter of a century in order to get the movie made—and since he used his stature in the American film industry to force onto multiplex screens a slow-moving film lasting nearly two and three-quarters hours—it seems reasonable to assume that this is a project especially dear to Scorsese's heart. The filmmaker, surely, passionately wants us to consider what *Silence* has to offer.

The film is set in seventeenth-century Japan, and the backstory concerns the efforts of Jesuit missionaries to bring the One True Faith (as Catholicism was regarded with particular fervor and urgency by the Vatican of the Counter-Reformation) to this distant land “at the

ends of the earth,” in one character's words. For a while the Jesuits were quite successful: Hundreds of thousands of Japanese converted, and the local authorities regarded this alien religion in their midst with fairly relaxed tolerance. But then everything changed. Evidently because it came to be felt that Christianity threatened Japan's distinctive culture and its cherished isolation from the West, the authorities decided to extirpate Japanese Christianity with extreme thoroughness and ruthlessness. Torture and death became the reward for fidelity to the Cross. In the face of such persecution, many Japanese Catholics abandoned their new religion, but some, remarkably, did not. Whole communities of Christians continued to worship in secret, concerned yet courageous in the face of deadly danger, and, above all, hungry for priests to bring them the sacraments.

As the film opens, two young Portuguese Jesuits—Father Sebastião Rodrigues (Andrew Garfield) and Father Francisco Garupe (Adam Driver)—are asking their superior, Father Alessandro Valignano (Ciarán Hinds), for permission to travel to Japan: not only so that they can minister to the faithful there but also, and more particularly, so that they can search for their beloved mentor, Father Cristovao Ferreria (Liam Neeson), who has disappeared from sight somewhere in Japan. Is he dead, murdered by the persecutors? Is he in hiding? Or has he succumbed to the persecutors' demands and apostatized from the faith? There seems to be evidence for this last possibility, but Father Ferreria's protégés refuse to believe it without seeing for themselves. Father Valignano warns them of the terrible “high danger” that a journey to Japan will involve, but, in the face of the young priests' determination, he reluctantly grants permission.

So Rodrigues and Garupe set out for Japan, knowing little of what to expect except that they will be placing their lives in extreme peril. Numerous interesting events ensue, but all of them are more-or-less predictable—or at least not particularly surprising—and, despite some scenes of genuinely shocking violence, there is hardly any real “action” in the sense that that term is understood by the typical multiplex-goer. The events of the film do not, for the most part, operate for the sake of anything properly describable as a plot; and even the function of the events in revealing the minds of the characters is an important but secondary aspect of *Silence*. The primary purpose of the various situations that Garupe and (especially) Rodrigues find themselves in is to raise questions about the whole project of religious faith. This is the most intellectual—more specifically, the most theological—film of Scorsese's career to date. Instead of being asked to contemplate the life and teaching of an exemplary religious figure like Jesus or the Dalai Lama, we are here being asked to think about some of the most difficult problems that religious teaching may raise. After a lifetime spent in (or near, or around) the Roman Catholic Church, Scorsese (who is now in his mid-70s) clearly remains fascinated by many of the questions that believers, semi-believers, and even unbelievers have been pondering for centuries. On the evidence of *Silence*, he does not seem confident that he knows the answers.

—Continued on page 22



# FACULTY FOCUS SUMMER WORKSHOP

LSU faculty, educational and technical specialists will present innovative strategies proven to increase engagement and learning in large class environments, especially for first-year students.

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- Saundra Yancy McGuire, CAS Director Emerita and Department of Chemistry
- Dalgis Mesa, Department of Physics & Astronomy
- Caroline Schneider, Department of Chemistry

[For more information, or to register, click here.](#)

### Event Contact:

Debbie Layzell

[dlayze1@lsu.edu](mailto:dlayze1@lsu.edu)

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### Media Contact:

Tatum Lyles

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## LSU RESEARCH DISTRICT TRANSCENDS TIME AND SPACE

K. T. Valsaraj and his team in the LSU Office of Research and Economic Development have scored another “innovation bull’s eye” with their latest project, the “LSU Research District.” As is appropriate for an office in which futuristic projects provide the daily bread, the “district” in this title transcends time and space. Rather, it is conceptual: If not the entire intellectual sphere of intellectual activity at the storm-tossed flagship campus, then at least that broad expanse of effort and talent that hovers along the edge of the University Lake and that emanates from the Louisiana Emerging Technologies Center and the Electronic Arts habitat. The attempt by ORED to reintegrate the slightly mysterious collection of industrially secret projects underway on the campus perimeter could be seen as a step in the direction of open-access research or at least of transparency. Given that these new buildings that serve largely private interests rose on the rubble of agricultural facilities that served the common interest, such a move in the direction of openness deserves ovations. A portfolio of the activities in this new loosely-defined zone appears [online](#).



## BAD IDEA OF THE YEAR AWARD GOES TO SELU PRESIDENT CRAIN

The selection of Donald Trump as *Time Magazine* man of the year demonstrates that fame (or infamy) need not cohabit with virtue. Renown and even applause often comes to those who blunder, bluster, or blast. So it is that the *Newsletter* award for worst idea of the year goes by unanimous vote to Southeastern Louisiana University President John Crain. Crain’s aversion to faculty initiatives was best evidenced by his failure to show up at James Kirylo’s forum on the future of higher education (an event that drew media attention around Louisiana but that was held immediately off campus owing to resistance from the Crain administration). Crain’s latest caper is a proposal to freeze tuition costs at SELU for all students who complete at least one-quarter (thirty hours) of their progress toward a baccalaureate degree each year. Consider what this discount implies. First, it suggests that, the better students perform, the cheaper education becomes—that the more valuable the college experience, the lower its value in the eye of consumers; second, the measure pays students to behave responsibly, rendering virtue an economic rather than moral matter and thus depreciating the ethical improvement elicited by a college education; and, third, Crain’s hare-brained idea reduces revenues for the institution, thus financing student attendance with money that could be used to improve professorial salary and thus penalizing professors for improving student performance by attracting students to the classroom. For all these reasons, the not-so-coveted plucked booby statue goes to Southeastern’s lackluster leader.



SELU President John Crane

## SHERMAN BRUIES FACULTY EMPLOYMENT FAIR

Worn down but not dispirited by diminishing salaries, administrative neglect, and poor working conditions, faculty members are evidencing their usual genius in finding a way to make life better. Under the leadership of media personality and Southeastern Louisiana University Professor Dayne Sherman, an ensemble of faculty members is organizing a regional job and recruiting fair for faculty. To be advertised in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and other prominent academic publications, the fair will draw together faculty members looking for opportunity with recruiters from universities and industries outside Louisiana. Included in its many highlights will be a special emphasis on minority recruitment—on delivering opportunity to minority faculty who have not received the support promised from Louisiana universities. The first goal of the fair is the provision of new options for inadequately appreciated faculty; the second goal is the demonstration to Louisiana higher education leadership that failure to support and reward faculty will lead to expensive out-migrations, to bad publicity, and to increased faculty replacement expense. Congratulations to Dayne and his team for their innovative response to economic and administrative lethargy.



Dayne Sherman unveils recruiting fair plan

## DEPARTMENT OF LABOR RULES ON UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION FOR CONTINGENTS

Breaking news from Washington at the moment that we are going to press brings good tidings from the federal government. The United States Department of Labor has released new guidance concerning the eligibility of contingent faculty for unemployment compensation. Under the new rules, employees with a “reasonable assurance” that they would have employment at some future date will be eligible for unemployment payments. The ruling short-circuits attempts by universities to find ambiguity in previous pronouncements. The complete text of this complex but important decision is available [online](#).





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## FREE EXPRESSION BILL HEADS TO DEBATE

If there were ever an area in which that old idiom, “expect the unexpected,” might apply, it is in the ever-evolving debate over free speech and its volatile subset, free expression on American campuses. Louisiana has had more than its fair share of free expression problems—one thinks of the Ivor van Heerden and the Teresa Buchanan cases—and so it is no surprise that, despite the best efforts of higher education leaders to run for cover when this issue enters the spotlight, the problem of free expression on campus has now reached the Louisiana legislature. Representative Lance Harris has secured House Education Committee approval on [HB 269](#), a measure aimed at intensifying incentives to allow free speech on Louisiana campuses. Presently headed to debate on the House floor, the measure calls on Louisiana institutions to create free expression policies; assigns the Board of Regents the task of issuing annual reports on the state of free expression on Louisiana campuses; specifies that education related to free expression be included in freshman orientation; and establishes attempts to restrict free speech on a college campus as a legal cause of action. Already, several campuses have cautioned that campuses can develop their own free expression policies without legislative interference; already, faculty members have begun wondering whether the legislature is the best-qualified body for determining what constitutes a proper discourse for campuses; and, already, several wits have wondered whether Louisiana campuses have demonstrated that they really are able to produce policies that promote the free exchange of ideas.



Rep. Lance Harris

—Continued from page 18

One set of issues that the film raises concerns the nature of apostasy, and involves an interesting contrast between the two young priests that is refracted through the physical presences of the two actors. Driver’s gaunt, ugly face and his almost emaciated physique suggest the furious asceticism of a medieval saint, whereas the more handsome Garfield projects a much warmer, more approachable appearance that often blends into the popular image of Jesus himself (once, when gazing into a pool of water, Father Rodrigues sees the face of Jesus gazing back at him). For Father Garupe, the choice is simple: Even the smallest gestures of apostasy (the persecutors generally require only that Christians or suspected Christians place a foot on a *fumie*, a small carved image of Christ) are, in Garupe’s view, absolutely wrong and to be refused at all costs, regardless of the consequences. Father Rodrigues takes a more nuanced view, and once shocks Garupe by urging a group of Japanese Catholics to trample on a *fumie* in order to save themselves from death by hideous torment. The film explicitly refers to the problem of confusing the visible and tangible signs of Christian faith with the faith itself; and we are bound to remember that Christianity, like all other Biblical or Abrahamic religion, strictly forbids the worship of graven images. So is placing a foot on a *fumie* really such a terrible thing to do? The issue becomes especially complex and agonizing when the persecutors threaten to torture several Japanese Catholics to death—even though all have repeatedly apostatized—unless a *priest* apostatizes as well. Father Ferreria (who turns out to have indeed apostatized and is even writing a book against Christian doctrine—with what degree of sincerity is hard to tell) thunders that the dilemma is really no dilemma at all, and that Jesus Christ would have unhesitatingly apostatized in order to save His suffering children: a view that Father Rodrigues comes reluctantly to accept. But, if one apostatizes in order to save not only oneself but also one’s fellow Christians, is that really even apostasy? The film raises the question with painful clarity and leaves the viewers to ponder its complexities.

A different set of issues is raised by the most interesting of the Japanese characters, the servant Kichijiro (Yōsuke Kubozuka, who delivers perhaps the most gripping performance of the film). A Japanese Catholic who serves as the Jesuits’ sometime guide, he has apostatized repeatedly, once watching his entire family being tortured to death when all of them, except he himself, refused to renounce their adopted religion. More than just an apostate, he is also capable of betraying a priest

to the authorities for 300 pieces of silver; that this sum should be exactly ten times what Judas is said to have received for betraying Christ is presumably no co-incidence. Yet, however despicable Kichijiro may often appear—“He is not worthy to be called evil,” as Father Rodrigues once says of him in an expression of supreme contempt—his Christianity is terribly, agonizingly sincere. He furiously repents after every apostasy or betrayal, begging that God may forgive him. On one occasion he laments that he did not live before the time of the persecution, when, he feels confident, he would have found it easy enough to live and die a faithful Catholic. How many times can a man commit the same sin and hope to find absolution? Then too, Kichijiro is clearly a Judas figure, and the question of Judas’s possible salvation is a perennial one in theological speculation. Certainly the centrality of Judas to the whole Christian scheme of things is important to Scorsese, who mightily stresses it in *The Last Temptation of Christ* (in which Judas is played by the great Harvey Keitel).

Probably the largest theological question that *Silence* raises is, however, the one suggested by the title. Since the God of Christianity is omnipotent, He must be capable of ending human suffering—or, alternatively, of conveying, with absolute clarity and mathematical certainty, that suffering is meaningful and can be succeeded by its reward in Heaven. But He does not do so. Why not? Why does He remain silent? “How can I explain His silence to these people?” asks Father Rodrigues. “The weight of Your silence is terrible,” he says to the deity he worships, and he does not flinch from considering the most obvious and (from his viewpoint) the most terrible of all possible explanations: “Because You are not there?” The theme of silence is paralleled by the quiet soundtrack—made up largely of natural sounds, with little of the music that is often so prominent in Scorsese’s films—and, visually, by slow, painterly takes that achieve an austere, tranquil beauty even when scenes of terrible torment are on screen (the contrast is striking with the energetically moving cameras that are a Scorsese trademark in movies like *GoodFellas* [1990] and *The Wolf of Wall Street* [2013]). But the ultimate silence of *Silence* lies, I think, in the filmmaker’s refusal to offer answers to the theological questions he raises. Perhaps he feels that he simply does not know the answers; perhaps he feels that nobody does. This film, which focuses on Christian evangelists of almost unthinkable—though not always unlimited—courage is resolutely non-evangelical in its own final orientation.