

**LSU AGCENTER FACULTY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
February 20, 2009**

**Members Present:** Joan Almond, Mandy Armentor, David Blouin, Wayne M. Gauthier, Dianne Glasgow, James Hendrix, Natalie Hummel, Collins Kimbeng, Joan King, Donna Lee, Johnny Saichuk, Diane Sasser, Philip Stouffer, Ed Twidwell, Deniese Zeringue, Adrienne Vidrine and Richard Vlosky.

**Members Absent:** Andrew Granger, Mike Hebert, Jeff Hoy, Mary Grodner

**Proxies:** None

**Guests:** Chancellor William B. Richardson, Ann Coulon, Director, Human Resource Management, Sarah Johnston, CMT, Frankie Gould, Director, Communications

**Call to Order**

Chairperson King called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. in the Sullivan Room of the John M. Parker Coliseum.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Evolving Historical Notes Documenting LSUAC'S Budget Reduction (1, 2, 14)
- Furloughs as Response Option (2, 10-13, 17, 27-29)
- Revenue Estimating Committee Projections (3, 7)
- Budget Cuts Related to \$1.3 - \$2.0 Billion Dollar State Deficit (4)
- Amount of Unrestricted Stimulus Money Available To Cut Deficit Unknown (5, 18)
- Political Intensity of Governor's Legislative Budget (6, 7)
- Offsetting Revenue Generating Measures Not Likely (8)
- WBR Estimates Budget Cut Between 8-15% for LSUAC (9)
- Furlough Translates Into \$1.1 Million/Week & 1.9% Salary Cut Weekly (11, 17)
- Objective: Maximum Possible Personal Management of Any Furlough (11)
- Present Responses Will Impact LSUAC's Future (12)
- Caveats: "Everything is on the Table"; What's Best for the LSUAC? (13)
- Hiring Freeze & Budget Cut Implementation Chain of Command (14)
- What Cuts Could Look Like (14,16)
- Downside of Long Term Vacant Extension Agent Field Position (14)
- WBR: To Remind Higher Ed Policy Makers That LSUAC Is A "Can Do" Org. (15)
- Furlough Impacts Vary on Benefits, Service Credits & "High 3" Retirement (17)
- WBR: Favors Cuts Over Furloughs (17)
- Unit Heads to Administer Possible Furloughs Within Uniform LSUAC Guidelines (17)
- Money Possible for Repair & Renovation, But No Money for New Construction (19)
- LSUAC and Its Programs Have Support of President Lombardi (20)
- Biggest Cost of Annual Conference (AC) is Travel (21)
- LSUAC Intranet Registers 21 Million Hits Per Month (22)

- Unconfirmed 3-5% Increases in Health Insurance Premiums Scheduled (23)
- Filled Position Most Likely Grant Funded (24)
- Vidrine on LSUAC's Wellness Committee (25)
- LSU A&M Memorial Day Holiday Issue (26)
- Mandated Budget Cut Eliminated Actual & Projected Vacant Positions (28)
- Return to Work Provisions Possible Feature of Budget Cut Options (29)
- Retirement Incentives Not Likely Feature of Budget Cut Options (30)
- Orleans Parish Now Contributing Support to Extension (31)
- Share Point to Replace LSUAC Intranet in Unknown Time Frame (32-35)
- Share Point Will Require Management at Unit Level (34)
- Share Point Content Not Confidential (35)
- Gould Representing Davis on Annual Conference Feedback (36- 49)
- WBR: No Post 2008 Annual Conference Evaluation (37)
- Outcome of 5K Walk/Run Event Unknown (39)
- Recognition Session Too Long (41)
- Information Sharing Is A Declining Land Grant Phenomenon (44)
- Food at Annual Conference Appreciated (45)
- Merits of Information Technology Exposition (46)
- Access to LSU-BR Campus by Field Employees (48)
- Chancellor Richardson's PowerPoint Address to be Posted (49)
- Members of Faculty Oversight Committee for Budget Related Matters (18, 50)
- Legacy Vendors and IRA Participation Decision to be Revisited by BOS (51)
- Every Group, except Faculty Has Representation on BOS (52)
- LSU A&M Budget Forum Scheduled for March 18, 2009
- Southern University Budget Cut Resolution (54)
- Advisory Service Committee Appointees (55)
- Updated COA Dissertations and Theses (56)
- LSUAC Publications Need LAES Number to be Included in Portfolio (57)

**Dr. William B. Richardson (WBR), Chancellor, LSUAC**

1. Chancellor Richardson took note of the January 17, 2009 e-mail which outlined the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center's (LSUAC) response to the Division of Administration's directive to outline the LSUAC's actions in response to varying levels of major reductions in its budget.

2. Chancellor Richardson observed that since Christmas, the LSUAC's budget has been subject to a 7.8% cut with 4.4% of that reduction still in place. A couple of positions can be filled with President Lombardi's approval. The LSUAC was required to assess the effects of rounded-off cuts ranging between 20% and 30% between Saturday, January 17, 2009 and Friday, January 23, 2009. Chancellor Richardson reported that 85% of Louisiana's higher education budget is controlled by Dr. Mike Martin, Chancellor of LSU-BR; Dr. Tim Ryan, Chancellor, University of New Orleans; Dr. Jack Weiss, Chancellor, LSU Law Center; and himself as Chancellor, LSU Agricultural Center. Their options for addressing budget cuts of the magnitudes mandated all involved negative consequences for people and included such actions as furloughs and early retirement

packages. Earlier, the LSU System held back one percent (1%) from each unit's budget for a System Enhancement Performance Fund (SEPF). The purpose of the SEPF was to deal with issues within the LSU System. In the case of the LSUAC, the SEPF added \$900,000 to the amount that had to be adjusted for in the LSUAC submittal of January 23, 2009.

3. Statewide budget projections are based on estimates made by the Revenue Estimating Committee (REC). These estimates are educated guesses as to what projected future revenues might be for Louisiana. Estimates made by the REC were upset by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Chancellor Richardson expects that the forthcoming REC's projections will create some confusion. The REC did not decrease its revenue projections for the 2008-2009 fiscal year (FY). Thus, units within the LSU System might not have to make any adjustments until July 2009. All the major indicators suggest that the revenue for the 2009-2010 FY will be down. Oil revenue represents 13% of the state's budget and oil prices are now below their projected levels. Sales tax revenues are fluctuating. The downturn in the national economy hasn't been fully experienced in Louisiana yet. The state economy lags the national economy because of the types of industries that exist in Louisiana.

4. The projected deficit for Louisiana in the 2009-2010 FY ranges between 1.3 and 2.0 billion dollars. It influences the basis upon which the various budgets for state agencies are developed.

5. Some of the unrestricted stimulus monies is supposed to go to education. How much of the unrestricted stimulus money might go to higher education is unknown. It may be as high as 61% which would have the effect of cutting the projected deficit in half.

6. Chancellor Richardson indicated that the next major event would occur when the Governor's legislative budget would be followed by revisions to current budgets to adjust for reductions ranging from 0 to 30 percent (%). Chancellor Richardson indicated that there had been no mention of higher education and the LSUAC, in particular, being spared from any budget cuts.

7. The budget estimates that are issued in mid-May are crucial to the budget that is acted on by the legislature. By mid-May, most of the money in the current FY budget has been spent or committed. The time between the submission of the Governor's budget in mid-March and the mid-May REC's projections upon which the legislative budget for the coming FY is formulated is all about politics. This reality needs to be recognized as such recognition should better enable LSUAC personnel to remain focused on their work. The legislature gets serious with the issuance of the mid-May REC projections upon which the legislative budget is built. Chancellor Richardson is confident that no new taxes are likely to be proposed nor any existing taxes raised to address the deficit.

8. A potential movement is under consideration to un-dedicate some percentage of the state's budget that is constitutionally protected. Such a movement is expected to be opposed by teachers, fire and police unions. If anything, there will probably be greater

pressures to raise and not lower the homestead exemption as a revenue generating measure. Raising the homestead exemption would reduce revenues.

9. Chancellor Richardson's projection of budget cuts for the LSUAC ranges between eight and fifteen percent.

10. There was a discussion regarding a LSU-BR campus document addressing the furloughing of employees in the absence of any declaration of financial exigencies. Chancellor Richardson noted that Chancellor Martin was not asking for permission to undertake such actions. Because of the number of LSUAC employees with joint appointments with the LSUAC and the option of furloughs as a possible course of action, there is an interest in the LSU-BR's resolution.

11. The impact of a two-week furlough for the LSUAC is approximately \$2.2 million dollars or one million dollars per week. In the event of a furlough or other action impacting its employees, efforts will be exerted to give people the maximum amount of flexibility to manage furloughs.

12. The size of cuts influences actions relative to whether vertical or horizontal cuts need to be implemented. The pressing concern is not so much with the existing situation, but with the adjustments accompanying the 2010-2011 budget. There is an appreciation that present responses will have consequences for the LSUAC's future.

13. In response to a question regarding cost savings that might come from paying research associates out of grant funds, Chancellor Richardson's response was that "everything is on the table" and decisions necessarily have to be made within the context of what's best for the LSUAC. Research and extension are recognized as core to the LSUAC mission which means that the service units need to be closely scrutinized. Chancellor Richardson has purposely not been specific as to what actions might have to occur. He reiterated that he has no list upon which actions might be taken.

14. Chancellor Richardson observed that the hiring freeze was mandated by the state. The mandate was first given to the Board of Regents who passed it on to the LSU Board of Supervisors who then directed President Lombardi to implement it. Saichuk observed that people who live without extension agents for a period of time raise questions first about their local level contributions of support for agents and then about their need for an agent if the position remains unfilled. Chancellor Richardson observed that a freeze is immaterial when the organization is directed to implement a 15% budget cut. At that level of budget reduction, the leadership needs to talk about "things not happening" such as cancelled livestock shows. Unfortunately, people need to experience the absence of traditional events and services before they fully comprehend that event or service's contribution to their life.

15. Chancellor Richardson observed that the positive LSUAC responses to the hurricanes had been recognized within the higher education community and he indicated that he was

going to remind policy makers within the higher education community of those contributions as often as possible.

16. Chancellor Richardson is attending commodity group meetings for the purpose of making them more aware of the implications of cuts in the budget to the LSUAC. Some key positions are going to remain vacant and the reduction in the budget means that he is talking to these groups in terms of “what they are not likely going to get”.

17. Ms. Coulon responded to a question regarding benefits under furlough conditions. She indicated that they don't change. She also observed that while a two-week furlough represents a 3.8% cut in gross pay, the employee's service credit would not be impacted. She indicated that there were a number of issue associated with personnel actions ranging from what particular actions might do to the individual's high three years of salary used in calculating the retirement benefit. It also has tax implications. By law, classified employees can't participate in some of these actions. There is some logic in making the public feel the pinch. The rules governing the implementation of any personnel action necessarily comes from the LSU System. The response to the question of how does the talk of negative personnel actions under conditions of financial exigency affect the recruiting of researchers and administrators was that it makes it much rougher. Richardson indicated that he prefers cuts to furloughs because the latter are worse for morale. He indicated that two million dollars translates into 40 jobs. The LSUAC administration will entertain the possibility of letting department heads determine furloughs. However, there needs to be uniformity throughout the LSUAC. If the LSUAC were to experience furloughs, the chancellor wants to give unit heads flexibility in its implementation. In the events of cuts, they would more likely be prorated on the basis of salaries as was done by the campus at an earlier time. The expectation is that the guidance accompanying any personnel actions will provide shorter periods of notice and no rights of appeal.

18. It was observed that the regional directors and department heads had input in the creation of earlier responses to adverse personnel actions, but that the faculty had no input. It was further observed that it would be helpful if there was a group of faculty which could meet with Chancellor Richardson. In response to the observation that we need a process, the chancellor indicated that what was really needed was a number identifying the magnitude of the cut which won't be known until mid-May. The question is how much of the surplus can be used for debt service?

19. Regarding capital outlay appropriations, Chancellor Richardson indicated that there was no money for new construction. However, there might be money for renovation and repair.

20. Chancellor Richardson remains comfortable with President Lombardi's support for the LSUAC and its programs.

21. The biggest cost of annual conference (AC) is travel. The LSUAC may not have an annual conference in 2009 because of the state of its finances. There have been a

decreasing number of meetings in the recent past because of the LSUAC's financial situation.

22. Fred Piazza reports that since becoming affiliated with Google, the number of hits on the LSUAC intranet site has doubled to 20 million hits per month and these have been followed with four to five million individual inquiries.

**Ms. Ann Coulon, HRM Manager, LSUAC**

23. Ms. Coulon reports that there is unconfirmed information circulating that health insurance premiums for carriers other than the First Health Plan are planning to increase their rates 3-5% effective July 1, 2009.
24. Any authorization to fill a position is more likely to be associated with a grant funded rather than a state funded project.
25. Adrian Vidrine will be serving on the LSUAC's Wellness Committee.
26. There was a discussion of a LSU-BR campus petition initiative to declare Memorial Day a holiday. Discussion revealed that (a) Louisiana state law limits the number of state government employee holidays to 14 annually; (b) by virtue of mission requirements, higher education employees get a different set of 14 days of holiday leave and thus it doesn't get some government declared holidays and (c) Vlosky observed that a broad-based responses from the faculty is needed because a decision would be needed as to which holiday to swap out if Memorial Day becomes a holiday.
27. In the event that furloughs become a reality, Ms. Coulon indicated that the LSUAC could probably manage them in creative ways so as to minimize their financial pain and not hurt those employees close to retirement.
28. Ms. Coulon indicated that in order to meet the 7.8% mandated reduction in its budget, LSUAC administrators had to cut not only every vacant position but also had to include some projected vacant positions.
29. The administration is including return to work provisions in its creation of options for addressing budget shortfalls through reductions in the workforce.
30. Ms. Coulon suggested that retirement incentives were not likely to be included in any options.
31. In response to a question by Gauthier regarding parish contributions to the support of extension service personnel, Ms. Coulon indicated that the level of support varies between the parishes. Deniese Zeringue reported that Orleans parish was now contributing to the support of its extension agents.

**Sarah Johnston, Information Technology Manager and Tanya Ruffin, Information Technology Training Coordinator**

32. Ms. Johnston made a presentation and answered questions about how SharePoint, a software application website, is likely to impact the LSUAC in the future. Share Point is intended to replace the current intranet. However, no time frame has been established at which Share Point will replace the LSUAC intranet.
33. Share Point is a Microsoft tool for (a) website development, (b) file storage and sharing and (c) collaboration. Its principal features are (1) consistent intranet navigation, (2) search web pages and other documents and (3) customizable. Its other features include (1) surveys with branch logic, (2) shared calendar for meetings that is manageable through outlook, (3) announcements and (4) front page automatic site updates of announcements, minutes and upcoming meetings. LSUAC sites already using Share Point include 4-H and LAES units.
34. It was noted that Share Point is a website and that it will have to be managed internally by an employee within the unit or organization using it. For example, there will have to be a designated individual on the Faculty Council who will have the responsibility for updating any and all information that the Council might want to make available to its members as well as to the general public.
35. Share Point will be able to support two types of discussions or forums: (1) an all LSUAC forum and (2) a private council forum. Individuals will be able to post information internally without concern for copyrights so long as the information is specific to a group. Share Point cannot block the “forwarding” of information. There were question relative to access. Specifically, whether there would be an ability to limit an administrator’s view of people’s comments on surveys or other documents. It was observed that Share Point’s content would not be confidential, but it could be limited to the faculty.

**Ms. Frankie Gould, Director, Communications**

36. Ms. Gould indicated that she was appearing on behalf of Dr. Debora Davis, the chairperson of the 2008 Annual Conference. Frankie indicated that the observed changes in the 2008 program had been based on suggestions received from faculty as feedback from earlier conference experiences. To that end, she distributed a questionnaire about the 2008 Conference and requested it be completed and returned so that it could benefit those charged with planning future conferences.
37. In response to questioning, Frankie replied that Chancellor Richardson had determined that a post conference evaluation of the 2008 Conference was not necessary. Vlosky suggested that the Faculty Council consider doing a post conference evaluation survey.
38. Frankie indicated that the 2008 Conference was different because of the emphasis being placed on healthy lifestyles and that these topics were well-attended.

39. It was observed that nothing was mentioned about the outcome of the 5K walk/run event during Annual Conference nor was it mentioned at a luncheon. The majority of the participants in the Fitness Walk/Run event were from Baton Rouge and not from outlying field units. Some of the reasons cited for this phenomenon were that people didn't know whether they were going to get reimbursed for their expenses associated with participating in the Fitness Walk / Run event plus participation meant that they would have had to leave home a day earlier. There was a noticeable absence of encouragement to come early. Sunday and church attendance was also a factor as was the need to consider its impact on traditional Monday meetings. The event was probably funded with Foundation monies. Sponsorships are needed to offset the cost of the event. It could be a source of advertising. There is no problem with state employees advertising private businesses with the exception of alcohol, tobacco and firearms products.
40. CMS training went well. CMS training was held on Monday morning not to conflict with ACE meetings on Tuesday. It did conflict with some of the organization meetings like ESP.
41. There was a repeat of the observation from previous conferences that the recognition session takes too much time. Frankie observed that it had been separated in 2008 for length of service award recognitions. There were 175 people in attendance for this ceremony. Frankie reported that HRM is supposed to send longevity certificates to those involved in service learning recognition. Positive comments were received about the 2008 process. It was suggested that consideration be given to just listing people by name at their various five (5) year points of service.
42. The general session was reformatted to recognize the current year award recipients of the various performance awards within the LAES and the LCES.
43. There was a suggestion that some signage be created to help people find the restroom facilities in the Cox Center.
44. Ms. Gould reported that there is no agreement in writing that requires land grant universities to share information even though they have done so in the past in the spirit of creating and disseminating information. Making information less readily available has been occurring with the declining percentage changes in federal funding of university research. Part of the phenomenon is associated with institutions protecting their copyrights.
45. The meals being provided at annual conference are appreciated and facilitate useful interactions at annual conference. However, there is a concern about the limited bathroom facilities at the mini-farm building. The meal reception at that facility could be made more enjoyable if small, but high, tables were stationed around the room as a convenience.
46. The purpose of the Information Technology (IT) exposition is to provide opportunities for LSUAC employees to both look at what technology is being used within the LSUAC



and to give approved state vendors an opportunity to showcase forthcoming new technologies. The observation was that the IT exposition space was too crowded.

48. Parking continues to be a problem for field personnel attending annual conferences. The problem is more acute for those coming onto the campus between annual conference sessions. The current procedure for gaining access to gated lots is for those desiring such access to make their own arrangements for the access wand the day prior to their need for it. There is also a public relations issue relative to the observation of directors driving directly to a facility passing employees who have been walking relatively long distances to the same facility.
49. Frankie indicated that the Chancellor's 2008 Progress Report would be put on a power point presentation on the Faculty Council's web site so that it could be made available to faculty as well as to the general public and legislators.

### **New Business**

50. Chairperson King, Johnny Saichuk and Adriane Vidrine were nominated to serve as members of the Faculty Oversight Committee for Budget Related Matters.
51. Dianne Sasser attended the last LSU Board of Supervisors (BOS) and reported that there had been a discussion of benefits specifically with regards to limiting the number of vendors with whom LSU employees could establish Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA) under IRS 403(b) provisions. Up until December 31, 2008, there was a group of (a) legacy vendors with whom employees had established IRA plans since the IRA became available and (b) non-legacy vendors who constituted a select group of four vendors from whom LSU employees could only continue participating in an IRA after January 1, 2009. Discussion at the BOS meeting indicated that the decision that the employee could only establish an IRA with a non-legacy vendor was apparently made by one person. Dianne indicated that the BOS is going to revisit that decision and that it can be rescinded.
52. Dianne indicated that there is representation on the BOS for every group except faculty.
53. It was announced that there will be a LSU-BR Faculty Senate Forum at 3:00 p.m. on March 18, 2009 for purposes of discussing budget related matters and to receive comments from Dr. Mike Martin, Chancellor of LSU-Baton Rouge.
54. King spoke briefly about the request to support a Southern University Resolution addressing present and expected budget cuts. Following a brief discussion, it was determined that additional input would be needed to determine whether supporting such a resolution would be in the best interest of the LSUAC.

55. The following members volunteered to serve on the various Service Unit Advisory Committees:
- a. Natalie Hummel: Sponsored Programs
  - b. Diane Sasser: Information Technology
  - c. Deniese Zeringue: Communications
  - d. Wayne M. Gauthier: Accounting
  - e. Joan King : Facility Planning
  - f. Rich Vlosky: International Programs. Vlosky will serve only if needed. Due to the reorganization of the International Programs Office on the LSU-BR campus with Lakshman as its Director, there is a need to determine whether a need exists for this office within the LSUAC.
  - g. Adrienne Vidrine : Human Resource Management
56. It was reported that Dissertations and Theses within the College of Agriculture have been updated.
57. Dianne Sasser indicated that the annual Performance Evaluation instrument now needs to have a LSUAC manuscript number assigned to it before it can be entered into the Portfolio. This requirement has been imposed by Dr. David Morrison, the Associate Vice-Chancellor of the LAES. There is now a need to change the portfolio template in order to provide for the entry of publications that do not bear LSUAC numbers. There are LSUAC scientists who have non-LSUAC publications from their work with peers at other institutions. The question is what happens to the “accounting for” publications that: (a) don’t go through the LSUAC system, (b) have been published or (c) are in press? How are such publications to be inputted into the system so as to be reflected in the annual performance evaluation? Joan King indicated that she will be contacting Dr. Morrison.

The motion to adjourn was seconded and approved on a voice vote at 1:30 p.m. on February 20, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne M. Gauthier  
Secretary