

**LSU AGCENTER FACULTY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
March 27, 2009**

Members Present: Joan Almond, Mandy Armentor, David Blouin, Wayne M. Gauthier, Andrew Granger, Mary Grodner, Mike Hebert, James Hendrix, Jeff Hoy, Natalie Hummel, Donna Lee, Johnny Saichuk, Diane Sasser, Philip Stouffer, Ed Twidwell, Deniese Zeringue, and Richard Vlosky.

Members Absent: Adrienne Vidrine, Dianne Glasgow, Collins Kimbeng, and Joan King.

Proxies: None

Guests: Chancellor William B. Richardson, Ann Coulon, Director, Human Resource Management.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Magnitude of Budget Reduction to LSUAC in 15-20% Range (1)**
- **The One Unacceptable Option (2)**
- **LSU-BR's Consolidation Initiative Not Favored by Richardson (3)**
- **LSUAC Budget Cuts of Concern to Influential Rural Political Groups (5)**
- **Guiding Question: What's Best for the LSUAC? (6)**
- **LSUAC Supporters Get No Promises, Just Respect from BOR and DOA (7)**
- **Political Posturing and Tapping of the Mega Fund and Rainy Day Fund (8)**
- **Bleak Outlook: 2009-2010 and 2010 – 2011 Fiscal Years (9)**
- **"Tipping Point" for Financial Exigency Declaration (10)**
- **Legislature Appropriates, BOR Allocates, & LSUAC Requests Fairness (11)**
- **Absence of Knowledge Hampers LSUAC's Funding (12)**
- **Declaration of Financial Exigency Would Necessitate Program Cuts (13)**
- **Defining Programs Can Be Difficult (13)**
- **When to Notify People Most Likely to be Impacted by a Program Cut? (13)**
- **No Furloughs or Retirement "Buy Outs" in Present Contingency Plans (13)**
- **Topics and Questions Related to Current Budget Reduction Situation (14)**
- **LSU-BR Initiative to Reduce COA's Student Population 40% (14.d)**
- **WBR's Recommendation to the Individual LSUAC Employee (15)**
- **Hendrix's Recommendations to Chancellor (16)**
- **On Drafting a Resolution for the LCES (19)**
- **Recommendations to Chancellor (20)**
- **On Average, LA's Police Juries Provide 10% of LCES's Funding (21)**
- **Chancellor Creating Committee to Establish Performance Standards (22)**
- **HRM Updating Policy Regarding SSAN's (23)**
- **Background Checks, EAP Benefits, LSU FIRST Rates (24)**
- **Coulon on Budget (25)**
- **Grant Fund Replacement of Salary Reductions Due to Furloughs (26)**
- **Faculty Oversight Committee's Budget Cut Recommendations (28)**

- **A Set of Budget Priorities Identified (29)**
- **Council to Create Resolution Regarding Budget Reductions to HE (30)**
- **King and Lee Designated Contact Points for Budget Issues (31)**
- **Itemized Concerns for Budget Issues (32)**

Call to Order

In the absence of both Chairperson King and Vice-Chairperson Adrienne Vidrine, Donna Lee called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. on March 27, 2009 in the Sullivan Room of the John M. Parker Coliseum.

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

1. Dr. Richardson began his remarks by noting that the reference of a cut to higher education (HE) of 7.7 % was not correct. He referenced the document “Regents Allocate Higher Education Cuts” in which the budget reduction to the LSU System of \$102,087,705 is the most accurate number to date. The LSU Agricultural Center (LSUAC) portion is \$13.1 million which is a reduction in addition to the cut ordered in January 2009 of \$4.5 million. WBR observed that in addition to these announced cuts, there are unfunded mandates that have to be met which will increase the size of the budget cut to the LSUAC of as much as \$19 million dollars. Since the state’s budget for the LSUAC is \$82 million, the projected cuts represent a cut of between 15-20 percent (%).
2. Chancellor WBR indicated that he would not go into specifics, but that there were few if any options open to the LSUAC other than to raise its fees for such activities as 4-H camp and to charge for its publications. Although all options are open, moving the LSUAC under the control of the LSU-Baton Rouge (LSUBR) campus is not an option.
3. The published initiative by the LSUBR campus to consolidate units and colleges did not meet with Chancellor WBR approval. Some particular points touched upon by the Chancellor with respect to this initiative included:
 - a. The initiative of combining units such as social work and education to form a new college would include components of the School of Human Ecology (SHE). The LSUAC has a rather small investment in the SHE in the form of extension programs. Chancellor WBR indicated that those extension programs were going to remain with the LSUAC extension service (LCES).
 - b. WBR indicated that there was no need to move the nutrition program over to LSUBR and that it was going to remain with the LSUAC. This particular issue is now under discussion with LSUBR Chancellor Martin.
 - c. The Department of Agricultural & Biological Engineering is not going to become part of the LSUBR College of Engineering.
 - d. The LSUAC has a small investment in the Department of Experimental Statistics.

- e. Chancellor WBR indicated that the LSUAC was going to protect its assets and was not going to relinquish any assets currently under its budget.
4. At the present time, Chancellor Richardson doesn't know what President Lombardi might say when the HE leadership meets on April 21, 2009 with the legislative Education Committee.
 5. Chancellor Richardson observed that there is an increasing awareness among members of the Rural Caucus of just how devastating the proposed cuts to the LSUAC would be to their constituents and to the rural areas of the state. He took note of the significance and implications of the resolutions passed by the:
 - a. Acadiana Caucus
 - b. Rural Caucus
 - c. Police Jury Association
 6. Chancellor Richardson indicated that the LSUAC would proceed with caution, but that its decisions will be guided by the question of "what's best for the LSUAC?"
 7. Chancellor Richardson reported that some key farmers and agricultural leaders had met with both Dr. Sally Clausen, the Commissioner of Higher Education, and Angele Davis, the Commissioner of Administration for the State of Louisiana. The feedback from that meeting was that while no promises were made, they were treated with respect.
 8. Chancellor WBR expects that there will be much political posturing between the present time and April 21, 2009 over how best to address the state's projected deficit. Specifically, whether some portion of the mega funds of \$482 million for economic development and the "rainy day" fund should be tapped to minimize the cuts to other programs in order to satisfy the constitutional requirement of a balanced budget.
 9. In addition to the bleak outlook for the 2009-2010 fiscal year, state policy makers are also expecting the 2010-2011 budget year to be bleak.
 10. Chancellor Richardson will soon be sending a more detailed itemization of how the LSUAC plans to address budget cuts in the range of 15-20 percent (%) or of \$13.1 million dollars. Chancellor WBR is hoping that the actual cut to the LSUAC could be minimized to a maximum of eight (8) million dollars by legislative actions. Regardless of the magnitude of the actual reduction in the LSUAC budget, the question is at what level of budget reduction does the LSUAC reach the point of "no return" at which programmatic cuts have to be made to protect the core functions that define the LSUAC as an institution within the LSU System. The answer then becomes the "trigger" for requesting financial exigency. Although the answer is yet to be known, the administrative staff is compiling the paperwork in preparation for a declaration of financial exigency.
 11. In response to Herbert's question, WBR responded that the Board of Regents (BOR) makes the majority of the decisions relative to the level of budget cuts and those decisions are generally formula-driven. Sometimes the LSU System will make budget cuts. Under the formula that had been used up to 2008, the LSUAC was considered to be over-funded by 122%. The 2008 updated formula now has the LSUAC funded at 92%.

However, there have been times when across-the-board cuts have been implemented. Chancellor Richardson noted that the Louisiana legislature is the only entity that can appropriate state monies to higher education. Within the accounting system, line item appropriations for the LSU System and for the LSUAC is zero (0), but the line item appropriation to the BOR is in excess of one billion dollars. Thus, it is the BOR that determines the level of appropriations to the LSUAC. There is no question but that the state of Louisiana needs to make substantial investments in higher education and that the LSUAC needs to support the BOR in advancing that initiative. At the same time, the LSUAC needs to insure that it is being treated fairly by the BOR.

12. A continuing and systemic problem plaguing the LSUAC is that people don't know how it is structured. The absence of that knowledge hampers its effectiveness in securing sufficient funding support.
13. Saichuk observed that a declaration of financial exigency would help administrators in dealing with contracts and tenure. WBR observed that financial exigency forces the Chancellor to address budget reductions in terms of programs and not in terms of people as individuals. There is a need to avoid running afoul of the law of the land in terms of how the people associated with programs are treated. Defining programs can be difficult. A related issue for which there is no clear-cut answer is whether to tell people who are in programs likely to be eliminated that their program is "on the bubble" today or to wait until there is absolute certainty about the magnitude of the reduction and then give the people who are impacted a 90-day notice of termination. Saichuk further observed that if a program is eliminated under conditions of financial exigency, it cannot be resurrected for some defined period of time. Chancellor Richardson further observed that retirement buy-outs wouldn't help the LSUAC cope with budget reductions unless the window associated with those buyouts is narrower. The Chancellor also indicated that there is nothing on furloughs in the current plans.
14. Related topics and questions associated with the current budget reduction included:
 - a. the potential of converting research projects to less than a full 100% effort;
 - b. coping with budget reductions will include fee increases for programs and publications and these are mostly in extension;
 - c. the International Programs office is self-supporting;
 - d. LSU-BR is committed to the establishment of a new college. Its establishment would mean a 40 percent (%) reduction of students in the College of Agriculture;
 - e. whether individuals losing compensation under furlough conditions could recoup some or all of that compensation from grant and contract monies;
 - f. what might be the outlook for individuals who successfully go through the tenure and promotion process to receive additional compensation?
15. Chancellor Richardson indicated that the LSUAC necessarily has to plan for a budget reduction of from 13 to 17 million dollars in real money. The best set of actions an individual LSUAC employee can take consists of:
 - a. doing the best job possible and
 - b. talk to their local representative(s) in terms of the LSUAC's multi-faceted contributions to the local people and economic activity in their area.

16. Hendrix suggested to the Chancellor that we need to do a better job of marketing and branding the LSUAC; that there is a disconnect between association with the LSUAC and particular people; and that LSUAC offices creating weekly columns need to utilize the Chancellor's talking points.
17. Chancellor Richardson observed that some of the discussions about un-dedicating monies to "sacred cows" will necessarily require a constitutional convention.
18. Vlosky observed that LSU-BR Chancellor Martin wanted furloughs without a declaration of financial exigency.
19. Hendrix stated that the BOR should be aware that some extension offices are aiding the community college system with providing sites and assistance in delivery of their academic programs. Also, the LSU A & M campus should highly value the AgCenter's outreach to the state's population relative to academics and research generated on campus, as well as AgCenter research.
20. Natalie Hummel suggested to Chancellor Richardson that there be provisions for new faculty hires to have: (a) money for research associates, (b) travel funds and (c) be provided with state-supported research associates. Established faculty could reasonably be expected to bring in 25-50% salary support for their research associate. Jeff Hoy said that state funds dedicated to supported research associates represent one of the best investments possible for long term productivity in research programs.
21. Hebert contrasted the \$20 to \$30 million generated from grants and contracts against the monies being provided by the police juries for support of the extension service. Overall, Louisiana's police juries provide 10% of the support needed to maintain the local extension service. Chancellor Richardson observed that the southern average of such support is seventeen percent (17 %). He cited the implications of receiving \$12,000 from Catahoula Parish and of the tax passed in East Carroll parish specifically for the support of the extension service. Hebert asked about the potential of providing grant workshops locally.
22. Chancellor Richardson indicated that the BOR was requiring that each of the institutions of higher education create a set of performance measures. To that end, he reported that he is in the process of identifying people to serve on a committee to create such a set of performance measures for the LSUAC and that he encourages people to submit their names. He also indicated that he has secured the services of Dr. Jim Firnberg who has had extensive experience in this activity to assist the LSUAC with this initiative.

Ms. Ann Coulon, Director, LSUAC Human Resources

23. Ms. Coulon provided the latest draft of the LSUAC's "Social Security Number Policy". She indicated that the LSU identification number would be used to replace the social security account number (SSAN) and that any old personnel files that contained SSAN were to be destroyed. She recognized that obtaining the SSAN was critical as in the case of making payments to 4-H winners and others. She indicated

that to the extent possible, LSUAC offices were not to obtain or keep files with SSAN numbers. If files with SSAN had to be kept, then the SSAN's needed to be edited out and the files needed to be secured better.

24. Ms. Coulon conveyed the following bits of information:

- a. the LSUAC will share membership in the LSU System Diversity Committee;
- b. expanded background checks will be made on 4-H volunteers;
- c. information about the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available under the Benefits section of the HRM website and
- d. the LSUAC is waiting on release of LSU FIRST health insurance rates.

25. Ms. Coulon indicated that the political process affects the budget at the state level and is a moving target about which she doesn't know too much about as it applies to the existing situation within the LSUAC. She indicated that there might be specific buy-outs, but no wholesale buyouts.

26. In response to a question of whether grant funds could be used to offset cuts in appropriated funds resulting in furloughs, Ms. Coulon indicated that would depend on details of the furlough.

Members of the LSUAC Faculty Council

27. The motion to accept the minutes of the February 20, 2009 meeting was made, seconded by Hendrix and approved by voice vote.

28. On behalf of the Faculty Oversight Committee for Budget Related Changes, Dr. Saichuk introduced a varied set of ideas, concepts and recommendations that need to be considered as the process of coping with a reduced LSUAC budget unfolds:

- a. If furloughs become a reality, then it should be mandatory that the employee be required to not perform any services for at least half of those hours. Otherwise, the public will not experience the true loss of service that a furlough entails and it will subject present and future employees to further cuts as the perception will be that future funding to the LSUAC can be cut without proportional reductions in its services and programs.
- b. There is a need to know the effects of nine month appointments on retirement benefits.
- c. There should be no "across-the-board" cuts to programs based on:
 - (i) productivity of a program,
 - (ii) effects on the clientele, and
 - (iii) cost-benefits ratios by station, campus units, and extension vs. research entities.
- d. regional programs versus parish programs.
- e. Use more volunteers.
- f. Base layoffs on performance

- g. Moving a productive employee from an eliminated to a retained program
 - h. Faculty buy-outs should be on an individual basis
 - i. Promotion from within the LSUAC, and
 - j. Consolidate experiment station offices into service centers.
29. Discussion indicated that the following should be protected as the process of coping with a reduction in the budget unfolds:
- a. Maintain overhead to Departments and other units;
 - b. Provide full support to new personnel for three years, and
 - c. Maintenance a LSUAC presence in every parish.
30. Vlosky asked whether the Council wished to support the resolution presented by Southern University. Granger's motion for the Council to create and distribute its own resolution was seconded and passed on a voice vote. There was a sentiment for emphasizing the contributions of extension in that resolution. Grodner, Granger and Vlosky agreed to write the resolution.
31. Ideas and issues related to the budget and cost savings can be e-mailed to Joan King or to Donna Lee.
32. A set of issues, concerns, and suggestions for cost saving measures gathered from the Department of Entomology were presented. This was in response to Dr. Richardson's request that we provide feedback on budget cut-backs – in terms of which programs to protect and where we can streamline programs and generate revenue.
- a. carefully consider branch station closing and opening;
 - b. protect distribution of miscellaneous funds back to departments;
 - c. merge Ag Center Support staff back under LSU main campus including international programs and sponsored programs;
 - d. more efficient travel;
 - e. streamline annual conference;
 - f. use distance education more;
 - g. embrace and use more technology; and
 - h. encourage specialists to invest time training county agents to present master gardener presentations on specialized topics. This could potentially be an improvement in efficiency by decreasing travel cost and time.
33. There were no Service Advisory Committee reports.

The motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved on a voice vote at 12:00 noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne M. Gauthier, Secretary