

MINUTES
LSU AgCenter Faculty Council Meeting
February 17, 2012
Sullivan Conference Room
9:30 a.m.



Members Present: Layne Arceneaux- Langley, Lisa Benoit, Edward Bush, Sharman Charles, Quincy Cheek, Josh Detre, Hallie Dozier, Tina Goebel, Clayton Hollier, Joan King, Robin Landry, Nikki LeMaire, Ken McMillin, Ross Pruitt, Diane Sasser, Michael Stout, Rich Vlosky and John Westra.

Members Absent: Esther Coco Boe, Allen Hogan and Boyd Padgett.

Guests: Dr. William B. Richardson, Chancellor, LSU Agricultural Center (LSUAC).

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1. Chancellor Richardson started the meeting by describing the major incident on Highway 30, down the road from the Reproductive Biology Center in St. Gabriel involving 63 calves that had somehow managed to find their way onto the highway early that morning. Two pickup trucks and a tractor-trailer carrying hazardous cargo were involved in separate accidents involving these cows. The drivers suffered minor injuries and the hazardous cargo was not spilled, despite the semi running into the ditch. Unfortunately, 19 animals either were killed in the accident or had to be destroyed as a result of serious injuries sustained in the accident. Other calves were being cared for after surgery at the veterinary school.
2. It was speculated that the gate for the pasture in which the cows were located was left open, perhaps by a graduate student. Speculation or rumor that LSU Police may have left the gate open was dismissed by the Chancellor. (Subsequent investigation and reports by LSUAC Ag Communications indicated that the animals, spooked by the severe thunder and lightning storms that evening, rushed or pushed up against the gate, broke through, and wandered out onto the highway). The animals' remains were disposed of by the LSUAC.
3. The Chancellor indicated that there are at least 6 different bills filed for the upcoming legislative session with the State Legislature dealing with retirement of state employees, including higher education. Ann Coulon, Director of Human Resource Management at the LSUAC has been reviewing the bills and is trying to make sense of what the implications and effects on LSUAC personnel might be. These bills might affect retirement contribution rates, retirement age, how defined benefits rates are calculated prior to retirement, etc.
4. Much of this interest in changing the state retirement system stems from, by some estimates, an \$18 billion unfunded liability for the state's retirement program – promises for retirement benefits made by previous legislatures and governors that were not financed by either the state or the employees over the past years.

5. The Chancellor indicated that one useful resource Ms. Coulon identified that summarizes this legislation is being provided by the Teachers' Retirement System of Louisiana (TRSL) at: <http://www.trsl.org/main/general.php?section=general&tables=y&page=legislation>
6. Preliminary analysis of some of the bills by Ms. Coulon indicated that if some form of the bills passes that increases the minimum retirement age to 67 for existing employees under LASERS or TRSL (as opposed to the current combination of age and years experience), up to 100 current employees of the LSUAC could retire this year. This, the Chancellor indicated, would severely, adversely affect the LSUAC as many of the faculty and staff affected have years of experience in critical fields of research and extension, with many more potential years of productivity, that would be exceedingly difficult to replace.
7. Dr. Richardson relayed that some of the retirement proposals would require a three percentage point increase in employees and employer matches to retirement program. To help give perspective on this, a 1% increase would be associated with approximately \$450,000 in salaries, excluding benefits, for the LSUAC.
8. None of the plans filed to date, as far as the LSUAC has been able to discern, will affect those employees under Federal retirement rules.
9. The employees in DROP may be affected, but again, the impact will depend on any final bill that passes both houses and is signed by the Governor.
10. The Chancellor suspects that some version of some retirement plan will pass both chambers and be signed into law by the Governor. All LSUAC employees are encouraged to read and research the bills as they will be directly affected by them.
11. The Governor released his Executive Budget and Dr. Lombardi, System President, directed all campuses within the LSU System via memo to publicly support the portion of the budget for Higher Education.
12. The budget, as presented by the Governor, essentially pulled all funding from individual campuses within a system, and all systems within the state, and allocated it to the Board of Regents. The Regents will need to determine how to distribute among the campus in Louisiana.
13. Of particular concern to the Chancellor is how self-generated funds from various campuses within the LSU System will be treated and or redistributed back to the campus associated with the generating activity. This amounted to \$27 million last year for all the campuses, of which the LSUAC constituted a significant share.
14. Dr. Richardson met with Mr. Jim Purcell, Commissioner of Higher Education and presented his plan for the LSUAC for the coming year. The Commissioner seemed interested in and positive about the importance of the LSUAC and output associated with the research and extension activities conducted by its faculty and staff throughout the state.
15. Administrators of the LSUAC will be meeting with the various legislative committees, including appropriations, with whom they will meet March 6th, and before whom they will testify April 2nd.
16. On a positive note, Dr. Richardson indicated there is language in some of the bills for Higher Education that authorizes the LSU System campuses to address salary adjustments. But of course there is no funding associated with the authorization.
17. Discussion about the proposed merger of Food Sciences and Nutrition brought up the issue that the Provost had indicated to Dr. Richardson that he had met with and spoken to faculty in these two units about this possibility. According to LSUAC faculty present, this had not occurred or they were unaware of it happening.
18. Dr. Richardson indicated that the Ag Coalition, recently formed group of key agricultural personnel around the state to discuss budget, autonomy, among other topics, is going well. They met as a group informally previously and were planning to meet again March 7th. Information on the Louisiana Ag Coalition can be found online at: http://www.lsuagcenter.com/en/administration/about_us/chancellors_office/Ag_Coalition/

Business -- Dr. Ken McMillin, Chair, LSUAC Faculty Council

19. The January 13, 2012 meeting minutes were approved as distributed and will be posted on the LSU Ag Council website.

Reports

20. LSU Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting – at the February 3, 2012 meeting, Rich Vlosky, LSUAC representative from Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) related that, for the most part, the meeting consisted of much naming of facilities at the various LSU campuses, including buildings, rooms, professorships, discussion about licensing fees, servitudes, property transfers, and other issues like this. There was some discussion on the proposed roundabout at the entrance to the Baton Rouge campus on Dalrymple, near the LSU Lab School. The \$8 million estimated to make this change in street and traffic flow is not identified at this time. The next BOS meeting will be March 16, 2012. Upcoming information about meetings can be found at the BOS website:
<http://www.lsusystem.edu/index.php/board-of-supervisors/minutes-agenda/>
21. Council of Faculty Advisors (CFA) – serves as a liaison between LSU Systems office and the campuses of the LSU System and is used to communicate views and concerns of faculties on system-wide matters, including academic and professional policies of the system. Meetings are usually during morning prior to the BOS meetings. Information on the Faculty Advisors can be found at:
<http://www.lsusystem.edu/index.php/board-of-supervisors/faculty-advisors/>
22. Ken McMillin and Rich Vlosky represented LSUAC at the CFA meetings at the most recent meeting on February 3, 2012. The NCHEMS report for the Louisiana Board of Regents (BOR) for the Louisiana Legislature on the future of the Higher Education system in Louisiana was discussed. The full report can be found: <http://www.lsu.edu/senate/NCHEMS%20Report.pdf>
23. At the CFA meeting, Kevin Cope, Chair of the Council, indicated that he thinks there are forces at play to weaken the LSU System. According to Dr. Cope, the LSU-Shreveport and Louisiana Tech merger news that was in the media recently, supports his contention. Additionally, many decisions are made by the BOS with little or no faculty input Dr. Cope stated. Dr. Lombardi, System President, proposed a study looking at proposed realignments within the LSU System that would include faculty input and participation, as a means of informing the BOS of the repercussions and potential benefits of such realignments. This report would be completed and delivered to BOS in a couple of years.
24. The other issue discussed at the CFA meeting was the wide range of salaries by faculty rank, across units and campuses in Louisiana, but more importantly to identify to the public that the salaries of faculty in Louisiana are among the lowest in the region if not the nation.
25. Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates (ALFS) – consists of faculty senate representation from all institutions of higher education within Louisiana. Information on ALFS can be found at:
<http://web.lsu.edu/alfs/>. This meeting is usually held in conjunction with the Louisiana Statewide Colleagues' Collaborative Summit Meeting at LSU-Alexandria.
26. At ALFS, discussion focused on the proposed Education Online Services Contract between Southern University and A&M College System (SUS) and Education Online Services (EOS) to record and later rebroadcast or be made available online, lectures and other instructional activities to students without: permission of faculty, regard to their intellectual property rights, compensation, and

consideration that at some future point the material will be obsolete or superseded by other information and discoveries in that field.

27. American Association of University Professors Meeting – brings together representatives from the AAUP (Louisiana Conference). Upcoming meeting is April 14 at Tulane University, and will focus on faculty governance, academic freedom and tenure. Information can be found here: <http://www.laaaup.org/>

Discussion Items

28. LSUAC cell phone policy (PS-45) remains under review, according to Mark Legendre, pending action by other campuses within the LSU System.
29. Service Unit Advisory Committee appointments – LSUAC has the FAC to nominate potential members from the FAC and outside the FAC for each Service Unit Advisory Committee to the Chancellor, who then may either accept or reject these suggestions. Terms start January 1 and last three years. Ken McMillin will email the list of nominees from the FAC to the Chancellor. As far as could be determined, every Service Unit Advisory Committee met in 2011 except for International Program and Human Resource Management.
30. LSUAC FAC Bylaws revisions – Ken McMillin deferred to next meeting.
31. LAES Project Management Task Force Report – Ken McMillin presented to FAC copy of the task force recommendations with suggested changes to LAES Project Management. General changes to recommendations, based on feedback McMillin received from LSUAC faculty in various units were: limit number of reviewers for any LAES Project to three, with one from the department, one from outside the unit, and one at unit head discretion; streamline the process by having the unit head managing most of the process (should prevent delays and provide better oversight), with LAES providing only record-keeping activity in the process; policy should allow for exceptions to delinquency of not having an LAES Project; response time for comments and changes by Research Scientist should be 6 weeks, not 3; include language so as to acknowledge and avoid potential contradiction with existing policies – PS 38 and PS 39. A question was raised during the discussion about unit heads reviewing their own LAES Project and how that should be handled. McMillin will send out revisions to FAC via email for their review.
32. Purpose and restructuring of ACE groups – FC members talked about the need for faculty to take over leadership of ACE groups because ACE groups were developed, in part, to provide better interaction among and benefit scientists and faculty, working on and off campus, and across disciplines. Questions were raised about the usefulness of ACE groups; with some highly functioning ACE groups being very useful to their members.
33. Rich Vlosky had received no questions or suggestions from FAC members regarding the survey instrument he was tasked with developing at the last FAC meeting. McMillin asked for a subcommittee to help Vlosky with the ACE group survey. Those volunteering included Diane Sasser and John Westra.
34. Level of access to Outlook Calendars – McMillin indicated that some faculty members in at least one unit on campus were directed by their unit head to make their Outlook Calendars available on a weekly basis to the unit head and his secretary. FC discussed The FC talked about the requirement for faculty to keep electronic calendars, value or usefulness of them to others, why administration would want to keep track of faculty in this manner. Field faculty mentioned that they have to allow Regional Directors and Parish Chairs access to their Outlook Calendars. Personnel issues and job responsibilities were other issues raised during the discussion. Issue was deferred until next meeting.

35. Retirement legislation – The Louisiana Retired Teachers Association (LRTA) handout on the legislation for proposed changes to the state retirement system was distributed by McMillin. All FAC members and LSUAC faculty and staff were encouraged to stay informed of this legislation. More information can be found at: <http://www.lrta.net/>

The meeting adjourned on a voice vote at 12:50 p.m., February 17, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

John V. Westra
Recorder