

February 2023

Dear Senators,

I hope you have now settled into the Spring semester and your classes are going smoothly. Below are some items that I'd like to update you since our last meeting.

1. Campus Safety

It is with a very heavy heart we continue to learn more details about the tragic death of undergraduate student Madison Brooks. I have heard from a number of members of the LSU community who were concerned about President Tate's comments and approach to this matter, particularly his focus on underage alcohol consumption. I communicated these concerns to the administration and asked that they be provided to President Tate.

The Executive Committee had already been attempting to meet with Vice President of Inclusion, Civil Rights & Title IX Todd Manuel even before the recent heartbreaking event, and after a prolonged period of attempts to set a time, we can confirm that he will be joining us at our FSEC meeting on February 23rd. We anticipate a far-ranging discussion touching on each of the offices under his purview.

Members of the Executive Committee also understand the concerns surrounding safety for students, faculty, and staff. I will be meeting with representatives from the Title IX office later in the week to see if there may be any opportunities for a collaborative effort to address these concerns. We are also in touch with both staff and student leadership to be sure that all voices are heard. I hope that we can identify ways in which safety can be improved on campus and in the surrounding community. I will keep you informed about our initiatives to keep the LSU community safe for all.

2. Zero-Based Budget and Graduate Student Stipends

Faculty continue to express confusion and concern over elements of the new graduate student funding model, including how and if graduate students will be provided with health insurance as part of the new packages. The FSEC recently met with President of the Graduate Student Association Lyric Mandell to learn more about the students' concerns and receive an update on the current status of the health insurance proposal. Our understanding is that Dean Spencer of the Graduate School is looking into some possible options for health insurance but as of now nothing has been settled for the Fall 2023. Given the significant interest among the graduate students for effective and affordable health insurance we are aware that the uncertainty surrounding this aspect of graduate student funding is creating a tremendous deal of anxiety. We support our graduate students in their request and will continue to do what we can to advocate on their behalf in this regard.

3. Need Prioritization Advisory Working Group on Zero-Based Budget

Vice President Tirone and I met with Provost Haggerty last week and reminded him of the strong desire among the faculty that the Advisory Working Group's report be made public. The Provost thanked the committee members for their service and said that he was planning on meeting with them in the near future to discuss the recommendations in their report. He also indicated that he appreciated the faculty's interest in the recommendations but his preference at the time of our meeting was to not share the report. Though we hope that he will in time change course, we respect the Provost's position and also acknowledge that he has been generally responsive to the Senate's requests for increased communication surrounding this process, including holding the Town Hall Forum on Zero-Based Budgeting we requested last semester. We suggested that if the full report will not be made public then perhaps the Provost could draft an executive summary that can be posted on Academic Affairs' website; he has taken that request under consideration. We will follow up next week and keep you posted of any changes that develop.

4. SCR6

State Senator Stewart Cathey recently informed reporters that that he will not be convening the tenure taskforce established in Senate Concurrent Resolution 6, but instead is working with unspecified higher education leaders to draft a bill on tenure, which he will introduce during the upcoming legislative session. We have no additional information on the contents of this alleged bill or the individuals with whom he is consulting, though we have been told that the Senator has not spoken with anyone from LSU about this new approach. We stand by the Faculty Senate's original affirmation of support for tenure and academic freedom, Resolution 22-06, which was adopted last Spring, and a subsequent similar statement issued by the Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates (ALFS). I was also personally heartened when, at the Board of Supervisors meeting last week (10 February), President Tate gave an impassioned statement in support of tenure and LSU's faculty. His comments made it clear that the President's commitment to both will be unflinching during these uncertain times, especially as threats to tenure and academic freedom are increasing within our region and across the country.

5. Faculty Senate Integrative Core Learning (FSILC)

Fall 2022 saw the first full round of course assessments under the Integrative Learning Core (ILC), LSU's new General Education framework. Many faculty have expressed concerns over what they perceive to be an excessively complicated and overly opaque reporting system. The FSEC is working with the FSILC Committee and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to identify ways to simplify the process and ease the burden on faculty. As part of this effort Sandi Gillilan will be visiting FSEC on February 23 to address some of these concerns.

6. Fall 2022 Student Evaluations

Due to continued concern over the Fall evaluations that were extended into final exams week, I reached out to Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management to confirm that the evaluations collected after the original deadline will not be shared with administrators (e.g., directors, chairs, deans, etc.). I was assured that they will only be available upon request to individual faculty members. Consequently, Academic Affairs sent a broadcast email confirming this to all faculty on February 8th.

7. ChatGPT

As most of you are probably already aware, the artificial intelligence powered chatbot ChatGPT poses an increasing threat to the integrity of campus assignments. I have been meeting with various administrators to try to figure out the best practices and recommendations we can provide faculty to identify these plagiarized essays. If you know any faculty members, perhaps in the computer science department, who can provide more insight into this matter, I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to speak with them. I am meeting next week with Associate Vice President & Dean of Students Brandon Common, to further discuss what options, if any, may be available to address these potential violations through the Student Code of Conduct. In the meantime, Communications across the Curriculum (CxC) has put together a terrific webpage of resources that many of you will find helpful. You can access it [here](#). I'd like to especially thank Vice Provost of Academic Programs Jackie Bach for helping us in addressing this issue.

8. Faculty Senate Nominating Committee

According to our Bylaws, the FSEC must appoint a committee to solicit nominations for the upcoming Faculty Senate elections in April. Last week, the FSEC appointed four outgoing Senators to the Nominating Committee. They are Kellie Brisini (HSS), Lori Bade (MDA), Louay Mohammad (Engineering), and Robert Cook (Science). We thank them for agreeing to serve in this capacity. Please contact any of them to nominate someone, including yourself, for any of the FSEC positions—President, Vice President, Secretary, and two members-at-large. The list of all nominees will be published in the agenda for the March meeting of the Faculty Senate.

9. Faculty Council Meeting

I am happy to report that the location of the Faculty Council meeting has been set. It will take place on April 17 at 2:30pm at the Royal Cotillion Ballroom at the Union. Please be sure to communicate this to your colleagues. It is very important that we make quorum!

10. Innovation Series

LSU & Continuing Education (OCE) team invites you to the upcoming Innovation Series event, *Keeping Students First: Building Equitable Bridges to the Future*, scheduled for Monday, March 27th from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the LSU Lod Cook Alumni Center. For more information about the event and registration, please click [here](#).

Please continue being the eyes and ears for us. It strengthens our advocacy for you, your departments, and colleges. We are always stronger together.

Sincerely,



Inessa Bazayev
President, LSU Faculty Senate