



August 2022

Dear Senators,

Welcome to the Faculty Senate! You are here because your colleagues have elected you to represent them in the important work the Faculty Senate does on campus. If you are a returning Senator, I hope that you will continue your active participation in shared governance and work with me to address your faculty's concerns. I also hope that you will help our new Senators with your guidance and expertise on how to improve their units and strengthen the University.

Throughout the summer, the incoming and outgoing Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) members met as a single body, chaired by outgoing President Mandi Lopez. I officially began the duties of the Presidency on 22 August 2022. I have been working closely with our new Faculty Senate Executive Committee to better serve our faculty and the University. During the past months I also spoke with many Faculty Senate Presidents around the country both past and present to learn about how their Senates operate and to gather ideas about how we can update our policies and procedures to better execute our critical role on behalf of faculty. Below are some of the important events that took place since our last Senate meeting.

Last May the Louisiana legislature passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 6 calling for the formation of a taskforce to study tenure within Louisiana. The Task Force for Tenure in Higher Education is comprised of members of the legislature and higher education appointees from all public systems in the state: LSU, Southern, the University of Louisiana, and the Louisiana Community and Technical College System. I have been in touch with the LSU faculty representative, Christof Stumpf from LSU-A, and President Tate to discuss how we will approach the committee and will keep you informed on the developments of their work. While there is no need to panic, we are taking the task force seriously and will do everything we can to protect tenure within our institutions.

In the past couple of months, Vice President Dan Tirone, outgoing Member-at-Large Jeff Roland, Susannah Knoll, and I compiled a guidebook for our Faculty Senate. The guidebook includes pertinent information regarding Senate policies and procedures, as well as its history. It also covers Senators' roles, as well as important documents concerning faculty governance. We had hoped to have the guidebook available for our August Senate meeting, but a eight-week gap between FSEC meetings over the summer slowed its production; it will instead be distributed when we meet in September.

FSEC members—Meredith Veldman and Jeffrey Roland—who are on the ad hoc COVID-19 committee distributed a survey on faculty mitigation preferences in August. This survey received over 450 responses. Results are being prepared for distribution to faculty and will be instrumental in our discussions with the administration on how to operate campus in a safe manner that advances our educational mission.

We worked locally, but we also look at issues nationally, both in our research and in our projects. In June I attended the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) national meeting in Washington DC as a delegate from the Louisiana section. It was empowering to meet likeminded faculty who are working hard to strengthen faculty shared governance at their respective institutions. Founded in 1915, the AAUP has helped to shape American higher education by developing the standards and procedures that maintain quality in education and academic freedom in this country's colleges and universities (www.aaup.org). I am pleased to note that along with the AAUP of Louisiana and the LSU Ethics Institute, the Faculty Senate is making arrangements to co-sponsor a visit of Michael Bérubé, Edwin Erle Sparks

Professor of Literature at Pennsylvania State University, who will give a lecture entitled “Taking Academic Freedom Seriously” on Friday, November 11. We’ll share more information about his visit soon.

We are all aware of the many challenges on our campus and in higher education nationally, from low morale and below market compensation to threats to academic freedom and tenure protections. In the coming months I would like the FSEC to meet with all of you in smaller groups to hear your concerns that may be lesser known but just as important. To help address these issues I’d like to strengthen the relationship between the Executive Committee, the Faculty Senate, our committees, and the faculty we serve. We will all need to work together on and off our campus to effectively address issues of significance to faculty in the LSU system and statewide.


The incoming FSEC and I have a lot of plans for the Faculty Senate this year: things that we’d like to achieve and things that we’d like to set in motion. These include:

- bringing the Senate into compliance with its policies and procedures;
- forming an ad hoc policy committee to review and update Senate policies, outdated permanent memoranda (e.g., PM-24) and policy statements (e.g., PS-15);
- continuing to advocate for satisfactory faculty compensation, as a start working with the Faculty Senate Benefits Committee and the Faculty Senate Budget and Planning Advisory Committee;
- following up on the resolution that they sponsored last year to address faculty compensation (i.e., Faculty Senate Resolution 22-02); and
- working with the AAUP and LSU’s upper administration to revive efforts to lift the double censure on LSU for violations of academic freedom (<https://www.aaup.org/report/academic-freedom-and-tenure-louisiana-state-university-baton-rouge>).

Ultimately it is incumbent upon us to place the educational mission of LSU back at the forefront of the public’s perception. It is easy to become distracted by the bells and whistles of a major university, but the true purpose of LSU occurs in our classrooms and laboratories, our libraries and our performance halls. It is in the life-altering interactions between our faculty and our students that we contribute to the welfare of our community both locally and globally. To achieve these things, we must empower our faculty and thus strengthen our institution. As Isidore Rabi so eloquently reminded Dwight Eisenhower when the future President addressed a group of Columbia faculty as “employees” of the university, Rabi interrupted: “Mr. President, we are not employees of the University; we are the University.”¹

I look forward to working collaboratively with you to continue to build our Senate into a formidable body that advocates for faculty, enhances shared governance, and allows LSU to achieve the immense potential made possible by its extraordinary faculty, students, and staff.

Sincerely yours,



Inessa Bazayev
President, LSU Faculty Senate

¹ http://senate.columbia.edu/archives/plenary/16-17/plenary_documents_16-17/fac_letter_to_bollinger_20170224.pdf