

Dear Senators,

We are at our last stretch of the semester. Below are some items on which I'd like to update you since our last meeting.

**1. Faculty Council Meeting Turned End-of-the-Year Meeting**

Though we had an impressive 323 faculty members register for the Faculty Council meeting it unfortunately fell short of our quorum requirement of 420. Therefore, the meeting on April 17 turned into an end-of-the-year meeting with President Tate. I offered a short address to the faculty, which was followed by a longer address by President Tate, covering major issues dealing with the recently filed Senate bill on tenure and the anti-DEI resolution. The President was very clear on his commitment to academic freedom and tenure. He reassured the faculty that his team is doing everything to protect LSU and the other institutions of higher education in our state from these types of legislative efforts. President Tate also addressed issues more local to our campus, including the crumbling infrastructure, salaries, and faculty recruitment and retention. This was followed by a lively Q&A by the faculty. The tone of this portion was amicable and quite a few faculty stayed after to chat with both President Tate and Provost Haggerty.

**2. Senate Bill 174**

The attacks on tenure and academic freedom continue to be a serious issue in our region. As you are probably already aware, two weeks ago State Senator Stewart Cathey filed a bill which calls for mandatory annual faculty evaluations at public institutions of higher education across the state. That bill provides a very detailed process for how these mandatory evaluations are to be carried out. Vice President Tirone and I, along with faculty and administrative leaders from public institutions around the state including Southern, Southeastern, and the UL system, were invited to the Capitol to meet with Senator Cathey regarding this bill. We worked quite closely with the administration to prepare for the meeting and although it was amicable in tone, we were very clear that LSU has grave concerns about the proposed legislation. We will continue our close collaboration with the LSU administration and can assure you that they are taking this matter seriously and treating it as one of their top policy priorities.

**3. New ITS Policy Statements and Standards and FS IT Committee**

The FSEC has been in discussions with representatives from ITS about a suite of new Policy Statements and Standards Documents they have been developing over the last year and a half and intend to submit for approval soon. During these conversations we realized there was a mutual desire for increased cooperation between the Senate and ITS, so last week the FSEC created an ad hoc IT Committee to work closely with the IT Governance Council to provide faculty feedback on new proposals and revisions to existing policies, including those already in development. The committee will have eleven voting faculty members and a number of ex-officio members, including Craig Woolley and Sumit Jain from ITS. We have already appointed seven faculty members and recommend that you contact Param Singh if you would be interested in joining the committee. We are in particular need of faculty who teach online courses and faculty from the humanities.

#### **4. Committee on Committees**

Last week the FSEC voted to create an ad hoc Committee on Committees to assist us with the time-consuming task of finding faculty to serve on our standing, special and administrative committees. We have already appointed four members representing four colleges, including Ag, Engineering, HSS, and Science. Senator Louay Mohammad agreed to serve as its chair, and he comes with immense experience, as he had chaired this very committee some years back. We are grateful for his insight and leadership and the willingness of the other committee members to fill these important roles. That committee is currently at work to staff some of the vacancies that will arise at the beginning of the next academic year and is in need of faculty for almost all committees both appointed and elected. If you are interested and willing to serve please contact Dr. Mohammad before the beginning of the Fall semester when we hope to make the necessary appointments and hold elections for the committees for which they are required.

#### **5. Senate Budget**

An Excel spreadsheet with information about the Faculty Senate budget through the end of February was distributed with the email notice for today's meeting. I would like to thank Ryan Landry for preparing the document and assisting us with our questions about the Senate's finances. The majority of our expenses are related to running the Faculty Senate meetings and purchasing supplies for Senate operations. This was also an unusual year in that we had some salary savings as the Faculty Senate Coordinator position was vacant most of the time since the beginning of the Fall term. There are a few more approved expenses to be applied to these accounts between the beginning of March and the end of the fiscal year on June 30<sup>th</sup> but overall, it appears that we are well within our budget for the two accounts at the Senate's disposal.

#### **6. Student Government Resolution**

The FSEC recently met with representatives from Student Government to discuss a resolution they passed regarding Faculty Senate Resolution 23-02, Proposed Revisions to Clarify Expectations Around Course Grading and Communication. The students' resolution, which was distributed with the email notice of today's meeting, expressed their appreciation of the Senate's efforts on this issue and encouraged all faculty to implement the recommendations. This is a topic of tremendous interest to our students, and we look forward to continue working with them on these and other issues moving forward.

#### **7. Staff Senate**

Early in the Fall term the Senate created a committee to regularly attend Staff Senate meetings and identify issues of mutual interest between our two groups. The members of this committee have done an excellent job and it is clear that there are numerous issues on which both Senates might work cooperatively. I am in discussions with Staff Senate President Tammy Millican about identifying some of these areas and I would hope that in the Fall the Policy Committee will investigate various options by which the two bodies may formally work together in pursuit of shared goals.

#### **8. Faculty Senate Coordinator**

I am happy to report that we have hired a new Faculty Senate Coordinator. Tricia Cobb has started her new position last week and has already begun all the necessary trainings to join the LSU community. Tricia comes with nearly a 10-year experience with customer service, communication, and organization, as she was a medical assistant at the Bone and Joint Clinic of Baton Rouge. We are excited to welcome her and very much look forward to working with her.

It has been an honor to serve you this year. And should I be re-elected today I will continue to better shared governance and further strengthen faculty voices. We are always stronger together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Inessa Bazayev". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'I'.

Inessa Bazayev  
President, LSU Faculty Senate