



LSUUnited stands for a shared vision and collaborative governance for our university and throughout higher education in Louisiana.

We're on facebook. Are you? Become a fan of LSUUnited to get the latest updates on our organizing efforts.

We are coordinating our organizing efforts with the National Education Association (NEA). Today, NEA has the largest college and university faculty and staff membership in the United States, representing more than 200,000 higher education employees in public, as well as private, institutions nationwide. Since NEA's beginning, college and university faculty have played prominent roles in the Association's history.

During our first 60 years, there was hardly a leader in American higher education who was not also a leader in the NEA. At least one-fourth of its founding members were faculty or administrators from higher education institutions.

To learn more about the work of the NEA in higher education and the issues and priorities of our higher education members

– faculty, education support professionals, academic professionals and graduate assistants - go to www.nea.org.



An Honor to Join, a Benefit to Belong

The Louisiana Association of Educators (LAE) is the largest education association in the state of Louisiana. LAE is an affiliate of the 3.2 million member, National Education Association (NEA), which is the nation's largest professional employee organization. The NEA is committed to advancing the cause of public education and believes every child deserves a quality education.

The LAE mission is to organize and empower local associations to promote quality public schools, to strengthen the education profession and to improve the well being of members.

The LAE provides legislative initiatives, legal assistance, professional development opportunities, great member benefits, and informative publications and website.



Voices of Higher Education

LSUUnited's Quarterly Newsletter

SPRING 2011



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Co-Presidents' Message

Since the formation of LSUUnited in the fall of 2010, we have passed a few milestones. We would like to apprise you of those.

Our membership has swelled to over 100, and we continue to add new members. We have had several informational meetings around campus and are planning more. These meetings are helpful in terms of getting our message out to many people at once. Still, we are finding that it is really the individual, face-to-face contacts that have the greatest effect. Therefore, it is important that every member speaks to his or her colleagues. We are all membership recruiters, both seed and fertilizer for this organization.

With regard to official recognition, you should know that our constitution and by-laws--drafted by our own "Tom Jefferson," Dr. Paul Wilson--have been accepted by the Board of Directors of the Louisiana Association of Educators (LAE), our sponsor and

mentoring organization.

LSUUnited has garnered media attention, with articles in *The Reveille* and the *Greater Baton Rouge Business Report* as well as an appearance on The Jim Engster Show on WRKF radio. LSUUnited assisted the Proud Students organization in planning and promoting the jazz funeral against cuts to LSU's budget in October 2010. In November 2010, LSUUnited and LAE participated in the rally at the state capitol against higher education budget cuts; and, on February 26th, one of our members, John Protevi, was a featured speaker at MoveOn's "Save the American Dream" rally in support of public sector unions. Each of these events received credible media coverage. We and LAE are committed to assist the Proud Students in their next rally, which should take place in May 2011.

(continued inside)



(Co-Presidents' message continued)

Our organization has garnered the attention of the media, including articles in *The Reveille* and the *Greater Baton Rouge Business Report*, as well as an appearance on *The Jim Engster Show* on WRKF radio. LSUnited assisted the Proud Students organization in planning and promoting the jazz funeral against cuts to LSU's budget in October 2010. In November 2010, LSUnited and LAE participated in the rally at the state capitol against higher education budget cuts; and, on February 26th, one of our members, John Protevi, was a featured speaker at MoveOn's "Save the American Dream" rally in support of public sector unions. Each of these events received media coverage.

Members of LSUnited have also become active statewide. Faculty Senate President and LSUnited member, Kevin Cope, has begun seriously to galvanize higher education professionals statewide with a series of strategy meetings in Alexandria. These meetings have been well attended by educators from all over the state, with an especially vigorous contingent from LSUnited.

We are a step closer to becoming official in the eyes of the university. We are preparing to set up dues payroll deduction with the LSU Payroll Department. Dues, understand, are a three-legged stool. We pay dues to three separate entities.

- First, the local dues: The maximum dues for LSUnited are \$77 for the year. (We hope to convince Payroll to allow us to set up a sliding scale for this, based on salary ranges, so that only those in the top salary range would pay the full \$77, while others would pay gradually less. We will let you know if we are successful. The scale is attached.)
- Second, the state dues: The annual dues for LAE are ordinarily \$252 for most full-time faculty. However, the LAE is granting us a 20% discount for the remainder of the current year (dues are also pro-rated for the remainder of the current year) and a 10% discount for the following year. Not until the year after that will the full dues kick in. This discount is an incentive and is applicable only to folks who join this year, so tell your friends to get off the fence and join now.
- Third, the national dues: The National Education Association (NEA) dues are \$166 for most full-time faculty.

And something we're sure you'll be glad to know, dues are tax deductible.

To answer a question that is often asked, our dues, in a general sense, are used to support and promote the agenda of the organizations to which dues are paid. We receive significant support from LAE and, by extension, NEA. A large portion of our dues covers legal support and lobbying. Another large portion pays for the infrastructure of the parent organizations, such as the staffs that are essential to their effective operation. More detailed analyses of dues allocation are available at -----.

(Co-Presidents' message continued)

Several committees are now at work on our behalf, and all of them are in need of more volunteers:

- Membership—Mike Russo (6923louis@gmail.com), Patt O'Neill (BlessedBe@cox.net);
- Communications—Gina Costello (gina.costello@gmail.com);
- Newsletter—Jeff Roland (jroland@lsu.edu);
- Constitution and By-laws—Paul Wilson (pwilson@eatel.net);
- Legislative—Dominique Homberger (hombergerdg@gmail.com).

Please contact the committee chairs listed above to volunteer. With everyone pitching in, the growth of our organization will be faster and its effectiveness accelerated. We've all signed up. But signing up is not the end; it is the beginning. Now, it is time for all of us to do the work that will make LSUnited a forceful and compelling voice in the LSU conversation.

Once again, thanks for joining and congratulations for seeing the sense of taking matters that directly affect you into your own hands. With time and persistence, we are sure to make LSUnited a positive factor in our university's future.

Mike Russo and Patt O'Neill
Co-Presidents, LSUnited



Mike Russo and Patt O'Neill

In the News

Public sector unions and the right to organize have been under attack in recent months.

- In Wisconsin, Governor Scott Walker signed a bill eliminating nearly all collective bargaining rights for public employees, including faculty at Wisconsin's public colleges and universities. The people of Wisconsin continue to fight implementation of this law in the courts, on the streets, and at the ballot box.

www.thenation.com/article/158990/spirit-wisconsin

www.thenation.com/blog/161159/wisconsin-protests-ramp-approach-budget-showdown-recall-elections



AP Photo: Wisconsin workers rally in Madison, February 15, 2011.

- In Ohio, Governor John Kasich followed suit.

www.reuters.com/article/2011/04/01/us-ohio-unions-governor-idUSTRE72U62W20110401

- Anti-union bills were also considered in Indiana, Tennessee, Maine, Michigan, Idaho, New Jersey, and Florida.

Recent threats to faculty rights in higher education have not been limited to attacks on collective bargaining. Across the country, faculty rights are being challenged.

- In Utah, a bill was introduced in the House of Representatives to eliminate tenure for faculty at public universities.

www.deseretnews.com/article/700109900/Lawmakers-bill-would-end-tenure-for-Utah-professors.html

- In Florida, eliminating tenure for community college faculty passed in the House of Representatives.

www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/03/29/florida-lawmakers-may-move-to-end-tenure-at-community-colleges

- At Florida State University, 21 tenured professors were fired for budgetary reasons. The good news is that all were rehired after a successful challenge to the firings was brought by their faculty union, United Faculty of Florida.

www.insidehighered.com/news/2010/11/08/florida-state

- Here at home in Louisiana, the University of Louisiana system has weakened tenure protection.

www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/02/28/university-of-louisiana-weakens-tenure-protections-angers-faculty-leaders

The University of Louisiana at Monroe and Southeastern Louisiana University have already fired tenured faculty *and then offered to rehire them as adjuncts to teach the same courses they previously taught.*

www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/06/07/u-of-louisiana-accused-of-eliminating-tenure-rights

LSU faculty members have not been spared. Fourteen instructors of foreign languages were fired mid-year of 2010–2011, apparently for budgetary reasons.

www.lsureveille.com/news/fired-foreign-language-14-confront-chancellor-martin-1.2350760

Louisiana's state budget, and with it LSU's budget, for the upcoming fiscal year remains unclear. Further cuts to education funding in the state could bring more faculty firings, potentially including tenured and tenure-track faculty.

www.lsu.edu/departments/curb/qanda.shtml

Pass It On

When you're finished with this newsletter, please pass it on to a colleague who may be interested in joining LSUUnited. Together we can make a positive difference to LSU and higher education in Louisiana.

At the Legislature

Several members of LSUnited made a visit to the Louisiana legislature to lobby on behalf of higher education in the state.



LSUnited members Mike Russo and Anna Nardo speak with Senate Education Committee Chair Ben Nevers (D-Bogalusa).

In the Trenches

(The following remarks were made by LSU Professor of French and LSUnited member John Protevi at the Louisiana – Wisconsin Solidarity Rally, May 26, 2011, held at the State Capitol in Baton Rouge.)

We're here today to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Wisconsin.

Now that sounds crazy, "brothers and sisters." None of us are related to them, we probably don't even know any of them. But we know their cause, and it's our cause too: the cause of public service and the cause of union rights. It's one cause; you can't have one without the other.

Why do I say that? Because if we don't have union rights, pretty soon we won't have public service either. Because the enemies of union rights are also enemies of public service!

They don't want public service; they want to cash in on privatizing the institutions that provide public service. Which means they really don't want a public at all. They want isolated individuals, afraid for their jobs, working at the whim of bosses who funnel the profits into the bank accounts of investors.

They want isolation and fear, and to them we oppose solidarity and joy. Because there's nothing better than working together! We're made to work together. It's our heritage from the brave men and women of the labor movement, and it's even our nature as human beings. It's when we feel the best, when we feel alive and happy and productive, working together to serve the public good.

For the enemies of public service and union rights, there's no such thing as a common good, as the public good. They outright deny it. It's their philosophy; they say it out loud.

So we need to say it out loud: they're wrong. They're wrong to want to divide us. They're wrong to want to manipulate our fears. They're wrong when they deny public service. They're wrong when they deny union rights.

But we're not here to be negative. We're here to be positive. So we should say what our vision is: we're here today to show what free people coming together to work for the common good looks like.

Freedom doesn't come when you're cut off from your brothers and sisters, when you're alone and afraid and resentful in front of your TV. Freedom comes when we work together to provide the roads, the health care, the education, all the things that let us be free from fear and poverty and ignorance.

That's what we do with our lives. That's what gives them meaning. That's what gives us strength and joy. And that's what brings us here today to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Wisconsin.



John Protevi