



October 9, 2025

Dear Senators,

I begin this month's report with a topic that has garnered a great deal of attention: the search for LSU's next president.

1. The Presidential Search

The Presidential Search Committee met on Wednesday, October 1. During the meeting there was an opportunity for members of the committee to share our expected qualifications for the successful candidate, and I discussed the criteria I had shared with you in my previous report, including a history of personal academic achievement resulting in appointment as a full professor at an institution comparable to or more highly ranked than LSU; administrative experience in a role which included the research and teaching missions of an R1 university; and prior experience as an upper-level administrator in a system as large as LSU. Information was also provided about the pool of individuals who had expressed interest in the position, which includes sitting Presidents and Provosts and five individuals who currently have positions at other flagship universities.

I realize that interest in the search is high and that there are reasonable discussions which can be had about the composition of the committee and the process. I do not have additional information to provide about the process moving forward at this time as I understand some of the details are still being worked out. My personal belief is that we should not rush the decision and need to take the time necessary to complete a thorough, national search that will yield the most accomplished candidate who is ready to lead LSU from the day he or she steps foot on campus. Given the stakes, I think it is critical that we get the decision right, rather than make it right now. That is not to deny that there may be circumstances in which time can be of the essence, such as when we are in competition with another institution for a highly sought after candidate. To the best of my knowledge we are not yet in that position and can take the time necessary to go through a comprehensive process.

I would also like to emphasize the importance of faculty remaining attentive to the search and ready to become more engaged if necessary. One of the criteria listed for the next president's attributes and qualifications in the [published job advertisement](#) is that they have "significant academic accomplishments and an earned terminal degree sufficient to gain the trust and respect of the faculty." This requires faculty to be clear in our communications with the search committee and the Board of Supervisors about which candidates have our trust and respect. I was very pleased to see the number of faculty and staff who have already completed the survey being conducted by the Council of Staff Advisors and which will close at the end of the business day on Friday, October 10. As of Wednesday morning there were 1,270 responses including 623 from A&M, 294 from the Health Science Center New Orleans, and 94 from Ag. Of those responses, approximately 80% stated that they believed it was very or extremely important that the next LSU President has a strong background in academia. That figure increases to 96% when you add in moderately important.

As the only two faculty members on the committee, Dr. Schafer and I should play critical roles in expressing the faculty's views and determining which candidates would have our trust and respect. While deference to our perspectives should be expected, it is not inconceivable that there may be a difference of opinion on the suitability of particular candidates relative to this criterion. In those cases it would be beneficial to hear directly from faculty to ensure that the committee and Board are fully informed of their position. Hiring a candidate who does not hold the trust of the faculty would be tremendously harmful in any number of ways, including but not limited to the difficulties it would create in recruiting the highly accomplished faculty we need to bring to our campus to continue our pursuit of academic excellence. One only needs to look a few Presidents back in LSU history to see the types of issues which can arise when there is a disconnect between the faculty and administration, and we do not want to return to that situation.

The role of LSU in the state of Louisiana was another topic which was mentioned numerous times during the meeting by various committee members. There was general agreement that our university is not just an academic institution but a cultural one as well and that we need to recognize the important role we play as stewards of this public resource. I agree with this sentiment but wanted to share my perspective on one dimension of the discussion which came up on occasion.

You do not have to be from Louisiana to value LSU and recognize its special role in the state. As someone who grew up elsewhere, it did not take me long to understand the deep attachment our fellow citizens have for the work we do at the university and what it means to Louisiana, and in many ways I think it represents the best of what an educational institution can be. It attracts the best and brightest talent from around the globe and brings them to our state so our friends and neighbors can get a world-class education at home rather than having to travel elsewhere. Or, stated differently, we bring the world to Louisiana's backyard. We should celebrate the arrival of these experts who during the course of their careers will establish roots, raise families, benefit their communities and learn to celebrate what it is that makes Louisiana unique.

I therefore wish to be clear that in my opinion being a native of Louisiana is not a qualification for this position. Rather than limiting ourselves geographically, we must be as rigorous in searching for the most talented candidates for the Presidency from all backgrounds and hometowns as we are when we scour the country for a quarterback or football coach.

These next few weeks will be some of the most consequential for LSU in many years. Presidential searches are challenging even in the best of times, and this is a uniquely difficult period for higher education. If you are looking for reasons to be optimistic, the strength of our institution should make this a desirable position and we have many impressive individuals who are deeply committed to the academic mission of LSU on the search committee, including Chairman Ballard. Even with these conditions success is not guaranteed, and I have had many sleepless nights lately thinking about the numerous outcomes which could occur. Ultimately I believe that the committee and the Board of Supervisors will recognize the tremendous responsibility we have to act in the best interest of our institution and our state, because as the example of the Jindal era shows the fortunes of Louisiana closely mirror those of LSU. Selecting the right individual to lead us into the future will allow us to grow the national and international respect we have developed for our accomplishments; choose poorly, and that respect will turn to ridicule. I ask everyone with an interest in LSU, including students, staff, faculty, alumni, donors, and others, to remain attentive and engaged so we don't have to look back and wish we had done more. The time to act is now, while we can, to keep LSU strong today and into the future.

2. The Search for the Next Faculty Senate Coordinator

The job posting for the Faculty Senate Coordinator position is now [available online](#). If you know of anyone who might be interested in the role please encourage them to review the posting and direct them to contact me if they have any questions. This is an excellent position for someone who is organized and can operate independently and wants to work in an interesting and dynamic environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. C. Tirone". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "D" and a distinct "T" for the last name.

Daniel C. Tirone
President, LSU Faculty Senate