

Weeks of November 13th and 20th

Last spring, conversations began in legislative and policy circles about the potential of a shortfall in funding for TOPS. Tens of thousands of current college students and graduates of the high school class of 2016 had already made life-defining decisions and turned down hundreds of millions of dollars in scholarships in order to attend college in Louisiana based on a promise. That promise to those students said if you do certain things, your state will fund your education. By mid-June, that promise was broken...kind of...

Faced with a \$900 million then-current year budget deficit and a staggering \$2+ billion budget deficit for 2016-17, the legislature passed temporary revenue measures and spending cuts to balance the budget. The fiscal experts' best guess suggested the budget would still be short, so TOPS was funded at 70%. The reduction in payments to students was pushed back into the spring semester because some believed the forecast was too conservative. The thought was surely a solution would materialize: better-than-expected sales tax revenues, an improving economy, higher price of oil, etc. A solution did not materialize. The state finds itself with a \$300+ million deficit for last year and a yet-to-be-determined deficit for this year (Supposedly. We have collected \$580 million more through October than we did last year, and nobody can explain to me why that translates into a problem. That said, there are a number of complex moving parts, and I am just a journalism major...). No magic solution for TOPS appears imminent.

At NSU, we began planning for the worst early. A portion of our increases in revenue from projected (now realized) enrollment growth and the 8% fee increase was reserved. Combined with savings from the delayed filling of some positions and attrition, and with an emphasis on private scholarship fundraising specifically tied to mitigating the TOPS shortfall impact on students, we can protect our students for this year without devastating impact on the university. There is an impact, of course, but compared to the negative impact on our graduation and retention rates and the multi-year revenue consequences, the business decision was pretty easy. The moral decision was even easier: for a university that serves a significant number of first-generation students, students from rural areas, students from underserved and impoverished populations, we did the right thing. Sometimes, it really is that simple.

The Week

Monday morning, we held the November Leadership Team meeting. Below are Pam Cook's notes:

November 14, 2016 @ 8:30 a.m. Leadership Team Meeting

- **Chris Maggio:**
 - **Enrollment Management**
 - An increase in admitted students as compared to this time last year, 12%.
 - Had a successful HS Preview Day, approximately 1300 students and family.
 - Counselor Luncheons in 8 cities.
 - Planning special recruiting days including AHEC for students interested in health care fields, Journalism Day (implemented by dept.).
 - RETENTION and PRE-REGISTRATION need to be focus for spring semester.
 - A lot of questions about TOPS, financial aid, etc. Staff in Financial Aid, Admissions, and Recruiting doing a great job working with students.
 - Thank faculty and staff who go out of their way to help with events. Tours, questions, etc.

- **Frances Conine:**
 - Handling a number of student conduct issues. Working hard to keep these students in school.
 - We want every office at NSU to be viewed as a safe space. Several "safe spaces" for students including the Wesley Foundation, have been identified.
 - Thursday afternoon, Rebecca Boone, Director of Counseling, will hold seminars on dealing with post-election stress and vulnerability.
 - Attended LCTCS workshop in Baton Rouge re: OCR status.

- **John Pearce:**
 - SGA-Leadership Team Luncheon to be held today at 11:30 a.m.
 - Stage project – architect doing renderings.
 - Bill has been developed and passed to allow Shreveport students to vote in student elections.

- **Roni Biscoe:**
 - QEP work progressing.
 - SACSCOC Focused report due back after Thanksgiving.
 - Multiple surveys (student evaluation, graduating student, graduating graduate student, etc.) being administered now through December 5th.

- **Marcia Hardy:**
 - Faculty Senate has identified recipients of teaching awards to be appointed as faculty marshals for Fall 2016 commencement.
 - Ad hoc committee to review research/graduate faculty teaching loads.

- Looking for permanent location for webex access.
 - Faculty Senate looking into participating in a service project with students and/or Natchitoches community.
 - Next FS meeting tomorrow; will discuss QEP and an exploratory 'any impact' discussion session on the cap on faculty salaries handbook policy as related to the introduction of competency based course extra services contracts. Vickie will address.
- **Vickie Gentry:**
 - QEP
 - QEP experiential learning proposal called: Learning for Life.
 - Held 3 faculty forums, and 3 student forums.
 - QEP document to be submitted by January 27, 2017, before onsite visit.
 - The executive committee consists of 7 members; taskforce has 16 members.
 - There are 2 deadlines to meet in December.
 - Website being developed.
 - BESE changes for 2018-2019 include year-long residency with mentor teachers.
- **Drake Owens:**
 - Reaching out to Alumni Chapter Presidents; making efforts to add new members to regional chapters.
 - Tailgating complete; great turnout throughout the season; 1200 people came through on Homecoming.
 - 2300 handwritten thank you letters from students were sent to donors during annual Thank-a-Donor Day event.
 - 52% increase in giving from the 1st to the 3rd quarter of 2016.
 - 80% increase in individual donors over the past 12 months.
 - Annual "Columns Fund" mailer completed and sent to print.
 - Annual "Columns Fund" video to be filmed to accompany mailer featuring Dr. Henderson and Mr. and Miss NSU.
 - Board of Regents has changed requirements for establishing professorships including a reduction in state matching funds from 40% to 20% and elimination of matching funds for First Generation Scholarships.
 - November 29th is the National Day of Giving; plans underway for accompanying social media fundraising campaign.
 - November 30th will be 1st Senior Ring Ceremony which will be held in Turpin Stadium.
 - Preparing for GALA reception to be held on Friday, December 2nd.
 - Hosted the City of Natchitoches interviewing architectural firms for joint recreation park project with the City.
 - Continuing work on Community Enrichment segment of the Strategic Plan.
 - Continuing work on the development of the Quality Enhancement Plan.
- **Greg Handel:**
 - Several units within College of Arts and Sciences are going through accreditation reviews including Vet Tech.
 - Continue to have students and families come through for visits.
 - Journalism Day was held Friday, November 4th.

- Chanticleer Vocal Ensemble presented concert on November 1st. They also held master classes prior to concert.
 - Classic on the Cane Marching Band Contest was held on Saturday, November 5th with 34 bands participating. 17 of the bands are led by NSU alumni. Parkway won the contest.
 - 18 vocal students in competition. 12 of the 18 moved to semi-finals.
 - Guest came from Cuba to demonstrate print making.
- **Margaret Kilcoyne:**
 - Pre-registration roundup on Wednesday, November 16, 2016. We are having games – Hungary Hippo and Spin the Wheel.
 - Have over 10% growth for fall 2016...topped CoN ☺.
 - Working on an endowed professorship with State Farm and some other corporate initiatives.
 - Business and Industry showcase was a huge success and employers want us to do it again. Will probably do it in the spring.
 - J. Walter Porter Forum was a huge success.
 - College of Business and Technology supported Operation Christmas Child by packing and donating 80 shoeboxes for this year.
- **Jerry Pierce:**
 - **Continuing work on Community Enrichment segment of the Strategic Plan.**
 - Hosted Cross Country Meet on November 14-15.
 - Developed publicity and marketing plans for the upcoming Gala.
 - WRAC membership continues to grow.
 - Compiled marketing presentation for CLEDA annual meeting held on November 7th.
 - Journalism Day was a huge success.
 - Continue to work closely with Greg Burke on Athletics issues.
 - Marketing worked closely with Alumni Center to complete new annual fund mailer.
- **Greg Burke:**
 - This year's soccer season has been the most successful in 11 years.
 - Volleyball in conference tournament this weekend.
 - Athletic teams are partnering with Jaycees to help collect for Toys for Tots.
 - To meet with Roni Biscoe and Cecil Knotts re: new overtime policy.
 - While in Dallas for an AD's meeting, met with a company about perhaps generating revenue through the sports medicine department which would also enhance the level of compliance and documentation in that area.
 - Football schedule for 2017-2018 complete.
 - Basketball opens this week.
 - November 29th is National #GivingTuesday.
 - Softball reunion last weekend. Engaged former athletes.
 - The potential of installing a new video board, which would be HD and larger, at Turpin Stadium, is being explored.
- **Carl Jones:**
 - Completed exit interview for legislative audit.
 - The university is still in good shape financially.

- **Marcus Jones:**
 - Campus security assessment should be completed in the next couple of weeks.
 - Kyser Hall concrete project is drawing to a close. One section left to pour.
 - Physical Plant is working on preparing for graduation.
 - Varnado project: finishing up last minute details of lease to hopefully present at the next board meeting.
 - International: 6 students going to Angers, France for a semester abroad, and 8 students will be traveling to Cartagena, Colombia with Reatha Cox and myself for a short exchange.

- **Ron Wright:**
 - Banner updates complete.
 - Working on specs for CLV upgrade to Varnado.
 - Will be conducting network maintenance over Thanksgiving break.
 - Working on early preparations for Literary Rally.
 - Looking for new ways to improve campus messenger email for faculty and staff.
 - Demonstrated the new mobile app which should release in the next couple of weeks.

- **Darlene Williams:**
 - Received final approval for the establishment of a site at DeRidder from the State on November 1, 2016. Video conferencing equipment will be installed in advance of the start of the spring semester to begin offering nursing courses.
 - Completed the install of video conferencing equipment at Leesville. A series of video conferencing classroom upgrades has been in progress at most sites and is the result of grant funding provided by the College of Nursing.
 - Kicked off the new Teaching and Learning Professional Development Program for 2016-2017.
 - Participated in Leesville/Ft. Polk Army Community Partnership Program meeting with national facilitators, army and community representatives that will provide additional educational opportunities for partnerships between the university and the army. The most recent meeting presented the opportunity to create an MOU to expand internship opportunities for our students.
 - Celebrated National Distance Learning Week (November 7-11) and had a great response to the national webinars and other professional development opportunities.
 - Launched new online portal for noncredit.
 - Developed website and launched the Online Competency-Based Degree program and have enrolled first student.
 - Participated in Transfer Day at Bossier Parish Community College and the Bossier City Benefits Fair at the Bossier Civic Center.
 - Conducted a series of training events by SBDC to include IRS, Boots to Business, etc.
 - Received honor of being named a Military Friendly School for the seventh consecutive time.
 - Submitted \$436,210 in grant requests by faculty for funding through the BoR Enhancement Support Fund.
 - Initiated launch of Open Educational Resources (OER) statewide project for the BoR in partnership with California State University.

➤ **Continued development of the Market Responsiveness portion of the Strategic Plan.**

- **Dr. Henderson:**
 - **TOPS: We won't let students be penalized for the state's lack of funding TOPS for the Spring 2017 semester.**
 - **Could be one year away from the state reinvesting in higher education.**
 - **November 30th is the date set for new ring ceremony; 5:00 p.m. at Turpin Stadium.**
 - **David Morgan will serve as commencement speaker for Fall 2016 ceremonies.**
 - **When Strategic Plan is finalized, it will govern everything we do.**

Next meeting scheduled for Monday, December 12, 2016 at 8:30 a.m.

At lunch, many of us attended the SGA sponsored Leadership Team Luncheon. The event allows students to interact with formal and informal university leaders in a relaxed setting.

Monday afternoon, Olga Bazhanova and I met with freshman Vlada Litvinova. We talked about the discipline of journalism and the job prospects for journalism graduates.

Later Monday, TJ Ghoram and Leighann Westfall joined me to record a video message to NSU alumni and other stakeholders encouraging them to participate in the Columns Fund. Cole Gentry and Karalee Scouten were there, but hardly needed as TJ, Leighann, and I nailed our parts in one quick take...as far as you know... On another note, Cole is a magician. A link to the video: <https://vimeo.com/191708463>

Monday evening, Reatha Cox hosted a Thanksgiving dinner for the President's Leadership Program participants.

Tuesday morning, I was honored to join Governor Edwards, BPCChancellor Rick Bateman, Louisiana Tech President Les Guice, and leadership of CSRA on stage for the ribbon cutting of the stunning Integrated Technology Center in Bossier. Curtis Penrod and his counterparts at the other institutions created a groundbreaking plan to develop a workforce for the technology company.

Tuesday afternoon, I met with Grambling President Rick Gallot, Interim ULS President Dan Reneau, representatives of the Contractors Education Trust Fund, and others at GSU on a legal matter.

Wednesday, Tonia and I drove to Madisonville to attend the Counselors' Luncheon at Keith Young's (a hidden jewel of a restaurant to keep in mind). Jana Lucky, Kirsten Bartels, Ruth Fruge, Cade Stepp, and Kiley Bell told the NSU story to a receptive audience.

In Baton Rouge Wednesday afternoon, I attended the fall meeting of the Committee of 100. That evening, Tonia joined me for the the C100 reception at the City Club. Officials from LSU congratulated us on the decision to do the right thing on TOPS rather than focus on short term political positioning (sarcasm font: activated).

We were able to visit with Governor and Mrs. Edwards, key legislators, and a number of business leaders.

Thursday morning, Dr. Randy Hoff of Cenergistic met with me on an energy saving concept. While there is no shortage of "opportunities" to engage in these partnerships, this one seems more promising than others and is certainly worthy of further investigation.

The Alexandria Counselors' Luncheon was well-attended and, as you might imagine from one of our key markets, our message was well-received. Unfortunately, the NSU attendees have blurred together in my memory, but they included Jana Lucky, Kirsten Bartels, Tori Thompson, Cade Stepp (I think), and perhaps a couple of others (that will teach me not to skip a week of weekly reports). Suffice it to say that our entire Recruiting team continues to do an amazing job of carrying our message across the state and beyond.

Thursday evening, the Center for Inclusion and Diversity hosted an open forum on religion in the President's Room of the Student Union. This was the last in a series of conversations around issues that too often divide us. Brittany Blackwell and CID continue to pursue programming that is truly making a difference.

Friday, I represented the University of Louisiana System at the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget. On the docket was the Governor's Office proposal to close the \$300+ million deficit from last year. In December, the Revenue Estimating Conference may recognize a ~\$200 million deficit for the current year. The Committee asked the

Administration to hold off on budget reductions until the totality of the problem is understood. My opinion: there is little, if any, appetite to further cut higher education, but the growth of tax expenditures over the past eight years (now an annual \$7.6 billion) leaves little alternative.

Saturday, Tonia and Reagan joined me for the drive to Nacogdoches to watch the Demons face SFA. This was a difficult season, to be sure. That said, I have looked into the eyes of our coaches and our players all year, and never saw a hint of quit. They battled to the end. Some may call me an eternal (delusional?) optimist, but I look forward to watching this team next year. Our athletics program is a source of great pride for many reasons. We have leaders of character who focus on academics, service, and competitive excellence.

Tuesday, I met with Paul Rainwater and Rachel Kincaid in Baton Rouge. Paul handles advocacy for the ULS. He is a former high ranking official in the Blanco and Jindal Administrations, and has always impressed me as a voice of reason. We talked about the legislative and policy priorities for ULS universities.

Wednesday, Drake Owens and Jill Bankston hosted a check presentation from AEP SWEPCO and Public Service Commissioner Foster Campbell. Funds left over from the former Valley Electric Cooperative after all attempts to for refunds to the Coop members were donated to NSU. A first generation scholarship, an endowed professorship in the College of Business and Technology, and a donation to the Columns Fund totaling \$280,000 made the day before Thanksgiving very special.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or comments.