

August 27, 2024

Dear Senators,

I hope you have had enjoyable and productive summers and are ready for the beginning of a new academic year. I am pleased to welcome those of you who are joining us for the first time to the Senate, and welcome back those of you who were Senators last year. I anticipate that it will be an interesting year and look forward to working with each of you. Below please find a summary of notable developments since the end of the spring semester.

### **1. Faculty and Staff Raises**

As announced by President Tate in a broadcast email on July 10<sup>th</sup>, a 3% merit raise pool was provided for eligible faculty and staff for this coming year. These raises became effective on August 15<sup>th</sup> for academic-year employees and will be reflected in September paychecks. One aspect of these raises which I would like to highlight is that these are not funds which were appropriated by the legislature for the purpose. Rather, the raises are being provided from LSU's self-generated funds and involve reallocations within the operating budget. This is a break from how raises have previously been provided and I appreciate that the administration did what I believe was right in prioritizing faculty and staff but not easy given the tradeoffs involved.

### **2. The FY 2026 Budgeting Process**

As you are likely already aware there is a tremendous degree of uncertainty about the state budget after this year given the potential sunseting in 2025 of the 0.45% state sales tax and a 2% sales tax on business utilities, among other factors. There is reporting that the Board of Regents has been tasked with planning for a possible \$250 million in cuts to state support for higher education should these taxes be allowed to expire.\* As part of this process LSU is obligated to prepare a budget for submission to the Board of Regents that incorporates this possible decline of approximately 20% in state funding.

Obviously cuts on this scale would be tremendously damaging to the university and there will no doubt be much public discussion between the various bodies involved in the budgeting process between now and the next legislative session. One point that has been emphasized to me in discussions with members of the administration is that while LSU is required to produce a budget

or taxes to implement, it is important that every possible effort be made to avoid reductions in state support to LSU and the other institutions of higher education. We simply are not in a position to sustain further cuts without significant declines in performance. Furthermore, given that LSU

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\* [Ashley White, "Louisiana college leaders sound alarm over possible \\$250 million budget cut next year", \*The Advocate\*, June 14, 2024.](#)



