Board Elects New Chair; First African-American Female

The Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System unanimously elected Elsie Burkhalter as its 2008 Chair.

Burkhalter served as vice-chair for the last two years. In assuming this post, she becomes the first female and African-American Chair of the Board.

“I believe education is the key to breaking the cycle of poverty and fostering economic development. It is the key to making our state and country better,” said Burkhalter.

Among her many accomplishments, Burkhalter has been recognized by the American Federation of Teachers and Louisiana Federation of Teachers for her outstanding leadership. She was also awarded the “Extra Mile Award” by the St. Tammany Parish School Board for post-Katrina work.

A lifelong resident of St. Tammany Parish, she earned a Bachelor of Science from Southern University and a Master in Education from Southeastern Louisiana University.

“I strongly support our work for greater student access and success. Our campus doors must be open to more Louisiana students,” said Burkhalter. “I look forward to leading the UL System Board in a fashion that will continue our work in moving us to the ‘head of the class’ in higher education.”

The Board also elected Winfred Sibille of Sunset to serve as Vice Chair and Wayne Parker of Ruston to serve as Parliamentarian.

Savoie Named Next UL Lafayette President

E. Joseph Savoie, Louisiana’s top higher education leader, was selected to become the next president of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. The Board’s selection was the result of a seven-month national search.

Speaking before the final vote, UL System Board Member Paul Aucoin said, “Today, we have an opportunity to select a candidate with outstanding credentials that would be the envy of any other state. We cannot pass on this opportunity to select Dr. Savoie.”

Savoie was one of three finalists for the position who interviewed publicly with the Board. A total of 38 people applied from across the country.

Addressing the board after its vote, Savoie said, “I will make you proud of your decision, and I look forward to serving the university, the Acadiana area, and the state.”

Students, Faculty and Staff Help Rebuild New Orleans

Over 75 students, faculty and staff members from the eight campuses in the University of Louisiana System took part in a Day of Service at Habitat for Humanity Musicians’ Village in New Orleans on Dec. 1.

Participants assisted with roofing, siding, painting and other chores as needed.

Habitat for Humanity began this project in the hurricane stricken area of New Orleans to bring musicians back to the city. The project has developed into the single largest rebuilding effort in the area.

In addition, Southeastern Louisiana University’s jazz band performed during lunch. Musicians’ Village residents were on-hand to assist with building. They offered their thanks to the students and faculty for volunteering to rebuild the area.

Habitat hopes to have all residents moved into the area within six months. Volunteers are vital to the success of the project.
Board Action
The Board of Supervisors for the UL System approved the following university requests:

Academic and Student Affairs

- McNeese: establish the Louisiana Co-Occurring Mental Health & Substance Abuse Innovation Center
- UL Lafayette: establish the Ernest J. Gaines Center

Facilities Planning

- Nicholls: lease the Alumni Center to the Nicholls State University Alumni Federation
- Nicholls: annexing of property bought by the university into the city limits
- McNeese: purchase the “Miller’s House for Sports” property for approximately $585,000
- McNeese: enter into a lease agreement with the McNeese University Foundation to install artificial turf on Cowboy Stadium Field

Personnel

- Grambling: appoint Dr. Cornelius Wooten as VP for Finance
- LA Tech: appoint Dr. David Gullatt as Dean of the College of Education

College Convention 2008
Nov. 27-Dec. 1

ULS students and staff were part of a 43-member Louisiana delegation at College Convention 2008 in Manchester, New Hampshire. Student leaders interacted with U.S. presidential hopefuls and asked questions on education, poverty, and hurricane recovery.