
AAUP Follow Ups from State of the University

From Beth A Stauffer <beth.stauffer@louisiana.edu>

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To Ramesh Kolluru <ramesh.kolluru@louisiana.edu>

Cc ULLaf.AAUP@gmail.com <ullaf.aaup@gmail.com>; Office of the President <president@louisiana.edu>

Dear President Kolluru,

We appreciate the updates shared at the most recent State of the University. However, there was no opportunity to ask questions before or during the event, as there has been in years past. For that reason, we are sending questions that we ask you to address.

1) What is our current financial situation?

[On June 25th](#), you shared the news that we were ending FY26 with “approximately \$3.4 million in the bank” but an expected structural deficit of \$26 million. In the State of the University, you shared that we’re starting the academic year with a “balanced budget” for the first time in a decade. These statements are difficult to reconcile. We ask for clarification on the following:

- A) *What is the current projected deficit for FY27?*
- B) Significant budget cuts to research and teaching seem to be included in the projected balanced budget, yet upper administration in particular continues to grow. *What budget cuts have been made to upper administration? Where can we find past and current organizational charts?*
- C) Multiple staff have been laid off, fired, or forced into retirement over the summer. *How many personnel have been let go (or otherwise forcibly separated) since May 2026, and how many more are projected? How is the University handling this process with care and transparency?*
- D) *Will units that charge students fees for classes (i.e., studio fees in Visual Arts, lab fees in Sciences) have full access to those funds this academic year? Will Foundation funds that support teaching and research be fully available?*

2) How will we protect our R1 status?

At the State of the University, you suggested that we’d be striving for SREB1 status after our recent R1 re-designation. However, we have concerns about losing the already limited resources required to maintain R1 status, let alone pursuing an additional research designation. Specific questions include:

- A) We understand that the library is facing a significant budget cut, which will likely lead to the elimination of crucial databases like Web of Science and IEEE Xplore. *How do cuts to valuable library resources fit with supporting high research expectations for faculty and students?*
- B) *Will funding for faculty research travel be reinstated in the FY27 budget?*
- C) [Local reporting](#) indicates that athletics loses \$12 million annually. We’re concerned about our commitment to maintaining an underperforming D1 athletics program at the expense of our R1 designation. *What was the FY26 athletics deficit? What is the plan for ensuring that athletics will adhere to its FY27 budget given its history of overspending?*

3) How long will faculty have to do more with less?

- A) We were heartened to see an investment in adjusting salaries toward the medians of R2 (formerly) peer institutions identified in the [Faculty Salary Study](#). *However, is that \$500,000 protected from potential budget revisions? What commitments are you making to continuing to address issues of underpayment, including inversion within and compression among ranks?*
- B) All faculty have experienced effective pay cuts in the last three years with no raises, increased benefits costs, and continued inflation; yet, faculty have maintained our R1 status and improved student success. *When will all faculty receive a cost of living adjustment?*
- C) *How have upper administration positions and salaries at the Vice President and Chief Officer ranks changed since last fall? Will you commit to a freeze in upper administration hiring and raises until the faculty compensation issues are addressed?*

In the spirit of your commitment to transparency and shared governance, **we respectfully request answers to these questions by next Friday, September 4th.**

We also **request that AAUP has a seat at the table** where future actions on these issues are discussed and decisions made.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Members of the AAUP Chapter of UL Lafayette