

LSUHSC-NO Senate Resolution: Regarding the Proposed LSU System Reorganization

Whereas the LSUHSC-New Orleans Faculty Senate concurs with the body of the LSU Faculty Senate's Resolution 12-13, parts of which are reiterated below;

Whereas the six academic and professional schools that constitute the LSUHSC-NO campus have accrediting, credentialing, and licensing authorities in addition to the one accrediting authority, SACS, considered in the AGB report;

Whereas operational, management, and accrediting issues of these academic and professional schools differ substantially and must be addressed uniquely for each school;

Whereas the student body at this campus is comprised of pre-professionals and professionals pursuing further degrees, characterized by high academic qualifications, very high rates of graduation and professional success after graduation;

Whereas the measures of success at which this campus excels -- including sponsored research dollars and accomplishments, graduation rates, and the provision of trained professionals to meet the state's health-related personnel needs -- raise the need for metrics and approaches distinct from those applicable to the entire LSU System;

Whereas this campus generates a large portion of its own funding through sponsored research combined with clinical and other health-related service activities, presenting a different financial model than most of the LSU system institutions;

Whereas proposals to combine the administrations of LSU System campuses and to restructure the LSU System were prepared by a group of three consultants from the Association of Governing Boards (of Washington, D. C.), consultants who had minimal exposure to faculty, staff, and students of the LSU System and as far as we are aware had no contact with faculty, staff, or students of this Health Sciences Center or its counterpart in Shreveport;

Whereas consultations by the LSU System management board with stakeholders in the LSU campuses and communities have been limited to three ninety-minute breakfasts on the A&M campus and to a smattering of three-minute "public comments" at LSU System Board meetings;

Whereas the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Committee on Colleges (SACSCOC), the accrediting agency for most of the LSU System campuses, has cautioned both the LSU A&M campus and the LSU System that its hasty and erratic approach to governance restructuring may imperil the entire accreditation of the LSU System institutions;

Whereas the behavior of the LSU System Board of Supervisors in regard to restructuring has elicited a large body of public criticism regarding the politicization of university governance in Louisiana;

Whereas classroom service, research obligations, and state travel and leave regulations create insurmountable obstacles for colleagues who would like to contribute to the discussion of

university governance but who, owing to poor communication from the LSU System office, often receive little or no advance notice of significant actions;

Whereas the Board, while asserting that it and its consultants talked to some faculty members in the process of proposing this re-organization, has not sought the consultation or advice of any established and representative body of faculty self-governance, such as the faculty senates at the several campuses;

Whereas the “Transition Advisory Team” includes no faculty, staff, or student members;

Whereas the consultants for the LSU System originally proposed three scenarios for LSU’s future, but only one of these avenues to advancement has been explored, the decision among those options having been made by unknown means and therefore de facto in violation of the Louisiana open meetings law;

Whereas the concealing of search processes not only diminishes the dignity of a great, free, and innovative university, but also raises questions concerning compliance with the spirit as well as the letter of equal employment and civil rights laws;

Whereas the expenditures and resources required for both the consultants’ reports and for the proposed numerous committees and subcommittees charged with managing the “transition” process not only call into question the cost-saving dimension of the proposed restructuring but also siphon the talent and the funds needed for the many problems resulting from an extended period of budget shortfalls;

Therefore be it resolved that the LSUHSC-NO Faculty Senate asks the LSU Board of Supervisors and the Interim President of the LSU System to suspend the restructuring of the LSU System until a committee that includes a substantial representation of faculty and professional staff from the LSU System campuses, including the LSUHSC-NO —colleagues who have been selected through procedures in keeping with shared governance principles—can review and revise procedures for pertinent executive searches and can evaluate the full range of options for the future of the LSU System campuses.