

## FACULTY SENATE RESOLUTION 15–19

# Quality Faculty and the Collegiate Education of Young Adults

*Sponsored by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee*

Whereas universities serve the public in multiple ways, including service and research as well as teaching;<sup>1</sup>

Whereas college education contributes to the formation of an educated citizenry while shaping those in the last stages of the progress to adulthood and to full participation in a free society;

Whereas institutions can anticipate an increase in the population of “non-traditional,” older students, students who may not associate college education with a particular time of life or who may question preoccupation with youth;

Whereas the extraordinary efforts undertaken by many institutions to appeal to high-school students have received public criticism, the controversy over the “lazy river” swimming pool being an example;

Whereas LSU faculty care committed to teaching and care deeply about student learning, they are concerned that popular phrases and concepts such as “student-centered education” have been misused in such a way as to become incongruous with and inadequate to the multi-purpose activities of comprehensive universities;

Whereas recent disciplinary actions for faculty and staff by the LSU administration have cited the protection of students as justification for disregarding policies requiring due process, fairness and confidentiality,

and concern for both the rights of the accused and the accuser;

Whereas the discourse of safety and protection has created more distrust and anxiety among faculty than it has conferred immunity on students;

Whereas the Faculty Senate has received numerous expressions of grave concern from reputable faculty members who fear unfounded or even coordinated accusations from students and who lament the anti-faculty attitude arising at LSU;

Whereas the protection of student learning environments has been misused at LSU to justify the removal of a colleague from the classroom, a removal that drew national attention and an action that LSU eventually recanted;

Whereas, in recent times, a dramatic increase in the number of faculty disciplinary cases on LSU campuses has occurred;

Whereas several of these disciplinary cases have been conducted exclusively by HRM personnel or have been conducted on parallel tracks—both according to published procedures such as PS-104, PS-109, and PM-35 and by officers in Human Resources Management (HRM), who have made independent recommendations;

Whereas the members of the LSU faculty have not been consulted with respect to measuring or even identifying speech or action that imperils rather than challenges students, all while faculty recommendations contained in existing policies have been disregarded;

Whereas the LSU faculty embraces robust and vigorous teaching methods that expose students to the full range of issues, challenges, and styles that they will face in their lives as leaders while not condoning unacceptable professional conduct of their colleagues;

Therefore be it resolved that the LSU Faculty Senate calls on the LSU administration to exercise restraint in invoking arguments relating to the alleged protection of young adults; and

Therefore be it further resolved that the LSU Faculty Senate reaffirms that the University carries out multiple missions, including research and service as well as teaching; and

Therefore be it further resolved that the University create a special committee to clarify, simplify, and improve disciplinary policies such as PS-104, PS-109, and PM-35 so as to create a single and just disciplinary policy applicable at multiple campuses; that addresses academic freedom while encouraging diversity in teaching and research approaches; that recognizes the many, sometimes conflicting demands on the faculty; and that sets clear limits to the prerogative powers of the President, the administration, and units such as Human Resources Management; and

Therefore be it further resolved that the recommendations of the special committee should be presented at a public forum of faculty and of administrators.

1. The most recent mission statement for LSU A&M University, as approved by the Board of Regents, stresses the multiplicity of assignments: “The mission for Louisiana State University and A&M College (LSU) is that as the state's flagship university, LSU is committed to offering a broad array of undergraduate degree programs and extensive graduate research opportunities designed to attract and educate highly qualified undergraduate and graduate students; employing faculty who are excellent teacher-scholars, nationally competitive in research and creative activities, and who contribute to a world-class knowledge base that is transferable to educational, professional, cultural, and economic enterprises; and using its extensive resources to solve economic, environmental, and social challenges (Mission Statement, approved October 2012).” Worthy of note is the presentation of even the undergraduate teaching mission not as a thing in itself but as an element in the development of knowledge-producing and knowledge-disseminating *programs*.