

FACULTY SENATE RESOLUTION 10-16

“Stoppage of Budget Scenarios that Degrade Morale and Appeal for Increased Leadership by Boards of Higher Education”

Sponsored by Ken McMillin and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee

Whereas the Louisiana Legislative and Executive branches have failed in the performance of their constitutionally assigned duty to demonstrate fiscal responsibilities and have instead produced a deficit budget this last fiscal year; and

Whereas revenues continue to decrease this year, even after expected sources of budgetary income were stifled by repeal of revenue-generating legislation over the course of the last two years; and

Whereas state support for higher education was cut \$280 million and support for the Louisiana State University A&M campus was cut \$42 million during the past two years; and

Whereas the Louisiana Legislature has repeatedly and irresponsibly failed to provide sufficient financial support to the four-year colleges and universities and these institutions are now threatened with an estimated additional \$34.7 million mid-year budget cuts to these institutions this year, cuts that will greatly decrease the abilities of these institutions to fulfill their mission statements and to fulfill the mandated goals of the newly passed GRAD Act; and

Whereas Louisiana State University is the largest employer and has a great economic multiplier effect in the Baton Rouge and surrounding areas, and the state; and

Whereas 4-year degrees lead to employees that are more highly trained and intellectually qualified to have higher earning power and greater economic contributions if graduates remain in the state; and

Whereas a highly educated and motivated workforce and transfer of technology from the university helps to maintain competitiveness of Louisiana and national companies; and

Whereas having educated potential employees and university intellectual property available to entrepreneurial startup companies are major attractors for new businesses and economic growth in Louisiana; and

Whereas the Louisiana Board of Regents and the Louisiana Board of Supervisors have not convinced either the academic community or the community at large that they have served as advocates for higher education and have merely passed on the budget crisis handed to them by the Louisiana Legislature, not even questioning the wisdom of an across-the-board, percentage-based cut to the otherwise unequal four-year institutions of higher learning in this states; and

Whereas the numerous budget cut “scenarios” that have been required of college and university administrators over the past two years have not resulted in any meaningful direction or guidance to the

institutions, have wasted valuable time and human resources, and will likely need to be repeated again since the Governor's Office has not identified the next level of specific budget cuts; and

Whereas each of the budget cut "scenarios" and administrative announcements of program reductions and layoffs of instructors and staff have continued to erode the morale of our administrators and faculty; and

Whereas these budget cut "scenarios" are causing students to question whether they will be able to complete their degree programs while fostering a general sense of futility about the health of higher education in this state; and

Whereas such a loss of confidence may translate into our students resuming their migration for education and employment into states that are perceived to be more friendly to higher education;

Therefore be it resolved that the LSU A&M Faculty Senate strongly recommends that our administrators stop engaging in these destructive exercises that, if fulfilled, will lead to the demise of LSU; and

Therefore be it further resolved that the Louisiana System Board of Regents and Board of Supervisors accelerate their efforts as advocates of higher education by interacting with individual legislators and collectively with the Louisiana Legislature to forestall such drastic budget reductions that the Louisiana flagship institution would be so devastated that it could not return to the top tier of research universities until the celebration of its Tercentennial or beyond; and

Therefore be it further resolved that the LSU A&M Faculty Senate urges the Governor and the Legislators to provide leadership in securing adequate funding for the State's higher education system including its Flagship university for its citizens' well-being and for the State's economic prosperity.