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Faculty Senate Resolution 13-04

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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FACULTY SENATE RESOLUTION 13–04

Public Disclosure, the Presidential Search, and Informed Debate

*Sponsored by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee with the Endorsement of the LSU System
Council of Faculty Advisors*

Whereas universities are institutions where information is freely disseminated and where open and energetic debate is encouraged;

Whereas state law, in recognition of the centrality of information to a democratic society require the disclosure of the identity of candidates for positions of authority in state agencies (Louisiana Revised Statute 44:32);

Whereas the LSU System Board of Supervisors violated state laws relating to the calling of executive sessions [see Louisiana Revised Statute 42:6.1A4) by including a student who was not yet appointed to the presidential search in putatively confidential discussions of particular candidates and their qualifications;

Whereas the American Association of University Professors (“AAUP”) has recently issued a statement of principles concerning executive searches that condemns the imposition of secrecy oaths on search

committee members and that criticizes the cult of secrecy that surrounds many presidential searches;

Whereas a prominent newspaper, the Baton Rouge *Advocate*, has filed a formal request for information concerning presidential candidates, only to be rebuffed by the LSU System interim General Counsel on the grounds that the requested information is “private” and “proprietary”;

Whereas the aforementioned newspaper, through objective news coverage and ardent editorials, has supported Louisiana higher education in the face of budgetary and political challenges;

Whereas the record of LSU and the LSU System regarding surreptitious executive searches has contributed to constant administrative turnover, with few appointees remaining in office for more than four years;

Whereas great public institutions such as the University of Wisconsin and many other highly-ranked campuses require advance disclosure of multiple candidates for university leadership positions, and that with no impairment of their ability to recruit able presidents;

Whereas the LSU System Board of Supervisors has refused to appoint faculty members who are not administrators to the Presidential Search Committee despite frequent, ardent, repeated, and unanimous encouragement to do so by all the Faculty Senates of the LSU System;

Whereas the LSU System Board of Supervisors has added a student member to the Presidential Search Committee while refusing to include faculty and staff members;

Whereas the characterization by the professional search consultant of his list of candidates as “proprietary” and therefore secret raises a

variety of questions about the character of the search, questions pertaining to the propriety of using Foundation funds to support this search or pertaining to a possible violation of “sunshine” laws or pertaining to whether the proprietary list is adequately diverse or pertaining to whether all citizens have an equal opportunity to join the proprietary candidate list;

Whereas the search consultant for the presidential search has repeatedly urged the search committee to bring only one candidate to campus, thereby disallowing comparisons among seekers after one of the most important leadership posts in Louisiana;

Therefore be it resolved that the LSU Faculty Senate recommends and expects that the LSU Board of Supervisors immediately disclose full and complete demographic and statistical information concerning the current candidate pool for the combined Presidency and Chancellorship, including age, geographic location, vocational background, level of education, ethnicity, gender, income, and similar information, including information regarding whether or not candidates hold earned terminal degrees; and

Therefore be it further resolved that the LSU Faculty Senate recommends and expects that the Presidential Search Committee comply with the public information request of the Baton Rouge *Advocate* by disclosing the names of and key information concerning the candidates for the LSU and LSU System Presidency.