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Faculty Senate Resolution 15-05

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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FACULTY SENATE RESOLUTION 15–05

Overcoming AAUP Censure: A New Strategy for a New LSU

Sponsored by the LSU Faculty Senate Executive Committee

Whereas LSU President King Alexander has questioned whether raw rankings or other “metrics” are the proper measure of a quality institution;

Whereas the the esteem in which a university is held by competent and honored members of the learned vocations that it supports and represents is one such measure;

Whereas the American Association of University Professors (“AAUP”) has held a continuous position of high esteem among American scientists, intellectuals, cultural advocates, and educational leaders since its founding one-hundred years ago;

Whereas AAUP specifications for working conditions, for academic freedom, for institutional governance, and for the general conduct of the academic profession are recognized as the “gold standard” by academic leaders, university professionals, accreditation agencies, labor organizations, and courts of law;

Whereas LSU A&M has suffered reputation damage and nationwide opprobrium owing to its presence, since 2012, on the AAUP list of censured institutions;

Whereas not a single member of LSU’s list of official peer or aspirational institutions nor any AAU (Association of American Universities) institutions are on the AAUP censure list;

Whereas LSU A&M occupies an awkward leadership position in a state higher education system that has received five institutional censures since 2008, nearly ten percent of all AAUP censures in the last fifty years, a record vastly out of

proportion to the size of the Louisiana higher education enterprise;

Whereas continued presence on the AAUP censure list impairs the ability of LSU A&M to recruit and retain the best and most innovative faculty;

Whereas LSU A&M has already invested a significant effort in the attempt to end the censure, including sending of a top-level delegation to the Washington AAUP office;

Whereas LSU System President King Alexander issued a letter on January 27th, 2015 informing the AAUP that “LSU does not plan to pursue any further action regarding removal of censure” despite repeated and strong expressions of concern about the censure by LSU A&M faculty leadership to the LSU A&M Provost;

Whereas President Alexander’s letter to the AAUP was written and sent without faculty consultation or faculty leadership notification, although that letter alludes to collaboration with faculty members and with the Faculty Senate leadership concerning the revision of those hiring and promotion procedures that attracted adverse AAUP concern;

Whereas President Alexander’s letter to the AAUP omits the fact that LSU A&M faculty leadership never regarded nor gave the impression that recent, nominal improvements in employment conditions so as to enhance academic freedom for contingent faculty would be adequate to restore LSU A&M into compliance with AAUP standards;

Whereas the continued presence of Murray State University on the AAUP censure list during President Alexander’s tenure as President of that institution suggests a need for President Alexander to collaborate with the AAUP and with faculty;

Whereas the emergence of a new LSU through the consolidation of the A&M campus and its administration with several system campuses provides an opportunity for the new LSU to set an example of leadership in all matters of academic policy and practice;

Whereas the AAUP showed good will by granting a special dispensation to LSU A&M, a dispensation whereby AAUP Committee A, which deals with academic freedom issues, could have released LSU A&M from censure without waiting for the national AAUP meeting if LSU A&M could show adequate progress in

promoting the academic freedom of long-term contingent faculty;

Whereas the AAUP has invited LSU A&M to resume negotiations;

Therefore be it resolved that the LSU A&M Faculty Senate calls on President Alexander to collaborate with the LSU Faculty Senate on the development of a realistic plan for removing LSU A&M and its allied campuses from the AAUP censure list;

And therefore be it further resolved that the LSU Faculty Senate will establish, in cooperation with President Alexander, an ad hoc University committee that will include one or more designees from the LSU President's office, the purpose of that committee being collaboration with the national AAUP office regarding the removal of LSU from the AAUP censure list and of bringing LSU into compliance with AAUP standards regarding academic freedom and employment practices.