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Faculty Senate Resolution 15-15

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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FACULTY SENATE RESOLUTION 15–15

REGARDING THE CASE

OF

DR. TERESA BUCHANAN

Introduced at the request of Cecil Eubanks, James Garand, Robert Hogan, Pamela Monroe, Lillian Bridwell-Bowles, Brooks Ellwood, Carl Freedman, Petra Hendry, Dominique Hombberger, Stuart Irvine, Patrick McGee, Richard Moreland, John Protevi, A. R. P. "Ravi" Rau, and George Strain

PREAMBLE

Affirming that an environment of free and fearless inquiry is the cornerstone of academic freedom and a great university, as it is necessary for sustaining received truths and discovering new insights;

Believing that the principles of academic freedom, so essential for teaching and research, include toleration of what we might find offensive, as well as of what might challenge our principles both in substance and style of expression;

Recognizing that great universities have in place three significant measures to ensure the continued observance of academic freedom: Tenure; faculty governance; and due process;

Convinced that all three measures have been violated in the case of Associate Professor Teresa Buchanan;

Aware that the standards initially used by the LSU's administration to justify the termination of tenure and dismissal for cause of Associate Professor Teresa Buchanan were the creation of a hostile environment and consequent sexual harassment through the use of vulgar language, even though it is not clear that any specific individual brought such charges;

Alarmed by a standard that is chilling in its breadth and ambiguity;

Further aware of a second set of standards, announced in the aftermath of national and international outrage over the actions by LSU's administration, which based the dismissal of Associate Professor Buchanan on having "created a consistently hostile and abusive environment in the classroom;"

Convinced that this second set of standards is equally contrary to academic freedom as it reveals that LSU's administration regards itself as the sole guardian of student welfare and is unable to define what constitutes a consistently hostile environment;

Noting further that a faculty committee, chosen to hear the case of Associate Professor Terry Buchanan, unanimously recommended that she be censured for specific behaviors, but decided that removal is not warranted and found that the procedural actions by LSU's administration were flawed;

Deeply concerned that LSU's administration ignored the recommendations of its own faculty committee and created a second set of standards that were not part of the initial charges against Associate Professor Buchanan;

Emphasizing that once the LSU administration decided to pursue charges against Associate Professor Buchanan its most egregious violation of due process was its failure to follow the guidelines of PM-35 and the procedure required by PS-109, both of which mandate a specific iterative process by which faculty behavior and/or performance is reviewed in a context of

remediation designed to salvage both the faculty member's career and the University's investment in long-serving faculty;

Concluding that the violation of tenure, the creation and implementation of vague and chilling standards of discourse that violate all precepts of free inquiry and speech, the failure to follow faculty counsel in these matters, and the outright abrogation of proper due process by LSU's administration have placed the LSU community in a state of confusion and outrage about the lack of commitment of LSU's administration to an environment of freedom of inquiry and speech.

RESOLUTION

Be it therefore resolved: That LSU Chancellor-President F. King Alexander, Provost Stuart Bell, and Dean Damon Andrew of the College of Human Sciences and Education be censured for their failure to adhere to due process standards in faculty review proceedings and for their pursuit of confusing, dangerous, and untenable standards for dismissal of a tenured faculty member at Louisiana State University. And

Be it further resolved: That the Faculty Senate requests of LSU's administration that the decision in the case of Associate Professor Teresa Buchanan shall be reversed and all necessary and continuing matters related to her case be considered in a proper PM-35/PS-109 review process.