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Faculty Senate Resolution 16-03

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FACULTY SENATE RESOLUTION 16–03

Supporting the Louisiana Museum of Natural History at LSU

Sponsored by Judith Schiebout; by the Faculty Senate Master Planning Committee; and by Adelaide M. Russon; Elaine Maccio; Susan E. Ryan; Paula K. Arat; Sarah E. Becker; Jeffrey Perry; Michelle A. Massé; Suzanne Marchand; Sarah Pierce; Peter Clift; Brooks Ellwood; and Bryan McCann

- Whereas 16 natural history collections at LSU were named as the Louisiana State Museum of Natural History by the Louisiana Legislature in 1999.
- Whereas the collections are the natural history treasures of a state exceptionally high in natural history wonders, and some of the collections also rank as world treasures. Collections and research rank high, but museum segments are generally housed in facilities and locations deleterious to the collection contents and in building locations environmentally unsuitable, that place the collection in harm's way, for example, from flood damage.
- The LSU collections represent millions of research dollars from NSF and other grant, contract, and donation supporters. LSU is a repository for many collections, which means that it does not own them, and could have them taken away if standards are not met, or if a tragedy happens to one collection.

- Whereas failure to pursue accreditation for the LMNH may impact LSU accreditation, as subunits of accredited universities, such as LMNH at LSU, should be accredited.
- Whereas a state Museum of Natural History at a flagship university would be attractive to major donors.
- Whereas there are whole areas of grant possibilities that are precluded by the lack of unification and adequate space. A job applicant turned down at one of the LSU museums just after she earned her Ph.D., now brings in over two million dollars of grant and contract starts per year at the Florida Museum of Natural History.
- Whereas LSU has relatively new leadership in many areas, and a major planning effort underway.
- Whereas Provost Koubek has called for new ideas, vision, and the type of balance of science and the humanities that the LMNH represents.
- Whereas a tramline is being planned between downtown and the LSU campus, which would make visitation of the major LMNH easier and its influence on the local and regional economy greater.
- Whereas the Faculty Senate Task Force on Museums (2011*) called for regular meetings of all the LMNH curators (the museum faculty).
- Whereas there is a public support organization for the LMNH, the Friends of the Louisiana Museum of Natural History Foundation, Inc. (formerly known as the Build-a-Museum Team) which has funded informational studies of LMNH before, such as the report of museum experts Mares and Tirrell in 2009*. The Friends are eager to support progress. Dr. Mares led Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History during its unification from scattered collections and is its current director. SNOMNH is a winner of the 2014 National Museum Medal (<https://vpr-norman.ou.edu/national-museum-medal-sam-noble-oklahoma-museum-natural-history>).

Therefore, be it resolved that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee host a meeting of all LMNH curators to discuss curator concerns and to institute regular meetings of the curators, that the Provost meet with the leadership of the Friends of LMNH, and that he consider calling on experts from accredited **state** museums of natural history at flagship universities, if information is needed to move toward an accredited, unified, full service LMNH.

*Reports are on the Faculty Senate website under the "Under Discussion" button or directly at <http://www.lsu.edu/senate/under%20discussion.html>