

FACULTY SENATE RESOLUTION 15–10

Comprehensive Approaches to Higher Education Funding

Introduced at the request of the Association of Louisiana faculty Senates and the of University of Louisiana Lafayette and Southeastern Louisiana University Faculty Senates

WHEREAS the Louisiana State budget presented by the Governor's office has a potential cut of over five-hundred million dollars, resulting in a potential gap in funding of over six-hundred million dollars to higher education if there is no intervention by the Legislature, and over two-hundred million even if all the funding proposed by the Governor are enacted;

WHEREAS cuts of this magnitude (up to sixty percent of state funding) would be devastating to the public universities and colleges of the state;

WHEREAS these cuts, which will affect all Louisiana universities, could lead to massive lay-offs of personnel, closing of programs, cancelling of classes, and even, in some cases, closure of universities;

WHEREAS higher education has already taken, during the last eight years, painful cuts in state funding of over seven-hundred million dollars (forty-three percent), resulting in declines as sharp as fifty-five percent for some university systems—a statewide decline which has severely hampered the ability of all universities and colleges to provide needed services and which has already resulted in layoffs and furloughs; increased class size; reduced

offerings; elimination of programs; delay of maintenance; and minimal, irregularly applied faculty pay raises;

WHEREAS regional campuses, including those serving metropolitan areas and including those serving as feeders for graduate programs, have sustained disproportionately large budget cuts (for example, Southeastern Louisiana University, which serves the New Orleans north shore population, has suffered the largest cuts of any university both in total dollars [\$47,762,780] and percentage [60%]); and

WHEREAS Louisiana has had the second sharpest decline in state funding for higher education in the nation since the recession ended in 2008 (forty-three percent) and the highest dollar amount per student reduction (over five-thousand dollars) of any state;

WHEREAS Louisiana, like most states with large higher education systems, depends on a blend of institutions of various types and on a variety of higher education delivery systems to educate its citizens;

WHEREAS the administrative and jurisdictional distinctions among campuses and systems seldom keeps pace with the more dynamic interaction of educational influences in the lives of Louisiana citizens (interaction that might allow, for example, a person helped by Pennington-derived discoveries to attend McNeese State University so as to prepare for advanced study at the AgCenter en route to a career teaching at Southern University);

WHEREAS Louisiana is ranked among the bottom tier of states in respect of the percentage of its population with bachelor's degrees and the lack of an educated workforce, a situation that hurts Louisiana's potential economic growth;

WHEREAS because the Constitution of Louisiana protects most of the budget from cuts, higher education and health care are left to take the brunt of cuts every year;

WHEREAS shifting the funding from the state onto the students through higher tuition and fees (a 61% increase in tuition alone since 2009) has created hardships, especially for those students not on TOPS and scholarships;

WHEREAS every time tuition goes up the funding for TOPS also goes up and comes out of the Higher Education budget, thus reducing the effect of the increase of the tuition to the universities;

WHEREAS business and industry in Louisiana receives over two billion dollars a year in tax credits, exemptions, refunds, and subsidies, including over a billion dollars per year in new tax cuts and subsidies since 2008;

WHEREAS Louisiana State University benefits from the success of other campuses, most notably from the refreshing stream of qualified applicants for LSU graduate education that flows from all of Louisiana's higher education institutions;

THEREFORE BE IT NOW RESOLVED that the LSU A&M Faculty Senate asks the Louisiana Legislature to find budget solutions that will allow for the full funding of the entirety of Louisiana higher education and that will develop permanent solutions to the problems induced by protecting the dedicated funding of state agencies other than higher education and health care; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LSU A&M Faculty Senate urges LSU System president King Alexander to work with legislators to achieve funding solutions that support LSU by supporting the entire Louisiana higher educational project and by supporting the full

complement of Louisiana higher education institutions, a project that also serves the long-term interests of LSU.