

Faculty Senate Resolution 08–14
“An Ad Hoc Committee on Executive Search Procedures”
Sponsored by Charles Delzell

Whereas it is in the general interest of the University community to insure that searches for major administrative officers are conducted according to best standards and practices; and

Whereas the LSU Faculty desires to work together with the administration to insure transparency in all such searches; but

Whereas on May 21, 2008 the Faculty Senate Executive Committee listed several “serious shortcomings of the Chancellor Search process,” and other faculty members have identified similar shortcomings (many of which apply as well to the 2004 search for the previous chancellor and the 2007 search for the LSU System president), among them those relating to:

- (a) A complete lack of transparency, based on an alleged need for or right to confidentiality that is rarely mentioned during faculty searches;
- (b) The naming of a single finalist who is presented to the LSU community on the eve of a quick appointment;
- (c) Circumventing the intent of Louisiana’s Open Meetings law by transferring control of the search to an outside search firm and a small subset of the Search Committee or upper administrators, so that the finalist is disclosed at a late date even to many on the Committee;
- (d) Absence of any comparative assessment that the Search Committee itself, faculty, and students can perform among several candidates;
- (e) Failure to bring the candidate to campus at times when faculty are available;
- (f) Lack of bargaining power for LSU when negotiating salaries and other benefits if there is only one viable candidate;
- (g) Lack of accountability of search firms and consultants, either of their past performance, or the vetting they do of the candidates, and of their fees and charges as expenses; and

Whereas negative reactions by the local newspapers and the public to the unnecessary secrecy and to failed searches or failed appointments does not merely reflect on the individuals and the poor judgment of the search firms and the few upper administrators involved but tars LSU itself and its reputation and standing;

Therefore be it resolved that the Faculty Senate expresses its dissatisfaction with problems in administrative searches of the kind noted above, both in recent searches and in searches conducted in earlier years; and

Therefore be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate calls on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to appoint a committee of limited size to investigate, report on, and make recommendations on good practices in conducting searches for senior LSU officers. The charge to such a committee shall include:

- (a) Examining national searches, best practices and standards;
- (b) Recommending ways to encourage quality applicants while upholding the transparency expected of LSU as the state's premier institution of higher education and complying with the spirit as well as the letter of the state "Open Meetings Law";
- (c) Investigate the primacy of the Search Committee over any informal, secretly appointed subcommittee thereof, and over any outside consultants; and
- (d) Timely completion of a report to the Faculty Senate, preferably within six months of the establishment of the committee.

References:

1. "Summary Report on Interview Visit by the Candidate for the chancellor's Position with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee," May 21, 2008.
2. *Advocate* "Opinion" page staff, "Our Views: LSU Secrecy Bad Policy," Baton Rouge *Advocate*, May 23, 2008 (<http://www.theadvocate.com/opinion/19199164.html>).