TO: Faculty Members, Louisiana State University  
FROM: The Faculty Senate Executive Committee via Kevin L. Cope, Faculty Senate President  
December 8, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

This may be one of the most important emails you will receive during your faculty career at LSU owing to current social and administrative attitudes and opinions concerning acceptable faculty conduct.

Recently, the Chair of the LSU Board of Supervisors stated that the University considers students the single most important aspect of the University enterprise. Despite the role that faculty and staff members play in instruction, research, public service, scholarly activity, and the overall maintenance and financial support of the academy, their value is, in the estimate of the Supervisors, is beneath that of the students whom they mentor and instruct. Given the aforementioned depreciation of faculty and staff members, the Faculty Senate leadership has advised me to warn colleagues about and encourage full awareness of the dangers inherent in the overzealous environment in which they are being evaluated, scrutinized, and occasionally investigated.

Responding to the broad differences in opinion between faculty and administration regarding acceptable professional conduct, due process, academic freedom, and freedom of speech, the University Counsel of Faculty Advisors has requested an open forum on the topic of faculty rights and conduct. President Alexander has tentatively agreed to participate in the forum, which will occur in late January or early February 2016.

While we await the forum and its outcomes, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee recommends the following to those colleagues who may find themselves involved in any disputes, conversations, or investigations relating to professional conduct, whether pertaining to employment or to any other working conditions.

**OBTAIN A PEER FACULTY ADVISOR.** Before any meeting with any administrator in which the topic of the meeting is not announced or is not clear—especially if the requester of the meeting indicates that “the topic will be clarified at the meeting”—the faculty member should request that a trusted peer faculty member accompany him or her to the meeting. Any surprise agenda or actions affecting the faculty member employment status will be verifiable by the peer faculty advisor. If the faculty member cannot arrange for an accompanying faculty member advisor at a meeting in which the employment of the faculty member is discussed, then the faculty member should request postponement of the meeting until a peer faculty member or legal counsel is able to accompany the faculty member.

**OBTAIN LEGAL COUNSEL.** In the current litigious environment, it is advisable that every professional-level employee who undergoes an investigation should consult a lawyer for general advice. If the faculty member is accused in an administrative meeting of misconduct, unacceptable behavior, or other situations that might affect the employment status, then it is strongly advised that the faculty member seek appropriate legal counsel. In such situations, it is highly likely, if not certain, that the University has already contacted and received a preliminary opinion from University General Counsel or from contracted attorneys on the legal aspect of the matter.

**REVIEW THE LSU FACULTY HANDBOOK.** The *Handbook* (http://www.lsu.edu/senate/handbook/introduction.html) outlines the basic responsibilities and rights of faculty members. Basic
recruiting and employment policies for faculty members are in PS-36T and PS-36NT.

REVIEW THE SPECIFIC POLICIES THAT YOU ARE ACCUSED OF VIOLATING. Policies
may be found at http://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/policiesprocedures/policies-and-procedures/. Examples of
policies that are frequently invoked in disciplinary procedures include PS–109 and the related PM–35
(campus implementation procedure); PS–104 (dismissal for cause for faculty); PS–73 (sexual
harassment); PS–95 (sexual harassment of students); PS–69 (research misconduct); PS–1 (equal
opportunity employment); and PS–36T (tenure-track and tenured faculty—appointments,
reappointments, promotions, tenure, annual reviews, and enhancement of job performance); PS–30
(student privacy rights).

MAINTAIN A TIMELINE DIARY OF EVENTS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND THE PEOPLE
INVOLVED IN THOSE EVENTS. As soon as you are accused of violating any policy, develop a
timeline of dates, times, people, communications of any kind (email; postal; telephone calls) and or
activities that were directly or have been indirectly involved in the accusation. Place as much detail as
can be remembered in this diary. As you learn more details, update the timeline diary to maintain it as a
record to supplement your memory of events and situations.

CONSIDER FILING A GRIEVANCE. If the accusation or behavior is not settled appropriately,
contact the chair of the Faculty Senate Grievance Committee, who will meet with the faculty member
and advise on the appropriate process in filing a grievance. For the composition of the Faculty
Grievance Committee, see http://www.lsu.edu/senate/StandingCommittees.html.