

LSU Staff Senate Resolution 21-01

Staff Recommendations in Response to the Husch Blackwell Title IX Report

Senators R. Henry, T. Millican, M. Lane, H. Dawan, W. Ghebreyessus, and S. Baldrige

WHEREAS, one of the primary charges of the LSU Staff Senate, the elected representative body for staff members, is to advocate for staff and serve as a bridge between staff and administration on matters of importance and concern; and

WHEREAS, the Husch Blackwell report, subsequent Louisiana legislative committee hearings, and various local and national news articles have uncovered numerous failures across the LSU campus related to Title IX and sexual assault response; and

WHEREAS, the University released an action plan based on eighteen recommendations from the Husch Blackwell report to include appropriate staffing of a new Civil Rights & Title IX Office, as well as improved Title IX and sexual assault response training, support, and resources. Although recommendations for disciplinary consequences for named staff within the report did occur, termination was not a consequence; and

WHEREAS, while LSU Staff Senate is charged with advocating for all staff, we also believe we have the responsibility to hold all fellow staff members accountable for providing high standards of service excellence to our students, faculty, and colleagues. We support LSU Student Government Resolution 24 and agree that the University should hold any employee accountable that violates Title IX procedures, as these actions threaten the safety of our students, damage the University's reputation, and carry potential financial impact and liability for LSU; and

WHEREAS, the recent communication has been clear as to which LSU staff members are considered responsible parties or mandatory reporters, the consequences for mishandling reports or failing to report incidents related to Title IX remain vague and unclear; and

WHEREAS, there is a perceived lack of viable options for staff experiencing sexual harassment, as the current possible avenues have assumed challenges or consequences including, but not limited to, confidentiality and retaliation; and

WHEREAS, the LSU Board of Supervisors is a constitutionally empowered board granted the authority and responsibility to supervise and manage Louisiana State University campuses and is composed of one selected student member and two members from each congressional district, with three members from the state at-large appointees selected by the governor with confirmation of the Senate. As the Board of Supervisors' charge indicates, this governing board has significant influence in all decisions across campus, including those related to Title IX; and

WHEREAS, the make-up of the LSU Board of Supervisors does not appear to accurately reflect the LSU community in diversity of gender, race, thought, or industry. Specifically, the 2020 LSU Fall Facts report that more than 54% of the LSU community identify as female and there are currently only three female LSU Board of Supervisors. Additionally, the occupations of the members are primarily in law and business with few members having a background in academia or higher education management.

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THEREFORE, be it resolved; the LSU Staff Senate hereby proposes the following recommendations and requests:

- Clear communication and clarification of staff consequences for not participating in mandatory trainings, mishandling Title IX reports, or not reporting incidents related to Title IX. Additionally, having clear examples and definitions of behavior classified for each level of consequences (i.e. first decisional, second decisional, and termination).
- Ensuring the updated Title IX training is accessible and available to all staff members, regardless of title or classification. Although the annual sexual harassment training is set to be updated, the mentions of targeted training for certain areas of campus could lead to further inconsistencies. We ask that the same training be available to all staff, as any staff member has the possibility or opportunity of interacting with or being approached by students of concern or staff members that have been sexually harassed or assaulted. We support the need for topic specific training, but we ask that be available to all employees.
- Establish a timeline for Title IX investigations that eliminates unnecessary waiting for all parties involved and requires a formal resolution to each investigation.
- Additional support and resources for staff experiencing sexual harassment. At this time, staff members are limited to reporting these issues to Human Resources or the Ombudsperson. However, staff are not always comfortable reporting to either entity due to current location of the Ombudsperson's office in the University Administration Building (UAB) or the formality of the reporting process. We suggest expanding support services such as Lighthouse and Safe Space to include services for staff and also providing an additional campus office for the Ombudsperson to privately meet with staff.
- Diversification of the LSU Board of Supervisors to be more representative of the LSU Community, including but not limited to become more inclusive of gender, race, thought, and industry. As Title IX decisions have great impact on students, staff, and faculty, it is imperative that the board be representative of our diverse community. We propose a staff representative on the board with full privileges, including voting, that rotates among the LSU campuses to ensure that the perspective and concerns of staff are properly considered.
- Request for transparent reporting of progress of the eighteen recommendations of the Husch Blackwell report, as well as full transparency on acquisition and allocation of funding resources for the Civil Rights & Title IX office.

THEREFORE, be it further resolved, that a copy of this resolution be sent to Robert Dampf, Chair of the LSU Board of Supervisors; Thomas Galligan, Interim LSU President; Stacia Haynie, Executive Vice President and Provost; Donna Torres, Interim Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration/CFO; Clay Jones, Associate Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer; Mandi Lopez, Faculty Senate President; Takeyra Wagner, Council of Staff Advisors Chair; and Javin Bowman, Student Government President.

Jonathan Levesque
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LSU Staff Senate President
2020-2021

April 27, 2021
Date