HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 25

BY REPRESENTATIVE CROWE

COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES: Requests each public postsecondary education management board to take certain actions to assure that board and institutional policies, rules, and procedures meet specified guidelines relative to intellectual independence, academic freedom, intellectual diversity, and the pursuit of knowledge and truth.

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request that each of the state's public postsecondary education management boards undertake a complete and thorough review of board policies, rules, and procedures and the policies, rules, and procedures of the institutions under its jurisdiction in order to assure that such policies, rules, and procedures meet specified guidelines and standards designed to secure the intellectual independence of faculty members and students, protect the principles of academic freedom, promote intellectual diversity, and support the pursuit of knowledge and truth; to provide that each management board shall take such action as necessary to revise any policy, rule, or procedure that fails to meet the guidelines and standards and establish a process to assure that newly enacted board and institutional policies, rules, and procedures meet such guidelines and standards; and to provide for related matters.

WHEREAS, the central purposes of a public college or university are the pursuit of truth, the discovery of new knowledge through scholarship and research, the study and reasoned criticism of intellectual and cultural traditions, the teaching and general development of students to help them become creative individuals and productive citizens, and the transmission of knowledge and learning to society; and

WHEREAS, free inquiry and free speech within the academic community are indispensable to the achievement of the central purposes of a college or university; the freedoms to teach and to learn depend upon the creation of appropriate conditions and
opportunities on the campus as a whole as well as in the classrooms and lecture halls; and these purposes reflect the values of pluralism, diversity, opportunity, critical intelligence, openness, and fairness that are the cornerstones of our society, and academic freedom and intellectual diversity are values indispensable to a postsecondary education; and

WHEREAS, from its first formulations in the General Report of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure of the American Association of University Professors, the concept of academic freedom has been premised on the ideas that knowledge is a never-ending pursuit of the truth, that there is no truth that is not in principle open to challenge, and that no party or intellectual faction has a monopoly on wisdom; and

WHEREAS, academic freedom is most likely to thrive in an environment of intellectual diversity that protects and fosters independence of thought and speech; and

WHEREAS, because free inquiry and its fruits are crucial to the democratic process, and academic freedom is a national value as well; and

WHEREAS, academic freedom consists of protecting the intellectual independence of professors, researchers, and students in the pursuit of knowledge and the expression of ideas from interference by legislators or authorities within the college or university itself, meaning that no political, ideological, or religious orthodoxy should be imposed on professors and researchers through the hiring, tenure, or termination process, nor through any other administrative means by the institution; and

WHEREAS, the 1915 Declaration of Principles of the American Association of University Professors admonished faculty members to avoid "taking unfair advantage of the student's immaturity by indoctrinating him with the teacher's own opinions before the student has had an opportunity fairly to examine other opinions upon the matters in question, and before he has sufficient knowledge and ripeness of judgment to be entitled to form any definitive opinion of his own"; and

WHEREAS, in 1967, the American Association of University Professors' Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students reinforced and amplified this injunction by noting "[s]tudents should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion".
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
urge and request that each of the state's public postsecondary education management boards
undertake a complete and thorough review of board policies, rules, and procedures and the
policies, rules, and procedures of the institutions under its jurisdiction to assure that such
policies, rules, and procedures meet the following guidelines and standards in order to secure
the intellectual independence of faculty members and students, protect the principles of
academic freedom, promote intellectual diversity, and support the pursuit of knowledge and
truth:

(1) All faculty members shall be hired, fired, promoted, and granted tenure on
the basis of their competence and appropriate knowledge in the field of their
expertise and, in the humanities, the social sciences, and the arts, with a view
toward fostering a plurality of methodologies and perspectives.

(2) No faculty member shall be hired, fired, promoted, or denied promotion or
tenure on the basis of the faculty member's political, ideological, or religious
beliefs.

(3) No faculty member shall be excluded from tenure, search, and hiring
committees on the basis of the faculty member's political, ideological, or
religious beliefs.

(4) Students shall be graded solely on the basis of their reasoned answers and
appropriate knowledge of the subjects and disciplines and not on the basis of
their political, ideological, or religious beliefs.

(5) Curricula and reading lists in the humanities and social sciences shall respect
all human knowledge in these areas and provide students with dissenting
sources and viewpoints.

(6) Teachers shall be free to pursue their own findings and perspectives in
presenting their views but shall consider and make their students aware of
other viewpoints.

(7) Academic disciplines shall welcome a diversity of approaches, and
institutions shall recognize that exposing students to the spectrum of
significant scholarly viewpoints on the subjects examined in their courses is
a primary responsibility of faculty members.

(8) Faculty members shall not use their courses or their positions for the purpose
of political, ideological, religious, or antireligious indoctrination.

(9) The freedoms of speech, expression, assembly, and conscience of students
and student organizations shall not be infringed upon instructors, institutional
administrators, student government organizations, or by institutional policies,
rules, or procedures.

(10) Selection of speakers, allocation of funds for speakers' programs, and other
student activities shall observe the principles of academic freedom and
promote intellectual pluralism.

(11) Except as provided by law, the obstruction of invited campus speakers, the
destruction of campus literature, and other efforts to obstruct a civil exchange
of ideas shall not be permitted.

(12) Academic institutions and professional societies shall maintain a posture of
organizational neutrality with respect to the substantive disagreements that
divide researchers on questions within or outside their fields of inquiry,
recognizing that knowledge advances when individual scholars are left free
to reach their own conclusions about which methods, facts, and theories have
been validated by research and that such institutions and societies, formed to
advance knowledge within an area of research, to maintain the integrity of
the research process, and to organize the professional lives of related
researchers, serve as indispensable venues within which scholars circulate
research findings and debate their interpretations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each public postsecondary education
management board, upon completing its review of board policies, rules, and procedures and
the policies, rules, and procedures of the institutions under its jurisdiction as provided by this
Resolution, shall take such action as may be necessary to revise any such existing policy,
rule, or procedure that fails to meet the guidelines and standards enumerated in this
Resolution so that it meets such guidelines and standards and, in addition, shall establish a
process to assure that newly enacted board and institutional policies, rules, and procedures
meet these guidelines and standards relative to intellectual independence, academic freedom,
intellectual diversity, and the pursuit of knowledge and truth.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution shall be transmitted
to the chairman of each public postsecondary education management board, the chairman
of the Board of Regents, and the commissioner of higher education.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument.

Crowe HCR No. 25

Requests that each of the state's public postsecondary education management boards
undertake a complete and thorough review of board policies, rules, and procedures and the
policies, rules, and procedures of the institutions under its jurisdiction in order to assure that
such policies, rules, and procedures meet guidelines and standards specified in the resolution
that are designed to secure the intellectual independence of faculty members and students,
protect the principles of academic freedom, promote intellectual diversity, and support the
pursuit of knowledge and truth.

Also provides that each management board shall take such action as necessary to revise any
policy, rule, or procedure that fails to meet the enumerated guidelines and standards so that
it meets them and, in addition, shall establish a process to assure that newly enacted board
and institutional policies, rules, and procedures meet such guidelines and standards.