Faculty Senate Resolution

Opposing the Erosion of Health Plans Administered by the Office of Group Benefits (OGB)

Introduced at the request of the Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates

WHEREAS the executive branch of Louisiana government is revising those state health insurance plans that are administered by the Office of Group Benefits (“OGB”) so as to shift more costs to employees, whether by increasing out-of-pocket costs, imposing higher deductibles, assessing prescription fees, or multiplying service exclusions;

WHEREAS estimates indicate that these proposed changes will increase out-of-pocket costs to employees and retirees by approximately 47%, an unexpected and disproportionate increase that is unjust to and that imposes an extreme hardship on present and former public servants;

WHEREAS the proposed policy changes will result in state workers and retirees paying more and getting less, in startling contrast to and inversion of the “do more with less” motto of the current state administration;

WHEREAS Nicholls State University faculty and staff have not received a pay raise in more than six years, and state workers and retirees in general have not seen cost-of-living allowances equal to inflation;

WHEREAS no satisfactory explanation has been given for the astounding erosion of the OGB reserve fund from $525,000,000 to approximately $225,000,000 in only two years;

WHEREAS the reduction of viable choices among benefit plans will further diminish the ability of Louisiana’s colleges and universities to recruit and retain faculty and to remain competitive with other states in either higher education or in the industries with which higher education collaborates;

WHEREAS the proposed OGB changes will irrevocably hurt state workers and their families all over the state of Louisiana;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Faculty Senate of Nicholls State University joins with its colleagues at Southeastern Louisiana University and LSU in opposing the suggested changes to the OGB-administered health plans—at least until full and complete studies and audits have been conducted, and in warning the people of Louisiana that the proposed changes will be extraordinarily harmful for state workers and retirees.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Nicholls Faculty Senate joins with the senates at Southeastern and LSU in cautioning the people of Louisiana that so dramatic a change in the affordability of health plans for the many thousands of fellow voters and taxpayers who constitute the staff of Louisiana higher education institutions will harm both the people and the economy of our state.