

DECEMBER 8, 2020

A RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE OF THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI ADDRESSING THE ACTIONS OF THE MISSISSIPPI STATE AUDITOR AND CALLING UPON THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI TO RESIST UNDUE EXTERNAL INFLUENCE AND TO SUPPORT ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Whereas on September 8-9, 2020 was held a “Scholar Strike” [described](#) as “both an action, and a teach-in” and as “designed to raise awareness of and prompt action against racism, policing, mass incarceration and other symptoms of racism’s toll in America”;

Whereas by letter to the University of Mississippi Chancellor Glenn Boyce dated September 14, 2020, the Mississippi State Auditor accused a member of the University’s faculty of violating Mississippi Code §37-9-75 by participating in the “Scholar Strike,” called for the faculty member to be fired, and demanded the recovery of a portion of the faculty member’s salary;

Whereas the term “strike” is defined by Mississippi Code §37-9-75(1)(a) as, “a concerted failure to report for duty, a willful absence from one’s position, the stoppage of work, a deliberate slowing down of work, or the withholding, in whole or in part, of the full, faithful and proper performance of the duties of employment, **for the purpose of inducing, influencing or coercing a change in the conditions, compensation, rights, privileges or obligations of public employment**”;

Whereas the “Scholar Strike” of September 8-9 was unrelated to “the purpose of inducing, influencing or coercing a change in the conditions, compensation, rights, privileges or obligations of public employment”;

Whereas participation in the "Scholar Strike" in no way contradicts the full, faithful and proper performance of the duties of employment of a faculty member of the University;

Whereas the University’s accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), calls upon the University’s governing body, the Mississippi Institutes of Higher Learning, to protect the University from undue influence by external persons or bodies (Standard 4.2(f)); and

Whereas the actions of State Auditor threaten to interfere in the internal affairs of the University thereby jeopardizing its independence and vitality, threaten to chill academic freedom essential for higher education, and threaten to chill protected speech; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE SENATE OF THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI EXPRESSES GRAVE CONCERN OVER THE ACTIONS OF THE MISSISSIPPI STATE AUDITOR AND CALLS UPON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI TO PUBLICLY RESIST ANY SUCH EXAMPLES OF UNDUE EXTERNAL INFLUENCE AND TO SUPPORT ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.