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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 24, 2011

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Regents Adopts Master Plan

BATON ROUGE, La. - The Board of Regents adopted a Master Plan for Higher Education today outlining the long-term goals for the state's colleges and universities through 2025. Article VIII of Louisiana's Constitution authorizes Regents to develop a Master Plan which provides a broad vision and goals and contains, at a minimum, a funding formula as well as the role, scope and mission for each institution statewide. The new plan will be delivered to the Legislature no later than September 1, 2011 as referenced in HCR 121 of the 2011 Regular Session. The last Master Plan was adopted in 2001.

The goals of the new 2011 Master Plan include:

- Increasing the educational attainment of the State's adult population to the Southern Regional Education Board average by 2025.
- Investing strategically in university research.
- Achieving greater efficiency and accountability in the postsecondary education enterprise.

The Plan outlines 18 objectives, 71 activities and 65 performance measures to achieve the above goals. Through these goals, related activities and measurable metrics, the plan assures that its implementation will be monitored, evaluated and reported throughout the duration.

"A tremendous amount of progress has been made in Louisiana since 2001 and we have more students achieving the dream of attending college than ever before, but today's economy requires that students not only attend, they have to graduate," said Board of Regents Chairman Bob Levy. "To reach the goal of increasing the educational attainment of our adult population to the SREB average of 42% the progress we've made must not only continue, it must accelerate."

"These are very ambitious targets for our state," said Commissioner of Higher Education Jim Purcell. "If each of our institutions meets its GRAD Act goals by 2015, we will still have to increase by 9% the number of associate degrees and by 5% the number of baccalaureate degrees produced through 2025. We have to continue to require our institutions to far exceed their performance to date, but I think they understand the urgency of this aspirational goal."

The 2001 Master Plan focused primarily on improved access to college for Louisiana's students and resulted in measurable progress through increased minimum admissions criteria and support for the state's developing community and technical college system including:

- Increased graduation rates (36.3% in 2001 compared to 42.6% in 2010)
- More first-time freshman enrolled in two-year/technical institutions (21% in 2000, compared to 44% in 2010)
- More students completing the Regents' Core Curriculum (56.5% in 2003 compared to 62.7% in 2010)
- Increased ACT scores for high school graduates (19.6 in 2001 compared to 21.1 in 2011)
- Fewer students requiring remedial coursework upon entering college (32.3% in 2001 compared to 20.8% in 2009)

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Regents staff will be establishing updated role, scope and mission statements for institutions in the coming months using the guiding principles outlined in the Master Plan:

1. Role, scope and mission statements represent the essence of the campus, its core priorities.
2. Role, scope and mission is a policy tool to help ensure the State's institutions collectively have the capacity to meet the needs of citizens and employers in a cost effective manner.
3. Role, scope and mission statements of institutions must reflect how they interact with and serve the economic and educational needs of the region in which the institution resides.
4. The flagship institution is the premiere public research university.
5. Statewide institutions serve the entire State but in a specific and limited manner.
6. Regional institutions focus primarily on providing services to the local population and economy.
7. Community and technical colleges focus primarily on serving local communities.
8. Budget realities of Louisiana require that institutions rethink their fiscal structures, adopt greater efficiencies, and think more about educational consortium agreements that maximize the utilization of academic resources and programs.
9. Graduate and professional programs must be of superior quality, strategically placed, and be made more available through the use of educational technology. This will require the elimination of some existing graduate and professional programs.

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