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Regents Move Forward Without Interim Commissioner

BATON ROUGE, La. – The Louisiana Board of Regents in an emergency meeting today moved to address the day to day operations of the agency without an interim Commissioner. The board appointed four board members; Artis Terrell, Bob Levy, Roland Toups and Maurice Durbin to work with senior staff to manage the operations of the office.

“Our immediate focus is on the critical work that must be done and the search for the permanent commissioner,” said Chairman Terrell. “The work of the interim commissioner will be handled by the board and staff and collectively we will ensure that we address the necessary work of the budget, GRAD Act, the statewide transfer degree and the numerous legislative requests as well.”

The board went into executive session to specifically address the possibility of Tom Layzell serving in a limited advisory capacity. Layzell, a three time commissioner of higher education in Kentucky, Mississippi and Illinois, was the board’s choice for interim commissioner but the salary was not approved by the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget (JLCB). Recent law now requires that Regents determine the salary for the commissioner subject to approval of the JLCB.

The board voted unanimously to approve continuing to work with Layzell in some capacity and in thanking him for his efforts and his caring for Louisiana.

“I have enjoyed my brief opportunity to assist you and look forward to future discussions. If there is any way that I can help, I am happy to do so,” Layzell stated.

“We are going full steam ahead with our search for the permanent commissioner,” said board member Mary Ellen Roy. The board restated their goal of filling the permanent position in six months.