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## **Regents Recognize Governor Blanco for Higher Ed Support**

The Board of Regents today formally recognized Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco for her steadfast support of Louisiana's public colleges and universities, particularly as reflected in the historic appropriation for higher education in her 2007-08 Executive Budget. The 2007-08 state budget, recently passed by the Louisiana Legislature, includes the largest single-year funding increase for public higher education in a generation. This investment brings all of Louisiana's public colleges and universities up to a funding level at least matching the average of their peer institutions across the South — a measure of financial support Louisiana's colleges and universities have not seen for more than 25 years. The budget also includes long-overdue faculty salary increases and Louisiana's first significant need-based financial aid program for moderate- and low-income students.

The Regents adopted a resolution detailing Governor Blanco's many contributions to public higher education. The governor, who attended the meeting, received a standing ovation from those attending the meeting.

"Education is the mortal enemy of poverty," said Governor Blanco. "I don't believe we solve this chronic problem with another poverty program. Education is the investment that will move us forward. I encourage you to target these historic investments wisely and to ensure that our colleges and universities can sustain the level of educational quality and research excellence that will keep Louisiana competitive for generations to come."

"With this historic investment, along with her many other expressions of support for education at all levels -- from LONI to pre-K to high school redesign -- Governor Blanco has secured her place in history as an education governor," said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie.

In other Regents business, the Board approved the implementation of the Board of Regents Support Fund Endowed Undergraduate Program for First-Generation College Students. The purposes of the program are to increase college access and success for low-income first-generation college students, to enhance institutional efforts to provide need-based financial aid to undergraduate students, and to provide additional opportunities for benefactors to support Louisiana's colleges and universities. Under the program, \$100,000 scholarship funds will be set

up at participating institutions, with 60% of the funding raised by the institution from private donors or from institutional funds and a 40% match provided by the Regents from the Board of Regents Support Fund (BoRSF), sometimes referred to as the “8(g) fund.”

The program was originally approved by the Regents in 2005, but it was never implemented because of budget cuts resulting from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

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