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## **Regents Halts New Programs and Identifies Underperforming Programs**

BATON ROUGE, La. –The Louisiana Board of Regents has identified college and university programs which could be eliminated due to low-completion rates and halted most new academic program approvals. These actions were taken today in response to the current and anticipated budget shortfall in Louisiana. Commissioner of Higher Education Sally Clausen called for fast-tracking of the review of the “low-completer” programs as a first step in an effort to identify current and long-term cost containment measures.

“Higher Education has an obligation, especially during economic downturns, to operate in the most efficient manner possible,” said Commissioner Clausen. “If we expect our state to invest in our human capital and make our colleges and universities a priority, we owe tax-payers a thorough assessment of our enterprise with an eye towards efficiency and accountability,” Clausen noted. System Presidents or their representatives were in attendance today in support of the review and stated they have already notified their campuses to begin the review process.

“For the LSU system, we are prepared to take the steps that will be necessary that will engage our various campuses in a complete review of our academic programs in consultation with our chancellors and our chief academic officers in consultation with our system heads and our board,” said Mike Gargano representing the LSU System. “We will make the appropriate decisions that will be necessary so that we offer the types of academic programs that are successful and meet the particular needs of our state.”

“This is certainly not a new process but it is a welcome one,” said University of Louisiana System President Randy Moffett. “The UL System will participate fully in this review of low completer programs and we support the moratorium as well as key components of an on-going effort to contain costs in higher education. We are not surprised by this. We have a tendency to always want to grow programs. However, I think often times it is healthy for us to step back and take a look at what we are doing and where we are spending our dollars.”

“When times get difficult you have to accelerate the pace of analyzing low completer programs,” said Southern University President Ralph Slaughter. “I think it is important that higher education in general and the Southern University system specifically try to concentrate the scarce resources that we have on the best programs. We have no problem with the low completer review.”

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“I want to publicly thank you Commissioner Clausen and your staff for the collaborative approach that you taken on this very sensitive subject,” said Jim Henderson from the Louisiana Community and Technical College System. “When it comes to the moratorium on programs this board should also be commended in taking into account the need to allow for programs that are targeted for economic development. That is primarily what our system does, and the acknowledgement of the caveat for economic development is welcome. We are committed to that review and we are committed to making sure that we are making the most efficient and effective application of higher education dollars.”

The Board of Regents periodically reviews all programs provided by Louisiana’s postsecondary institutions for low-completer status, recommends those that should be eliminated and discontinues those degree programs that fall within its authority to ensure accountability. Low-completer program reviews use multiple years of student graduation data provided by the campuses to measure productivity. The last low-completer review was done by Regents five years ago. This year’s review includes data from 2003-2008. The established standards to be met by campuses are:

- **Undergraduate Programs**-an average of 8 completers per year or a minimum of 40 graduates within 5 years
- **Masters/Specialist Programs**-an average of 5 completers per year or a minimum of 25 graduates within 5 years
- **Doctoral Programs**-an average of 2 completers per year or a minimum of 10 graduates within 5 years

The Board of Regents recognized that the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) employs the Council on Occupational Education (COE) completer definition will used by the LCTCS board in reviewing their program performance at COE accredited institutions. COE defines completers as a student who has demonstrated the competencies required for a program and has been awarded the appropriate credential (graduate completer) or has acquired sufficient competencies through a program to become employed in the field of education pursued or a related field as evidenced by such employment (non-graduate completer).

“It is appropriate to have a rigorous review process for program performance, especially during these times when the spending of every dollar must be scrutinized,” said Board of Regents Chairman Artis Terrell. “The Board of Regents is collaborating with all of our systems to ensure this work is done in the most thorough manner possible,” Terrell said.

The list of programs identified as “low-completer” has been shared with the Board of Regents and the four college and university systems as well as individual campuses. Each campus is given an opportunity to terminate the program, defend the continuation of any program identified in the report or comment on the information contained in the report. The Board of Regents then votes on recommendations made by staff concerning possible closure of select degree programs it has the authority to terminate.

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Several factors excluded some programs which were identified as “low-completer,” such as:

- Programs not in existence for at least five years
- Programs at institutions in the New Orleans and Lake Charles area which were impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita (These programs will be evaluated in October when 2008-09 data is available since the 2005-06 data did not provide an accurate picture)
- Core Academic Programs (Math, English, History, Computer Science, etc.)
- Programs where there are multiple but related degree options which counted together meet required numbers of completers
- Lower-level programs which support productive higher-level programs in the same subject area

The number of low-completer programs identified by the Board of Regents, based on analysis of credential attainment data provided by higher education management boards, and the percent of the total number of system/campus programs it represents is as follows:

	<u>Number</u>
<b><u>LSU System</u></b>	<b><u>36</u></b>
LSU-Alexandria	1
LSU-A&M (Baton Rouge)	28
LSU-Eunice	1
LSUHSC-New Orleans	0*
LSUHSC-Shreveport	0
LSU-Shreveport	5
UNO	0*
LSU Law	1
<b><u>University of Louisiana System</u></b>	<b><u>40</u></b>
Grambling	6
Louisiana Tech	11
McNeese	0*
Nicholls	2
University of Louisiana at Monroe	7
Northwestern	4
Southeastern	2
University of Louisiana at Lafayette	8
<b><u>Southern University System</u></b>	<b><u>17</u></b>
Southern-Baton Rouge	8
Southern-New Orleans	0*
Southern-Shreveport	9
Southern Law	0

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<b><u>Louisiana Community &amp; Technical College System</u></b>	<b>565</b>
Baton Rouge Community College	0
Bossier Parish Community College	5
Delgado Community College	0*
Nunez Community College	0*
River Parishes Community College	0
South Louisiana Community College	3
Delta Community College	0
Fletcher Technical-Community College***	10
Southwest Louisiana Technical-Community College***	0*
Louisiana Technical College*** (40 campuses)	547**
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b>658</b>

In addition, the Board approved a moratorium on new academic programs through the 2009-2010 fiscal year. This action focuses colleges and universities energies on existing programs while also addressing mid-year budget cuts. Among acceptable exceptions is consideration of new academic programs which directly address workforce development needs in the state.

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\*Hurricane-affected campuses

\*\* Hurricane-affected campuses of LTC include: Sullivan/Jefferson/West Jefferson/Collier/Slidell

\*\*\*Council on Occupational Education definition of completer will be taken into account in the review of program performance at COE accredited institutions