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Regents Pleased with Session Results

The recently-completed 2008 Regular Legislative Session gets good marks from Louisiana's public postsecondary education community. Louisiana's colleges and universities emerged from the 2008 Regular Session maintaining the full formula funding necessary to remain at the SREB funding average, and made progress in other areas as well.

"Overall, Louisiana's colleges and universities fared well this session," said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie. "Most importantly we came out with our institutions still funded at 100% of the formula, which means they will be able to keep pace with their public counterparts across the South."

Savoie enumerated several other positives for public higher education that came out of the session as well:

- The 2008-08 budget passed by the Legislature provides \$37 million to maintain full formula funding, helping ensure that Louisiana's colleges and universities continue to be funded from state appropriations for public institutions at the average of their peer institutions across the Southern region. The bill also included \$4 million for dual enrollment programs. In addition, the GO Grant initiative, Louisiana's need-based student aid program, was funded at \$24 million for 2008-09.
- House Bill 734, passed into law, provides legislative authorization for system management boards to allow public colleges and universities to adjust tuition from 3% to 5% per year in each of the next four years. Louisiana's tuition rates are among the lowest in the nation, and Louisiana is the *only* state to require a supermajority (two-thirds) of the legislature to increase tuition.

- Ten million dollars in funding was appropriated for the “Fast Start” / “Rapid Response” initiatives, providing the Louisiana Community and Technical College System with funds for customized workforce training solutions for high-demand and new or expanding industries.
- A variety of key higher education resolutions were passed, including one that provides that 15% of formula funding be tied to institutional performance, and another asking Regents to monitor college textbook pricing and make recommendations to the Legislature to help keep textbook costs as low as possible for students.

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