



Louisiana Board of Regents

Press Release



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Tuition Task Force holds First Meeting

BATON ROUGE, La. –Stakeholders from across the state gathered today to discuss tuition related issues for Louisiana’s public institutions. The newly created group, called the Tuition Task Force, was created pursuant to House Resolution 206 of 2013 by Representative Ortego.

“I, along with my colleagues in the legislature, believe that tuition is an important issue that should be addressed,” said Representative Ortego. “Higher education will be one of the top, if not the top, priority for the next legislative session and this task force will help us make decisions.”

Membership is comprised of business and industry leaders, higher education management board officials, K-12 representatives, public high school students, along with faculty, students, and Board of Regents representatives. Regents Chairman, W. Clinton Rasberry, Jr. stressed the critical nature of addressing tuition issues in our state. “There has been considerable discussion during the past session concerning tuition, and tuition is always a topic that must be approached with fidelity,” said Rasberry. “We must continue seeking the right balance for both our students and our institutions. We all know that this is challenging - especially during times of limited resources.”

Also attending were Speaker of the House, Chuck Kleckley and House Education Committee Chair, Steve Carter. Speaker Kleckley provided opening remarks, conveying his support for higher education and stressing greater collaboration. “When we look at our legacy as legislators we must ask, what do we want to leave?” said Kleckley. “It’s time for us to take a step back and look at what’s happened to higher ed in the past two years, and what we can do to change higher ed moving forward. My highest priority is higher ed and to help find solutions to the problems that higher ed faces. I can only do this with help from you. Higher ed must also come together and speak in one clear voice.”

Items for discussion included the new funding paradigm for higher education, financial aid, and new tuition alternatives. Commissioner Purcell presented information on suggested alternatives and best practices. During a panel discussion, members dialogued about possible changes to the current tuition framework, and the role that business and industry can play in supporting higher education. “Higher Education is everyone’s business,” said Jan Moller, of the Louisiana Budget Project. “There is a direct correlation between higher education and economic growth and development.”

Task force members and panelists also discussed the idea of TOPS reform. Erin Monroe Wesley, with the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, and State Representative Franklin Foil both expressed their support for increasing TOPS standards. The group also conveyed their support for a stable funding model for institutions.

The task force is set to hold several public meetings in the upcoming months and will submit a written report of its findings, including any recommendations for legislation, to the House Committee on Education not later than sixty days prior to the beginning of the 2014 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature.

“Out of this task force we need to learn a lot more and seek innovative ideas for improvement,” said Representative Ortego.

“We must look at things that have been tried in other states or things that will come out of Louisiana that are state specific and deliver results.”