

Regents Recap

Highlights of the Activities and Official Actions of the Louisiana Board of Regents

December 29, 2005

Regents Declare Moratorium on New College Programs

At its December 7 meeting, the Board of Regents declared a moratorium on the introduction of new academic programs at all public colleges and universities in the state. The action, rare but not unprecedented in the 30-year history of the Regents, is part of a series of measures the Board is implementing to ensure that limited resources are used as efficiently as possible in rebuilding the state's public postsecondary education system, hard hit by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

"The Board's primary purpose in declaring the moratorium is to see to it that adequate resources are first made available to existing, mission-critical degree programs before any new programs are considered," said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie. "Louisiana's postsecondary education infrastructure has been severely weakened by the recent disasters, and critical issues, including even what and where to rebuild, cannot be fully resolved until repopulation patterns emerge. Moreover, the state's budget has been decimated by the loss of critical tax revenue and a stable tax base. It's important for the Board to make sure that we focus resources on essential activities."

The moratorium applies to all existing and anticipated proposals for new programs, but it does allow for certain exceptions, as follows: 1) programs/units required by legal mandates, 2) programs/units which have completed all levels of review except final consideration by the Board of Regents, 3) programs/units deemed essential to immediate and long-term economic recovery after recent hurricane damage, 4) programs/units deemed essential to completing program development required for institutional accreditation of emerging new institutions, and 5) programs/units deemed essential to continue ongoing teacher education reform efforts.

The moratorium, effective immediately will remain in effect through the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

Postsecondary Education Community Holds Media Briefing on Budget Cuts

[Note: Since the Board of Regents does not meet in November, there was no November *Regents Recap* (where this item would normally have appeared.)]

On November 17, Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie, accompanied by the presidents of Louisiana's four postsecondary education systems, held a media briefing to announce plans for the \$66.7 million in cuts mandated for public postsecondary education as a result of the Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The following statement was released to the press at that briefing:

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita severely impacted Louisiana's public postsecondary education system. High winds and flooding inflicted massive property damage on our campuses, and thousands of students, faculty and staff have been displaced, some possibly never to return. There are still approximately 46,000 individuals who were college students ten weeks ago who are not in college today. Their absence – and strategies to get them back into school – will have a long-term impact on our state's workforce. Moreover, with the loss of these students came the loss of \$67 million in tuition income.

And now, in addition to these direct losses, the state's overall fiscal crisis, brought on by the loss of state revenue resulting from these disasters, has necessitated action that will affect campuses all across Louisiana. Executive Order KBB 2005-82 directs the Louisiana Board of Regents to submit to the Division of Administration by November 18 a plan to trim \$66.6 million from its 2005-06 operating budget.

(continued on page 3)



Roland M. Toups
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Vice Chair

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Richard E. D'Aquin
Reggie Dupré
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Virgil Robinson, Jr.
William Clifford Smith
Harold M. Stokes
Artis Terrell, Jr.
Chris Jividen
Student Member

E. Joseph Savoie
Commissioner of
Higher Education

Board Action - December 6-7, 2005

Regents Extend Current Officers' Terms

In the interest of maintaining continuity in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, at its December 7 meeting the Board of Regents voted to extend the terms of the current slate of officers for one year.

"The Board approved the term extension based on the conviction that it is in the best interest of our colleges and universities for the Board of Regents to maintain leadership consistency during this next critical year of recovery," said Commissioner of Higher Education.

Continuing in their present offices for 2006 will be Roland Toups, Chair; Frances Henry, Vice-Chair; and Pat Strong, Vice-Chair. A change in the Board of Regents by-laws must be approved at the Board's January meeting for the term extension to take effect.

The following Board members will serve on the Executive Committee for 2006: Roland Toups, Frances Henry, Pat Strong, Richard D'Aquin, Stanley Jacobs, Robert Levy, and Artis Terrell.

Officers will be sworn in at the Board's January meeting.

Redesigned Teacher, Leadership Preparation Programs Approved

Continuing its efforts to improve the level of preparation of Louisiana's classroom teachers and school administrators, the Board of Regents approved the following redesigned initial teacher preparation program and graduate programs for teachers and education leaders:

Southeastern Louisiana University: B.A. in Art Education – Grades K-12, B.M.E. in Vocal Music Education – Grades K-12, B.M.E. in Instrumental Music Education – Grades K-12, B.S. in Health and Physical Education – Grades K-12, B.A. in French Education - Grades K-12, and B.A. in Spanish Education – Grades K-12.

Southern University and A&M College: B.A. in Art Education – Grades K-12, B.M.E. in Music Education-Vocal – Grades K-12, B.M.E. in Music Education-Instrumental – Grades K-12, B.S. in Health and Physical Education – Grades K-12, B.A. in French Education - Grades K-12, and B.A. in Spanish Education – Grades K-12; and multiple M. Ed. programs in Curriculum and Instruction in Science Education – Grades 4-8, General Science Education – Grades 6-12, Mathematics Education – Grades 4-8, Mathematics Education – Grades 6-12, Political Science Education – Grades 6-12, History Education – Grades 6-12, Adult Education, Biology Education – Grades 6-12, Chemistry Education – Grades 6-12, Early Childhood Education, Economics Education – Grades 6-12, Educational Technology, Elementary Education – Grades 1-5, English Education – Grades 6-12, Physics Education – Grades 6-12, Reading Education.

LSU-Alexandria: Non-Master's/Certification-Only Alternate Program in Health and Physical Education – Grades K-12, Biology Education – Grades 6-12, English Education – Grades 6-12, Social Studies Education – Grades 6-12, and Mathematics Education – Grades 6-12.

University of New Orleans: M.Ed. in Educational Leadership program and Teacher Leader Endorsement.

LSU – Shreveport: M.Ed. in Educational Leadership program and Teacher Leader Endorsement.

Grambling State University: M.Ed. in Educational Leadership; B.S. in Middle School Education – Grades 4-8 in English and Mathematics; and multiple M.Ed. programs in Curriculum and Instruction in Reading, Early Childhood Education, Technology Facilitator, and Educational Technology Leadership.

Program Approvals

The Board of Regents approved the following proposed letters of intent, research units and progress reports on conditionally-approved programs:

Proposed Letters of Intent:

Grambling State University - M.S. in Nursing - Geriatric Nurse Practitioner; M.S. in Nursing - Pediatric Nurse Practitioner.

Request for Initial Approval of Research Unit:

Grambling State University - Center for Mathematical Achievement in Science and Technology.

Progress Reports on Conditionally-Approved Programs/Centers:

Louisiana State University - M.A. in Hispanic Studies; Louisiana State University - Shreveport - Master of Health Administration; Northwestern State University - B.S. in Addiction Studies; Sowela Technical Community College - Associate of General Studies; Southern University Shreveport - A.S. in Nursing; Southern University Baton Rouge - Master of Criminal Justice.

For more information on these and other Board of Regents actions, please visit our web site at www.regents.state.la.us

Media Briefing (continued from page 1)

In formulating this plan, the public postsecondary education community was guided by the Master Plan for Public Postsecondary Education, which provides a valuable context for these decisions. Relevant and reliable data, the momentum of recent progress and a clear vision for Louisiana's educational future have informed this process.

Also on our side is a spirit of cooperation among our systems and campuses. The best testimony to this unity of purpose was the statewide response of the entire postsecondary education community in the days and weeks following the storms. Our multi-system emergency response group came together the day after Katrina made landfall, quickly and effectively hammering out, among many other things, a strategy of accommodation allowing displaced students to quickly enroll at other public institutions and mobilizing resources to make certain students, faculty and staff were able to reconnect with their home campuses. Moreover, Louisiana's public postsecondary campuses all across the state have from the outset been integrally involved in disaster response and recovery, serving as evacuee shelters, triage centers, staging areas and the like. In many cases, these responses, which are outside the normal institutional mission responsibilities, have been managed at the campuses' own expense.

Notably, the higher education emergency response group has met and continues to meet frequently to guide the system's recovery. Indeed, that group's model of cooperation has played a critical role in the development of the budget reduction proposal that postsecondary education is presenting to the Division of Administration.

Against this backdrop, the Louisiana public postsecondary education community today outlines a system-by-system plan to address our share of the state's near-term budget shortfall. In developing this plan, we have also identified opportunities to begin to address the future funding needs of Louisiana's colleges and universities. Over the next sixty days postsecondary education will implement other immediate actions and propose long-term strategies to help engender sustainable financial health for our colleges and universities.

The viability of colleges and universities is critical to any meaningful recovery for Louisiana. These institutions are the engines of economic growth, the major providers of instruction and training, the primary source of our health care workforce, the chief agents of discovery through research, the accreditors of competency and skills and the transmitters of cultural heritage. For this reason, in the formulation of this budget reduction proposal we rejected the notion of across-the-board reductions. Such indiscriminate budget slashing in the 1980s seriously diminished the quality of Louisiana's higher education system.

The effects of the budget cuts we propose today will be real and visible: personnel reductions, layoffs, consolidation and elimination of programs, administrative and faculty losses, maintenance deferrals and more. We are nevertheless committed to a brighter future, confident that even with these setbacks, higher education in Louisiana is open for business and will recover along with our state. Today, even in these difficult times, the postsecondary education community wants to send a strong message to students, faculty and staff to continue their important work. We will recover as we have in the past, and we will battle back, because a quality postsecondary education system is critical to sustainable economic and social vitality for our state.

Louisiana's postsecondary education community appeals to our students who have left Louisiana to return to college here. We encourage students who have not re-enrolled to do so soon. We pledge to work with those students to develop appropriate schedules that fit in with their other responsibilities, and we will work with them to ensure that their education is affordable.

We appeal as well to our faculties to weather these trying times with us as we strive to return stability and growth to our system. As Louisiana rebuilds, there will be many unique opportunities and challenges that will require the kind of innovation, research, invention, teaching and productivity that only higher education can provide.

As previously stated, the budget reduction plan proposed to the Division of Administration today is designed to deal with near-term budget shortfalls. However, postsecondary education will also take the following more forward-looking measures:

- Effective immediately, a special accreditation and productivity review of all academic programs will be undertaken. Those which constitute an inefficient use of resources will be discontinued.
- A moratorium on all new academic programs (not already under development or connected to the recovery) will also be effective immediately.
- Through a variety of enrollment management strategies, first-time freshman enrollment at four-year campuses will be reduced by a minimum of 1000 students, beginning with the Fall 2006 semester. The goal of this reduction will be to channel those students into our community college system, where instruction is less expensive and where they may gain the foundation for success later at a four-year institution.
- Cost-saving administrative changes will be implemented by the end of December.

It should be noted that the budget proposal to be outlined today does not include campus-by-campus numbers or goals. The various systems will be conducting special meetings over the next few days to allocate these reductions across their campuses, and that information will be forthcoming as it becomes available.