

# Regents Recap

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

December 2007

## College Campus Safety Initiative Moving Forward

Louisiana's colleges and universities are making steady progress and are on schedule to meet a June 30, 2008, full implementation target date for a statewide campus security program. The Board of Regents received an update on the progress of the initiative, which was put into motion in May by Governor Blanco and the Board of Regents in response to the deadly shooting spree that devastated Virginia Tech University this past spring. According to the report, significant progress has been achieved in all four phases of the initiative: 1) electronic alert/notification system; 2) training for law enforcement, as well as faculty, staff and students; 3) campus physical security assessment; and 4) policy. The Louisiana Legislature appropriated \$2.5 million for the initiative this past session.

"The Board of Regents is pleased with the speed and thoroughness with which the safety and security initiative team has put its plan into action," said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie. "Whether we're faced with another natural disaster or an emergency like the one in Virginia, the safety of our students is our first concern. This initiative is addressing that concern from a variety of perspectives."

The selection and implementation of a common campus emergency alerting system, perhaps the component of the initiative that has received the most interest, is in its final stages. According to the report, a contract has been awarded and a protocol is being developed for the distribution of funding to assist individual campuses in availing themselves of the contractor's services. The system will provide for broadcast e-mail, "reverse 911," and cellular phone text message notification on every campus statewide.

"While the emergency alerting component is certainly critical to the initiative, we need to do more," said Mike Abbiatti, Regents' Associate Commissioner for Information and Learning Technology, who presented today's update. "That's why this initiative is multi-faceted. The key to a successful 'culture of preparedness' is continuous human-to-human communication at all levels."

Efforts in personnel training, the second facet of the Postsecondary Education Physical Security Initiative, have also yielded significant results. So far, 75% of the police officers on public college campuses statewide have received training from the Louisiana State Police in "active shooter response."

Training for civilian campus personnel and students is also progressing well. To date, 42 Community/Campus Emergency Training (CERT) teams have been formed across the state to train faculty, staff and students in emergency response and, even more importantly, in "situational awareness," aimed at preventing emergencies by recognizing potential problems before they escalate.

The initiative has also made notable progress in the area of campus physical security assessment. An on-line campus safety self assessment template has been completed. Once the tool has been validated, individual campuses will be able to access the template and use it to guide actual physical security assessments on the ground.

In the area of physical security policy, Abbiatti reported that a two-phased approach, beginning with the on-line assessment tool and moving forward into campus-

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## More Louisiana Students Qualifying for Academic Competitiveness Grants

Louisiana college students are qualifying for the new federal Academic Competitiveness (AC) tuition grant at a higher rate than the national average.

First- and second-year college students who are receiving federal Pell need-based tuition grants *and* have completed an acceptably rigorous high school curriculum can qualify for the supplemental federal grant and receive an annual award of up to \$750 the first year and \$1,300 the second year.

"The success Louisiana college students are experiencing in qualifying for this excellent new program is clear evidence that we risk excluding many of our best and brightest when we don't make every effort to provide access to our moderate- and low-income students," said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie, who reported on the program at the joint meeting of the Board of Regents and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in December.

In Louisiana, 30% of first-time, full-time Pell recipients received the AC grant, compared to 25.6% nationally. Nearly nine percent of Louisiana's recent high school graduates received

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**The next Board of Regents meeting will be held January 23-24, 2008**



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Commissioner of  
Higher Education

## Board Action - December 5-6, 2007

### Program Approvals

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

#### Proposed Letters of Intent

Louisiana State University Health Science Center-Shreveport/Louisiana Tech University/Louisiana State University-Shreveport: Collaborative Ph.D. Program in Bioinformatics and Computational Biology

Louisiana State University - Shreveport: M.S. in Environmental Biology

Louisiana State University and A&M College: M.S. and Ph.D. in Coastal and Ecological Engineering

Louisiana Tech University: Graduate Certificate in Information Assurance

#### Proposed Academic Programs

Louisiana Tech University: Graduate Certificate in Information Assurance

Louisiana State University and A&M College: B.S. in Coastal Environmental Science

#### Proposed Academic/Research Units

Louisiana Tech University: Center for Information Assurance

Northwestern State University: Department of Criminal Justice

#### Progress Reports on Conditionally-Approved Programs/Research Units/Centers

Louisiana State University Health Science Center-New Orleans: Doctor of Audiology; Inflammatory Bowel Disease Center

Louisiana Tech University: Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness

Baton Rouge Community College: A.S. in Business  
Southern University-Baton Rouge: Master of Engineering

Louisiana Technical College - Ascension: A.A.S. in Process Technology

### High School Curriculum Changes Outlined

Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs Gerard Killebrew briefed the Board on upcoming changes to Louisiana's high school curriculum. Killebrew explained that the proposed curriculum, expected to be approved by BESE this week and effective for incoming high school freshmen in the fall of 2008, is more rigorous than the current core curriculum and will better prepare high school graduates for both postsecondary education and careers. Once BESE formally approves the "Core Four," staff will submit proposals to the Regents to realign the "Regents Core" for admissions criteria with the "Core Four" and eventually recommend revisions to the TOPS legislation to align the curricula.

### TOPS Continues To Accomplish Objectives

Acting Deputy Commissioner for Academic and Student Affairs Larry Tremblay reported to the Board that students who earn a TOPS scholarship are significantly more likely to stay in college and graduate sooner than their fellow students enrolled without TOPS. Moreover, data show that since the advent of TOPS, Louisiana high school students are increasingly more likely to take the more rigorous TOPS Core curriculum, which helps prepare them for career success even if they do not choose to attend college. The highlights were part of a recent TOPS report presented to the Legislature.

### 2008 Officers Selected

The Louisiana Board of Regents selected its slate of officers for 2008. Serving for the coming year will be Pat Strong, Chair; Artis Terrell, Vice Chair; and Robert Levy, Secretary.

Also selected were the new members of the Board of Regents Executive Committee: Pat Strong, Artis Terrell, Robert Levy, Scott Brame, W. Clinton Rasberry, Mary Ellen Roy, and Harold Stokes.

In addition, Pat Strong and Theresa Hay, Regents' Assistant Commissioner for Planning and Research, will serve as the 2008 Regents' representatives on the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission (LASFAC), and Richard D'Aquin will represent the Board on the Regents' Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission.

**For more information about these and other Board of Regents actions, please visit our web site at [www.regents.state.la.us](http://www.regents.state.la.us)**

## Safety Initiative (from page 1)

by-campus on-site assessments, will provide campuses with a toolkit that will help ensure the best possible safety and security for Louisiana's public colleges and universities. The legislative funding will assist campuses in prioritizing and strengthening areas in need of immediate and long-term attention.

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## Academic Competitiveness (from page 1)

an AC grant, compared to 5.3% nationally.

For Louisiana students, there are three ways to receive credit for the completion of a "rigorous" high school curriculum. Staff from the Board of Regents and Department of Education worked with the U.S. Department of Education to approve the following as Louisiana programs of study approved for the AC grants:

1. The TOPS/Regents High School Core Curriculum
2. The Academic Endorsement to the Standard Diploma
3. The Career and Technical Endorsements, for those students who have completed the TOPS/Regents High School Core Curriculum.

Notably, the success story is not limited to the AC grants alone. In the fall of 2006, 7,400 students enrolled in Louisiana colleges and universities qualified for a total of almost \$8 million in federal tuition assistance over and above the basic Pell grant, including the AC grant program and another new federal program called SMART (Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent). Under SMART, college students in their third and fourth year of study in an approved science or math degree program who are receiving Pell may qualify for a grant and receive an annual award up to \$4,000.

The Department of Education's Student Transcript System, developed in partnership with LOSFA and Regents, verifies a student's completion of the approved high school program of study providing for consistent and timely certification by colleges and universities' financial aid offices. Louisiana is one of a handful of states with this capability.

"With TOPS, the new Louisiana Go Grant, institutional aid, and the federal grant programs, low-income students who take the right high school curriculum can have their college expenses fully paid," Savoie said.

The U.S. Department of Education has set a goal to double the number of students receiving the Academic Competitiveness and SMART grants by 2010-11. The Department of Education is encouraging states, colleges, and high schools to promote AC and SMART Grants because completing a rigorous high school program has been shown to be the best way to increase college readiness, reduce remediation and increase college completion rates for low-income students.