

# Regents Recap

Highlights of the Official Actions of the Louisiana Board of Regents

March 25, 2004

## Regents Approve First Step Toward Optical Network Connectivity

The Board of Regents approved the first phase of a plan that would bring optical network connectivity to Louisiana's research universities. The approval commits up to 70% of the \$5 million necessary for Louisiana to become part of the National Lambda Rail (NLR), a nationwide optical fiber infrastructure that will make it possible for scientists at universities and corporations across the country to work collaboratively on computer-based research projects. As NLR is currently configured, the closest NLR connection node would be in Dallas. But Louisiana's commitment to NLR, in concert with a similar commitment by Texas, will help make it possible to bring a loop of the NLR through Houston to Baton Rouge and, ultimately, to Jacksonville, Florida, where the next-closest node of the currently-configured Lambda Rail would be.

The research capacity that will ultimately be realized through the NLR and optical network connectivity would put Louisiana universities in a position to access over one billion dollars in federal research grants from such sources as the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education and NASA.

"I don't think I can overstate the importance of Louisiana's developing the ability to access the Lambda Rail," said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie. "It's where technology and university research are going. The implications of this investment for our ability to participate in cutting-edge research that can significantly impact economic development are far reaching."

Dr. Jerry Draayer of the Southeastern Universities  
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## Student Preparation Level Up

Freshmen enrolled at Louisiana's public, four-year universities would be significantly more likely to qualify for admission to their current institutions under the impending Board of Regents four-year-university admission requirements than their counterparts in 1999.

The Board of Regents received a report comparing admissibility under the new requirements of the state's freshman class of 1999 (when the new requirements were first proposed) with those of the freshman class of 2003. The data show that while 32.7 % of the 1999 class would not have qualified for the institution in which they enrolled, less than 20% of the 2003 class would fail to meet the requirements. Moreover, when adjusted for the exceptions allowed in the new requirements the number is reduced to 8.3%.

"This report demonstrates that our efforts to educate students and parents about the importance of proper high school preparation - particularly in light of the new requirements - and the targeted marketing and recruitment efforts of our colleges and universities are

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## Program Updates

The Board of Regents today received satisfactory progress updates on the following conditionally-approved programs:

Southern University and A&M College - Master of Engineering

University of Louisiana at Lafayette - Master of Architecture

Louisiana State University and A&M College - B.A. in Women's and Gender Studies

The Board granted an additional one-year conditional approval to the LSU Law Center's Pugh Institute for Justice.



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**William Clifford Smith**  
**Artis Terrell, Jr.**  
**Adonis Ducre**  
Student Member

**E. Joseph Savoie**  
Commissioner of  
Higher Education

## Low Completer Programs To Be Reviewed

The Board approved a review of the need for 150 academic programs at public colleges and universities across the state due to low numbers of graduates or “completers” of the programs. This is the fourth such review since 1986. Institutions will now be required to show evidence of the need for the identified programs, which will be reviewed by the Board of Regents before final decisions are made.

“These reviews are necessary to ensure that we are delivering educational services to Louisiana’s students in the most cost-efficient manner possible,” said Commissioner Savoie. “We consider every issue and justification in arriving at our decisions, but the bottom line is that we can not afford to support non-productive programs.”

## Regents Approve Administrative Separation For LSUHSC Schools

The Regents approved a measure to administratively separate the schools of Graduate Studies and Allied Health at LSU Health Sciences Center - Shreveport from LSU Health Sciences Center - New Orleans. The Shreveport schools were originally established as branches of schools at LSU Health Sciences Center - New Orleans, but since that time have evolved into functionally-independent entities.

The administrative change will allow the two Shreveport schools to operate more efficiently under direct administration by the LSU Health Sciences Center - Shreveport. Both LSUHSC-Shreveport and LSUHSC-New Orleans were in favor of the change.

## Blue Ribbon Committee Members Added

The Board of Regents approved the placement of the following individuals on the Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence:

- Dr. Jeanne Daboval, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, McNeese State University
- Dr. Ivory Toldson, Dean of the College of Education, Southern University and A&M College
- Dr. Joe Aguillard, Dean of the College of Education, Louisiana College
- Dr. Frank Cartledge, College of Arts and Sciences, Louisiana State University

The Board also approved a recommendation that a representative for the Louisiana Community and Technical College System be added to the Blue Ribbon Commission. Sean E. Reilly, Louisiana Community and Technical College System Board of Supervisors, is being recommended to serve as the representative.

### Optical Network (continued from page 1)

Research Association (SURA), briefed the Technology Committee on the broader implications of Lambda Rail access for Louisiana and the Southeast. SURA, a cooperative of 62 universities in the Southeast that promotes collaboration in science and technology, is working with Texas and Louisiana to make sure that the Lambda Rail goes through South Texas, on through Louisiana, ultimately establishing a closed loop across the Southeast to Jacksonville. SURA has struck a deal with AT&T that would allow Texas, Louisiana and other states to use AT&T’s “dark fiber” (previously-installed optical fiber not yet in use) already in the ground through much of the region in question, for little or no cost.

Once a Lambda Rail access node is established in Baton Rouge, Phase II of the Louisiana Optical Network Initiative (LONI) would connect Louisiana’s research universities with the Lambda Rail. Among the Louisiana research institutions that expect to take advantage of Lambda Rail access and LONI are LSU, Louisiana Tech, Southern University, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Tulane, and the University of New Orleans. Experts estimate that LONI would allow computer research networking among universities at a speed 1000 times faster than current capacity.

The cost of Phase I will be paid from funds available through the Louisiana Educational Quality Trust Fund (LEQTF), sometimes referred to as the “8(g) fund,” created from a 1986 settlement Louisiana received as the result of a dispute over offshore oil revenues. The interest proceeds of the LEQTF are dedicated to improving educational quality at all levels in Louisiana.

### Student Preparation (continued from page 1)

having the desired effect,” said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie. “These numbers indicate that the change in enrollment dynamics in 2005 should be manageable. And as these better-prepared students become upperclassmen, retention and graduation rates will continue to improve as well.”

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