

# Regents Recap

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

October 31, 2005

## Governor Blanco, Bob Kerrey Highlight Education Forum

Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco and former U.S. senator and Nebraska governor Bob Kerrey highlighted the statewide “Rebuilding Louisiana Through Education” forum on October 27 in Baton Rouge. The forum examined how Louisiana’s education community can help move Louisiana forward in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

“We cannot let the floodwaters wash away the achievements we have already made,” said Governor Blanco to the educational leaders gathered at the forum. “Much has been said about the divisions between the haves and have-nots. Here in Louisiana we know that education is what will erase that divide.”

“This forum addresses two challenges,” said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie, who served as host for the forum. “We have to preserve the viability and stability of our schools, colleges, and universities, and we must decide how best to use the tremendous intellectual, human and physical assets represented today in this room to resurrect, rebuild and renew.”

Bob Kerrey, now president of The New School, a university in New York City, was the keynote speaker for the forum. Kerrey, who served on the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (also known as the 9-11 Commission), spoke from his experience as an educational leader whose campus was adversely impacted by the 9-11 attacks. Kerrey advised the leaders gathered at the forum to speak with one voice and to focus on the important role education will play in rebuilding Louisiana, but he also offered a word of caution:

“If you follow your own agendas you will lose,” Kerrey said, adding that people in this country like Louisiana and that the state should be careful not to seem too demanding of the federal government.

Since the day after Hurricane Katrina’s landfall, the Louisiana Board of Regents, the state’s coordinating board for higher education, has hosted regular meetings of the Louisiana Higher Education Response Team (LaHERT), composed of system presidents, university presidents/chancellors, campus representatives, and invited guests to address the many issues facing higher education as a result of the two hurricanes. More than 80,000 Louisiana public and private college students and 10,000 faculty and staff were displaced by the two storms. Last week’s “town-hall” style forum expanded the scope of participants to include education board members, campus administrators, legislators, faculty, school superintendents, and student leaders.

“The impact of the storms on postsecondary education in Louisiana has been both broad and deep. It’s estimated that Louisiana lost 30% of its tax base, putting a tremendous strain on our state and citizens,” Commissioner Savoie said. “Our goal, which was reinforced by this event, is to use the collective assets of the education community to help Louisiana emerge as a better place to live and work. Mr. Kerrey’s unique blend of experiences, stimulated an insightful discussion about how Louisiana’s schools, colleges and universities can play a leading role in rebuilding and revitalizing Louisiana.”

The event was hosted by the Louisiana Board of Regents, University of Louisiana System, Louisiana State University System, Southern University System, Louisiana Community and Technical College System, Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, Louisiana Department of Education and the Virtue Foundation, a charitable organization that supports education initiatives worldwide.



Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco welcomes former U.S. senator and 9-11 Commission member Bob Kerrey to the podium at the “Rebuilding Louisiana Through Education” forum on October 27.



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## Board Action - October 26-27, 2005

### Regents Adopt Measures To Aid Colleges and Universities in Disaster Recovery

The Board of Regents approved a range of measures aimed at helping Louisiana's public colleges and universities recover from the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The Board's actions complemented a long list of actions taken by Louisiana's postsecondary education community to ensure that the impact of the disasters on institutional viability and student access to postsecondary education are minimized. Among actions taken immediately following the storm, for example, was an agreement among postsecondary systems that allowed displaced students to re-enroll at other state institutions without having to pay additional tuition or mandatory fees. Steps were also taken to ensure that student financial aid was not put at risk as a result of displacement.

Among the hurricane-related Board actions this week was the official establishment of the Post Katrina/Rita Research (and Related Infrastructure) Task Force. The Task Force, which has been functioning informally since shortly after Hurricane Katrina, will advise the Board of Regents on recovery policy decisions related to research in the so-called "STEM" disciplines (*science, technology, engineering and mathematics*).

"A significant portion of our research capacity, and with it, our capacity to attract federal research dollars, has been severely impaired as a result of the hurricanes," said Commissioner Savoie. "Rebuilding our research strength in the critical STEM disciplines is indispensable to our state's educational and, indeed, to our overall economic recovery. The Board has decided that a single statewide, coordinated approach is essential to getting our universities back on track."

Other recovery-related measures taken at the Board meeting included approval of an extension for final approval of redesigned K-12 and graduate programs in education, postponement in the development of the 2006-2013 Board of Regents Support Fund (BoRSF) Strategic Plan, and extensions in BoRSF deadlines and regulations for the FY 2005-06 project proposal cycle. The Board also adopted a series of recommendations aimed at accommodating proprietary schools affected by Katrina in the license renewal process.

### Program Approvals

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

#### Proposed New Academic Programs:

Northwestern State University - B.A. in Heritage Resources

University of New Orleans - B.S. in Earth and Environmental Sciences

#### Requests for Continued Approval of Research Units:

Louisiana State University Agricultural Center - Center for Natural Resources Economics & Policy

Louisiana Tech University - Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness

#### Progress Reports on Conditionally Approved Programs/Centers

Nicholls State University - M.S. in Community and Technical College Mathematics; M.S. in Marine and Environmental Biology; B.S. in Geomatics; and B.S. in Manufacturing Engineering Technology

Southern University Baton Rouge - B.S. in E-Business

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

Fletcher Technical Community College - A.A.S. in Technical Studies and A.A.S. in Nautical Science.

### Fall 2005 Preliminary Headcount Report Incomplete

The Board received a preliminary Fall 2005 headcount enrollment report. It was explained that due to hurricane Katrina a number of campuses did not reach the 14<sup>th</sup> class day and therefore were not represented in the report. Of those campuses reporting, with a continuing decline in high school graduates and implementation of admissions criteria, first-time freshman enrollment at 4-year campuses declined slightly as expected, while 2-year campuses continued to expand.

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