



February 16, 2017

Dear Legislators:

On behalf of the Student Government Association Presidents of Louisiana's colleges and universities, who represent more than 215,000 college students across the state, we want to express our concern about the constant cuts towards higher education.

Over the last nine years, state funding for Louisiana's colleges and universities has been cut more than any other state in the nation. Tuition and fees have also increased by 111 percent during the same period. The impacts of continued cuts are felt on our campuses every day with fewer classes offered, larger class sizes, and a reduction of services that are vital to our academic success.

Including TOPS, higher education has been cut by more than 100 million dollars in the last eight months alone. Not only are we paying higher tuition costs, but this semester, the state broke its promise to more than 49,000 TOPS students by not honoring the scholarships we have earned. That broken promise shifted another 80 million dollars in costs to students.

In the past, the state of Louisiana funded 70 percent of the cost of higher education, with tuition accounting for 30 percent, but now those percentages have flipped, increasing the burden on students. Many families cannot bear the burden of another budget cut and we urge our lawmakers to honor that.

Higher education is an investment into our future. We hope our state's leaders will focus on identifying a long-term source of sustainable funding that will end the state's practice of repeated cuts to higher education.

Sincerely,

Council of Student Body Presidents

Zachary Faircloth, Louisiana State University and A & M College, Jesse Elliott, Louisiana State University at Alexandria, Heidi Pitre, Louisiana State University at Eunice, Dennis Henderson, Louisiana State University at Shreveport, Matt Chappellie, Louisiana State University Health Science Center at Shreveport, David Polhemus, Louisiana State University Health Science Center at New Orleans | Zana Harris, Southern University and A & M College, Jordan Franklin, Southern University Law Center, Louis Blackmon, Southern University at New Orleans, Jerney Smothers, Southern University at Shreveport | Michael Meadows, Grambling State University, Mackenzie Potts, Louisiana Tech University, Caleb Prince, McNeese State University, Tommy Thibodeaux, Nicholls State University, John Pearce, Northwestern State University, Erin Fernandez, Southeastern Louisiana University, Wil Perkins, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Kaitlin Neal, University of Louisiana at Monroe, Antonio Torres, University of New Orleans | Jennifer Burgess, Baton Rouge Community College, Erica Lawson, Bossier Parish Community College, Emily Boston, Central Louisiana Technical Community College, Kendrica Garner, Delgado Community College, Sommer Brown, Fletcher Technical Community College, Benson Kinney, Louisiana Delta Community College, Brandyn Baham, Northshore Technical Community College, Tyler Johnson, Northwest Louisiana Technical College, Jacob Bianchini, Nunez Community College, Kelsee Moran, River Parishes Community College, Brooksie Peltier, South Central Louisiana Technical College, Serena Stoddard, South Louisiana Community College, Jaris Hollier, SOWELA Technical Community College