

Regents Recap

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

April 30, 2005

Regents Approve College Tuition and Fee Policy

The Board of Regents approved the *Louisiana Postsecondary Education Tuition and Fee Policy* at its April 28 meeting. The Regents were charged with formulating a comprehensive statewide tuition and fee policy by Act 1105 of the 2003 Regular Legislative Session. House Bill No. 619, if approved by a two-thirds majority during the current legislative session, would put the policy into effect beginning in 2006.

Act 1105 was enacted in 2003 in acknowledgment of Louisiana's need to streamline and standardize tuition and fee structures at public colleges and universities statewide. Formulating and implementing such a policy was facilitated by the creation of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, which provided statewide access to colleges with lower tuition.

In developing the policy, the Board was instructed to consider the cost of education provided by each institution, the proportion of such costs typically paid by students, the economic status of Louisiana's citizens, the overall rates of increase in public postsecondary education costs and tuition, and the status of existing tuition and fees relative to peer states.

"The details of tuition setting have become entirely too cumbersome for the Legislature to be expected to deal with every year. In fact, Louisiana is one of only two states where the primary authority for setting tuition still rests with the Legislature," said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie. "Our guiding principles in developing this policy were to maintain affordable resident undergraduate tuition, provide students and families with predictable tuition costs, provide institutions with adequate tuition revenue, and achieve similar tuition rates for similar types of schools."

Savoie said other issues were taken into account as well in developing the policy, including the state's lack of a significant need-based financial aid program and the fact that any increase in tuition translates into an increase in TOPS funding.

Regents student Board member Jeraul Mackey, speaking on behalf of the statewide Council of Student Body

Presidents (COSBP), thanked Commissioner Savoie for involving students in the development of the policy.

"Student leaders from every institution in the state were invited to provide feedback," Mackey said. "In fact, we've met with Regents staff three times in the past month to review revisions to the document."

The new policy includes the following general provisions, among others:

- Tuition and fees will be set by system management boards in accordance with the parameters of the policy.

- Tuition and fees will be limited to projections based on rates in the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) states by institution category and [in the case of LSU A&M] flagship peer rates.

- Tuition and fee increases will be phased in over a period of six years.

- An investment from operating budgets equal to 5% of revenue realized from tuition increases in a need-based aid fund will be required.

The policy provides for the following specific tuition and fee rates, by institution type:

- Louisiana Technical College (LTC): Resident tuition and fees limited to no more than 93% of the projected SREB median rate for technical colleges.

- Two-year colleges: Resident tuition and fees (including technical community colleges) are limited to no more than the projected SREB median for two-year institutions.

- Four-year universities (undergraduate): Tuition and fee rates are limited to no more than 93% of the projected SREB median rate by institution category.

- Flagship (LSU - Baton Rouge): Tuition and fee rates are limited to no more than 93% of the average national flagship university rate as reflected by the Washington State Tuition and Fee Report, issued annually by the Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Representatives from each of the four management board systems (LSU, Southern, University of Louisiana, and the Louisiana Community and Technical College System) expressed support for the policy.



Roland M. Toups
Chair

Frances T. Henry
Vice Chair

Pat A. Strong
Secretary

William "Billy" Blake
Scott O. Brame
Richard E. D'Aquin
Reggie Dupré
Stanley J. Jacobs
Ingrid T. Labat
Robert W. Levy

W. Clinton Rasberry, Jr.
Virgil Robinson, Jr.
William Clifford Smith
Harold M. Stokes
Artis Terrell, Jr.
Jeraul Mackey
Student Member

E. Joseph Savoie
Commissioner of
Higher Education

Board Action - April 23-24, 2005

Regents Approve 2004-05 LEQSF Awards

The Board of Regents awarded more than \$26 million from the Louisiana Educational Quality Support Fund (LEQSF) to colleges and universities statewide to fund a variety of valuable educational and research programs for FY 2004-05.

“The Educational Quality Support Fund has had a dynamic impact on the quality of Louisiana’s colleges and universities,” said Commissioner of Higher Education Joe Savoie. “The fund supplies our colleges and universities with investments targeted at quality-critical areas such as faculty development, scientific equipment acquisition, and graduate student recruitment. The fund’s implications for Louisiana’s long-term economic development are very significant.”

The program is funded through a permanent trust fund approved by voters in a 1986 constitutional amendment. The original \$540 million payment was part of a settlement between the state and federal governments over disputed off-shore oil and gas royalties (“8(g) fund”). By 2004, the trust fund had risen to nearly one billion dollars. Twenty-five percent of the earnings from the fund each year is reinvested in the fund. The Legislature appropriates half of the remaining interest earnings to the Board of Regents for higher education and the other half to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for grades K-12.

The Board of Regents component of the fund is known as the Board of Regents Support Fund (BoRSF). The Louisiana Constitution provides that the Board of Regents may use the fund to support any or all of the following programs: 1) carefully defined research efforts, 2) endowment of chairs for eminent scholars, 3) enhancement of the quality of academic research or agricultural departments or units; and 4) recruitment of superior graduate students.

The Board’s approval establishes the following award distribution:

- Endowment of Chairs for Eminent Scholars - Total funding: \$3,400,000

- Research and Development - Total funding: \$6,000,000+ (\$2,964,350 in first-year funds)

- Enhancement of the Quality of Departments/Units - \$14,000,000+ (\$11,053,561 in first-year funds)

Also under this category is funding for **Endowed Professorships**, which will be awarded at a later date.

- Recruitment of Superior Graduate Students - Total funding \$3,377,000

Governor Applauds Student Achievement Results

Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco was among those present at the April Board of Regents meeting to receive some very positive news regarding the latest results of Louisiana’s Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS). EPAS, developed by the ACT testing service, is a Regents-funded, statewide initiative designed to assist middle- and high-school students in preparing for college and careers. The EPAS “EXPLORE” assessment is given to eighth graders, and the “PLAN” assessment is given to tenth graders. This year’s results show that the performance of Louisiana 10th graders is now at the national average and at an all-time high for the state. Moreover, Louisiana’s score improvement for 10th graders who took the PLAN assessment in 2004 after having taken EXPLORE in 2002 was 33% greater than the national average.

“This composite growth for the 2002 cohort is very exciting,” said ACT Assistant Vice President Carolyn Kostecky, who made the presentation to the Board. “And even more exciting is the achievement growth among African American students, a group that has historically often been left behind.”

Kostecky went on to say that by any standard of college readiness, the percentage of Louisiana PLAN and ACT students reaching the standard is increasing. She also pointed out that the relative performance of Louisiana students is probably even better than the numbers indicate because ACT’s national EPAS norms include both public school and private school students, while Louisiana’s results are only for public school students.

“This progress is cause for great optimism, particularly when considered alongside Louisiana’s significant overall improvement in ACT scores. It shows that our accountability system is working,” said Governor Blanco. “These results show that if they are properly taught and given the instruction

(continued on page 3)

Board Action - April 23-24, 2005 (continued)

CABL Thanks Regents, Governor For Initiatives

Barry Erwin, President of the Council for a Better Louisiana (CABL), appeared before the Board to thank the Regents for their efforts in addressing the state's workforce and adult learning issues. Erwin also used the opportunity to express CABL's appreciation for the strong initiatives sponsored by the Governor's office in the areas of poverty, health care, high school redesign, adult literacy, and workforce competitiveness.

Meeting Notes

The Board voted unanimously to adopt a report on the response to Senate Current Resolution No. 138 of 2004, endorsing the establishment of the LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport as a separate institution.

Dr. Jimmy Clarke reported that the Noel-Levitz request for proposals (RFP) is complete. There is a total of nearly \$1.5 million available in Enrollment Management Capital Grant funds to support campus enrollment management initiatives.

The Board voted unanimously approved the allocation of \$34,000 from the balance of the Community and Technical College Pool funds for a comprehensive needs assessment for the Jefferson West Learning Center.

The Board voted unanimously to support a request by the University of Louisiana System and the University of Louisiana at Monroe to secure additional state resources for the School of Pharmacy.

Governor Applauds Achievement (from page 2)

they need, our public school students can compete with the rest of the nation. This also shows that our high school redesign efforts are right on target and will sustain this growth."

"This very significant progress is a direct result of the efforts of Louisiana's middle and high-school teachers across the state, who are working in partnership with our colleges and universities to ensure that Louisiana's high school students are academically prepared for life after graduation," said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie.

The report did, however, indicate that there are still areas that require attention. The performance of eighth graders on EXPLORE in 2004 was down slightly compared to previous assessments, indicating a need to emphasize college readiness even earlier than middle school. Also, many students who say they plan to go to college are not enrolled in the proper college preparatory courses to be on track to qualify for a Louisiana four-year university.

According to the presentation, students in the class of 2004 who completed the Regents' Core received an average ACT composite score more than three points higher than those who did not take the Core. As of Fall 2005, all entering freshmen at most of Louisiana's public, four-year universities, among other minimum requirements, must have successfully completed the Regents' Core high school curriculum.

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