



Regents Recap

FEBRUARY 16, 2009

Higher Education Focuses on Goals, Fiscal Accountability & Efficiency

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BATON ROUGE, La. – The Board of Regents today received information on key indicators needed to drive higher education efficiency and effectiveness and establish a collaborative team to focus immediately on this work.

Regents members along with all four system presidents discussed national trends in higher education spending and how Louisiana can become more efficient in its use of limited state dollars. Led by Jane Wellman, Executive Director of The Delta Project the board was challenged to focus on five key points -- where the money for higher education comes from, where the money goes, what that money generally buys, the relationship between spending and tuition, and the outcomes.

Wellman indicated that she believes that when it comes to higher education funding in Louisiana and across the nation the dip in public funding “will not be small or short lived.” Given this fiscal reality, she suggested that the primary source of money for institutions will require a reallocation of existing budget sources.

Wellman pointed to three major areas to focus that reallocation, including:

- Turnover/Retirement of Faculty
- Efficiency/Savings in administration and support areas such as consolidating duplicative programs, reducing energy costs, and slowing growth in employee insurance costs, and
- Increasing educational productivity by improving the efficiency of teaching/learning while increasing the educational attainment of students. Examples include distance education, creation of 3-year baccalaureate degrees and elimination of the attainment gap.

Wellman emphasized that the board’s focus should be on public accountability, oversight, and advocacy. To do this, the board will have to answer the public’s questions about where higher education spends its dollars.

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Goals, Accountability & Efficiency Cont.



From Left: Jane Wellman, Delta Project; Ralph Slaughter, Southern System President; Randy Moffett, University of Louisiana System President; Joe May, LCTCS President; John Lombardi, LSU System President

“We’re not going to have the kind of country we want if we have continued disinvestment in higher education,” said Wellman. “We have to continue to persuade the legislature and the public that this is a prudent investment of resources.”

“The point of this exercise is to ensure that we know where our money is being spent,” Commissioner of Higher Education Sally Clausen said. “We want to focus more resources on students. Now let’s ensure our spending patterns are getting us there.”

Commissioner Clausen says this strategic capacity to reinvest will be a critical step in attaining the goals outlined in the 2009 Plan for Public Postsecondary Education which was presented in draft form earlier in the day.

The plan, which includes benchmarks for accountability, focuses on two goals:

- Increase the educational attainment of the state’s population and produce an additional 10,000 graduates by 2015
- Invest strategically in university research

In response to the presentation by Wellman, board members agreed to form a special committee to identify and promote best practices for efficient and effective resource use which will then provide the data needed to make informed budgetary decision and to ensure public accountability.

This special committee will include representatives from all four systems as well as members of the board and will provide a progress report to the Board of Regents this Spring followed by a full report.

“This is an opportunity to fundamentally change the way we do business,” said Board of Regents Chairman Artis Terrell. “Today’s dialogue demonstrates our willingness to analyze where the public’s dollars are spent and determine how best to maximize our efficiencies during this time of retrenchment.”

Board of Regents Upcoming Meetings

March 25-26

April 22-23

May 21 (Joint Regents/BESE)

May 27-28