



Regents Recap

FEBRUARY 23-24, 2011

Jim Purcell Named Commissioner of Higher Education

Board of Regents

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BATON ROUGE, La – The Board of Regents unanimously appointed Dr. Jim Purcell as Louisiana's 7th Commissioner of Higher Education today. Dr. Purcell has been the Director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education since 2008 and says he is anxious to lead Louisiana through a transformational period in the history of postsecondary education.

In addition to his time in Arkansas, Purcell also brings experience as Associate Vice President for Strategic Planning for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. During his tenure in both states, Purcell worked extensively on issues including the creation and implementation of performance-based funding, the seamless transfer of credits among colleges and universities, and strategies for improving educational attainment. Purcell previously resided in Baton Rouge, working for Our Lady of the Lake College as Director of Planning and Assessment from 1994-98 and says the commitment to improve the quality of life offered by our state is just one of the many reasons he applied for the position.

Dr. Purcell holds a BS in Public Administration from Auburn University, an M.Ed. in Counseling from the University of Montevallo and an Ed.D. in Higher Education Administration from the University of Alabama. Much of his background focuses on improving institutional effectiveness and includes extensive experience in student placement, academic program reviews, academic program development, program entrance requirements, course evaluations, grade distributions and student retention and graduation rates. Additionally, he has experience working in 2-year, 4-year, public and private colleges and universities in five states.

Regent Chairman Bob Levy will negotiate the details of Purcell's letter of appointment in the coming days. Act 648 of 2010 Legislative Session requires a 2/3 vote of the total membership of the Board of Regents to hire a Commissioner, subject to confirmation by the Senate. Last week, the Board of Regents received approval from the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget on compensation package not to exceed \$275,000 to be negotiated with the Commissioner.

Currently residing in Little Rock, Arkansas, Dr. Purcell and his wife Sandra have an 18-year-old daughter who attends the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Regents Highlights

The Board of Regents approved the reauthorization of the following previously approved research units:

- Grambling State University-Center for Mathematical Achievement in Science and Technology

The Board of Regents approved the creation of the following Academic Programs through consolidation of 3 Masters and 2 Ph.D.'s:

- LSU A&M-M.S. & Ph.D. degrees in School of Renewable Natural Resources

The Board of Regents granted conditional approval for the following New Academic Program:

- Bossier Parish Community College-Associate of Science in Engineering

The Board of Regents accepted three Letters of Intent and granted conditional approval for the development of a plan for collaborative delivery for the following New Academic Program:

- Doctor of Nurse Practice (DNP)

The Board of Regents approved the following license renewal:

- Southern Arkansas University

The Board of Regents approved an amendment to the GRAD Act agreements allowing for future technical changes to the agreement without a signed amendment.

The Board of Regents approved responses to the following Legislative Resolutions:

- Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 60
- Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 108
- House Concurrent Resolution No. 212
- House Resolution No. 204
- House Resolution No. 197
- House Resolution No. 200

The Board of Regents agreed to work with a broad array of stakeholders to develop a statewide educational attainment goal for review at its September meeting.

UPCOMING REGENTS MEETINGS:

March 23-24

April 27-28

Joint Regents/BESE

May 17



The Board of Regents recognized and thanked Tom Layzell for his service during the past seven months. Layzell has consulted with the board on a number of important issues including the GRAD Act, the Performance Based Funding Formula and the search for a new Commissioner of Higher Education. Layzell's last day with Regents will be February 28th.

Board Adopts Leadership Agenda

The Board of Regents believes that high-quality postsecondary education is necessary to improve both the social and economic environment in which Louisiana citizens live. Yet, by any standards, our educational attainment is critically low when compared to our sister states. Low educational attainment endangers Louisiana's ability to remain competitive and relevant in a knowledge-based, global economy. Simultaneously, we are faced with a substantial budget challenge that forces a comprehensive review of all state services through a lens of efficiency and effectiveness. To accomplish our goals we must focus on a list of priorities as our agenda. In that spirit, Regents shall (in no particular order):

- **Advance a performance-based funding formula for higher education that aligns with the GRAD Act and drives continued improvement in education outcomes and meeting the workforce needs of the state.**
- **Complete a thorough review of all academic programs and eliminate, as appropriate, programs that are low-performing and duplicative.**
- **Develop and support autonomies that allow colleges and universities to manage their costs and demonstrate reductions in administrative overhead while at the same time, striking a reasonable balance between state and student support.**
- **Deliver services more efficiently by streamlining current business models and encouraging creative partnerships among institutions and systems.**
- **Support a flagship institution for Louisiana that is nationally competitive.**
- **Encourage our statewide universities to engage in targeted, innovative research.**
- **Assist our four-year regional universities in not only providing excellent general education, but also identifying a limited range of high-quality undergraduate degree programs in which to specialize.**
- **Enhance our developing community and technical college system so that it meets the workforce needs identified by Louisiana's employers at both the state and regional levels.**
- **Create a more balanced enrollment mix between two-year and four-year institutions through a.) increases in the minimum admissions standards as scheduled in 2012; and b.) expansion of articulation agreements such as the Statewide Transfer Degree that allows students seamless access to the full menu of postsecondary offerings.**
- **Prioritize affordability so that appropriate financial aid measures can be provided for students to continue to promote their access to postsecondary education.**
- **Encourage distance learning and virtual education to maximize program offerings to students while reducing costs.**
- **Demonstrate improvement in student learning outcomes through measurable data and reporting that can be shared publicly and used to drive the decision making process.**