

**RESPONSE TO SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 61,
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 88,
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 182,
SENATE RESOLUTION 98,
AND SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 73
OF THE 2011 REGULAR SESSION
OF THE LOUISIANA LEGISLATURE**

LOUISIANA BOARD OF REGENTS



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Assessment of the Technical and Two-Year Postsecondary Education Needs In Selected Regions of Louisiana

*Responses to Study Resolutions Offered by Members of the
Louisiana State Legislature, Regular Session 2011,
Numbers SCR 61, SCR 88, HCR 182, SR 98 and SCR 73*

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INTRODUCTION

Louisiana needs to continue to build a workforce that is increasingly productive, skilled, and credentialed. Employers are demanding that type of workforce to keep up with advanced technologies and grow. Moreover, an appropriately educated, credentialed workforce sends a strong message to existing companies and potential new companies that the state can meet their needs if they want to expand or locate here. Rising educational attainment is the surest way for the state to increase income and give people pathways out of poverty and into the middle class.

This report recommends ways for five regions in Louisiana to organize and deliver two-year education to meet the growing credential needs of the state's companies, its economy, and its people. It is a response to five study resolutions filed in the state of Louisiana's regular legislative session in 2011. These resolutions urge the Board of Regents and Board of Supervisors of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System to meet the two-year college needs of each region by studying the feasibility of:

- Improving the coordination or integration of operations among two-year postsecondary institutions serving the region through formal agreements;
- Realigning campuses or programs between and among two-year postsecondary institutions to better meet the workforce needs of the region;
- Expanding the mission of an existing two-year postsecondary institution or developing a new institution; and/or
- Merging existing two-year postsecondary institutions.

The regions under study are the Northeast (SCR 61), North Central (SCR 88), Greater Natchitoches (HCR 182), Greater Lafayette (SR 98), and South Central (SCR 73) regions of Louisiana.

The report is a compilation of industry and labor market analysis, extensive qualitative research gathered through interviews and focus groups in the regions,¹ and review of secondary research and reports on the economic, workforce and higher education systems in Louisiana. It contains an introduction, a set of guiding principles, and five reports customized with analysis and recommendations for each study resolution covering the five regions.

¹ In all, FutureWorks interviewed and met with more than 160 people during five site visits, one visit to each region. See Appendix A for a table of these interviews.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

There is little doubt that the advanced, technological nature of the workplace in the state's key industries is increasing. In fact, from the point of view of employers interviewed for this project, the adoption of new technologies and movement to an increasingly complex, advanced workplace have already occurred in most companies. In agriculture, for example, the rise of large-scale commercial farms – what some refer to as “precision farming” – has led to increased knowledge requirements for workers and reduced the number of unskilled laborers needed. The same is true of the oil and gas industry and in health care. In these industries a growing reliance on information technology and technical specialties has increased the requirements for workers with technology-based skills and credentials. Manufacturers say the same kind of shift has occurred in their industry. They now rely on more advanced technologies, new work processes, and new kinds of work organization to make their products. All of these changes, employers say, require more advanced technical skill in their workforce and more technical and advanced postsecondary credentials that clearly signal gains in worker knowledge and validate skill competency.

Research into the growing demand for Louisiana jobs requiring postsecondary credentials confirms this. A recent report by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce projects that by 2018 51 percent of the state's jobs will require some type of postsecondary credential; either a technical certificate, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree.² That means by 2018 Louisiana's economy will grow by 65,000 new jobs requiring a postsecondary credential and the state will need to refill another 251,000 job vacancies, due to retirements and churning, requiring a postsecondary credential. Right now, 27 percent of Louisiana's nearly 2.3 million working-age adults (25-64 years old) hold at least a two-year degree.³ The state's educational system needs to almost double that share to meet industry's demand for credentialed workers by 2018.

Increased postsecondary credentialing is not only good for Louisiana companies and the state's economy; it is also one of the surest ways to raise incomes for all residents of the state. That is, getting a vocational certificate, a two-year associate's degree, or a bachelor's degree can open the door to “middle skill” jobs that typically pay better than jobs requiring only a high school degree. Of course, jobs that require lower skill levels or only a high school degree do exist in the state. But Louisianians who hold these jobs, like most Americans, are more likely to slip out of the middle class if there is a layoff or other interruption in their job. Data show that residents who gain some level of postsecondary credential earn more salary than their counterparts who do not. Having earned a postsecondary technical credential (*e.g.*, technical certificate) adds nearly one-quarter of a million dollars to an individual's lifetime earnings when compared to the earnings of someone with no more than a high school degree. An associate's degree bumps up

² Carnevale, Anthony P., Smith, Nicole and Strohl, Jeff. *Help Wanted Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018*, The Georgetown Center on Education and the Economy, 2010.

³ *A stronger nation through higher education*, Lumina Foundation, February 2009. U.S. Census, 2008.

the difference in lifetime earnings to almost one-half million dollars and a bachelor's degree increases the earning advantage to nearly one million dollars.⁴

In short, Louisiana's companies, its economy, and its people will thrive and prosper by finding ways to increase the numbers of technical and two-year postsecondary credentials in the state. Educators, business people, economic developers, civic leaders, and especially legislators we met in each of the study regions underscored this expectation.

These interviews underscored the importance of finding the best way to align and deliver workforce, technical, and two-year postsecondary education so that economic development and worker needs in each region could be met. From analysis of the interviews and other data presented in the report, there have emerged six most important principles to guide implementation of the recommendations across the five regions. These principles are as follows:

1. ***The technical content and workplace relevance of workforce and technical education should be strengthened continually to meet the needs of a changing economy.*** Right now it appears that the strongest elements of the workforce and technical education programs in the five regions are concentrated in just a few industry and occupational areas. The opportunity to realign two-year postsecondary education should not diminish the strength of these current programs, but should be seen as an opportunity to update, broaden, and diversify high-quality workforce and technical education offerings to meet newly emerging needs in each region. That means creating technical certificates and degree programs that are better aligned with a diversifying economy and new industries. In turn, that will create better access for individuals and workers who need easy entry points into the postsecondary system and jobs.
2. ***Each region should build a more robust range of student support services, educational programs, and educational delivery strategies designed specifically to reach and support lower-income individuals.*** Civic leaders and legislators focused on the need to help low-income people get into the postsecondary education pipeline and enter jobs that exist in the region. Most low-income individuals will not be traditional full-time students and are often the least likely to complete a degree. Each region needs to develop deeper outreach, different forms of student engagement, and quicker completion strategies for low-income working adults as part of its transition, merger, and realignment plans. At present, those services, programs, and strategies are in short supply in most regions.
3. ***Articulation between workforce, technical, two-year, and four-year credentialing should be seamless and transparent.*** Our interviews repeatedly indicated the need for better articulation between workforce, technical, and two- and four-year programs and institutions. Employers want educational services that have transparency and simplicity and want previous training to "count" if their workers go back to school or continue to add to their training credentials. Civic leadership wants articulation across institutions so residents can leverage and articulate their credentials to build careers. Economic developers see this as an important way to increase educational attainment and support

⁴ Carnevale, Anthony P., Rose, Stephen J. and Cheah, Ban. *The College Payoff*, The Georgetown Center on Education and the Economy, 2011.

economic development goals. No one wants dead-end credentials. Education institutions in the regions need to create seamless degree pathways.

4. ***There needs to be a strong focus on performance, impact and outcomes that tie to each region's recommendations.*** The study resolutions are a healthy public statement of deepening interest in realigning institutions to achieve more effective educational services in Louisiana. However, these resolutions focus more on organization and less on content or outcomes. Our review of outcomes data for both the technical and community colleges suggests an equally important need to focus on the quantity and quality of outcomes produced by the technical and two-year system in each region. Statewide policies put in place, such as the LA GRAD Act and new admission criteria and standards, have already started down that path. A guiding question that should frame the implementation of the recommendations in each region should be: how will the organizational change suggested in the study resolution result in improved performance metrics and quality outcomes for the student and employer?
5. ***Implementation of the recommendations should be carefully phased within a two to five-year timeframe.*** If each study resolution is carried toward implementation by legislative action all at once, the resulting organizational changes may strain capacity at the state level to oversee and promote efficient and effective change. It seems reasonable to place these resolutions – should they become implemented in legislation – in a timeframe or schedule that would help insure deliberate change with clear objectives. In those regions where institutional mergers are already underway, we recommend an accelerated time frame for implementation. On the other hand, we recognize other regions with less preparatory work completed must begin implementation through a carefully staged and transparent planning process that results in clear objectives, well-understood action steps, and identified benchmarks toward implementation.
6. ***The LCTCS Board should consider a senior position responsible for sustaining and improving technical and occupational education across the technical and two-year college system.*** Given the implications of analyses presented below, we see advantage in creating a position within the LCTCS to advocate for technical and occupational education and carry out work aimed at the following outcomes:
 - Clarifying the mission of technical education's role within postsecondary education;
 - Fully engaging industry/employers in strategic guidance for technical education and provider institutions;
 - Creating a consistent statewide marketing plan and effort to promote technical education;
 - Developing appropriate performance metrics for technical education programs; and
 - Establishing a strong focus on program quality and degree/credential completion in technical and occupational education throughout the LCTCS system.

GREATER NORTHEAST AREA, SCR 61

Introduction

Senate Concurrent Resolution 61, 2011, sponsored by Senators Thompson, Kostelka, Riser and Walsworth, asked the Board of Regents to gather information and conduct a study on “the two year-college services offered to the greater northeast Louisiana area and to determine how the state can best meet the educational needs of students and the economic and workforce development needs of this region of the state.” Responsibilities included study of “the need and feasibility of creating a new institution of postsecondary education or merging institutions” in the Greater Northeast Louisiana area.

The Board of Regents hired FutureWorks to conduct an analysis that would address the directives of the study resolution and provide an assessment of how the region’s educational needs could best be met. To that end, FutureWorks gathered available information on the structure of the greater northeast area’s demographics, including the characteristics of its population, workforce, and educational attainment; its industry and occupational makeup; and its postsecondary resources and services. As a supplement to the data, FutureWorks completed a series of in-person interviews with key legislators, employers, economic developers, educators, and civic leaders of the region. These interviews took place in Monroe at Louisiana Delta Community College. (See Appendix A for table of interviews.)

Following the analysis of these data are recommendations to strengthen the provision of two-year college services in the greater northeast area.

Demographics

The Board of Regents and LCTCS define the northeast region of Louisiana as composed of twelve parishes: Caldwell, East Carroll, Franklin, Jackson, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, Union and West Carroll.⁵ Seven of the parishes border the states of Arkansas and Mississippi and are largely rural. The others have a mix of small towns and small-sized cities. Ouachita is the outlier in the group – the only parish with a population greater than 150,000.

Those parishes that border the state of Mississippi generally have high rates of poverty and sparse population. These parishes also have low household incomes and relatively low levels of educational attainment (some of the lowest in the state). The other parishes have a larger population but low household incomes and relatively high rates of poverty. They generally have higher rates of poverty than the state mean rate; most show lower overall educational attainment rates than state averages. (See table on next page.)

⁵ The Regional Labor Market Area, Region 8 includes 11 parishes. The LCTCS educational region includes these parishes plus Lincoln Parish.

Demographic Characteristics of the Greater Northeast Area, by Parish							
Parish	Population	Percent in Labor Force	Median Household Income	Unemployment Rate, 2010	Poverty Rate	Percent with Assoc. Degree	Percent with Bachelor Degree +
Louisiana		61.1	42,167	7.5	18.4	4.6	20.6
Caldwell	10,400	53.4	35,345	9.8	21.2	3.9	12.6
East Carroll	8,265	45.9	23,186	15.2	44.3	2.2	9.0
Franklin	19,996	53.6	30,031	11.2	26.1	2.8	10.5
Jackson	15,111	58.3	35,359	7.3	17.3	3.3	13.5
Lincoln	42,801	57.0	35,111	8.3	26.1	4.7	31.2
Madison	11,790	49.7	24,485	10.6	37.1	2.9	11.4
Morehouse	28,761	52.6	28,909	14.2	25.9	4.3	11.3
Ouachita	150,025	61.8	37,928	7.7	20.8	4.2	23.9
Richland	20,415	55.7	31,557	10.1	23.1	2.9	12.2
Tensas	5,798	52.5	24,456	15.1	35.6	3.5	11.0
Union	22,712	56.6	35,269	8.6	20.8	4.7	14.7
West Carroll	11,520	48.3	38,038	16.1	19.9	2.4	9.4

Sources: US Bureau of the Census, 2010; American Community Survey, 2005-2009; LA Works; USDA 2009-2011; labor force data are for population 16 years or older; educational attainment are for population 25 years or older.

Industry and Occupations

In general, the region’s parishes have relatively high concentrations of their workforce in agriculture, construction, and manufacturing. Almost one-third of all workers are concentrated in these industries for many parishes, roughly 10 percentage points higher than statewide average of 21.7 percent. Similarly, in related occupational areas, the region has as much as 38.5 percent of its residents employed in related occupational areas (agriculture, construction, and production) and nine of the 12 parishes have higher proportions than the state of the workforce in these occupations. The parishes in the region also generally have higher percentages of employment than the state in educational services, healthcare, and social assistance. Conversely, the region has lower proportions of the workforce employed in professional services and finance. (See table on next page.)

Our interviewees mainly described the workforce in the region as ‘blue collar’ with concentration in the trades. They also described a region heavily dependent on manufacturing, construction, and agricultural industries and occupations. But there are changes going on within these trades and occupations. Chief among them are more advanced technologies, new process applications, and new skills required in traditional industries. In agriculture, for example, increases in the scale of farming and companies focusing on value-added processing have led to increased use of technology and data-driven operations. The same is true in manufacturing, where firms are relying more on advanced manufacturing technologies, new work processes (such as cellular manufacturing), and new kinds of work organization (teams and workgroups). In healthcare, greater reliance on electronic medical records, diagnostics, and monitoring has changed the skill sets required in hospitals and care facilities.

Employment in Occupational Groups and Industries by Parish (ACS, 2005-2009)

Parishes in Region													
OCCUPATION	Louisiana	Caldwell	East Carroll	Franklin	Jackson	Lincoln	Madison	Morehouse	Ouachita	Richland	Tensas	Union	West Carroll
Total number employed on 16 years +		4,048	2,457	7,156	6,497	17,288	3,696	10,601	65,672	7,654	2,180	9,551	4,092
Management, professional, and technical occupations	30.5%	21.5%	19.7%	24.0%	21.2%	33.1%	24.6%	23.5%	32.1%	26.8%	25.8%	25.0%	26.1%
Service occupations	17.9%	21.8%	22.8%	19.1%	22.6%	20.9%	19.0%	20.4%	17.7%	16.9%	19.9%	14.4%	11.9%
Office occupations	25.8%	19.1%	31.1%	21.3%	25.2%	25.3%	29.0%	26.6%	29.4%	23.9%	18.1%	25.9%	23.5%
Construction, mining, and forestry occupations	0.7%	2.5%	3.1%	4.4%	1.6%	0.9%	4.3%	1.9%	0.1%	3.2%	15.5%	2.1%	4.2%
Production, extraction, and repair occupations	12.4%	16.9%	12.7%	17.7%	15.1%	7.8%	9.1%	10.5%	9.1%	13.8%	10.8%	15.5%	14.1%
Transportation, material moving, and equipment occupations	12.7%	18.1%	10.6%	13.4%	14.4%	11.9%	14.0%	17.1%	11.6%	15.5%	9.9%	17.1%	20.2%
INDUSTRY													
Construction, forestry, fishing, and mining	4.4%	12.3%	7.8%	11.8%	7.5%	2.6%	7.7%	3.4%	1.2%	8.7%	25.3%	6.4%	10.4%
Manufacturing	8.8%	5.8%	8.8%	10.8%	6.2%	4.1%	5.7%	7.3%	7.5%	10.3%	4.4%	9.4%	14.5%
Retail trade	3.2%	1.9%	3.2%	1.5%	2.2%	2.3%	1.7%	2.6%	3.4%	3.2%	1.9%	4.6%	0.8%
Wholesale trade	12.0%	12.4%	21.4%	13.6%	13.3%	12.4%	18.0%	13.4%	12.5%	12.0%	8.6%	11.3%	14.0%
Transportation and information	5.1%	8.0%	5.1%	5.3%	5.0%	4.7%	5.1%	6.6%	4.4%	3.4%	5.0%	7.4%	11.2%
Accommodation and food services	1.7%	0.6%	0.0%	0.5%	1.0%	1.1%	1.0%	2.2%	3.7%	0.8%	0.4%	3.5%	0.8%
Health care, insurance, and financial services	5.6%	5.1%	1.7%	4.4%	3.1%	5.1%	2.0%	3.7%	6.8%	6.7%	4.8%	5.0%	4.1%
Education, scientific, and arts, entertainment, and recreation	8.2%	4.1%	1.1%	4.4%	5.9%	5.1%	5.0%	5.7%	8.3%	6.1%	4.3%	3.4%	3.4%
Real estate and social assistance	22.5%	25.2%	21.3%	27.6%	26.3%	35.7%	26.1%	25.9%	26.6%	26.6%	22.2%	22.9%	22.1%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.4%	4.5%	6.7%	4.1%	5.2%	8.7%	5.2%	6.1%	7.5%	4.5%	4.6%	2.4%	1.6%
Administrative and support services, except public administration	5.1%	3.4%	7.0%	5.0%	4.4%	5.7%	3.0%	4.5%	5.3%	3.1%	3.7%	4.8%	5.9%
Public administration	5.5%	8.9%	11.7%	5.3%	5.2%	4.2%	10.8%	5.4%	4.4%	5.4%	11.6%	3.7%	4.9%

Postsecondary Educational Resources and Services

Technical College: The Northeast Louisiana Technical College (NeLTC) has four campus locations distributed across the region that vary in size and program offerings. The Tallulah campus has been combined with Louisiana Delta Community College. The largest is the Ouachita campus. It offers 18 programs, including several healthcare programs. Other campuses offer far fewer programs, between seven and ten. With the exception of Ouachita, between 40 and 75 percent of all diplomas and degrees award in 2009 by the NeLTC campuses were in healthcare. (Seetable.)

Awards by Major Field (CIP) for NeLTC Campuses, 2009-2010								
Campus	Comp. Info Tech.	Engineering Tech.	Personal Services- Culinary Family-Arts	Construction	Mech. Repair	Precision Prod.	Health Tech.	Business Tech.
Bastrop	2	1			14	7	32	9
Delta-Ouachita	16	48	19	11	89	23	48	14
North central	2					19	21	1
Northeast	10					4	32	14
Ruston	2				5		24	9
(Tallulah/M. Surles)	10					33	16	9
Total	42	49	19	11	108	86	183	57
Source: Louisiana Board of Regents								

Less than half of the 1,665 students enrolled across all NeLTC campuses in 2010 were full-time. About 40 percent were over 25 years old. The campuses enroll students locally. With the exception of the Ruston campus, most students attend campuses that are close to their homes. (See table.)

Student Enrollment and Parish of Student Origin, 2009-2010			
Technical College Campus	Student Enrollment 2009-10	Primary Parish of Student Origin	Percent Enrollment from Primary Parish
Bastrop	304	Morehouse	86%
Delta-Ouachita	1003	Ouachita	75%
North central	158	Union	87%
Northeast	377	Franklin, Caldwell, Richland	86%
Ruston	255	Lincoln	69%
Source: Louisiana Board of Regents			

Community Colleges: Louisiana Delta Community College in Monroe services this region. It received SACS accreditation in 2008. Although only recently established in the region LDCC now enrolls 2,500 students and has doubled growth since 2007. LDCC offers remedial

education, general education, and, as a young college, only offers AA and AAS degrees in limited fields in eight areas. Last year, LDCC awarded 99 associate's degrees; half of these were in business and management technology, while another 30 percent were transfer-oriented AA degrees. The geographic reach of LDCC is somewhat larger than that of the technical college campuses. Approximately 60 percent of the 2009 first-year students enrolling in LDCC resided in Ouachita Parish. LDCC and NeLTC have begun integration of some functions to achieve better efficiencies. The leadership of the two colleges are planning additional integration steps, including maintaining both SACS and COE accreditation.

Four-Year Colleges and Universities: The University of Louisiana at Monroe is a significant four-year institution in the region. It offers programs largely in liberal arts, sciences, and healthcare. NeLTC and LDCC are located near the ULM campus. ULM had been offering two-year degrees in lieu of a local community college but has now begun to work with LDCC on elimination of two-year degrees and increasing transfers from LDCC to ULM programs. If initial trends remain the same, LDCC will send a considerable number of transfer students to ULM. Nearly all of those interviewed for this report stress the abundance of four-year educational resources in the region.

Key Points Emerging From Interviews

Our interviews make clear that recent steps toward merger of the technical and community colleges in the region have created a positive momentum at the technical college and community college toward increased programmatic and additional joint operating procedures.

Our interviewees emphasized that the availability of and access to technical and occupational training are especially important because of the industry and occupational mix in the region and the large number of poor people in the region whose main interest in postsecondary education would be related to developing job skills and gaining employment. Legislators and employers stressed the need for occupationally oriented education as a means to address poverty in the region and to bring more people into the educational pipeline. The distribution of NeLTC facilities throughout the region offers residents important access to entry into postsecondary education. Sustaining this access as an outcome of a merger while finding opportunities for more effective and efficient utilization of campus facilities is important to key leaders in the region.

Some interviewees expressed concern that the current range of programs offered at the NeLTC campuses may not meet the requirements of the labor market or the current skill needs of employers. With the exception of Ouachita, the campuses of NeLTC mainly provide healthcare programs. Community leaders believe that merger offers the colleges a way to increase workforce development services that are needed in the region. It will be important that integration of technical programs of the NeLTC and LDCC be accompanied by concrete steps to strengthen the college's engagement with employers, seeking their active involvement with technical programming instruction.

Nearly all those we interviewed emphasized that access to more advanced technology education is important to effectively respond to industry needs and to structure education as a continuum.

Interviewees repeatedly suggested the need for better articulation between the technical college and Louisiana Delta Community College to foster educational services that have transparency and simplicity (where employers can go to get skilled workers and not have to deal with multiple and at times competing institutions) and credentials that are not lost if their workers go back to school or continue to add to their training credentials. Civic leadership (legislators, secondary educators, city leaders, etc.) wants articulation across institutions so residents can leverage and articulate their credentials to build careers and support economic development. They are also hoping for a wider range of degree programs related to the region's employers and to residents' educational aspirations.

Recommendations

Our review of the data available on the northeastern Louisiana region and our discussions with representatives of the region's elected officials, employers, civic leaders, and educators lead us to the following recommendations.

1. Continue with and accelerate the merger of Northeast Louisiana Technical College (NELTC) and Louisiana Delta Community College (LDCC). The colleges have already begun to integrate some office, administrative, and functional areas, such as finance and purchasing, and this seems to be proceeding smoothly in beneficial ways. This direction should continue and should extend toward the merger of program services and educational programming. Further, the Board of Supervisors of the LCTCS should pursue legislative approval to formally merge the two colleges.
2. In addition, we recommend that a comprehensive plan be developed by the colleges and LCTCS that describes how the merger will take place and establishes a timeframe for the merger processes and steps, addressing organizational change, institutional change, and changes in programming of the two merging colleges. We recommend that the plan also specify development and strengthening of:
 - Employer engagement and workforce development services to the region;
 - Institutional supports for technical and occupational education programming;
 - Facilities assessments and planning for upgrading technical and occupational programming to address the regional labor market;
 - Outreach and supportive services to populations that have traditionally been the focus of the technical colleges; and
 - Credentialing and certification to assure credit transfer between occupational programming and associate's degree programming.

Merger planning also should include clear objectives for strengthening technical and occupational education through an in-depth review of existing technical programming and labor market needs for the citizens of the region.

3. We recommend maintaining NELTC's accreditation with COE and maintaining institutional SACS accreditation. The reporting requirements and standards that colleges are required to maintain with COE accreditation are more attuned to occupational programs and occupational outcomes. Further, existing LDCC technical programs that do not already hold some form of

programmatic accreditation should seek COE accreditation at the program level where appropriate.

4. Program integration should not be one-sided or seen as the community college absorbing the technical college programs. We recommend that the planning clarify the missions of comprehensive postsecondary education, identifying how those multiple missions of serving multiple constituencies and providing a variety of services will be realized. Merger should embrace a full, comprehensive mission for the college that reflects the multiple missions of a comprehensive college and addresses the needs of the region, including:

- Academic programming designed to help students transfer credits to a four-year institution;
- Academic occupational programming designed to help students obtain the credentials and the occupational skills they need to enter the workforce or improve their careers;
- Academic and non-credit programming that serve the workforce development needs of the region (and the state) to help people gain specific skills and credentials they need to enter the regional workforce and to meet specific needs of employers for a skilled workforce;
- An access point into postsecondary education for adults and students who need assistance and supports to be successful in education; and
- Active engagement of the community college leadership (and other college personnel) with the broad economic development needs of their service area.

GREATER NORTH CENTRAL AREA, SCR 88

Introduction

Senate Concurrent Resolution 88, 2011, sponsored by Senator Adley, asked the Board of Regents to gather information and conduct a study on “the feasibility of offering community college services to the greater north central Louisiana area, and to determine how the state can best meet the educational needs of students and the economic and workforce development needs of this region of the state.” The study responsibilities included study of “creating a new institution of postsecondary education, which includes establishing a branch of such an institution or converting any non-degree granting institution to an institution which grants degrees.”

The Board of Regents hired FutureWorks to conduct an analysis that would address the directives of the study resolution and provide an assessment of how the region’s educational needs could best be met. To that end, FutureWorks gathered available information on the structure of the greater north central area’s demographics, including the characteristics of its population, workforce, and educational attainment; its industry and occupational makeup; and its postsecondary resources and services. As a supplement to the data, FutureWorks completed a series of in-person interviews with key legislators, employers, economic developers, educators, and civic leaders of the region. These interviews took place in Minden at the Northwest Louisiana Technical College and in Bossier City at the Bossier Parish Community College. (See Appendix A for table of interviews.)

Following the analysis of these data are recommendations to strengthen the provision of two-year college services in the greater north central area.

Demographics

The Board of Regents and LCTCS define the northwest region of Louisiana as composed of nine parishes: Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, De Soto, Natchitoches, Red River, Sabine and Webster. Although there is no formal definition of a north central region by LCTCS, for purposes here, we add Winn, Jackson and Lincoln Parishes to the northwest region. Lincoln and Winn parishes each include one location (Ruston) of the Northeast Louisiana Technical College and the Huey P. Long Campus of the Central Louisiana Technical College. Population by parish varies significantly in the region, from a low of 8,746 in Red River to a high of 244,937 in Caddo (home of the city of Shreveport). (See table on next page.)

Demographic Characteristics of the Greater North Central Area, by Parish							
Parish	Population	Percent in Labor Force	Median Household Income	Unemployment Rate, 2010	Poverty Rate	Percent with Assoc. Degree	Percent with Bachelor Degree +
Louisiana		61.1	42,167	7.5	18.4	4.6	20.6
Bienville	14,386	50.6	31,741	8.9	25.1	4.0	13.6
Bossier	105,610	63.7	49,815	5.8	14.1	7.4	20.2
Caddo	244,937	60.9	36,536	7.4	21.1	5.2	22.2
Claiborne	15,049	54.8	29,345	9.0	27.1	3.5	11.3
De Soto	25,812	58.4	36,867	8.1	21.6	4.1	14.6
Natchitoches	38,041	56.7	28,411	8.1	30.6	4.0	20.8
Red River	8,746	56.3	32,242	8.8	24.6	5.6	13.5
Sabine	23,522	52.8	34,632	6.9	20.1	2.9	10.9
Webster	39,586	56.6	35,145	8.0	21.0	4.1	13.7
Jackson	14,936	58.3	37,531	7.3	14.6	3.3	13.5
Lincoln	37,379	57.0	48,735	8.3	28.7	4.7	31.2
Winn	14,108	49.0	30,514	8.2	26.0	2.7	11.9

Sources: US Bureau of the Census, 2010; American Community Survey, 2005-2009; LA Works; USDA 2009-2011; labor force data are for population 16 years or older; educational attainment are for population 25 years or older.

There are also very large differences in educational attainment across the region. Lincoln Parish has one of the highest bachelor's and greater attainment rates in the state. It is home to Grambling State University, Louisiana Tech University, and a campus of Northeast Louisiana Technical College. This parish also has the second highest poverty rate in the region. The only other parish with an educational attainment rate (bachelor's or higher) that is significantly above the state as a whole is Caddo Parish. Otherwise, parishes in the north central region have low educational attainment rates relative to the state. Sabine Parish, on the other side of the region from Lincoln, has one of the lowest attainment rates in Louisiana with just 11 percent of its adult population with a bachelor's degree or greater.

All but two of the parishes have relatively low median household income. Bossier and Lincoln parishes have median household incomes above the state average. The region's ten other parishes are below the statewide average, some significantly so. Two rural parishes along the Texas border, Sabine and De Soto, currently have relatively low median household income. These figures may not reflect recent trends, namely the significant economic impact and income that new gas drilling of the Haynesville Shale has brought to these parishes.

Industry and Occupations

Many of the parishes in the region have a high proportion of residents employed in occupations that serve the manufacturing, construction and extraction, and agriculture industries. The more urban parishes of Caddo and Bossier, and Lincoln, which is a college center in a rural area, follow the larger state occupational patterns. As employment and service centers for their region, they are much more diverse in their occupational and industry makeup.

A number of the region's parishes have substantial proportions of residents employed in farming and forestry occupations. In rural Sabine and Bienville, for example, the proportion of residents employed in these occupations is six times greater than the state as a whole. There is substantial agriculture related to wheat, corn, soybeans, and cotton along the Red River extending northwest toward Texas and Arkansas. Some employment is related to timber and wood processing occupations. As already mentioned, some of the parishes are experiencing new employment opportunities from gas exploration related to the Haynesville Shale. Many parishes, especially those along the Texas border, have larger proportions of their residents employed in natural resource extraction, construction and manufacturing industries.

Partly due to the economic mix of urban centers but also due to the presence of educational and healthcare facilities in rural parishes, there are substantial proportions of the labor force in services. For example, in Lincoln Parish one in three people in the labor force is employed in either healthcare services or education. Although these percentages produce small absolute numbers for some rural parishes in the region, the employment opportunities become quite significant with proximity to larger parishes that are service centers for the region.

Finally, with the exception of the concentration of health and education in Lincoln Parish, the other parishes in the central part of the state have similar industry and occupational concentrations to those of the northwest region as a whole. There are concentrations of industry in agriculture and manufacturing that, in conjunction with the low population, suggest a largely rural economy dependent on industrial activity. (See table on next page.)

Employment in Occupational Groups and Industries in Greater North Central Area by Parish (ACS, 2005-2009)													
OCCUPATION	Louisiana	Bienville	Bossier	Caddo	Claiborne	De Soto	Natchitoches	Red River	Sabine	Webster	Jackson	Lincoln	Winn
Civilian employed population 16 years +		5,484	49,323	108,293	6,284	10,927	15,467	3,497	9,039	16,796	6,497	17,288	5,557
Management, professional, and related occupations	30.5%	23.6%	29.8%	30.6%	24.5%	25.1%	27.2%	27.6%	23.7%	24.8%	21.2%	33.1%	22.8%
Service occupations	17.9%	16.8%	18.5%	20.9%	23.2%	17.4%	21.2%	24.2%	15.0%	16.8%	22.6%	20.9%	24.3%
Sales and office occupations	25.8%	21.2%	25.8%	26.9%	20.2%	23.5%	22.7%	17.4%	21.5%	22.5%	25.2%	25.3%	15.8%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0.7%	4.8%	0.3%	0.4%	3.1%	1.2%	1.2%	2.7%	4.4%	0.4%	1.6%	0.9%	3.9%
Construction, extraction, maintenance, and repair occupations	12.4%	13.1%	13.6%	8.6%	12.4%	15.8%	12.0%	13.7%	18.0%	17.0%	15.1%	7.8%	14.4%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	12.7%	20.6%	11.9%	12.6%	16.6%	17.0%	15.7%	14.5%	17.5%	18.5%	14.4%	11.9%	18.8%
INDUSTRY													
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	4.4%	11.7%	3.6%	2.6%	9.5%	6.8%	5.8%	9.8%	16.8%	6.9%	7.5%	2.6%	11.6%
Construction	8.8%	8.6%	8.5%	5.5%	6.0%	8.9%	7.1%	8.6%	7.9%	11.1%	6.2%	4.1%	7.1%
Manufacturing	8.5%	15.7%	7.0%	7.0%	11.0%	12.5%	13.5%	10.6%	10.8%	13.8%	14.8%	8.2%	12.5%
Wholesale trade	3.2%	4.0%	3.8%	3.6%	2.3%	2.0%	1.8%	3.8%	2.2%	2.9%	2.2%	2.3%	1.5%
Retail trade	12.0%	10.0%	11.8%	12.3%	8.2%	11.9%	11.4%	9.2%	11.5%	11.0%	13.3%	12.4%	11.3%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5.1%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	7.8%	5.0%	4.2%	4.5%	5.3%	3.4%	5.0%	4.7%	5.9%
Information	1.7%	1.1%	1.9%	2.1%	0.7%	1.5%	1.2%	0.3%	1.5%	1.2%	1.0%	1.1%	1.7%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	5.6%	2.1%	6.2%	5.3%	2.8%	4.7%	4.1%	3.3%	4.7%	4.8%	3.1%	5.1%	3.0%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	8.2%	3.1%	6.8%	7.9%	3.5%	5.1%	6.2%	4.0%	4.3%	6.2%	5.9%	5.1%	3.5%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.5%	24.1%	22.0%	27.0%	24.4%	21.8%	25.8%	31.9%	21.1%	21.5%	26.3%	35.7%	22.7%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.4%	4.2%	12.0%	11.6%	4.7%	7.2%	9.4%	6.9%	3.8%	7.8%	5.2%	8.7%	6.6%
Other services, except public administration	5.1%	4.9%	4.3%	6.0%	8.6%	6.3%	5.0%	4.1%	5.7%	4.1%	4.4%	5.7%	4.3%
Public administration	5.5%	5.7%	7.1%	4.3%	10.6%	6.2%	4.5%	3.2%	4.3%	5.1%	5.2%	4.2%	8.2%

Postsecondary Educational Resources and Services

Technical Colleges: The Northwest Louisiana Technical College (NwLTC) has five campus locations in the region. These vary in size from enrollments of about 300 to over 1,400 in Shreveport. The Northwest (Minden) campus serves as the main campus for the region. In 2009-2010, it had an enrollment of about 830 students, although a substantial proportion of those students appear to be related to an educational program at prisons. The Minden campus will soon move into a new facility that is now under construction and is considerably larger than its existing space.

The campuses offer a large number of programs relative to their total enrollments. For example, the Mansfield campus has an enrollment of 300 students and offers 10 programs that range from healthcare (including an LPN program) to welding. The Shreveport campus offers 18 AAS, diploma, and certificate programs. These include industrial technology, office technologies, and healthcare.

Credential awards in NwLTC, and Ruston and the Huey Long Campuses, are distributed in several fields. However, if enrollments in the special programs operated by Northwest are excluded, awards become concentrated in healthcare, mechanical repair, and business technology. That makes the distribution by field of study as similar to those of other technical colleges. Of all 850 credentials awarded by campuses in the region, over 50 percent were diplomas, 45 percent were certificates and roughly 5 percent were associate's degrees. (See table.)

Awards by Major Field (CIP) for NwLTC Campuses, 2009-2010,										
Campus	Agriculture	Computer Info Tech.	Engineering Tech.	Personal -Family Services -Arts	Construction	Mechanical Repair	Precision Prod.	Transport- Material Handling	Health Tech.	Business Tech.
Mansfield							4		46	8
Natchitoches		1		12		29			9	17
Northwest*	18	2	87		23	96	37	4	65	9
Sabine Valley		5				5	10		20	18
Shreveport		32	5	34	22	48	11		93	1
Huey P Long (CLTC)					4		13		77	17
Ruston (NeLTC)		2				5			24	9
Total	18	52	92	46	49	183	75	4	334	79

Source: Louisiana Board of Regents; *Northwest campus includes enrollment from correctional facility programs.

As with other technical colleges in the state, NwLTC campuses largely serve students from the immediate parish. Natchitoches, located in an area where there are no other nearby campuses, draws students from a wider geographic area. (See table.)

Student Enrollment and Parish of Student Origin, 2009-2010			
Technical College Campus	Student Enrollment 2009-10	Primary Parish of Student Origin	Percent Enrollment from Primary Parish
Mansfield	304	De Soto	86%
Natchitoches	380	Natchitoches	58%
Northwest*	829	Webster	64%
Sabine Valley	309	Sabine	95%
Shreveport	1403	Caddo and Bossier	91%
Huey P Long (CLTC)	337	Winn + (Jackson, La Salle)	89%
Ruston (NeLTC)	255	Lincoln	69%

Source: Louisiana Board of Regents; * About half of Northwest enrollments (379) are from West Carroll Parish, which is in the far northeastern corner of the state; these enrollments are from a prison education program. These were removed from the total enrollment to calculate the percentage of students from the parish location of the campus.

Community Colleges: The region is served by Bossier Parish Community College (BPCC), which holds SACS accreditation, located in Bossier City in a new facility. The campus contains seven classroom buildings with dedicated facilities for health and science programming, computer electronics and information technology, and electronics and industrial systems.

BPCC has grown rapidly and now enrolls about 6,000 students, with steadily increasing enrollments. The community college offers a wide range of AA, AAS, and certificate programs in fields including liberal arts and transfer-oriented programs, healthcare, and technology, with a strong emphasis on information technology and electronic systems. There appear to be only a few mechanically oriented technology programs. The college provides a comprehensive set of services to its students such as remedial education and online programs. BPCC also has agreements to provide educational services in partnership with a wide variety of other institutions in northwest Louisiana. These institutions include four-year colleges (Northwestern State University), technical colleges, area high schools (dual enrollment programs), and several healthcare facilities.

About two-thirds of the 760 credentials awarded by BPCC in 2010 were associate's degrees. Of these two-year degrees, roughly 70 percent were in liberal arts, health and business technologies and 20 percent were in information technology and communications technology. For all 760 awards in 2010, including certificates and diplomas (health), just over half were in liberal arts and healthcare fields. About two-thirds of all awards in 2010 were associate's degrees.

The majority of BPCC students are from parishes near the main campus in Bossier City. In 2010, 81 percent of the college's students came from Bossier Parish or parishes contiguous to Bossier.

Four-Year Colleges and Universities: This region contains a number of four-year colleges and universities, including Grambling State University, Northwestern State University, Louisiana Tech University, and LSU-Shreveport. Students from the region also have a considerable range of choice in colleges and universities nearby the region. Colleges in the region awarded almost 8,000 credentials in 2010.

Key Points Emerging From Interviews

A central theme from our interviews with civic leaders, elected officials, and employers was that the region is experiencing a number of shifts in its industries and occupational concentrations. This, in turn, is fueling a need for more and different educational capacity and in many ways some qualitatively different kinds of capacity. This region needs additional educational capacity and college services as well as technical and occupational programs.

Our interviewees believe that, at both the technical college and the community college levels, the range of degree programs is too narrow—most are in healthcare and office technologies or general studies. They look forward to a thorough joint assessment of educational needs in the region as a healthy step toward aligning resources and programming to better meet regional economic needs.

One of the changing conditions noted in our interviews is a rise of gas production in the shale fields. This will create an employment boom in many occupations that will need new workers. Some of the region's traditional industries are also changing. Economic developers and employers told us that industries such as manufacturing and wood products are seeking a workforce with a higher level of technical skills than is currently supplied by the existing workforce. In short, our interviews kept coming back to the need for more educational capacity in technical and occupational areas to meet the skill needs for new and existing jobs despite the large number of educational institutions in the region.

There was a strong interest in our interviews in sustaining focus on entry-level technical college programs that meet a basic level of technical skills while adding educational capacity, mainly through offering general education courses for transfer purposes, to create pathways for workers to get the next level of skills. One of the benefits of developing greater community college capacity in the north central portion of the region is to meet a need for associate's degrees that include general education and level of curricula that address a wider range of skills needed in the economy. In addition, more community college-type programming will help develop career pathways to facilitate the labor force to enter jobs and then advance. This requires greater coordination of career-oriented education and mechanisms to easily transfer credits between institutions.

There was some caution expressed during our interviews about the feasibility and desirability of creating a new community college facility in the north central portion of the state. In part, this was because the greater northwest region already has a large number of educational institutions and capacity to deliver associate's degree programs through two- and four-year institutions. There have also been large investments made to build new educational facilities in the region – *i.e.*, BPCC's relatively new main campus facility in Bossier City and NwLTC's new facility

under construction in Minden. These investments may offer ways to build educational strength that spans academic disciplines and occupational fields and offers a more integrated and aligned set of educational programs to address economic development and workforce needs. Those needs may be best met by finding ways to bring the existing college resources of BPCC and NwLTC together in a more seamless and accessible delivery design.

Recommendations

1. The data and findings suggest there is a need for expanded two-year college services in the region to serve the workforce and economic development needs of the north central region. At the same time, it is also clear there is a need for assessments and clear planning to determine how those expanded services might best be developed and organized. We recommend that the leadership of NwLTC and BPCC begin a deliberate planning process to determine the best means of meeting the identified needs of the region maximizing all of the resources of both institutions. As such, the college leaders shall by no later than December 2012 present to the Board of Supervisors of the LCTCS a comprehensive plan for improving the level of two-year college services to the citizens of north central Louisiana.

As part of that planning process, we recommend the college leaders consider how to:

- Expand college services now offered in the technical college and community college;
- Assess facilities usage with an objective to increase access in rural communities throughout the region to both technical/occupational education and associate's programs;
- Bolstering workforce development services across the region;
- Implement joint operating agreements for more efficient facilities utilization and increased program access; and
- Share important services (such as student supportive services and services to support persistence) across all programming provided by the technical college and community college.

2. We recommend that the NwLTC leadership focus particular attention on building capacity at the smaller campuses and growing technical education programs as a part of the planning effort. With the exception of Shreveport, all of the current NwLTC sites are small and have relatively small enrollments. Even so, they serve as important entry points into postsecondary education for many residents living in rural parts of the region.

GREATER NATCHITOCHEs REGION, HCR 182

Introduction

House Concurrent Resolution 182, 2011, sponsored by Representative Nowlin and Senator Long, asked the Board of Regents to gather information and to study “the feasibility of offering community college services to the Greater Natchitoches Region and to determine how the state can best meet the educational needs of students and the economic and workforce development needs of this region of the state.” In doing so, the study responsibilities included assessing “the need for and feasibility of creating a new institution of postsecondary education, which includes establishing a branch of such an institution or converting any non-degree granting institution to an institution which grants degrees in the area.”

The Board of Regents hired FutureWorks to conduct an analysis that would address the directives of the study resolution and provide an assessment of how the region’s educational needs could best be met. To that end, FutureWorks gathered available information on the structure of the greater Natchitoches region’s demographics, including the characteristics of its population, workforce, and educational attainment; its industry and occupational makeup; and its postsecondary resources and services. As a supplement to the data, FutureWorks completed a series of in-person interviews with key legislators, employers, economic developers, educators, and civic leaders of the region. These interviews took place in Natchitoches at the Northwest Louisiana Technical College and in Bossier City at the Bossier Parish Community College. (See Appendix A for table of interviews.)

Following the analysis of these data are recommendations to strengthen the provision of two-year college services in the greater Natchitoches region.

Demographics

Natchitoches is a Louisiana parish in the western central part of the state; we are defining the greater Natchitoches region by the surrounding parishes as shown in the chart below. The region has a relatively low level of income, high rates of poverty, and a lower-than-average labor force participation rate. Seven of the eight parishes have a median household income significantly below the statewide average. Only Vernon Parish has a median household income above the state median. The median household income of Natchitoches is the lowest in the region (\$28,411). It also has the region’s highest rate of poverty (30.6 percent). Every parish in the region has a labor force participation rate that is below the statewide average, which suggests both persistent unemployment and high levels of discouraged workers in the region.⁶ Several of those interviewed – and all the legislators – stressed the persistent poverty in the region and the need to address low educational attainment and consequently the poor job prospects among poor people. Some commented that the persistence of poverty in the region was a drag on economic

⁶ Discouraged workers are those workers who are not actively seeking employment or who are not able to find employment and become “discouraged” about the prospects for employment, often because of persistently high unemployment or because only very low-wage jobs are available.

development and lowered the overall ranking of the communities when companies reviewed the area statistics in their location decision-making.

Even though Northwestern State University is located in Natchitoches, all of the parishes in the region have a lower rate of four-year educational attainment than the state. Yet, interestingly, four of the eight parishes in the region have a higher rate of two-year attainment than the state. In addition, as could be expected, the urban parish of Rapides is the one outlier in the region. It has higher levels of median income, labor force participation, and educational attainment, and a lower rate of poverty, than the other parishes in greater Natchitoches (See table.)

Demographic Characteristics of the Greater Natchitoches Region, by Parish							
Parish	Population	Percent in Labor Force	Median Household Income	Unemployment Rate, 2010	Poverty Rate	Percent with Assoc. Degree	Percent with Bachelor Degree +
Louisiana		61.1	42,167	7.5	18.4	4.6	20.6
Natchitoches	38,041	56.8	28,411	8.1	30.6	4.0	12.2
DeSoto	25,812	58.6	36,867	8.1	21.6	4.1	9.6
Grant	18,443	54.1	39,328	7.8	15.2	5.1	8.3
Red River	8,746	56.3	32,242	8.8	24.6	5.6	8.9
Rapides	127,036	60.0	39,456	7.0	18.2	6.0	13.1
Sabine	23,522	52.9	34,632	6.9	20.1	2.9	7.8
Vernon*	45,273	48.6	44,453	6.9	16.6	5.6	10.6
Winn	14,108	49.0	30,514	8.2	26.0	2.7	8.3

Sources: US Bureau of the Census, 2010; American Community Survey, 2005-2009; LA Works; USDA 2009-2011; labor force data are for population 16 years or older; educational attainment are for population 25 years or older.
 *Vernon Parish is the site of a military base with 6,000 in the armed forces. The percentage in the labor force is 65.2.

Industry and Occupations

The greater Natchitoches region has relatively high concentrations in farming, construction, extraction, material moving, and production-related occupations. Some of these concentrations are quite high: Sabine Parish has a concentration of 40 percent of its labor force employed in these three occupational groupings compared to 25 percent for the state. These concentrations are parallel to employment within industry sectors; the percentages show significantly higher concentrations of employment in agriculture and manufacturing than the state. In Red River and Sabine Parishes, for example, the concentration of employment in agriculture and resource-related industries are two to almost four times greater than those for the state. Moreover, with the exception of Vernon and Rapides Parishes, the concentration in manufacturing was moderately but consistently above that of the state as a whole. Natchitoches has the highest concentration of manufacturing employment in the region.

In contrast, the eight-parish region generally has lower concentrations of its labor force employed in management, professional, and service occupations. The exceptions are Red River and Rapides parishes; each has higher proportions of employment in management, professional, and service occupations than the state as a whole.

Half of the region's eight parishes have higher concentrations than the state in the educational services and health care industries. About 30 percent of the workers from Red River and Rapides parishes and a little more than 25 percent of the workers from Natchitoches and Grant Parishes are employed in these industries. So, despite the presence of NSU in Natchitoches, which certainly implies a concentration in education-related employment, the strong effect of manufacturing (13.5 percent of the workforce) somewhat balances the employment in the education and healthcare sectors. (See table on next page.)

There also appear to be a number of emerging job opportunities and changing skill levels that will affect employment in the greater Natchitoches region. One of these emerging industries is in the gas and oil industry. Business, civic, and legislative leaders say that new companies are emerging that are engaged with natural gas production and transportation related to the Haynesville Shale. There is a potential gap in both numbers of workers available and the skill sets needed in process technologies to support these new jobs and the services. Other industries with growing workforce needs are wood products and manufacturing. Leaders say that the wood products industry is shifting from labor intensive harvesting toward more value-added products and higher levels of technology. That same shift is occurring in manufacturing. And, some civic leaders foresee an economic upswing in the region that will spread out over the next twenty years as new facilities and operations to support these industries are built.

Employment in Occupational Groups and Industries in Greater Natchitoches Region by Parish (ACS, 2005-2009)									
OCCUPATION	Louisiana	Natchitoches	Desoto	Grant	Sabine	Vernon	Red River	Rapides	Winn
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	1,936,682	15,467	10,927	7,958	9,039	16,237	3,497	57,043	5,557
Management, professional, and related occupations	30.5%	27.2%	25.1%	27.3%	23.7%	26.7%	27.6%	32.1%	22.8%
Service occupations	17.9%	21.2%	17.4%	13.6%	15.0%	19.9%	24.2%	19.9%	24.3%
Sales and office occupations	25.8%	22.7%	23.5%	24.6%	21.5%	25.2%	17.4%	25.2%	15.8%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0.7%	1.2%	1.2%	0.9%	4.4%	1.0%	2.7%	0.8%	3.9%
Construction, extraction, maintenance, and repair occupations	12.4%	12.0%	15.8%	15.3%	18.0%	15.7%	13.7%	10.5%	14.4%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	12.7%	15.7%	17.0%	18.3%	17.5%	11.5%	14.5%	11.5%	18.8%
INDUSTRY									
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	4.4%	5.8%	6.8%	5.5%	16.8%	4.3%	9.8%	3.1%	11.6%
Construction	8.8%	7.1%	8.9%	10.5%	7.9%	9.6%	8.6%	7.5%	7.1%
Manufacturing	8.5%	13.5%	12.5%	12.9%	10.8%	4.6%	10.6%	7.5%	12.5%
Wholesale trade	3.2%	1.8%	2.0%	3.5%	2.2%	1.2%	3.8%	2.7%	1.5%
Retail trade	12.0%	11.4%	11.9%	7.6%	11.5%	14.2%	9.2%	12.8%	11.3%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5.1%	4.2%	5.0%	6.9%	5.3%	4.4%	4.5%	5.3%	5.9%
Information	1.7%	1.2%	1.5%	1.9%	1.5%	1.2%	0.3%	1.7%	1.7%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	5.6%	4.1%	4.7%	5.0%	4.7%	3.6%	3.3%	4.7%	3.0%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	8.2%	6.2%	5.1%	5.8%	4.3%	7.8%	4.0%	6.2%	3.5%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.5%	25.8%	21.8%	25.8%	21.1%	22.1%	31.9%	29.7%	22.7%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.4%	9.4%	7.2%	3.6%	3.8%	7.5%	6.9%	7.2%	6.6%
Other services, except public administration	5.1%	5.0%	6.3%	3.9%	5.7%	5.4%	4.1%	4.4%	4.3%
Public administration	5.5%	4.5%	6.2%	7.1%	4.3%	13.9%	3.2%	7.2%	8.2%

Postsecondary Educational Resources and Services

Technical Colleges: The Northwest Louisiana Technical College (NwLTC) maintains a campus in Natchitoches in close proximity to Northwestern State University of Louisiana. The large majority of NwLTC-Natchitoches' 385 students are from the surrounding parishes – 81 percent are from Natchitoches Parish, 9.4 percent from Red River Parish, and 4.2 percent from Sabine Parish. The campus offers 14 programs that range from Automotive Technology to Welding to Practical Nursing. Degrees granted are AAS, Diplomas and Certificates. The technical college's PN degree articulates with the LPN to RN program at Northwestern State University of Louisiana. (See table.)

Awards by Major Field (CIP) for NwLTC Natchitoches Campus, 2009-2010								
Campus	Computer Info Tech.	Engineering Tech.	Personal - Family Services -Arts	Construction	Mechanical Repair	Precision Prod.	Health Tech.	Business Tech.
Natchitoches	1		17		29		9	17
Source: Louisiana Board of Regents								

The campus has modest enrollments and consequently produces relatively few credentials compared to colleges in the whole region. In 2009-2010, the Natchitoches campus of NwLTC reported about 385 enrollments and in the same year awarded 6 AAS degrees, 36 diplomas (of about one year in length) and 31 certificates. This is the second-lowest number of credentials awarded among the five technical college campuses in the Northwest region.

Community Colleges: Bossier Parish Community College (BPCC), with its main campus located in Bossier City, also serves the greater Natchitoches region with satellite services located on the Northwestern State University campus. BPCC now enrolls roughly 6,000 students. Enrollment at BPCC has nearly doubled since 2007.

BPCC grants the second largest number of degrees and certificates among the state's community colleges. BPCC grants about one-third of its associate's degrees in areas that could be considered transfer degrees in liberal arts and interdisciplinary studies. An even higher percentage of associate's degrees and a majority of certificates awarded by BPCC are in more technical and occupationally related fields. Two of the buildings on BPCC's new campus in Bossier City are devoted to technology programs such as robotics, electronics, information technology, and industrial maintenance systems.

Of the 5,430 students enrolled in BPCC in the 2009-10 academic year, about 325 came from Natchitoches and the immediate surrounding parishes. Students enrolled in the college travel to the main campus, take classes online, or attend BPCC classes (general education and remediation) at NSU.

In addition, BPCC and NwLTC maintain a memorandum of understanding that defines terms for sharing facilities at each other's campuses. The terms include offering classes and sharing classrooms and equipment. BPCC is contracting with the Natchitoches campus of NwLTC to provide 15 hours of general education classes (and for other LTC campuses as well) to help satisfy the AAS general education requirements. In addition, BPCC supplies testing and developmental education and 12 hours of general education courses to meet requirements of the baccalaureate degree at NSU. The university and BPCC share campus facilities in Natchitoches.

Four-Year Colleges and Universities: Greater Natchitoches is the home of Northwestern State University of Louisiana, a long-established four-year school that began as a teacher training college in the late 1800s and is now a major educational resource in the area. NSU serves a statewide student market and attracts a considerable number of students from out of state; just over 50 percent of its students are from the Greater Natchitoches parishes. Of the 9,247 students enrolled in NSU in 2008-2009, 55 percent were from Natchitoches Parish or contiguous parishes. There is also a considerable number of students from Bossier Parish. No other campuses of the University of Louisiana System are close to NSU. Campuses of Louisiana State University are situated to the north of Natchitoches in Bossier Parish and to the southeast in Rapides Parish.

In addition to four-year degrees, NSU offers six associate's degrees and an ASN in Nursing degree. While most of the associate's degree programs at NSU produce modest numbers of graduates, the AS in Nursing is clearly a significant program for the university and the region, both as a source of transfer students (into the BSN program) and for employees in hospitals and care facilities across the state. Of the 1,022 students enrolled in associate's degree programs at NSU in the fall of 2009, 724 were in nursing programs. The associate's level General Studies program at NSU is designed as both a transfer degree and for those students who are not clear on a college major. The General Studies program accounted for just over 33 percent of the associate's degrees awarded at NSU in 2010. Together these two associate's degree programs account for 82 percent of all associate's degrees awarded by NSU in 2010.

Completion rates for associate's and bachelor's degrees at NSU are 29 percent. NSU's completion rate for associate's degrees is similar to the completion rates at most colleges around the nation. The reported full-time, first-time graduation rate in 2008 for all NSU students seeking associate's degrees was 14.9 percent for those students enrolling in the 2006 cohort. Given the degrees awarded in 2010, it is clear that associate's degree students are not in the full-time, first-time group of students and therefore probably not in the profile of traditional students. (See table.)

Associate Degree Programs, Enrollment, and Degrees Awarded, NSU, 2009-2010		
	Degree-Seeking Enrollment	Degrees Awarded
ASN Nursing	724	116
AD Business Administration	78	14
AD Veterinary Technology	33	14
AD Electronics Technology	8	17
AGS General Studies	116	93
AA Criminal Justice	63	14
Source: NSU Factbook, 2010, Institutional Research		

NSU and Bossier Parish Community College offer some joint programming on the NSU campus (called BPCC at NSU). This includes developmental education (remediation) and courses focused on general education transfer. In addition, NwLTC has an articulation agreement with NSU to bring students completing AAS degrees at the technical college into programs at NSU.

Key Points Emerging From Interviews

Our analysis of the needs of the population, supply of the educational infrastructure, and demand of the labor market led to considerable discussion with local leaders about the need for more comprehensive college educational capacity at the associate's degree and sub-baccalaureate levels in the greater Natchitoches region. This includes capacity for technical and occupational education as well as community college-type capacity.

Local leaders consider educational access and services – mainly technical and occupational education, but also education broadly – as essential to addressing the region's persistent poverty and low incomes. They emphasized that occupational technical education, workforce development, and transferability to other postsecondary opportunities are important not only to meet employer needs for a skilled workforce, but also as stepping stones for residents to move out of poverty and into the labor force. There is concern that, though resources are now locally available, those educational resources are not sufficiently focused, coordinated, and aligned to address these issues. This reflects a concern with the effective use of educational resources in the area to increase access to education, but it also expresses a concern with the content of the resources that are available.

These interviews suggest that employers and local civic leaders see the occupational and technical education now furnished by the existing providers of postsecondary education in Natchitoches as too limited. They see limits to the delivery and range of technical and occupational programs offered at the Natchitoches campus of the NwLTC; those limits appear to get in the way of meeting the needs of employers and seem primarily related to resources. Furthermore, concern was expressed that the associate's degree programs in technical areas at NSU – with the obvious exception of the health care and nursing programs – do not produce many graduates and may not be specifically relevant to the workforce needs expressed by our interviewees. Some expressed concern that there are not adequate resources or planning capacity to sustain or add programs at either the technical college or NSU to meet the needs. Finally, some interviewees observed that outreach into poor communities by the technical college and NSU appears very limited – either because of a lack of resources to do so or because it is not in the core missions of the institutions.

Our interviews suggest that Natchitoches and the immediate surrounding parishes lack an institutional framework and infrastructure to supply comprehensive community college services. There is no local institution whose mission it is now to supply those services or develop new capacity to do so. For example, both local institutions now contract with Bossier Parish Community College for development and general education programs related to associate's

degrees. While a good service in itself, this arrangement does not lead to coordinated or comprehensive services.

According to our interviews, further contributing to the lack of institutional consistency is the difference of focus in the local colleges. The technical college awards far more diplomas and short-term certificates than associate's degrees. It is constrained from expanding those offerings beyond an AAS degree by current state and accreditation standards. For its part, NSU does not actively market its associate's degree programs to nontraditional students (with the exception of nursing) and is further constrained from developing new or significantly enhancing existing associate's degree programs because of the directives of the GRAD Act. Nor does NSU maintain an extensive workforce development arm to develop, design, and broker services for employers. As a four-year institution, it does not see workforce education as one of its core missions.

Our interviewees see that this creates a gap in educational services for the residents and employers of the greater Natchitoches region. This gap lies precisely in the area of educational and student services that are typically offered by a comprehensive community college, such as outreach, student engagement, workforce development, diversity of occupational offerings, and comprehensive academic programs – services that would permit a more transparent and accessible pathway from occupational programming to academic/transfer education.

Legislators, employers and civic leaders in the region attach much importance to the ongoing presence of NSU in Natchitoches. Adding new community college capacity and more comprehensive two-year programs in the region raises the possibility of educational facilities competing for scarce students and resources. Yet, strong support for NSU is accompanied by observations from the same individuals that the current educational offerings in the region have gaps and are difficult to navigate for either students or employers. There are few two-year technician-type degrees available locally that relate directly to the needs of employers for workers in applied fields. Employers observe that there is very little capacity in the area of workforce development or customized training due to the limited resources of the technical college. Moreover, with the expectation of increases in natural gas production in nearby parishes, the educational resources needed to train a skilled workforce are not in place.

Community leaders observe that, with implementation of the GRAD Act and the state's investment in a comprehensive community college system, the rationale for maintaining separate associate's degree capacity in the four-year system has diminished. The development of new comprehensive community college capacity in the greater Natchitoches region could help NSU as a four-year university to focus on its core mission and to increase transfer enrollments from two-year and technical colleges. In turn, this will ultimately attract new qualified students into baccalaureate or advanced professional development programs.

Recommendations

1. The data we have collected and our qualitative assessments suggest a need for expanded two-year college services in this region. Given the current provision of college services in the region and strong relationships within the civic and business communities in the region, postsecondary leadership in the greater Natchitoches region, in concert with Board of Regents and LCTCS staff, should enter into a deliberate planning process to develop a comprehensive plan for increasing the two-year college services while maximizing the resources of all of the institutions. As such, the college leaders, by no later than December 2012, should present to the Board of Regents, Board of Supervisors of the LCTCS, and the Board of Supervisors of the University of Louisiana System a comprehensive plan for improving the level of two-year college services to the citizens of the Greater Natchitoches region. As part of that planning process, we recommend the college leaders consider:

- Expanding locally available two-year college programming and associate's degree services, including student supportive services;
- Bolstering the quantity and quality of technical and occupational education including workforce development services;
- Assuring access for rural communities and lower-income residents of parishes in the region; and
- Implementing joint operating agreements for both efficiency and more coordinated educational services to residents.

This planning process should consider the feasibility of providing that Bossier Parish Community College assume the administration and support of operations of the Northwest Louisiana Technical College at Natchitoches. The objective here would be to develop resources, operating efficiencies, and supports necessary to increase technical and occupational training provided within the study region.

2. We recommend that NSU plan to divest itself of associate's degree programs over time, with the possible exception of its ASN in Nursing and nursing bridge programs. We believe this can be carried out in ways that will cause NSU relatively little loss of students or revenue. It also continues in the spirit of the GRAD Act. Although there is a perception that a significant amount of the university's future rests on offering associate's degree programs, we can find little data to support this. With the exception of the large associate nursing program, few students enroll in or complete in other associate's degree programs. All students enrolled in associate's degree programs—other than those in nursing-- make up 3 percent of NSU's total enrollment; and this figure includes over 100 students in the general studies degree, which is viewed partially as a transfer degree for those not ready for a baccalaureate program. (We have not seen transfer figures from this program or other associate's degree programs at NSU into baccalaureate programs, but in other colleges generally only a small number of students receiving two-year degrees transfer directly into baccalaureate programs.)

The technically oriented associate's degree programs now offered at NSU would have more value within a community college infrastructure such as BPCC; they would become more accessible to students not only in Natchitoches but also wherever they were offered. To the extent they are now duplicative with existing programming, this offers the potential for

efficiencies and savings. More important, integrating these programs into a community college infrastructure would offer greater access to community college services such as student support.

Part of the planning process for aligning educational services within the region should be the transition of these programs to BPCC. This will take a few years to accomplish as BPCC develops capacity and it will be important to avoid disrupting services to existing students enrolled in two-year programs at NSU.

The plan should also include an assessment for keeping the ASN in Nursing and LPN to ASN bridge program programs at NSU. We see several good reasons for these programs to remain at NSU: they continue to serve a regional need; this would avoid duplication of the expensive teaching equipment involved in either an ASN or BSN program; this would better utilize hard-to-find faculty; and this would avoid competition between institutions for scarce clinical slots.

GREATER LAFAYETTE AREA, SR 98

Introduction

Senate Resolution 98, 2011, sponsored by Senator Michot, asked the Board of Regents to “study the feasibility of merging Acadiana Technical College and South Louisiana Community College in order to more adequately address the educational needs of students and the economic and workforce development needs of the greater Lafayette area.”

The Board of Regents hired FutureWorks to conduct an analysis that would address the directives of the study resolution and provide an assessment of how the region’s educational needs could best be met. To that end, FutureWorks gathered available information on the structure of the greater Lafayette area’s demographics, including the characteristics of its population, workforce, and educational attainment; its industry and occupational makeup; and its postsecondary resources and services. As a supplement to the data, FutureWorks completed a series of in-person interviews with key legislators, employers, economic developers, educators, and civic leaders of the region. These interviews took place in Lafayette at South Louisiana Community College and Acadiana Technical College. (See Appendix A for table of interviews.)

Following the analysis of these data are recommendations to strengthen the provision of two-year college services in the greater Lafayette area.

Demographics

The Board of Regents and LCTCS define the Acadiana region of Louisiana as eight parishes: Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, and Vermilion.⁷ Iberia and Vermilion border the Gulf of Mexico and the other parishes run north to the central part of the state. Lafayette Parish contains the city of the same name and is the largest population center of the region. The others parishes include a mix of small towns and cities.

The region contains a wide spread of socio-demographic characteristics, some that bear on the educational needs of the region. In terms of income, for example, Lafayette is among the seven highest household income parishes in the state. St. Landry Parish has the fifth lowest household income. Lafayette Parish also stands out in its extraordinarily high level of bachelor’s and greater educational attainment. The parish contains a major hospital, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, South Louisiana Community College, and Acadiana Technical College. Many of the other parishes are largely rural. (See table on next page.)

⁷ There are eight parishes in the Regional Labor Market Area, Region 4 that includes Lafayette. The RLMA does not include Jefferson Davis Parish but does include St. Mary Parish. However, since St. Mary Parish is in the south central region, it will be included as part of that analysis.

Demographic Characteristics of the Greater Lafayette Area, by Parish							
Parish	Population	Percent in Labor Force	Median Household Income	Unemployment Rate, 2010	Poverty Rate	Percent with Assoc. Degree	Percent with Bachelor Degree +
Louisiana		61.1	42,167	7.5	18.4	4.6	20.6
Acadia	59,016	57.6	33,882	6.7	21.4	4.8	10.8
Evangeline	33,658	51.3	33,445	8.6	23.6	5.8	10.8
Iberia	73,100	60.5	40,803	7.8	20.6	3.7	13.1
Jefferson Davis	30,805	58.3	39,756	6.3	17.0	4.6	11.1
Lafayette	199,972	68.3	46,526	5.7	15.5	5.1	27.7
St. Landry	89,382	52.6	28,110	8.3	29.6	4.3	11.6
St. Martin	49,811	61.8	39,186	7.3	16.1	3.3	11.1
Vermilion	58,813	58.2	40,785	7.1	18.5	4.4	10.6

Sources: US Bureau of the Census, 2010; American Community Survey, 2005-2009; LA Works; USDA 2009-2011; labor force data are for population 16 years or older; educational attainment are for population 25 years or older.

The other parishes in the region have lower population than Lafayette Parish, and relative to the state as a whole, all have lower household incomes and many have higher rates of poverty. Most of the parishes have low rates of labor force participation relative to the state as a whole. That, coupled with the statistics on household income and poverty, suggests the region contains some deeper pockets of poverty with people not readily participating in the labor force. Many of the lower income parishes, Acadia, Evangeline, Jefferson Davis, and St. Landry, are also largely rural and may contain a substantial low-wage agricultural labor force.

Industry and Occupations

No single occupational cluster stands out as dominating the regional economy, even though there appear to be high concentrations of some industry groups where residents in the region are employed. In Lafayette Parish, for example, the proportions of the workforce in occupational groups or industry sectors virtually mirror those of the state as a whole. Its occupational and industrial structure is evened out by higher proportions of the labor force employed in professional, financial services, sales, and administrative occupations, largely characteristic of an employment center serving the region. (See table on next page.)

Employment in Occupational Groups and Industries in Greater Lafayette Area by Parish (ACS, 2005-2009)									
OCCUPATION	Louisiana	Acadia	Evangeline	Iberia	Jefferson Davis	Lafayette	St. Landry	St. Martin	Vermilion
Civilian employed population 16 years +		24,077	12,691	31,636	12,771	102,768	33,419	22,726	23,790
Management, professional, and related occupations	30.5%	24.9%	28.0%	25.2%	23.5%	34.8%	25.6%	23.0%	23.6%
Service occupations	17.9%	18.3%	18.5%	18.5%	16.9%	16.1%	19.4%	16.3%	18.2%
Sales and office occupations	25.8%	23.2%	21.4%	25.4%	24.3%	28.0%	25.0%	26.3%	24.4%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0.7%	0.8%	1.5%	1.0%	0.7%	0.1%	1.0%	1.1%	2.4%
Construction, extraction, maintenance, and repair occupations	12.4%	17.2%	19.6%	15.3%	20.3%	11.2%	14.3%	15.2%	17.2%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	12.7%	15.7%	11.0%	14.6%	14.3%	9.8%	14.7%	18.0%	14.3%
INDUSTRY									
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	4.4%	13.5%	13.1%	12.4%	14.1%	9.4%	8.0%	10.0%	17.0%
Construction	8.8%	8.3%	10.0%	6.6%	9.7%	5.9%	8.9%	10.2%	8.5%
Manufacturing	8.5%	7.2%	5.5%	10.1%	5.4%	6.0%	6.7%	10.5%	5.7%
Wholesale trade	3.2%	3.0%	1.0%	3.4%	3.0%	3.1%	2.6%	4.1%	4.0%
Retail trade	12.0%	11.3%	11.5%	11.5%	12.9%	12.6%	14.7%	14.2%	12.1%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5.1%	5.4%	3.6%	4.0%	5.4%	4.2%	5.3%	6.2%	5.9%
Information	1.7%	1.1%	1.1%	0.7%	0.9%	2.6%	1.8%	1.4%	0.8%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	5.6%	4.9%	4.1%	6.0%	4.3%	6.2%	3.8%	4.8%	4.8%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	8.2%	6.0%	5.6%	6.9%	4.5%	10.5%	5.8%	5.2%	5.7%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.5%	24.3%	25.9%	20.3%	24.4%	21.4%	25.3%	17.3%	19.4%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.4%	6.2%	6.9%	7.3%	8.0%	9.5%	7.7%	6.0%	5.6%
Other services, except public administration	5.1%	6.1%	5.5%	7.0%	3.9%	4.8%	4.9%	6.0%	6.6%
Public administration	5.5%	2.9%	6.2%	3.7%	3.3%	3.9%	4.6%	4.2%	3.9%

Other parishes have different concentrations. Residents in some parishes are employed in higher proportions in manufacturing, agriculture, and oil and gas production. Others parishes are some of the top producers of sugarcane (Iberia, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette and St. Martin parishes), rice (Acadia, Vermilion and Evangeline parishes) and soybeans. The concentration of residents employed in related industries (such agricultural, fishing and mining) and occupations can be two to three times the state average in these parishes.

In addition to confirming this general occupational and industrial mix, our interviews with business and civic leaders in the region highlighted the importance of oil and gas production. Most spoke of the industry growing rapidly, with new companies expanding to provide services to existing production sites as well as potential new natural gas sites. Leaders also highlighted the importance of health care to the regional economy and the region's historical reliance on agriculture and natural resources.

Our interviewees also drew a picture of a region with traditional industries that are changing to use new technologies in order to be competitive and adapt to a changing national and global economy. Newer technology ranging from information technology in healthcare to large-scale farming in agriculture is changing the skill sets sought by employers. Many identified a need to upgrade the skill sets of incumbent workers with low educational attainment, particularly in traditional low-skilled industries like agriculture and wood products. In addition, they stressed the need to develop new educational capacity to respond to the changing character of employment in nearly every local industry.

Postsecondary Educational Resources and Services

Technical Colleges: The Acadiana Technical College (ATC) has eight campus locations distributed across the region. The Teche Area, Lafayette, and TH Harris campuses have moderate to large enrollments, between 700 and 1,300 students. The Lafayette campus of the technical college is the largest and offers 23 programs across a broad range of technologies and occupations, including several healthcare programs and practical nursing. All campuses of the technical college offer health programs, including practical nursing, as well as welding programs and business office technologies.

ATC awarded 1,403 credentials to students in 2010 across all of its campuses. The credentials awarded were 77 associate's degrees, 645 diplomas, and 681 certificates. Across all credentials, 43 percent were in healthcare and business administration programs. Eighty percent of the associate's degrees were in these two fields. Another 30 percent of all credentials were awarded in mechanical and repair technology and precision production programs. In these fields, however, the large majority of the awards were certificates of technical competency; just ten were associate's degrees. Acadiana Technical College is producing credentials across a somewhat broader range of occupations than most other technical colleges in the LCTCS. (See table on next page.)

Awards by Major Field (CIP) for Acadiana Technical College Campuses, 2009-2010										
Campus	Communication	Computer Info Tech.	Engineering Tech.	Personal -Family Services -Arts	Construction	Mechanical Repair	Precision Prod.	Science Tech.	Health Tech.	Business Tech.
Acadian			10		1	6	15		46	12
C.B. Coreil						6	14		58	16
Evangeline				3		4	2		25	3
Gulf Area		1	6	16	9	38	8		54	23
Lafayette	6	62	10	20	11	68	42		100	44
Morgan Smith					3	1	4		23	15
Teche Area		7	24	12	15	44	38		41	22
T.H. Harris		17	16	1	21	70	19	37	49	9
Totals	6	87	66	52	60	237	142	37	396	184

Source: Louisiana Board of Regents

Most of the campuses draw students from the parish in which it is located. The exception is the Lafayette campus. It draws 39 percent of its students from surrounding parishes. (See table).

Student Enrollment and Parish of Student Origin, 2009-2010			
Technical College Campus	Student Enrollment 2009-10	Primary Parish of Student Origin	Percent Enrollment from Primary Parish
Acadia	283	Acadia	85%
C.B. Coreil	384	Evangeline	83%
Evangeline	488	St. Martin	79%
Gulf Area	584	Vermilion	89%
Lafayette	1,320	Lafayette	61%
Morgan Smith	278	Jefferson Davis	92%
Teche Area	750	Iberia	71%
T.H. Harris	659	St. Landry	72%

Source: Louisiana Board of Regents

Community Colleges: The region is served by South Louisiana Community College (SLCC), which received SACS accreditation in 2007. Its main campus is across from the ATC in Lafayette. SLCC offers eight program areas with degrees and certificates in each. Unlike some of the other community colleges, SLCC's current health field only includes two programs in childcare and child development and an emergency medical technician program. Apparently, the college has avoided duplicating the health programs offered by the technical colleges and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. The college has limited technology programming. It has one program in industrial technology that appears to have limited exposure to hands-on applications. It is largely designed as a transfer program to articulate to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. The community college's business technology program offers certificates in Microsoft.

SLCC reported total enrollments of just fewer than 4,000 students in 2010, with about half of the students coming from Lafayette Parish. In that year, the college awarded 211 associate's degrees and another 279 certificates. About half of the associate's degrees (117) and two-thirds of the certificates (182) were awarded in liberal arts and sciences. All other certificates (97) were awarded in healthcare professions; eleven associate's degrees were awarded in healthcare. The college awarded 36 associate's degrees in the industrial technology program.

Four-Year Colleges and Universities: The University of Louisiana at Lafayette is the only public four-year institution in the region, with over 16,000 undergraduate and graduate students in Lafayette. UL-Lafayette offers programs in liberal arts, sciences, business, healthcare, agriculture and engineering. There are articulation agreements between the university and the community college. These include agreements that articulate into the liberal arts and Louisiana Transfer Degree programs as well as the criminal justice, industrial technology and business programs offered by the college. Unlike some of its sister institutions, UL-Lafayette offers only bachelor's and graduate degrees. It does not report any associate's degree or sub-baccalaureate certificates.

LSU at Eunice, however, is a two-year college that offers associate's degrees and certificates. It offers these in transfer-oriented programs, nursing, healthcare professions, and criminal justice. LSU at Eunice also offers a considerable number of short-term and professional development certificates. It draws a significant number of students from the region. In the fall of 2009, 71 percent of its student enrollment came from the Lafayette region. In 2010, 240 students from the Lafayette region completed coursework at LSU at Eunice and received either an associate's degree or certificate (although almost all of the awards were associate's degrees).

Key Points Emerging From Interviews

Our interviews with civic leaders, elected officials, and employers underscored the point that this region contains a broad base of diverse industries. Manufacturing-based industries such as metalworking and metal fabrication employ a substantial number of workers in the region. The region has a number of large healthcare facilities, many of which report a shortage of technically skilled workers. Many of the parishes maintain a strong presence in agriculture and food production. More so than many other areas of Louisiana, this diversity of employment and demand leads to a broader set of needs in education, from a variety of occupational programs to fields that prepare workers from entry-level positions to those that require more advanced technologies.

At the same time, our interviewees suggested themes that are similar to those we heard in other regions: ensuring access, sustaining technical education, and responding to changes in technology. They emphasized the need for increased capacity in sub-baccalaureate education. The range of occupations important to the region, and the scale of employment in both the more urban and rural parishes, call for broad educational programming. Of particular concern is the need for educational programs that will help people enter technician-type employment and prosper in increasingly technology-intensive settings. In healthcare, for example, information technology and electronic medical records are increasingly important. Information technology and process technologies are also becoming more important in valued-added food processing and

agriculture. Employers we interviewed said that it was hard to find employees with higher levels of familiarity with technology used in their companies. Growing employment in some occupational fields and changing technology in others suggest that the current program offerings in the region will be strained to meet demand.

In addition, there is concern that the campuses or branch locations of the technical college are not able to invest in improvements or develop the kinds of programming for which employers are looking. Although the many locations of the ATC throughout the region help provide access to poor people and others in the parishes, the smaller campuses focus on a limited range of offerings and award relatively few degrees. The limited resources available to ATC and the technical college system overall means that it will be difficult to keep up with the pace of changes in technology and the range of programs demanded by industry, which could accelerate the gap in capacity to meet local economic needs.

Those we interviewed expressed a positive view of the potential of merger between SLCC and ATC. Some expressed the expectation that it would increase transparency across the two institutions and help modernize ATC programs and facilities. Adding technical and occupational programming to the community college would also build SLCC's capacity in workforce and economic development. That would strengthen the college's efforts to become a comprehensive community college. Moreover, community leaders see merger as providing resources for a greater range of supportive services and credential options that are not currently available in either setting.

Employers in the region asked for more of the kinds of educational content in courses that is typically found in a comprehensive community college. They are hoping for the breadth of a comprehensive community college education tightly linked to high-quality technical and occupational education. This suggests a careful review of existing technical programming at both the community and technical colleges and, importantly in the observations of several interviewees, with associate's and bachelor's programs offered through LSU-Eunice or UL-Lafayette, especially those related to healthcare occupations.

Recommendations

1. We recommend that participants continue with and accelerate the merger of Acadiana Technical College and South Louisiana Community College (SLCC). The colleges have already begun to integrate some office, administrative, and functional areas, such as finance and purchasing, and this seems to be proceeding smoothly in beneficial ways. This direction should continue and should extend toward the merger of program services and educational programming. Further, the Board of Supervisors of the LCTCS should pursue legislative approval to formally merge the two colleges.

2. In addition, we recommend that a comprehensive plan be developed by the colleges and LCTCS that describes how the merger will take place, a timeframe for the merger processes and steps addressing organizational change, institutional change, and changes in programming of the two merging colleges. We recommend that the plan also specify development and strengthening of:

- Employer engagement and workforce development services to the region;

- Institutional supports for technical and occupational education programming;
- Facilities assessments and planning for upgrading technical and occupational programming to address the regional labor market;
- Outreach and supportive services to populations that have traditionally been the focus of the technical colleges; and
- Credentialing and certification to assure credit transfer between occupational programming and associate's degree programming.

Finally, we recommend that the merger planning include clear objectives in the planning process for strengthening technical and occupational education through a review of existing technical programming for the citizens of the region.

3. We recommend maintaining Acadiana Technical College's accreditation with COE and maintaining institutional SACS accreditation. The reporting requirements and standards that colleges are required to maintain with COE accreditation are more attuned to occupational programs and occupational outcomes. Further, existing SLCC technical programs that do not already hold some form of programmatic accreditation should seek COE accreditation at the program level where appropriate. At the same time, integration should proceed with a clearly defined and fully embraced comprehensive mission for the college that reflects the multiple missions of a comprehensive college and addresses the needs of the region. The mission should embrace the following:

- Academic programming designed to help students transfer credits to a four-year institution;
- Academic occupational programming that is designed to help students obtain the credentials and the occupational skills they need to enter the workforce or improve their careers;
- Academic and non-credit programming that serve the workforce development needs of the region (and the state) to help people gain specific skills and credentials they need to enter the workforce and to meet specific needs of employers for a skilled workforce;
- An access point into postsecondary education for adults and students who need assistance and supports to be successful in education; and
- Active engagement of the community college leadership (and other college personnel) with the broad economic development needs of their service area.

GREATER SOUTH CENTRAL AREA, SCR 73

Introduction

Senate Concurrent Resolution 73, 2011, sponsored by Senator Gautreaux, asked the Board of Regents to gather information and conduct a study on “the two-year college services offered to the greater south central Louisiana area and to determine how the state can best meet the educational needs of students and the economic and workforce development needs of the this region of the state.” In doing so, the study responsibilities included study of “the need for and feasibility of creating a new institution of postsecondary education or merging institutions in the greater south central Louisiana area.”

The Board of Regents hired FutureWorks to conduct an analysis that would address the directives of the study resolution and provide an assessment of how the region’s educational needs could best be met. To that end, FutureWorks gathered available information on the structure of the greater south central area’s demographics, including the characteristics of its population, workforce, and educational attainment; its industry and occupational makeup; and its postsecondary resources and services. As a supplement to the data, FutureWorks completed a series of in-person interviews with key legislators, employers, economic developers, educators, and civic leaders of the region. These interviews took place in Morgan City at South Central Louisiana Technical College Young Memorial campus and in Reserve at South Central Louisiana Technical College River Parishes campus. (See Appendix A for table of interviews.)

Following the analysis of these data are recommendations to strengthen the provision of two-year college services in the greater south central area.

Demographics

The south central region consists of Ascension, Assumption, Lafourche, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Martin, St. Mary, and Terrebonne parishes. Three of the seven parishes lie along the Gulf of Mexico; all are influenced strongly by the oil and gas industries.

The region has a relatively high level of household income. Ascension Parish, part of the Baton Rouge metro area, has the highest household income in the region and the state. Only one parish in the south central region, St. Martin Parish, has a median household income below that for the state as a whole. In general, the region’s parishes with the highest levels of median household income also have high levels of educational attainment. There are two exceptions. Both Assumption and Lafourche parishes have relatively high levels of household income (above the statewide average), but also have significantly lower levels of bachelor’s degree and professional attainment than the state as a whole. Most of the parishes in the south central region have levels of associate’s degree attainment lower than the state as a whole. The exceptions are Ascension and St. John the Baptist parishes. (See table on next page.)

Demographic Characteristics of the Greater South Central Area, by Parish							
Parish	Population	Percent in Labor Force	Median Household Income	Unemployment Rate, 2010	Poverty Rate	Percent with Assoc. Degree	Percent with Bachelor Degree +
Louisiana		61.1	42,167	7.5	18.4	4.6	20.6
Ascension	98,115	68.4	60,874	7.1	10.6	4.7	20.6
Assumption	46,349	55.5	43,003	10.4	19.9	2.4	5.1
Lafourche	91,115	58.9	46,196	5.2	15.4	4.1	4.4
St. James	21,046	62.7	49,883	11.4	13.2	3.9	14.7
St. John Baptist	46,349	64.1	47,574	10.1	14.3	5.1	16.3
St. Martin	49,811	61.8	39,186	7.3	16.1	3.3	11.1
St. Mary	50,474	61.0	44,151	9.3	21.5	3.8	10.4
Terrebonne	107,264	50.2	55,025	5.5	16.9	3.7	14.6

Sources: US Bureau of the Census, 2010; American Community Survey, 2005-2009; LA Works; USDA 2009-2011; labor force data are for population 16 years or older; educational attainment are for population 25 years or older.

Many of the city and legislative leaders we interviewed identified significant pockets of poverty as a persistent problem, even though most of the residents enjoy relatively good levels of income. For example, Assumption and St. Mary parishes have higher poverty rates than the state as a whole, even though their household incomes are higher than the statewide average. Add in the relatively high levels of educational attainment for some of the parishes, and it suggests communities in which significant poverty exists within a solidly middle class region.

Industry and Occupations

The region has an extremely high proportion of its workforce employed in occupations related to manufacturing and extraction. The proportions of residents employed in these occupations range from 30 percent to 40 percent of the total workforce for the parishes in the south central region. The statewide average for these same occupational groupings is 25 percent. In general, these occupational groups have high concentrations of high-wage technical and skilled manual jobs associated with the oil and petroleum industries. Conversely, the proportions of residents employed in managerial and professional occupations are considerably lower than the state as a whole. Because of the concentrations of employment in high-wage jobs associated with oil and gas, incomes are higher without necessarily being accompanied by very high levels of educational attainment. This helps explain the differences between high incomes in parishes and modest levels of educational attainment. (See table on page 41.)

This picture of a high-wage ‘blue collar’ region is further supported by concentrations of workers employed in industries such as transportation, agriculture and mining, construction, and manufacturing. The proportion of workers employed in these four industries is 27 percent for the state as a whole. The parishes in the south central region have concentrations of workers employed in these industries that are substantially higher, ranging from 34 percent to 47 percent. Moreover, these levels of concentration are among the highest we have seen in the five areas studied.

Our interviews with legislators, employers and civic leaders stressed the historical importance of the oil and gas industry in this region and its potential to significantly increase scale in the near

future with renewed off-shore production and new fields of natural gas coming online. Regional impact will include increases in the number of suppliers and support services for the industry, such as new opportunities for high-end electronic equipment services, mechanical equipment maintenance, shipbuilding and barge fabrication. The occupations in high demand for these industries cluster around fabrication skills, such as welding and construction, and process technology.

In addition to occupations associated with oil, gas and petrochemical production, employers note two other factors associated with training and education in the region. First is the rapidly rising levels of education and training required for licensing and permitting. Largely driven by federal safety and environmental requirements, companies in the industry are required to demonstrate a credentialed workforce that can meet a host of safety training and technical skills. Moreover, as regulations change, employers need a ready and flexible source of training for their employees. Second, there is a rapid escalation in complex technology used in the field for construction, operations, and maintenance. For example, new drilling technologies, sophisticated sensing equipment, and the integration of electronics into mechanical equipment have increased the skill requirements for nearly every on-shore and offshore position in the industry.

The large scale of operations and immediacy of need for workers in the oil and gas industry somewhat overshadow the demand for other occupations and for skilled workers in the region. Local leaders identified occupations in health care, information technology, and manufacturing as growing and in high demand.

Employment in Occupational Groups and Industries in Greater South Central Area by Parish (ACS, 2005-2009)									
OCCUPATION	Louisiana	Ascension	Assumption	Lafourche	St. James	St. John Baptist	St. Martin	St. Mary	Terrebonne
Civilian employed population 16 years +		47,939	9,368	41,095	9,440	20,974	22,726	22,109	47,610
Management, professional, and related occupations	30.5%	32.1%	19.3%	27.7%	22.8%	24.5%	23.0%	23.1%	24.2%
Service occupations	17.9%	13.1%	17.0%	14.8%	20.5%	17.8%	16.3%	17.1%	13.9%
Sales and office occupations	25.8%	27.0%	22.7%	24.7%	20.1%	27.4%	26.3%	23.0%	26.3%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0.7%	0.3%	1.1%	1.1%	0.3%	0.5%	1.1%	0.8%	0.8%
Construction, extraction, maintenance, and repair occupations	12.4%	13.7%	19.4%	14.4%	14.5%	13.6%	15.2%	13.8%	16.0%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	12.7%	13.8%	20.5%	17.3%	22.0%	16.2%	18.0%	22.2%	18.8%
INDUSTRY									
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	4.4%	1.1%	7.7%	9.1%	1.9%	1.0%	10.0%	10.3%	11.8%
Construction	8.8%	12.9%	14.6%	9.5%	9.1%	10.8%	10.2%	7.4%	8.2%
Manufacturing	8.5%	15.0%	12.5%	11.0%	28.6%	14.7%	10.5%	11.5%	9.4%
Wholesale trade	3.2%	4.4%	4.1%	3.8%	2.3%	2.9%	4.1%	2.7%	4.2%
Retail trade	12.0%	10.8%	12.3%	11.9%	9.7%	12.4%	14.2%	11.7%	13.2%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5.1%	5.1%	6.5%	7.0%	7.2%	8.4%	6.2%	6.0%	6.7%
Information	1.7%	1.3%	1.4%	1.0%	0.5%	1.1%	1.4%	1.1%	1.1%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	5.6%	6.7%	3.7%	4.3%	2.4%	6.2%	4.8%	4.8%	5.1%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	8.2%	9.4%	7.8%	5.6%	3.8%	6.9%	5.2%	6.2%	6.1%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.5%	17.8%	16.4%	20.3%	20.1%	17.9%	17.3%	16.4%	18.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.4%	6.9%	2.7%	7.1%	5.1%	8.9%	6.0%	11.6%	7.2%
Other services, except public administration	5.1%	3.9%	6.2%	5.8%	4.6%	3.7%	6.0%	6.0%	5.2%
Public administration	5.5%	4.6%	4.1%	3.9%	4.8%	5.1%	4.2%	4.4%	3.2%

Postsecondary Educational Resources and Services

Technical Colleges: The South Central Louisiana Technical College (SCLTC) has four campus locations distributed across the region: Galliano, Lafourche, River Parishes and Young Memorial. The Galliano location is an extension of the La Fourche campus and is included in discussions of that campus. Lafourche and River Parishes campuses largely serve the immediate parish or parishes near their campus. The Young Memorial campus, on the other hand, serves a population that comes from all parts of Louisiana, and even out of state. About half of Young Memorial students come from St. Mary Parish. The balance of its students come from 38 other parishes and out of state (in 2010, 203 of its students were from out of state). River Parishes is the largest campus in terms of program enrollments with 1,428 students in 2010. All the campuses have significant numbers of dual enrollments with local high schools. (See table.)

Student Enrollment and Parish of Student Origin, 2009-2010			
Technical College Campus	Student Enrollment 2009-10	Primary Parish of Student Origin	Percent Enrollment from Primary Parish
Lafourche	540	Lafourche	74%
River Parishes	1,428	St. Charles, St. James, St. John	83%
Young Memorial	946	St. Mary	52%
Source: Louisiana Board of Regents			

In terms of completions of certificates, associate's degrees and diplomas, SCLTC as a whole awarded 126 associate's degrees, 143 diplomas, and 231 certificates. Over half of these awards were in the two fields of healthcare and business administration. In fact, all but one of the associate's degrees was awarded in three fields: health, business, and engineering technology. (The Process Technology [PTEC] program is the only associate's degree offered in engineering technology and River Parishes awarded all of these.)

According to IPEDS data, SCLTC awarded over 3,800 short-term certificates; almost all at Young Memorial for short-term training conducted for the petroleum, gas and marine industries. The short-term certificates and industry-specific training dwarf the degrees, diplomas and certificates awarded by the technical college. (See table on next page.)

Awards by Major Field (CIP) for SCLTC Campuses, 2009-2010									
Campus	Agriculture	Computer Info Tech.	Engineering Tech.	Construction	Mechanical Repair	Precision Prod	Transport-Material Handling	Health Tech.	Business Tech.
Lafourche				13	2			34	37
River Parishes			97		40	1		49	14
Young Memorial		4	10	17	21	2	35	54	70
Totals		4	107	17	63	3	35	137	121
Source: Louisiana Board of Regents									

SCLTC campuses are distinguished by their programming designed for the regional petroleum, gas, and petrochemical industries. Young Memorial campus provides a significant amount of customized training for the petroleum industry and its related suppliers. This includes specific technology education, such as welding, and safety and operations training for offshore platform operators in the Gulf of Mexico. A substantial partnership has been developed between this campus and the industry. Employers have contributed equipment, built and equipped buildings and facilities, and provided funds to the campus to develop and offer the kinds of training required by the industry.

The River Parishes campus offers the Process Technology (PTEC) Degree Program. This is a standardized curriculum for an AAS designed for the petrochemical, oil and gas industries. The curriculum focuses on operations and process technologies for power plants and petrochemical refining. At River Parishes, employers offer scholarships, provide internships, and hire graduates from the program. For example, Dow Chemical offers \$3,000 scholarships to selected students entering PTEC. The program includes an internship with area employers that benefits both students and employers because the internship serves as a pre-employment period with the companies. Employers have agreed to hold off hiring students from this program until they complete it and receive a degree. Some employers require a PTEC credential as a minimum hiring requirement. Employers have a close working relationship with River Parishes and donate equipment and funds to support the program operations.

Both programs serving the petrochemical industry at the Young Memorial and River Parishes campuses have strong industry support. They differ in their approach to training and education. PTEC is a standardized curriculum, approved by an industry group and by state agencies. It leads to an AAS degree that includes some general education classes. As noted, employers value the credential and support students as they obtain a degree. At Young Memorial, a large proportion of the training is customized short-term training for specific industry needs and specific requirements for worker skills (*e.g.*, safety procedures). This yields a high number of short-term certifications in areas such as safety training and specific technical operations in offshore platform operations. Because many of these training programs are tied to the licensing and permitting requirements of drilling, transporting, and refining operations, they are highly specific to industry needs and must be very flexible to accommodate changes in permitting and

licensing. In general, these short-term certificates, while extremely important to the industry and to Louisiana's economy, do not translate into or transfer toward associate's degrees or diplomas from the technical college.

Community Colleges: The region is served by L.E. Fletcher Technical Community College and River Parishes Community College. Fletcher is the more recent of the two colleges; River Parishes was established in 1999 and Fletcher was converted to a technical community college in 2003. Both are SACS-accredited institutions.

Although recently established in the region, Fletcher Technical Community College enrolls 2,395 students and River Parishes Community College enrolls 1,805 students. River Parishes recently merged with the Ascension campus of South Central Louisiana Technical College. This allows River Parishes to offer a wider range of technical and occupational programs as well as academic transfer programs. Fletcher, as a technical community college, also offers transfer programs and an array of technical programs, including electronics, mechanical technologies, marine related technologies, automotive technology, nursing assistant, and welding. In addition, Fletcher operates the Marine and Petroleum Institute, which is a facility for training in maritime occupations, petroleum refinery and process manufacturing operations. The Institute had about 100 degree- or certificate-seeking students in 2010.

In 2010, River Parishes and Fletcher awarded most of their 131 associate's degrees in liberal arts (82 degrees), business management (29), and engineering technologies (14). Fletcher awarded all of the associate's degrees in technology. Certificates awarded largely parallel the same distributions and proportions as associate's degrees, although Fletcher awarded additional technical certificates and technical diplomas.

Four-Year Colleges and Universities: Nicholls State University is the only public four-year institutional presence in the region. Its total enrollment is about 7,100 students, with roughly 6,400 enrolled in undergraduate programs. While of course those living in the region enroll in other four-year colleges elsewhere, about five times as many students from the region attend Nicholls than any other four-year institution in the state. Just over 50 percent of the students come from the two parishes of Terrebonne and Lafourche.

Nicholls State University is focused on liberal arts and sciences. It offers a large nursing program with over 800 enrollments and a pre-med program. The college offers no engineering or technology programs with the exception of a petroleum services program that focuses on geologic exploration and surveying. Nicholls awarded 153 associate's degrees in 2010. These degrees focus on transfer to baccalaureate-level degrees. About half of the associate's degrees awarded by Nicholls are in liberal arts or health professions. In the past Nicholls offered a wider range of associate's degrees. It transferred most of these programs to Fletcher Technical Community College over the last several years.

Key Points Emerging From Interviews

The large scale of the oil, petrochemical, and gas industries shapes the occupational and socioeconomic characteristics of the region. It also places unique requirements on the delivery of education in south central Louisiana. Leaders we interviewed in this region stressed the

importance of sustaining high-quality technical and occupational education to meet the needs of local industry. They also stressed the importance of using educational opportunities to build pathways to good-paying jobs in the industry and out of poverty.

The socio-economic characteristics of the region suggest that there are substantial numbers of people with relatively high incomes who do not have high levels of educational attainment. However, according to industry representatives, this will change as the technologies in the oil and gas industry change. Jobs in the industry are becoming more complex and require far more credentials than they did even in the recent past. Meeting industry demands for skilled workers places significant requirements on educational resources. It especially makes demands on technical and occupational education.

Employers in the oil and gas industry are concerned that there are not enough skilled workers being produced. Even now, they observe, there are significant numbers of oil and gas workers and technicians imported into the region from other states and even from other countries. Local leaders want the educational capacity and the outreach available to bring more local residents into the industry and into high-wage jobs. These leaders generally believe that the technical and community colleges in the region have responded with very substantial efforts to meet industry needs that few other regions in Louisiana or the nation have duplicated. In fact, employers are now sending out-of-state residents to these programs.

At the same time, a considerable number of those we interviewed – including college personnel – observed the need for additional capacity, additional programs, and program modifications in order to meet the growing and changing needs of the industry. Often, employers expressed deep support and appreciation for the technical and occupational education at the technical colleges but also suggested that broadening the curricula to include more “academic programming” (*i.e.*, general education) and deeper technical content was needed. For instance, interviewees in one meeting responded to questions about capacity by suggesting that the local technical college needed more equipment, more laboratories, and more laboratory-based classes; more intermediate programs linked to the fundamental programs; smaller classes; chemistry, math, and more academic and general skills to help students in problem solving and becoming more well-rounded employees; and better transfer opportunities. Some of those interviewed who were not connected with the oil and gas industry (such as healthcare industry or economic development representatives) expressed interest in having the technical colleges offer a broader and deeper range of programs to help them obtain employees in high-demand fields in their industries or in those that showed prospects for development.

A particularly important consideration, as several employers and legislators noted, is the need to build closer connections between technical education and sub-baccalaureate education to facilitate transfers to higher-level degree programs. Taken together, the comments of those we interviewed combined a strong appreciation for the role of technical colleges, on the one hand, and expressed interest in what amounted to substantial change in the current organization of educational services.

It was also observed that there seems to be ambiguity in what programs and services are offered in the region, both between the colleges and between the community and the technical colleges. There is considerable duplication of programming between the technical colleges and

community colleges, especially in the petroleum-related technical programs, and both of the community colleges are offering programs typically found in a technical college. The ambiguities are not surprising given the genesis of the two community colleges serving the region – one growing from a technical college and the other recently absorbing a technical college campus.

There is a perception locally that the community colleges are academically focused while the technical colleges are more “hands-on” and occupationally and technically focused. At the same time, a number of people interviewed suggested that the technical colleges should become closer to the community college model and should adopt programs and services that are typically offered in a comprehensive community college.

There is a perception that the technical colleges are reaching the limit of what they can do effectively and this is stopping short of what the community wants. It makes sense to many of those we interviewed to consider how evolving community and economic needs can be addressed better through realignment among the technical and community colleges in the region.

It is also clear from our interviews that the relationships of Young Memorial and River Parishes campuses with their industry partners are striking. Leadership at both campuses has developed deep relationships with significant employers in the oil, gas and petrochemical industries in the region and, apparently, extending well beyond the region’s parishes. As noted earlier, each campus has built those relationships in different ways but both sustain strong industry support. Especially at Young Memorial, it appears that the relationship drives a very high proportion of the campus programming and most of that takes the form of customized training or curricula in short-term training programs. Employers have donated substantial resources for these programs. Obviously, the current tuition structure of the technical colleges offers industry an extremely low-cost alternative to private-sector training providers. In light of Young Memorial’s commitment to meeting industry standards and needs, the industry has found what seems to be an ideal educational partner.

This relationship presents a significant opportunity for the Board of Regents, LCTCS and the state to preserve and deepen this partnership with industry by recognizing its unique nature in the state’s educational systems and its importance in retaining and attracting companies in this industry. There may be an opportunity to establish Young Memorial as a dedicated training and education facility sharply focused on the industry and concentrating its services on meeting industry requirements for short-term technical and operations training. Doing so would signal to a very important industry in the state that its educational needs are being supported by LCTCS and would, regardless of any other reorganization of the educational system, allow the industry to sustain its own supply of training through a Louisiana-supported facility.

Recommendations

1. We recommend that the Board of Supervisors of LCTCS lead a planning process involving the key college educational providers in this region (SCLTC, Fletcher, and River Parishes) with the following objectives:

- Efficiently organize and allocate existing educational resources and institutional alignments to best serve residents of the parishes in the region, employers needing a skilled workforce, including though not limited to joint operating agreements;
- Expand two-year college services, assuring access for rural communities, implementing joint operating agreements;
- Provide needed institutional supports for technical and occupational education programming across the region to increase the range and quantity of services;
- Bolster technical education by assessing facilities and creating plans for upgrading technical and occupational programming to address the regional labor market;
- Increase outreach and supportive services to populations that have traditionally been the focus of the technical colleges; and
- Design program credentialing and certification to assure credit transfer between occupational and associate's degree programming.

2. We suggest that the recommendations presented here in relation to this study resolution be taken up by the Board of Supervisors of the LCTCS at a time deemed by the Board to be appropriate to allow a deliberate and comprehensive planning process and a timeframe to most effectively realize systemic educational change in the region. Given the immediacy of the current structural changes underway with Northshore Technical Community College and Central Louisiana Technical Community College, and given the recommendations of this report as they relate to both the Northeast and Acadiana regions of the state, it is important not to take on too much change at the same time. When the recommendations of this study resolution are taken up, we urge that employers be a strong part of the planning process to ensure there is no interruption in the level of service to employers.

3. We recommend that high priority be given to sustaining and strengthening the industry-education partnership established at the Young Memorial (including the Marine Extension) location of the SCLTC. We recommend that the Board of Supervisors of the LCTCS give immediate consideration to designating and providing appropriate resources to the Young Memorial campus to re-designate it as a Petroleum and Gas Industry Louisiana Center of Excellence. It could be operated as a quasi-independent public/private partnership to meet the education and training needs of the petroleum and natural gas industries and related supporting industries.

APPENDIX A: TABLE OF INTERVIEWS

FutureWorks interviewed each state senator and state representative who sponsored the study resolutions. These conversations occurred during our site visits; almost all were in a group setting. The interviews took place at the locations indicated below. The names of the legislators interviewed and numbers of the business, education, and civic leaders interviewed during each site visit follow. In all, we conducted meetings with 167 leaders in the five regions.

Greater Northeast Area at Monroe

Northeast region state senators and representatives interviewed: Senator Thompson, Senator Kostelka, Senator Riser, Senator Walsworth, Representative Little, Representative Hoffman, Representative Gallot, and Representative Chaney.

Greater Northeast Area Interviews

8	state senators and representatives
15	business leaders
5	chamber and industry association representatives
15	technical and community college leadership
5	K-12 leadership
2	LCTCS board members
0	other civic leaders
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50	Total

Greater North Central Area at Minden and Bossier City

North central region state senators and representatives interviewed: Senator Adley and Representative Burns.

Greater North Central Area Interviews

2	state senators and representatives
4	business leaders
2	chamber and industry association representatives
8	technical and community college leadership
6	K-12 leadership
1	LCTCS board member
2	other civic leaders
<hr/>	
25	Total

Greater Natchitoches Region at Natchitoches

Greater Natchitoches region state senators and representatives interviewed: Senator Long, Representative Nowlin, and Representative Howard.

Greater Natchitoches Region Interviews

3	state senators and representatives
3	business leaders
2	chamber and industry association representatives
3	technical and community college leadership
1	K-12 leadership
0	LCTCS board members
1	other civic leader
<hr/>	
13	Total

Greater Lafayette Area at Lafayette

Greater Lafayette region state senators and representatives interviewed: Senator Michot, Representative Hensgens, Representative Hardy, and Representative Huval.

Greater Lafayette Area Interviews

4	state senators and representatives
9	business leaders
4	chamber and industry association representatives
14	technical and community college leadership
1	K-12 leadership
1	LCTCS board member
0	other civic leaders
<hr/>	
33	Total

Greater South Central Area at Morgan City and Reserve

South central region state senators and representatives interviewed: Senator Gautreaux, Senator-elect Allain, and Representative Harrison.

Greater South Central Area Interviews

3	state senators and representatives
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24	business leaders
6	chamber and industry association representatives
7	technical and community college leadership
1	K-12 leadership
2	LCTCS board members
3	other civic leaders
<hr/>	
46	Total