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REGENTS STUDY ADMISSIONS EXCEPTIONS & STUDENT SUCCESS

Additional auditing of data still to come

BATON ROUGE, La. – In response to a resolution adopted by the Louisiana Senate last year, the Louisiana Board of Regents today approved a report focused on students admitted to college without meeting the board's minimum admissions standards and an analysis of their success.

Regents established minimum admission criteria, including admissions exceptions in 2001. Regents has tightened that policy over the last 13 years, reducing the number of students allowed to be admitted without the minimum requisites. Currently, of the more than 22,000 freshmen admitted to public colleges and universities in Louisiana each year, just over 1,000 students or 5.3% are admitted by exception.

Senators asked Regents to answer three specific questions: Who was admitted by exception? What academic requirement(s) triggered that exception and what do we know about the academic performance of those students?

"It's critical that we understand the characteristics of students admitted by exception, but more importantly, how they perform," said Board of Regents Chairman Marty J. Chabert. "We do a disservice to students if we do not place them in the best environment to succeed. However, sometimes life events make it difficult for our incoming freshman to meet all the requirements. What the data show is, with the right support, many students will go on to do well in college if we give them the chance to prove themselves," noted Chabert.

In looking at the characteristics of students admitted by exception in Louisiana's public higher education institutions the report reveals the following statistics:

- Of students admitted by exception, the majority are from Louisiana (76%), 19% are from out of state, and 5% are international students
- 75% of students admitted by exception did not meet the minimum ACT composite score but could be admissible if they had the minimum Core GPA
- 43% of students admitted by exception did not meet the minimum Core GPA
- 33% of students admitted by exception did not meet the mandated completion of the

Core curriculum, thus were only admissible by exception

o This is significant given the how long the Regents' minimum admission standards have been in place including the Core curriculum requirements.

"This is precisely the information and data we need to begin a robust discussion concerning admissions criteria and how they impact our goal of increased talent development for Louisiana," said Commissioner of Higher Education Kim Hunter Reed. "Making sure that students are not only given a chance to succeed but also have the academic support they need is paramount. I look forward to our continued work and analysis regarding the impact of admission policies," said Reed.

In terms of academic success and outcomes for students admitted by exceptions, the report outlines several conclusions including:

- There is a direct relationship between student preparation and student performance.
- Based on every performance measure examined, the student groups that gained regular admission (i.e., that met the Minimum Admission Standards) outperformed the groups admitted by exception.
- The smaller variances in the academic performance of students reported on athletic aid compared to non-athletes reflect the comprehensive student and academic support services generally more available to scholarship athletes.
- There are lessons for campuses to learn from the academic performance of supported student-athletes to improve overall student outcomes.

The Board will remain focused on the impact of these policies on Regents' broader commitment to increase talent attainment in Louisiana. In September 2018, the Board approved an audit plan focused on compliance with admissions exceptions which will yield further information on the topic. Additional research and study on performance variances within different elements of the minimum admission standards will continue to provide insight for the Board to utilize in considering any additional modifications to its policies.

The report approved today by Regents is due to the Senate no later than February 15, 2019.

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