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AGENDA
STATEWIDE PROGRAMS COMMITTEE
Wednesday, December 15, 2021
12:20 p.m.

Claiborne Building, First Floor
Thomas Jefferson A&B Room 1-136
1201 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Consent Agenda
 - A. Approval of Rulemaking extending the applicability of COVID-19 as an objective circumstance for which students may request an exception to the continuous enrollment, full time, and earned annual hours requirements for TOPS from the fall semester/winter quarter of 2021 through the summer of 2022
 - B. Approval of Rulemaking to amend the Scholarship and Grants program rules to add Dual Enrollment African American History as a course that may be graded on a 5.0 scale
 - C. Approval of TOPS Exception
- IV. Adjournment

Committee Members: Randy Ewing, Chair; Charles McDonald, Vice Chair; Sonia Pérez, Terrie Sterling, Collis Temple III, Cameron T. Jackson (student member), Felix Weill, Judy Williams-Brown

Agenda Item III.A.

Consent Agenda: Approval of Rulemaking

Rulemaking extending the applicability of COVID-19 as an objective circumstance for which students may request an exception to the continuous enrollment, full time, and earned annual hours requirements for TOPS from the fall semester/winter quarter of 2021 through the summer of 2022

Background:

At its meeting of February 24, 2021, the Board of Regents approved rulemaking to add COVID-19 as an objective circumstance for which students may request an exception to the continuous enrollment, full-time and earned hours annual requirements for TOPS. That rulemaking provided an end-date of the fall semester/winter quarter of 2021 for applicability of the rule.

As the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the Delta variant and the recent emergence of the Omicron variant of the virus, lingers and efforts to mitigate its spread continue to be implemented on postsecondary institution campuses, students have continued to request exceptions to the TOPS requirements noted. As a result, staff proposes to extend the applicability of the rule providing for an objective exception based on COVID-19 through the end of the 2022 academic year (summer of 2022).

LOSFA Advisory Board Recommendation

The LOSFA Advisory Board recommends that the Louisiana Board of Regents authorize the Executive Director of LOSFA to publish a notice of intent to make permanent rules which extend the applicability of the provision for an objective exception based on COVID-19 from the fall semester/winter quarter of 2021 to the end of the 2022 academic year (summer of 2022).

Agenda Item III.B.

Consent Agenda: Approval of Rulemaking

Rulemaking to amend the Scholarship and Grants program rules to add Dual Enrollment African American History as a course that may be graded on a 5.0 scale

Background:

The TOPS statutes authorize the Board of Regents to “establish course equivalencies for any course included in the definition of core curriculum” provided that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) has given prior approval. The statute also requires recommendations from the Board of Regents on establishing a TOPS Core Curriculum course equivalency.

In addition to authorizing the establishment of course equivalencies, the TOPS statutes provide that certain honors, advancement placement, gifted, and dual enrollment courses will be graded on a 5.0 grading scale for purposes of calculating students’ grade point average on the TOPS core curriculum courses beginning with 2018 high school graduates. The TOPS statutes provide that the Board of Regents and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will determine which of these courses will be eligible for the heightened grading scale.

LOSFA received notification on November 9, 2021, that the Louisiana Department of Education would be presenting Dual Enrollment – African American History as a course to be graded on a 5.0 scale at the joint Board of Regents/ BESE meeting on December 15, 2021. This amendment will be effective for graduates of 2022 and later.

LOSFA Advisory Board Recommendation

The LOSFA Advisory Board recommends that the Board of Regents authorize the Executive Director of LOSFA to publish notice of intent to make these rules permanent, subject to Board of Regents/BESE approval.

Agenda Item III.C.

Consent Agenda: TOPS Exception

Requests for exception to the TOPS regulatory provisions that require students to remain continuously enrolled and to earn the annual credit hours required during the academic year

Background:

Sections 705.A.6 and 7 of the TOPS administrative rules require TOPS recipients to continue to enroll in the fall and spring semesters of each academic year, to remain enrolled throughout the semester, and to earn the annual credit hours required by the end of the academic year. Section 2103.E authorizes the governing body to grant an exception to these requirements when the student/recipient has exceptional circumstances that are beyond their immediate control and that necessitate full or partial withdrawal from or non-enrollment in an eligible postsecondary institution.

One request for exception was reviewed and approved by the LOSFA Advisory Board at its meeting of October 14, 2021. The student has presented facts and circumstances that the student believes justify the granting of an exception as an exceptional circumstance.

LOSFA Advisory Board Recommendation

The LOSFA Advisory Board recommends approval of TOPS request for exception as presented.