

Louisiana Board of Regents

Final Report

**Response to
Act 309 of the 2009 Regular Session**

Louisiana Board of Regents

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Executive Summary

Education is everyone's business and is the key to creating business, raising the state's economic viability and increasing the quality of life for its citizens. The global economy is quickly bypassing those who lack education beyond high school, yet the majority of Louisiana's citizens lack a postsecondary education credential. These well-documented educational deficits are a drag on the state's economy, and keep many Louisianans from realizing their potential to successfully compete in the new knowledge-based economy.

The monetary return on investment in postsecondary education to the state is significant. According to 2008 data from the National Center for Public Policy in Higher Education, if all racial/ethnic groups in the state had equally high levels of education, annual personal income in Louisiana would be \$10 billion higher. The Board of Regents' primary goal is to assure that more Louisiana residents are provided access to and successfully earn a postsecondary education credential so they may obtain the employment they desire. Regents' role is to drive state-wide policies and initiatives that expand collaboration among all educational entities, business interests and governmental agencies in the state to educate more students in areas tied to quality jobs that support Louisiana's economy. Specifically, Regents has set a goal with the state's four public postsecondary management boards to produce an additional 10,000 awards by 2015.

Since the current fiscal crisis is calling into question the very survival of the postsecondary education enterprise in the state, some may wonder whether graduating more students is plausible. Educating more, even in these times, is possible and even more necessary in order to meet the needs of our state. Almost 22 percent of Louisiana's workforce is comprised of adults with some college credit but no postsecondary credential. Underserved students -- minorities, low-income and first-generation college-goers, often underrepresented in postsecondary education -- comprise an ever growing portion of Louisiana's population. A better educated citizenry will increase the state's economic competitiveness.

Successfully educating more will be achieved through the coordination of funding, resources and offerings based on priorities of the state and its regions. The assets of each of the state's regions will be assessed and maximized through collaboration between and among public postsecondary entities, regardless of management board affiliation. Mergers, consolidations and cooperative offerings will also be considered.

To help identify areas ripe for increased efficiencies, Act 309 of the 2009 Regular Legislative Session created the Postsecondary Education Review Commission (PERC). PERC was charged to review the entire postsecondary enterprise and, in context of the current fiscal challenges,

recommend ways to best serve the citizens of the state. The Board of Regents embraced the establishment of PERC and welcomed the intensive study. Regents has received and reviewed the PERC report and recommendations. The central tenets complement the Regents' past and current programs, policies, and actions and provide further impetus for driving the postsecondary education enterprise into a more student-centered, workforce-relevant, and cost-efficient operation.

The PERC report includes five major focus areas with 22 individual recommendations, concluding that the state needs to: dramatically improve graduation rates; align program offerings with institutional mission and economic priorities; emphasize institutional quality and performance in the funding formula; enhance tuition and financial aid policies; and reevaluate the postsecondary governance structure (Appendix A). A summary response by Regents to each of PERC's 22 recommendations is provided in Appendix B.

The Board of Regents, much like PERC, is not satisfied with the performance outcomes of Louisiana's postsecondary education system and agrees that higher standards and better outcomes are a must. Regents embraces PERC's goals, as well as the proposed *LA GRAD Act*, both of which seek to increase graduation rates. Improved student success is critical. However, measures of success must expand beyond the national standard graduation rate, which only includes traditional full-time students entering college for the first time, to gauge the success of institutions in educating all students -- traditional, non-traditional, part-time, and underrepresented students alike.

Examples of on-going and near-term Board of Regents' initiatives and policies that relate directly to PERC's recommendations include:

- Strengthening university minimum admission standards, tightening exceptions, and reducing developmental education at four-year institutions;
- Reviewing and focusing mission statements to ensure that each area of the state has a full-range of student-centered postsecondary education services that provide for workforce needs and are not unnecessarily duplicative;
- Refining program offerings to comply with newly focused institutional missions, institutional areas of excellence, and regional needs;
- Updating the funding formula to drive improved performance measured by critical achievement points which may include items such as progression from one year to the next, completion, and time to degree;
- Examining budget priorities to increase funding of innovative policies which may include items such as academic course redesign and statewide e-Learning and e-Advising;
- Aligning tuition and financial aid policies to encourage college attendance and improve student success;
- Developing a science and technology plan which targets research funding to statewide innovation efforts and workforce needs;
- Expanding cooperation between and among public postsecondary institutions, regardless of management board affiliation; and

- Sharing of facilities, faculty and technology.

These critical initiatives are resulting in a more cohesive statewide system that is made possible, in large part, by the constitutional and statutory authority of the state's policy and coordinating board.

PERC recommended restructuring the state's governance and coordination functions. The Board of Regents urges caution: the primary objective of increasing the number of residents with postsecondary education credentials must remain in the forefront and not be sidetracked or lost in a battle over governance. Knowledge rules in today's world. Thus to compete, Louisiana must not be distracted from the goal of educating more citizens beyond high school. During the past decade, the Board of Regents has implemented initiatives that, as outside organizations affirm, have led to important progress in postsecondary education in Louisiana. National research suggests that major changes in postsecondary education governance structures often result in years of inertia and a loss of momentum in the system. Any such loss at this time could be crippling not only to the state's postsecondary education enterprise but to its entire economy.

Due to the looming financial cliff facing postsecondary education, the system must be re-engineered to survive and prosper. Regents will continue to drive that transformation toward a more efficient and effective operation that educates more through prioritization of the state's offerings and resources, emphasizing regional delivery of services.

1 Louisiana Board of Regents
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3

4 Introduction
5

6 Louisiana's fiscal condition is presenting unprecedented challenges to the state as a whole and,
7 in particular, to unprotected areas of the state's budget such as the postsecondary education
8 enterprise. The fiscal constraints are not expected to lessen in the foreseeable future. However,
9 research has repeatedly shown that the true key to economic prosperity is education. Louisiana
10 ranks low on most regional and national educational success measures. Thus, for Louisiana to
11 develop a path to a sustainable future, more of its citizens must be educated beyond high
12 school and the investments in postsecondary education must be secure.

13 The Louisiana Board of Regents is constitutionally charged to plan, coordinate, and exercise
14 budgetary responsibility for the public postsecondary education enterprise. These duties are at
15 Regents' forefront as it designs statewide initiatives to educate more students in a manner that
16 is quality driven and responsive to the needs of Louisiana. The Board of Regents works in
17 tandem with people and organizations that represent all sectors of education (public and
18 private, preK-12 and postsecondary), business and industry, and, other governmental agencies
19 (local and statewide) to develop a comprehensive postsecondary education system. The
20 primary goal of Regents has been and continues to be to increase access to and success in
21 postsecondary education, leading to a better quality of life for all of Louisiana's citizens.
22

23 Louisiana's postsecondary education enterprise has absorbed \$250 million in state funding cuts
24 in the last 14 months. Although the Governor placed postsecondary education as a priority in
25 his current executive budget to stave off additional cuts for the upcoming fiscal year, a \$289.6
26 million shortfall is still expected once federal stimulus money is exhausted in 2011-12. Given
27 that reality, the Board of Regents has intensified its efforts to focus the entire system on
28 improving operations and becoming more efficient while successfully educating students.
29

30 In light of the state's educational deficits and the expectation of continued resource
31 constriction, the 2009 legislature created the Postsecondary Education Review Commission
32 (PERC). The commission was charged to conduct a comprehensive review of Louisiana's
33 postsecondary education enterprise and to report its findings to the Board of Regents.
34

35 PERC's report was delivered to the Board of Regents on February 12, 2010. The findings
36 centered on the need for dramatic increases in graduation rates and reassured Regents that a
37 relentless commitment to increase the number of citizens with postsecondary credentials is not
38 only a good idea, but necessary to the state's well-being. Many of Regents' on-going initiatives
39 incorporate and expand upon the ideas recommended by PERC. Additional coordination of
40 resources and offerings must occur so that more students may achieve educational success
41 even as funding constricts. The Board of Regents is continuing and intensifying its initiatives to
42 drive that coordination.

1 **Successfully Educate More**

2
3 Educational attainment is strongly correlated to economic prosperity and quality of life.
4 Research consistently demonstrates that to compete in knowledge-based world markets,
5 citizens need education beyond high school. Therefore, increasing opportunities for access and
6 success should be the fundamental purpose of any postsecondary entity. This is especially true
7 for institutions in Louisiana where the adult population lags behind most of the nation in
8 possessing postsecondary credentials.

9 Increasing postsecondary education degree attainment is a goal of many national groups. The
10 President’s goal is for America to be the nation with the highest proportion of college graduates
11 by 2020. The Lumina Foundation wants to have 60 percent of Americans holding high-quality
12 postsecondary education credentials by 2025, while the Gates Foundation’s goal is to double
13 the number of low-income Americans with training beyond high school. The Board of Regents
14 has recognized successful education beyond high school as a Louisiana imperative and has set a
15 goal with the state’s four public postsecondary management boards (Louisiana Community and
16 Technical College System, Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College
17 System, Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College System, University of
18 Louisiana System) to produce an additional 10,000 degrees by 2015 (Appendix C).

19
20 Regents embraces PERC’s goal to dramatically increase graduation rates and has initiated a
21 series of actions to support these efforts including: increasing university minimum admission
22 standards; developing successful pathways through gateway courses; and providing incentives
23 to institutions that achieve performance goals (Recommendations 1-3). The Governor has also
24 shown his commitment to reward universities that achieve performance goals. The proposed
25 *LA GRAD Act*, unveiled this week, would provide additional authority and flexibility to
26 institutions that meet specific performance goals (Appendix D).

27
28 Success in college depends on actions of both the students and the institutions that teach
29 them, many of which begin well before students start their postsecondary education
30 experience. Students should graduate from high school both college and career ready. Over the
31 last decade, the Board of Regents has developed and instituted several initiatives to address all
32 aspects of preparation including: Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS); College
33 Access Information Campaign; Louisiana Core 4 Curriculum; Early Start/Dual Enrollment;
34 Louisiana Lifelong Learning Education Portal (e-Portal); Louisiana Gaining Early Awareness and
35 Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP); workforce certification; Success Through
36 Articulation (STArt); Louisiana Systemic Initiatives Program (LaSIP); statewide placement policy
37 for entry level math and English courses; and, redesigned teacher education (Appendix E).

38
39 Students’ success in postsecondary education is most clearly influenced by their level of
40 preparation and the type of institution attended. One method to help match student
41 preparation with institutional expectations is through the establishment of university admission
42 standards. Minimum admissions standards were implemented in 2005 for the majority of four-
43 year institutions and have been continually monitored and upgraded by Regents (Appendix F).

1 Although it is too early to measure the impact on six-year graduation rates, retention rates at
2 most institutions are showing improvement (Appendix G). To accelerate progress, university
3 admission standards are currently being reviewed for strengthening. The proposed *LA GRAD*
4 *Act* supports this change by linking institutions' tuition authority to performance, including
5 stronger admission standards and improved graduation rates. Under Regents' proposed plan,
6 by 2014, entering freshmen who need developmental courses will have to begin at a two-year
7 college. This relates to PERC's recommendation that two-year institutions become the exclusive
8 providers of non-degree credit prerequisite courses (Recommendation 7).

9 10 **Coordinated Funding, Offerings and Resources**

11
12 To successfully educate more citizens in the most efficient manner, the Board of Regents must
13 expeditiously coordinate funding, offerings and resources of the postsecondary education
14 system. Increased focus will be placed on regional delivery of programs and offerings to
15 maximize access and success while creating greater efficiencies.

16
17 The statewide agenda, adopted by Regents in the 2001 Master Plan, is to increase
18 opportunities for access and success in postsecondary education. The Master Plan, which is
19 presently being updated, promotes two key goals: increasing the number of academic
20 credentials awarded to meet current and future workforce needs; and investing strategically in
21 research. To promote research leading to innovation, the Regents has unanimously endorsed a
22 statewide science and technology research plan. Many of these research-based initiatives will
23 help accelerate the state's economic development efforts. Due to the current and impending
24 financial reductions, these goals will only be achieved if funding, offerings and resources are
25 prioritized and intentionally directed to drive success.

26 27 **Coordination**

28
29 The Board of Regents serves a critical role in developing, coordinating and driving statewide
30 initiatives. Its many constitutional duties include: development of a Master Plan for Public
31 Postsecondary Education; development of a formula for the equitable distribution of funds;
32 approval and elimination of academic programming; representation of all public postsecondary
33 education to the Governor and the legislature; and prioritization of capital outlay projects
34 (Appendix H). Regents is also responsible for administering approximately \$90 million in flow-
35 through funds for programs, grants and entities not directly related to its primary constitutional
36 and statutory duties.

37
38 Louisiana's four system management boards are responsible for the supervision of day-to-day
39 operations of public postsecondary institutions. Some of these functions include: approving
40 personnel decisions; conferring degrees; purchasing and owning property; executing leases and
41 contracts; pooling resources; and incurring debt, including bond indebtedness. In addition to
42 the management of two-year and four-year institutions, current boards manage and supervise
43 the state's public hospital system, medical centers, law schools and agricultural centers.

1 While the management boards are responsible for advocacy for their institutions, it is the
2 coordinating board that is constitutionally and statutorily charged to represent postsecondary
3 education and balance the interests of all institutions in order to fulfill the state's needs.
4

5 Almost all of PERC's recommendations require statewide coordination across public
6 institutions, with one suggesting a strengthening and clarification of the Board of Regents'
7 powers (Recommendation 22). However, at its last meeting, the commission passed a
8 recommendation that advocated establishing two governing boards -- one for four-year
9 institutions and one for two-year and technical institutions (Recommendation 20). These
10 boards would oversee the management functions of the institutions, day-to-day operations,
11 and administrative and advocacy duties. There is nothing mentioned regarding how statewide
12 coordination, planning and policy making would occur.
13

14 At the January PERC meeting Aims McGuinness, a nationally and internationally recognized
15 expert on higher education governance structures, provided commissioners with a view of
16 different governance structures among postsecondary education entities in the United States.
17 He stated that there is no one perfect governance structure and that all forms have advantages
18 and disadvantages. He also noted that actions of the Governor and the legislature may
19 informally determine the powers of the boards, no matter the formal structure in the state.
20 According to McGuinness, any change in governance structure should be a means to an end and
21 made only when no other solution will bring about the desired result. He cautioned governance
22 change; even then, because of the inertia and loss of momentum that can be caused by the
23 change itself.
24

25 Appendix I is the Board of Regents' full response on the governance recommendations adopted
26 by PERC. The elimination of the oversight board that is responsible for statewide planning and
27 coordination would arguably do little toward developing a more cohesive system with a
28 coordinated statewide view. Clearly, this is the time when aggressive action and stability will be
29 needed and any loss in momentum or focus could be devastating to the state. While a change
30 in governance may, in the end, be a good idea, and certainly the public debate is appropriate,
31 the statewide policy perspective will continue to be necessary. In light of devastating budgetary
32 projections for the 2011-2012 fiscal year, moving forward with a proposal that could cause a
33 loss of momentum should be approached with caution.
34

35 Regardless of future debates that may occur regarding the state's governance structure, the
36 Board of Regents will continue to perform its constitutional and statutory duties. It will
37 coordinate reengineering of the postsecondary education organization into a more cost-
38 effective, student-centered, workforce-relevant system that educates more students. In this
39 reengineering process, Regents will conduct a comprehensive review of the enterprise and
40 study the need for consolidations and mergers with an eye toward regional delivery and
41 maximized efficiency (Recommendation 21).
42
43
44

1 **Funding**

2
3 Funding of postsecondary education is a conundrum in Louisiana. Costs for postsecondary
4 education have steadily outpaced the consumer price index, while state receipts have
5 decreased. In Louisiana, unfunded mandates to postsecondary education rose by \$69.4 million
6 for the upcoming fiscal year alone. Postsecondary education management boards are provided
7 few options to cover the increased costs. Louisiana is the only state in the nation that requires a
8 two-thirds vote of the legislature to increase tuition; thus, the management boards' ability to
9 consider tuition increases as a part of a comprehensive survival plan is limited. However, solely
10 increasing tuition is not a viable response because the impact would likely prove detrimental to
11 postsecondary student access. The only real choice left is to prioritize funding by areas of
12 greatest need, seek modest tuition increases, and cut other areas -- even those demanded and
13 deemed effective -- that are less germane to the core mission of postsecondary education.

14
15 The funding formula is a mechanism for equitable distribution of the limited dollars. Recently,
16 pay for performance has become a dominant topic in Louisiana. The funding formula has been
17 reviewed in conjunction with revisions in the Master Plan. A major focus has been to connect a
18 portion of funding to performance measures and to more accurately base funding on the role,
19 scope and mission of institutions (Appendix J). Unfortunately, implementation of the new
20 formula has been pursued at the same time that state fiscal demands have required significant
21 state budget reductions to postsecondary education. In the midst of these major adjustments,
22 PERC recommendations are calling for further revisions in the funding formula and the basis
23 upon which funding levels and allocation are to be determined. In response to these
24 circumstances the Board of Regents has established a new Funding Formula Task Force to
25 recommend revisions (Appendix K).

26
27 These revisions will seek to drive improved performance measured by critical achievement
28 points which may include items such as progression from one year to the next, completion and
29 time to degree. This is in alignment with recommendations by PERC (Recommendations 10 &
30 13). Institutional success, as defined by Regents, expands beyond historical and traditional
31 formula factors. The historical factors of enrollments and costs are readily available and can be
32 compared to other states; yet they only capture and reflect the resource needs of the
33 institutions. New formula funding methodologies and strategies shift the focus of funding
34 allocations to measures of outcome and success in fulfilling state needs. Comprehensive and
35 well-designed formula funding strategies reflect the specific needs of a state and its citizens. In
36 Louisiana, outcomes need to look beyond the traditional college students that begin and end
37 their college careers at the same institution. Well-performing institutions successfully educate
38 students from all walks of life and those that transfer from one institution to another.
39 Louisiana's data system tracks the progress of students attending the state's public institutions,
40 even those that transfer, so Regents can evaluate institutions on their success in educating
41 more than traditional students.

42
43 Additional fiscal policies to be reviewed include: finding ways to fund innovative programs, such
44 as course redesigns and expansion of technology; equalizing funding for associate degree

1 programs and lower division courses; the use of end-of-semester student hours as the basis of
2 the funding formula; and, establishing performance measures for all entities in postsecondary
3 education (Recommendations 8, 9, 11, & 15).

4
5 PERC also recommended that university presidents and chancellors be evaluated in part on the
6 same measures as the institutions they oversee (Recommendation 12). Regents' administrative
7 salary policy, in place since 2002, provides for a review and assessment of the appropriateness
8 of administrative salaries. It also includes a provision requiring performance reviews of chief
9 administrators by their management boards. In response to PERC recommendations, the
10 administrative salary policy will be reviewed for the purpose of specifically linking the
11 performance appraisal of presidents and chancellors to the goals reflected in the institutions'
12 performance requirements.

13
14 Tuition and financial aid policies impact college-going decisions: whether or not to attend;
15 where to attend; and whether or not to continue. These policies must be aligned to encourage
16 proper preparation, provide maximum access, and guide students to institutions where they
17 are more likely to succeed and to continue to completion. The Board of Regents agrees with
18 PERC that tuition authority should be returned to the management boards within the confines
19 of a statewide policy instituted by Regents (Recommendation 16). The recently proposed *LA*
20 *GRAD Act* would also link tuition authority to performance achievement.

21
22 Regents' tuition and fee policy is currently being reviewed for revision and update (Appendix L).
23 It sets the maximum tuition rates to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) median for
24 institutional peers, but it limits that maximum amount to the wealth of Louisiana relative to
25 other southern states and includes a performance element. Regents' tuition policy includes a
26 requirement that non-resident undergraduates be charged at a minimum of 200 percent of the
27 in-state undergraduate tuition rate and that graduate students be charged at a level consistent
28 with SREB charges (Recommendation 17). In addition, the establishment of a statewide policy
29 for residence regulations and fee waivers to provide for consistency in definitions and
30 administration is underway (Recommendation 18).

31
32 Financial aid can greatly impact students' postsecondary education opportunities. There is no
33 question that the state's merit-based financial aid program, the Taylor Opportunity Program for
34 Students (TOPS), promotes academic preparation for, and progress in, postsecondary
35 education. The GO Grant is a Regents' initiative that was instituted in 2007 as the state's first
36 need-based aid program in response to a legislative request to develop a financial aid policy for
37 the state (Appendix M). The demand quickly outstripped funding, leading to revisions to the
38 program. Regents also developed and implemented the Early Start (dual enrollment) Program
39 in 2006 with the support of the legislature. This program provides tuition assistance for eligible
40 11th and 12th grade students from public high schools to enroll in college courses for both high
41 school and college credit.

42
43 Questions have been raised as to whether the programs could be better aligned resulting in
44 more efficient use of state resources. PERC recommended a review of tuition and financial aid

1 polices (Recommendation 19). Regents has already begun a review and expects it to be
2 completed well in advance of the 2011 session as requested by PERC.

3
4 Streamlining and efficiencies, however, can only go so far in protecting past investments in
5 postsecondary education. Major budget cuts will jeopardize the state's future. In recognition of
6 this, PERC recommended that the state change the constitution in order to provide the
7 legislature more choices when dealing with tight budgets (Recommendation 14). Regents
8 concurs and has advocated for adequate and stable funding for public postsecondary
9 education.

10 11 Offerings

12
13 In order to educate more with constricted funding, Regents must streamline the activities of
14 the postsecondary education operation. The Board of Regents included campus mission
15 statements in the 2001 Master Plan (Appendix N). The mission statements were intentionally
16 open-ended to allow institutions to adapt as demand dictated. However, major financial
17 changes to postsecondary education now require that those missions become more focused.
18 Well-defined statements of role, scope, and mission can help institutions establish and retain
19 programs and research activities that best meet regional economic needs, fit well with defined
20 areas of excellence, and trigger extensive collaboration with proximate institutions. For
21 selected campuses, led by the flagship, focused research missions are expected to produce
22 impacts and outcomes which are statewide, national, and international in scope.

23
24 The constitution vests Regents with the responsibility to approve, disapprove and eliminate
25 academic program offerings. Program review is a continuous process. In 2009, 245 low-
26 completer programs were terminated by Regents and a revised process was developed to
27 expand program review beyond productivity to include program relevancy. It is no longer
28 enough to define an effective program as one that meets the threshold of producing a certain
29 number of graduates. Now, a program must also be evaluated by how well it supports the
30 institution's mission and meets the needs of its region and the expectations of an ever-changing
31 workforce (Appendix O).

32
33 PERC recommended a rigorous review of role, scope and mission statements and academic
34 program offerings (Recommendations 4 – 6). Regents is well on the way to creating a more
35 responsive system with more refined mission statements. Once new role, scope and mission
36 statements are adopted, the new program review process will be expedited. Offerings will be
37 assessed based on consistency with the institution's mission, institutional areas of excellence
38 and/or regional needs. Suggested program review elements recommended by PERC will also be
39 considered. An initial inventory of required hours for degrees has been conducted and a
40 process is being developed to minimize excess hours.

1 Regents has routinely pushed innovative methods and policies to ensure quality program and
2 course offerings. A few examples of these include: a policy for mandatory program
3 accreditation, a policy for placement into college-level math and English courses, and
4 redesigned teacher education programs (Appendix P).

5 6 **Resources**

7
8 Educating more requires the prioritizing of resources. Regents views regional delivery and
9 expansion of technology as key to a more efficient system with expanded access and
10 opportunity for success. Many of today's students are technologically savvy and have lifestyles
11 that are very different from the college students of previous generations. Many are not
12 committed to one institution but are instead committed to earning a quality credential
13 wherever and whenever possible. They are more mobile and have competing life demands.

14
15 Educating these students requires a new paradigm. No longer can teaching be confined to a
16 traditional institutional setting. Technology must be utilized and maximized. Many students are
17 willing to forgo the "college experience" in exchange for readily accessible, workforce relevant
18 programs that are transferable from one institution to another.

19
20 Among the most recognizable uses of technology is the delivery of courses and entire degree
21 programs on-line. To identify strategic goals to guide the state's electronic learning initiatives,
22 Regents has established the Electronic Learning Strategic Planning Task Force. The task force is
23 charged to identify key elements, innovative approaches, and best practices that provide the
24 momentum for Louisiana to truly embrace electronic learning as a delivery mechanism and as a
25 way to increase educational opportunities. It will also seek to maximize existing e-Learning
26 initiatives and technology infrastructure in order to expand the state's on-line offerings such as
27 Center for Adult Learning in Louisiana (CALL), Louisiana Optical Network Initiative (LONI), and
28 LOUIS: The Louisiana Library Network (Appendix Q).

29
30 Online advising and personalized student support (e-Advising) is another technology-based
31 strategy designed to improve student retention, completion, and time-to-degree. These
32 systems also serve to maximize efficiency in the utilization of faculty and facilities. Efforts have
33 begun to determine the plausibility of statewide adoption of this electronic advising tool.

34
35 Another use of technology to enhance success is through course redesign. Several Louisiana
36 institutions have adopted National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT) models to
37 redesign gateway courses. Others have initiated the NCAT planning process. Gateway courses
38 are those lower-level courses, such as College Algebra and Introductory English, which a
39 student must pass in order to continue his/her college career. Many students struggle to pass
40 these courses and may even drop out of college because of their experiences in them. NCAT has
41 developed a process to redesign such courses to achieve better learning outcomes at a lower
42 long-term cost than the traditional delivery method by taking advantage of the capabilities of
43 technology. PERC recommended instituting such course redesigns at all institutions, and
44 Regents concurs (Recommendation 2).

1 In the 1990's, Regents implemented an articulation matrix designed to increase the portability
2 of courses from one campus to another. Feedback reported gaps in the articulation matrix;
3 therefore, Regents hosted a conference on articulation and transfer last spring to explore
4 implementing a statewide model. Experts from other states with articulation and transfer
5 agreements presented at the conference. Many suggested that it would take years for an
6 agreement to be developed. Regents heralded model legislation enacted in 2009 requiring that
7 a comprehensive statewide approach be developed and implemented. In August, a task force
8 was formed with faculty and system leaders from all management boards as members. The
9 progress they have made is substantial -- statewide transfer degrees between two-year and
10 four-year institutions are now being established with expected implementation this fall
11 (Appendix R).

12
13 Given the magnitude of recent budget reductions, and faced with the potential of even deeper
14 cuts in the near future, expanded technology-based learning, program eliminations, and
15 articulation efforts alone will not be enough to mitigate the shortfalls. An integral component
16 of regional delivery to maximize facility usage, faculty sharing and administrative oversight
17 must include an intensive review of possible mergers and consolidations that may result in few
18 short-term savings but significant long-term savings (Recommendation 21).

19
20 Despite political and local reactions such a review will likely engender, it is important that all
21 possible mergers and consolidations be considered as "on the table." The comprehensive
22 review will include an assessment of all geographic regions of the state, workforce needs of the
23 regions, resources of all current systems and institutions, and program offerings. In addition to
24 reviewing merger and consolidation possibilities, other means to improve the efficient and
25 effective delivery of postsecondary education in each region of the state will be explored. To
26 assist this process, Regents, along with the Louisiana Workforce Commission, is considering
27 various means of collecting information and data to establish a placement accountability
28 system designed to track Louisiana graduates into the workforce.

29
30 A thorough analysis of current expenditures and return on investment, as well as alternative
31 ways of administering the delivery of postsecondary education must be undertaken to assure
32 that limited dollars are maximized toward the production of an educated citizenry and
33 workforce. Both must be commensurate with the needs and expectations of Louisiana's
34 families and businesses.

35 36 **Conclusion**

37
38 A vibrant and productive Louisiana requires a growing investment in postsecondary education.
39 Even in these times of constricted funding, the objective of the Board of Regents is to enable
40 more citizens to be successfully educated beyond high school.

41
42 Some of the on-going and near-term Board of Regents' initiatives to target dollars, offerings,
43 and resources include:

- 44 • Strengthening university minimum admission standards and tightening exceptions;

- 1 • Reviewing and focusing mission statements to ensure that each area of the state has a
2 full-range of student-centered postsecondary education services that provide for
3 workforce needs and are not unnecessarily duplicative;
- 4 • Refining program offerings to comply with new focused institutional missions,
5 institutional areas of excellence, and regional needs;
- 6 • Updating the funding formula to drive improved performance measured by critical
7 achievement points which may include items such as progression from one year to the
8 next, completion, and time to degree;
- 9 • Examining budget priorities to increase funding of innovative policies which may include
10 items such as academic course redesign and statewide e-Learning and e-Advising;
- 11 • Aligning tuition and financial aid policies to encourage college attendance and improve
12 student success;
- 13 • Developing a science and technology plan which targets research funding to statewide
14 innovation efforts and workforce needs;
- 15 • Expanding cooperation between and among public postsecondary institutions,
16 regardless of management board affiliation; and
- 17 • Sharing of facilities, faculty and technology.

18
19 The future of the postsecondary education enterprise must be secure -- at stake is a vibrant
20 knowledge-based economy and a work-ready citizenry. Louisiana must embrace the idea that
21 education is everybody's business and prioritize the business of education to ensure more
22 citizens become Louisiana graduates, Louisiana workers, and Louisiana tax-payers.

23
24 Board of Regents is leading the charge to build a stronger state. By coordinating funding,
25 offerings and resources with a focus on regional delivery, Regents will continue to drive
26 postsecondary education to be a more student-centered, workforce-relevant, and cost-efficient
27 operation.