



Board of Regents Policy: Establishment of a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) Designation

Background

Article VIII of Louisiana's Constitution authorizes the Board of Regents to develop a master plan for higher education in Louisiana. This Master Plan provides a broad vision for the state's higher education system and acknowledges its interdependence with the economy as well as its many contributions towards building better lives for Louisiana's citizenry. The Master Plan adopted by the Board in 2019 recognizes the reality that Louisiana must raise the educational attainment of its adult citizens if it is to compete successfully in the 21st-century world economy. The Plan also addresses the need to strategically invest in targeted research to sustain and expand the State's economic development. Increased accountability is emphasized throughout each element of the Plan.

To reach the state's ambitious goal of 60% of Louisiana's population holding a postsecondary credential of value by 2030, the Master Plan notes the critical role of historically black colleges and other minority-serving institutions in erasing equity gaps and increasing talent development. As the report states, "While important to all institutions, this must be an intentional focus for Louisiana's two-year colleges, as they serve a significant minority population along with historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), who mission is to serve and ensure success for minority populations."

As thoroughly articulated in the attached "Rationale for a Proposed HBCU Designation," the contributions of these institutions are significant and far reaching for our state and our nation.

As an addendum to the Master Plan, the Board of Regents delineates the types of institutions in the state and, after consultation with postsecondary management boards and campus leaders, establishes a mission statement for each two-year college, four-year university, special purpose institution, and research unit. The Board approves these as a component of the Master Plan. In addition, the Board is statutorily required to report annually to the Legislature and the Governor on the status of higher education relative to these mission statements, including revisions since the last report.

There are five public HBCU institutions in Louisiana and these are included in the Master Plan: Grambling State University (GSU), Southern University and A&M College (SUBR), Southern University Law Center (SULC), Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO), and Southern University at Shreveport (SUSLA). The Southern University System (SUS) is recognized as the only HBCU system in the nation.

At the Regents meeting in May 2020, Chairman Chabert expressed interest in exploring the adoption of an HBCU designation in the Master Plan.

Historical Context

Historically black colleges and universities are public and private institutions of higher education in the United States that were established prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with the intention of primarily

servicing the African American community. Most HBCU institutions were founded in the years after the U.S. Civil War and are located primarily in the Southern part of the country. HBCU institutions have continued to serve as places of opportunity for African American students to access and achieve degrees and credentials to support their life goals.

Review of Mission Statements and Institutional Classifications

The role, scope, and mission of each of Louisiana's public postsecondary HBCUs was examined as well as those of other HBCUs across the country. The mission statement of each Louisiana HBCU expressly acknowledges its federal designation as an HBCU and addresses this important characteristic. These mission statements are included in the Master Plan.

However, the HBCU designation is omitted from the classification in the Master Plan delineating the five types of institutions in Louisiana. The designation should be added to accurately acknowledge these valuable institutions in our state.

Classifications would be listed in the Master Plan as follows:

Comprehensive Research University (Flagship)

Specialized Units

Statewide Universities

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

Regional Universities

Community and Technical Colleges

Reflecting the federal designation, the HBCU classification included in the Master Plan would include the definition provided by the U.S. Department of Education as follows:

HBCU Designation

An HBCU is defined in Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as "any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of Black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary [of Education] to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation." Louisiana's public postsecondary HBCUs include the following; Grambling State University (GSU), Southern University and A&M College (SUBR), Southern University Law Center (SULC), Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO), and Southern University at Shreveport (SUSLA).

Given the range of HBCUs in Louisiana – from a specialized unit to a community college – this designation would be **an additional listing** for an HBCU institution, meaning each would be listed twice. For example, Southern Law Center would be listed both in the specialized units category and in the category of HBCUs.

Recommendation

In light of the longstanding and unique role historically black colleges and universities play in providing access to postsecondary learning opportunities for underrepresented and underserved student communities in Louisiana, senior staff recommends:

The Board of Regents add the HBCU designation and its federal definition to the classification of institutions in the State of Louisiana and update the Master Plan to include the HBCU designation for the following institutions:

Grambling State University
Southern University at New Orleans
Southern University Law Center

Southern University and A&M College
Southern University at Shreveport