

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

Board meeting to be held at the
Loyd J. Rockhold Distance Learning Room
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Cecil J. Picard Center
200 East Devalcourt Street
Lafayette, LA 70506



BOARD of REGENTS
STATE OF LOUISIANA

*The meeting may begin later
contingent upon adjournment
of previous meeting. Meetings
may also convene up to 30
minutes prior to posted
schedule to facilitate business

BOARD OF REGENTS

P. O. Box 3677, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821-3677
Phone: (225) 342-4253 and FAX: (225) 342-9318

Board of Regents Wednesday, October 18, 2023

Event	Time	Location
University of Louisiana at Lafayette Welcome and Campus Tour	9:30 a.m.	Loyd J. Rockhold Distance Learning Room University of Louisiana at Lafayette Cecil J. Picard Center 200 East Devalcourt Street Lafayette, LA 70506
(Meeting as a Committee of the Whole)** <i>Board of Regents</i> ➤ Finance ➤ Facilities and Property ➤ Academic and Student Affairs ➤ Planning, Research and Performance ➤ Audit	12:15 p.m.	Loyd J. Rockhold Distance Learning Room University of Louisiana at Lafayette Cecil J. Picard Center 200 East Devalcourt Street Lafayette, LA 70506

ADA Accessibility Requests: If you have a disability and require a reasonable accommodation to fully participate in this meeting, please contact Karlita Anderson five (5) business days before the meeting date via email at Karlita.Anderson@la.gov or by telephone at (225) 219-7660 to discuss your accessibility needs.

INDIVIDUAL COMMITTEE AGENDAS MAY BE FOUND ON THE INTERNET AT – www.laregents.edu

**Note: The Board of Regents reserves the right to enter into Executive Session, if needed, in accordance with R.S. 42:11 *et seq.*

Collis B. Temple, III
Chair

Gary N. Solomon, Jr.
Vice Chair

Robert W. Levy
Secretary

Kim Hunter Reed, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Higher Education



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*David J. Aubrey
Christian C. Creed
Blake R. David
Randy L. Ewing
Stephanie A. Finley
Phillip R. May, Jr.
Darren G. Mire
Wilbert D. Pryor
T. Jay Seale, III
Terrie P. Sterling
Felin R. Weill
Judy A. Williams-Brown
Samuel T. Gil, Student Member*

AGENDA
BOARD OF REGENTS*
Meeting as a Committee of the Whole
Wednesday, October 18, 2023
12:15 p.m.

Loyd J. Rockhold Distance Learning Room
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Cecil J. Picard Center
200 East Devalcourt Street
Lafayette, LA 70506

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Public Comments
- IV. Approval of Minutes from September 20, 2023
- V. Chair's Comments
- VI. Master Plan Update – Meauxmentum Moment
- VII. Reports and Recommendations
 - A. Finance
 - 1. Approval of Higher Education Budget Request for FY 2024-2025
 - B. Facilities and Property
 - 1. Consent Agenda
 - a. Small Capital Projects Report
 - i. LSU AG: New Greenhouse (Budget Increase)
 - ii. LSU AG: Shop Building
 - iii. LSU A&M: SVM Main Building Library Renovations
 - iv. LSU-S: Business Education Building West Side Roof Replacement
 - v. NTCC-Sullivan: Youthbuild Facility Renovations

- vi. ULL: New Iberia Research Center Land Acquisition
- b. Third Party Projects Report
 - i. La Tech: Joe Alliet Stadium Video Board Replacement

- 2. BoR FY 2024-25 Capital Outlay Budget Recommendation

- C. Academic and Student Affairs

- 1. Consent Agenda
 - a. Routine Staff Approvals
 - b. Academic Options
- 2. Reports
 - a. M.J. Foster Promise Program Annual Report
 - b. TOPS Annual Report

- D. Planning, Research and Performance

- 1. Consent Agenda
 - a. R.S. 17:1808 (Academic Licensure)
 - i. Renewal Applications
 - a) Baton Rouge General Medical Center (BRGM)
 - b) Fuller Theological Seminary (FTS)
 - c) Saybrook University (SU)
 - d) Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU)
 - e) University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USA)
 - b. Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission
 - i. Initial Applications
 - a) Clinical Lynks, Metairie, LA
 - b) Unimed Academy, New Orleans, LA
 - ii. Renewal Applications
 - a) 160 Driving Academy-Shreveport - License #2364
 - b) Acadiana Area Career College, Lafayette, LA - License #2357
 - c) Accelerated Academy-Denham Springs - License #2154
 - d) Accelerated Academy-Lafayette - License #2219
 - e) Accelerated Academy-Baton Rouge - License #2220
 - f) Accelerated Academy-Monroe - License #2223
 - g) Accelerated Academy-Slidell - License #2224
 - h) Accelerated Academy-Houma - License #2228
 - i) Accelerated Academy-Metairie - License #2230
 - j) Accelerated Academy-Hammond - License #2235
 - k) Accelerated Academy-Lake Charles - License #2308
 - l) Advance Nursing Training, New Orleans, LA - License #2197
 - m) Ark-La-Tex Dental Assisting Academy, Shreveport, LA - License #2131

- n) Baton Rouge Dental Assistant Academy-South - License #2305
- o) Baton Rouge School of Phlebotomy - License #2335
- p) Blue Cliff College-Alexandria - License #2358
- q) Blue Cliff College-Lafayette - License #2359
- r) Blue Cliff College-Metairie - License #2360
- s) Blue Cliff College-Metairie, Satellite - License #2361
- t) Camelot College, Baton Rouge, LA - License #680
- u) Coastal College-Alexandria - License #991
- v) Cross Road CDL Academy, Harvey LA - License #2321
- w) Digital Media Institute, Shreveport, LA - License #2198
- x) Fortis College, Baton Rouge, LA - License #2134
- y) Healthcare Training Institute, Kenner, LA - License #2109
- z) Life Care, Marrero, LA - License #2182
- aa) MedCerts, Livonia, MI - License #2337
- bb) Medical Training College, Baton Rouge, LA - License #969
- cc) NOLA Institute of Gaming, New Orleans, LA - License #2322
- dd) OceanPointe Dental Academy of Prairieville - License #2363
- ee) Opelousas Academy of Nondestructive Testing - License #2275
- ff) RelyOn Nutec USA, Houma, LA - License #2156
- gg) Remington College - Baton Rouge - License #2277
- hh) River Cities School of Dental Assisting, Shreveport, LA - License #2089
- ii) Smith Institute, Shreveport, LA - License #2362
- jj) Stick It Phlebotomy, Jonesboro, LA - License #2226
- kk) Synergy Massage Institute-Slidell - License #2336
- ll) Synergy Massage Institute-Metairie - License #2365

c. Approval Of Initial Rulemaking – Allows Advisory councils and commissions to meet remotely in accordance with new legislation R.S. 42:17.2.

E. Audit

1. Proposed Amendment to the Internal Audit Plan for Fiscal Year 2024

VIII. Reports and Recommendations by the Commissioner of Higher Education

IX. Other Business

- A. Approval of Board of Regents 2024 Meeting Calendar

X. Adjournment

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DRAFT

MINUTES

BOARD OF REGENTS

September 20, 2023

The Board of Regents met at 12:47 p.m. on Wednesday, September 20, 2023, in the Louisiana Purchase Room, Claiborne Building, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Chair Collis Temple III called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL

Ms. Doreen Brasseaux called the roll, and a quorum was established.

Present for the meeting were:

Collis Temple III, Chair
Gary Solomon, Jr., Vice Chair
Robert Levy, Secretary*
David Aubrey
Blake David
Samuel Gil, Student Member
Darren Mire
T. Jay Seale III
Terrie Sterling
Felix Weill
Judy Williams-Brown

Mgt. Board representatives present were:

Altermann “Chip” Jackson, LCTC System*
Mary Werner, LSU System*

Mgt. Board representatives not present were:

SU System Representative
UL System Representative

Absent from the meeting were:

Christian Creed
Randy Ewing
Stephanie Finley
Phillip May, Jr.
Wilbert Pryor
Terrie Sterling

Appendix A
Guest List

Chair Temple acknowledged the passing of Dr. Charles McDonald, who served on the Board of Regents from 2017 until 2022. Regent Levy noted that he, along with Commissioner Reed and Regent Williams-Brown, was able to attend the funeral of Dr. McDonald and noted that Commissioner Reed expressed, on behalf of the Board, our deepest condolences to the family and to those attending the funeral.

Regent Levy then spoke about Dr. McDonald's work at ULM, as well as his time as a student there, reflecting that Dr. McDonald had noted that it was his work there, in financial aid, that influenced his work in the legislature. Due to his efforts in the legislature, he became known as the "father of TOPS." Regent Levy noted that Dr. McDonald's "capstone exercise" was becoming a member of the Board of Regents, which was appropriate since he championed higher education throughout his work. Regent Levy stated that Dr. McDonald had a servant's heart and left an enduring legacy in higher education in this state. Chairman Temple thanked Regent Levy for his heartfelt comments and noted that Regent McDonald will be missed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Temple asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 23, 2023 MEETING

On motion of Regent Seale, seconded by Regent Weill, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the August 23, 2023 meeting.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Chair Temple made the following comments:

- He acknowledged Student Board Member Samuel Gil and gave him the opportunity to provide an update to the Board.
 - Regent Gil spoke about the COSBP meeting held the past week at Louisiana Delta Community College, saying that members had great discussion about campus safety and about the annual Washington, D.C. trip. He noted that COSPB will also be traveling to the College Convention in New Hampshire. He noted that this convention is not limited to SGA members and added that, in 2020, Louisiana had about 100 representatives, which was the largest group at that conference.
 - He reported that some of the institutions in Louisiana, including ULL, LSU, and SUBR, have hosted gubernatorial debates.
 - He added that some of the COSBP students were interviewed by LPB over the weekend, and LPB plans to use responses to lead into a question for the candidates participating in the gubernatorial debate hosted by LPB on September 28th.
 - He noted that, as discussed in the Budget Hearings the previous day, with enrollment decreases there will likely be budget decreases and increased student fees may be proposed to fill in the gap. He stated that raising student fees is not the answer to filling budget gaps as they put an undue burden on the students.
- Chairman Temple noted that Commissioner Reed joined Governor Edwards on August 28th for a ribbon cutting for the Lafourche Crossing GUMBO Project in Thibodaux, a newly completed

project to bring high-speed internet to over one hundred families and businesses in Lafourche Parish. He commented that we are first in broadband expansion across the nation.

- He announced that Regents staff attended the annual staff retreat at the Capital Park Museum, where he had the opportunity to open the retreat and Regent Sterling gave the keynote, specifically talking about having a work-life balance.
- Regent Solomon and Regent Sterling had the opportunity to celebrate Governor Edwards' healthcare and higher education investments at LSUHSC – New Orleans.

MASTER PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

Dr. Tristan Denley, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Innovation, presented to the Board the Master Plan Year 4 report. He reiterated the goal that shapes the Master Plan - 60% of the adult population with degree/credential attainment by 2030. He was excited to announce that Louisiana is currently at 49.5% attainment, which is the highest attainment rate the state has ever seen. He noted the importance of the return on investment related to growth and said he hoped to bring data to the Board next year. He went through the strategies that have been employed to achieve this goal – to increase college going, improve college success, and recognize all credentials of value – and provided details related to each of these elements.

Discussing the first factor, increasing college going, Dr. Denley noted the importance of dual enrollment, observing an overall 15% increase in participation over the last two years. He also indicated that there are 1,800 more African American students taking dual enrollment in 2022-2023 compared with 2021-2022. Other strategies to increase college-going include promoting admissions and the M.J. Foster Promise Program.

Dr. Denley noted the second strategy, to improve student success, will focus on scaling up corequisite math and English and advancing the Meauxmentum Framework. He provided a brief overview of these elements, citing as significant impacts reverse transfer, universal transfer pathways, and counting credentials from other providers.

Regent Solomon asked, regarding the chart showing the pathway to the 2030 goal of 85,000 students with a credential, how degree attainment aligns with the credential attainment goal laid out by LCTCS. Dr. Denley answered that there is a need to clarify what credentials are counted, which can be complicated. He talked about the differences in completion of degrees, stackable credentials, and

complete terms, noting that we need to be consistent about how these pieces fit together. He added that workforce credentials will comprise a significant number of these 85,000 degrees that Regents is aiming to produce. Regent Solomon asked if work had been done to see how the attainment goal is dispersed between different systems. Dr. Denley responded that with our expanded data set we now have the information that will allow us to do so. Regent Solomon noted that, in reference to resource planning, if the goal is to align the finite resources to increase degree attainment, it would be helpful to see the breakdown of expected degree attainment by system to understand how to allocate resources and set expectations as part of our operational and programmatic planning. Commissioner Reed acknowledged that this is an important point and noted the significance of the expanded data set that Dr. Denley has now developed, which includes all credentials of value from other providers, to enable the Board to have these planning conversations.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Chair Temple inquired if any member of the Board wanted to take up any of the Committee reports separately before a motion was made to accept all reports. Regent Aubrey asked if the Board would take up separately Agenda Item IV: Third-Party Project: ULL Football Stadium Seating Replacement from the Facilities Committee. Before discussion was had, Regent Temple asked the Board to approve all committee recommendations, except those of the Facilities and Property Committee.

On motion of Regent Mire, seconded by Regent Gil the Board voted unanimously to approve all Committee recommendations, except Facilities and Property Committee, from the September 20, 2023 Committee meetings.

After this vote was taken, Regent Mire moved to approve all items on the Facilities and Property Committee agenda except Agenda Item IV: Third-Party Project: ULL Football Stadium Seating Replacement.

On motion of Regent Mire, seconded by Regent Aubrey, the Board voted unanimously to approve all items on the Facilities and Planning Committee agenda, except Agenda Item IV: Third-Party Project: ULL Football Stadium Seating Replacement, from the September 20, 2023 Committee meetings.

Regent Aubrey noted his dissent on Agenda Item IV and explained his view that it sets a precedent of approval of the project though fees from parking and a master plan student fee will support it. Regent Weill asked for discussion regarding the approval of the third-party project, including the reasoning for and against approval.

Commissioner Reed asked Lawrence Sisung, Sisung Group, to speak specifically on the student impact regarding the master plan fee given the board's concerns. Mr. Sisung explained that this is a structure in which parking revenues will be used for a parking facility. He noted that when the parking facility was originally built, the master plan and parking fees were built around this credit structure. Mr. Sisung noted that these fees cannot be used towards luxury suites, as this is prohibited by law. He added that the whole project includes the master plan student fee and explained that the master plan student fee can only be applied to general seats, as these can be utilized by the general public. Regent Gil asked, regarding the master plan fee direction to this project, how this project will benefit students. Mr. Sisung noted that the project benefits students by providing an improvement in campus facilities, which will positively impact campus student life as well as yield increased economic impact. When asked, he clarified that the student fee is actually a parking fee paid by students and all others who choose to pay for parking on campus. Regent Seale asked whether, if these fees were eliminated, the project would still be built, but at a higher interest rate. Mr. Sisung confirmed this. Regent Aubrey asked if there was a dedicated master plan student fee outside of the parking fee. Mr. Sisung confirmed that it is part of the credit structure and that no new student fees are being assessed for this project which he stated has been approved by the UL system board as well. Regent Seale asked for clarification on how a Regents negative vote would affect the project. Mr. Sisung explained that the project would not move forward.

After this discussion, a roll call vote was taken for Agenda Item IV: Third-Party Project: ULL Football Stadium Seating Replacement. Agenda Item IV was passed by a vote of 8-1.

Board Members voting to approve Agenda Item IV.

Blake David
Samuel Gil
Darren Mire

T. Jay Seale
Gary Solomon, Jr.
Collis Temple III.
Felix Weill
Judy Williams-Brown

Board Members voting against Agenda Item IV.
David Aubrey

AUDIT

POSTLETHWAITE & NETTERVILLE (P&N) INTERNAL AUDIT PRESENTATION:

A. Internal Audit Risk Assessment B. Internal Audit Plan for Fiscal Year 2024

Mrs. Kristin Bourque from Postlethwaite & Netterville (P&N) provided an overview of the Annual Internal Audit Risk Assessment and summarized the objective and scope as well as the current year procedures. After this, Mrs. Bourque presented the Internal Audit Plan for Fiscal Year 2024. In the current plan, she noted three areas selected for auditing in FY 24: LOSFA's Information Technology Security Processes, BOR's Finance and Administration Human Resources, and BOR's Research and Sponsored Initiatives LASTEM.

Regent Seale requested a motion to approve P&N's Internal Audit Plan for FY 2024. On motion of Regent Weill and seconded by Regent Solomon, the motion passed unanimously.

FINANCE

REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF FY 2023-2024 OPERATING BUDGETS

Mr. Matthew LaBruyere, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration, began his presentation by stating that the September Board of Regents' budget hearings provided an entire day for the Board to receive budget presentations from each of the management boards regarding their campus and system budgets as well as from the Board of Regents, including the programs of LUMCON and LOSFA. The hearings focused on the FY 2023-2024 Operating Budgets, allowing for questions and discussion on immediate and long-term budget adjustments. The schedule for the budget hearings was as follows:

Schedule of Budget Hearings for Tuesday, September 20, 2022

**Board Conference Room, Claiborne Building, 6th Floor
Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

9:00 a.m.	Introduction
9:05 a.m.	Revenue Outlook and Statewide Overview
9:45 a.m.	Board of Regents
9:55 a.m.	Break
10:00 a.m.	Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON)
10:30 a.m.	Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA)
11:00 a.m.	Break
11:05 a.m.	Louisiana Community and Technical College System
12:05 p.m.	Lunch Break
12:45 p.m.	Southern University System
1:45 p.m.	Break
2:00 p.m.	Louisiana State University System
3:00 p.m.	University of Louisiana System

Following the hearings, today the Finance Committee met to review and consider acceptance of the FY 2023-2024 operating budgets. BoR staff presented statewide summary information for the Board's consideration.

Approved the funding recommendations for all Higher Education Systems, boards and agencies for FY 2023-2024.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. LaBruyere mentioned that this month's actions represent the final step in the FY 2023-2024 budget development cycle. Next month, staff will update and prepare the funding request for FY 2024-2025, which will be the first step in the FY 2024-2025 budget cycle.

Regent Aubrey asked Mr. LaBruyere to explain the previous formula reviews and what to expect in an upcoming review. Mr. LaBruyere explained the collaborative process with the systems undertaken in the past and added that the next review process is still being planned. Once set, the Board would be made aware of the review process.

FACILITIES AND PROPERTY

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Chris Herring, Associate Commissioner for Facilities Planning and Emergency Management, reported on the Consent Agenda Report containing the small capital projects staff approved since the previous meeting:

Approved the Consent Agenda, including the small capital and third-party projects reports, as presented.

A. Small Capital Projects

1. **BPCC: Server Room Project, Rayne, LA** – Bossier Parish Community College, Maintenance Reserve Account Revenues \$357,000
2. **LSU Ag Center: Rice Research Station New Greenhouse, Rayne, LA** – Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, Rice Research Board Revenues \$550,000
3. **LSU Ag Center: Greenhouse Generator, Rayne, LA** – Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, Rice Research Board Revenues \$179,925
4. **LSU A&M: Enchanted Forest Safety and Security Improvements, Baton Rouge, LA** – Louisiana State University and A&M College, Enhancing the Core Fee Revenues \$450,000
5. **LSU A&M: Evangeline Circle Horseshoe ADA Sidewalk and Site Improvements, Baton Rouge, LA** – Louisiana State University and A&M College, Facility Access Fee Revenues \$180,000
6. **LSU A&M: PERTT Equipment Yard CO2 Wellbore and Flow Loop Installation, Baton Rouge, LA** – Louisiana State University and A&M College, Operational Funds \$450,000
7. **LSU A&M: Thomas Boyd Hall Suite 146 Renovations, Baton Rouge, LA** – Louisiana State University and A&M College, Operational Funds \$335,000
8. **LSU A&M: Tiger Park Stadium Premium Seating Replacement, Baton Rouge, LA** – Louisiana State University and A&M College, Auxiliary Revenues \$225,000
9. **LSU-S: Business and Education Building Business Engagement Center, Shreveport, LA** – Louisiana State University - Shreveport, Operational Funds \$465,885

B. Third-Party Projects

1. **La Tech: Track and Field Complex Practice Fields, Ruston, LA** – Louisiana Tech University, Private Donations \$550,000
2. **NSU: Prather Coliseum Interior Renovations, Natchitoches, LA** – Northwestern State University, Private Donations \$90,000
3. **NSU: Softball Complex Improvements, Natchitoches, LA** – Northwestern State University, Private Donations \$980,000

THIRD-PARTY PROJECT: ULL FOOTBALL STADIUM SEATING REPLACEMENT

The University of Louisiana System (ULS), on behalf of the University of Louisiana – Lafayette (ULL), submitted a third-party project for the purpose of constructing seating improvements within the football stadium. ULL will enter into grounds and facilities leases with Ragin' Cajun Facilities, Inc. (RCFI), who will be responsible for the project. The project is a portion of a larger stadium renovation project to demolish the west side of the stadium and rebuild with improvements. The overall improvements include new premium seating, which is expected to include luxury suites, midrange suites, lower bowl loges, club-level loges, and club seating. This project will involve construction of new seating outside the premium seating areas. ULL, through RCFI, intends to use the proceeds of revenue bonds issued through the Louisiana Local Government Environmental Facilities and Community Development Authority to finance the project. Annual debt service for the bonds will be secured and payable from lease payments made by the ULS, on behalf of ULL, to RCFI and will be derived from a parking registration fee paid by students, faculty, and the public for the purpose of parking on campus, a master plan student fee, and a subordinate pledge of parking fees derived from the Zone 15 parking lot. ULL requested that a maintenance reserve fund not be applicable for this portion of the project due to this portion consisting of primarily concrete and metal seating improvements.

Regent Levy inquired as to whether any of the fees were long-running assessments or if they had a sunset. Mr. Herring stated that the parking fees are ongoing fees for parking on campus.

Supervisor Jackson asked for clarification on the master plan fee. Mr. Herring stated the master plan fee was a fee levied on students to assist ULL in meeting the goals laid out within the institutions most recent master plan.

Regent Gil requested a copy of the fee legislation related to parking. Mr. Herring invited Lawrence Sisung with the Sisung Group (representing ULL) and Matt Kern with Jones-Walker to come to the table

to provide additional insight. Mr. Walker stated that the parking fee is not a student self-assessed fee levied solely against students. The parking fees associated with the project are levied against any person (students, faculty, staff, or the general public) who would like to park on campus each semester.

Regent Aubrey sought confirmation that parking fees and the master plan fee would be used to fund the stadium improvements.

Mr. Sisung stated that the parking fees would not be used to fund the stadium improvements directly but would continue to fund the debt service associated with the Louis Street parking garage. The credit package involved with the Louis Street garage would be used for the seating project to achieve a lower interest rate for the transaction.

Approved the third-party project submitted by the University of Louisiana System, on behalf of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, for the purpose of construction and renovation of football stadium seating improvements.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Herring provided the Board with an update on the FY 2024-2025 Capital Outlay Budget recommendation, which will be presented during the October meeting. He followed up on Commissioner Dardenne's comments from the budget hearings while highlighting the number of projects received by the BOR for FY 2024-25 consideration and the year one funding requests for those projects. Specifically, he noted the number of total requests received by the management boards, including the number of ongoing projects from their submissions. Lastly, he informed the Board that the primary focus of the FY 2024-2025 recommendation will be on moving ongoing projects forward.

Regent Seale asked under what circumstances the Board would focus on new projects again. Mr. Herring stated it would be prudent to focus on completing ongoing projects, which include new facilities across all systems, before recommending new projects. Commissioner Reed mentioned that conversations would need to be held with the Division of Administration to discuss prioritization of the ongoing projects going forward due to capacity limitations.

Regent Solomon asked, if the BOR focused solely on moving ongoing projects forward, how the process would work if institutions went directly to their local delegations to fund specific projects.

Commissioner Reed stated that staff will need to work with the current, and future, Commissioners of Administration to determine what their focus will be in terms of capital outlay.

ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

Dr. Tristan Denley, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Innovation, presented the Consent Agenda, consisting of routine staff approvals.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approved the items on the Consent Agenda as presented.

A. Routine Staff Approvals

1. **River Parishes Community College: Request to offer the CAS in Medical Coding Specialist (CIP 51.0707) and the AAS in Drafting and Design Technology (CIP 15.1301) 100% online.**
2. **LSU A&M: Request to establish a Graduate Certificate (GC) in Agribusiness (CIP 52.0203) with a progress report due October 1, 2024.**
3. **LSU Alexandria: Request to offer the BA in History (54.0101) and the BS in Elementary Education (13.1202) 100% online.**
4. **LSU Alexandria: Request to establish an Undergraduate Certificate (UC) in Echocardiography (CIP 51.0920) with a progress report due October 1, 2024.**
5. **Southern University at New Orleans: Request to offer the BS in Forensic Science (CIP 43.0406), the MSW in Social Work (CIP 44.0701), the BS and MS in Computer Information Systems (CIP 11.0401) and the BS in Business Administration (CIP 52.0201) 100% online.**
6. **Grambling State University: Request to offer the MA in Mass Communication (CIP 09.0102) and the MAT in Special Education & Special Ed. M/Moderate Grades 6-12 (CIP 13.1205) 100% online.**
7. **McNeese State University: Request to offer the BS in Early Childhood Education Grades PK-3 (CIP 13.1210) and the BS in Elementary Education Grades 1-5 (CIP 13.1202) 100% online.**
8. **University of Louisiana at Lafayette: Request to offer the BSBA in Marketing (CIP 52.1401) and the MED in Special Education, Gifted (CP 13.1004) 100% online.**
9. **University of New Orleans: Request to offer the MS in Hospitality and Tourism Management (CIP 52.0901), the BA and MA in English (CIP 23.0101), the MFA in Creative Writing (CIP 23.1302) and the BA in Philosophy (CIP 38.0101) 100% online.**

NEW CENTER OF RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FOR THE STUDY OF INVASIVE SPECIES

Dr. Denley presented the request from LSU A&M, with the LSU AgCenter, to establish the new Center of Research Excellence for the Study of Invasive Species and to designate it as a Board of Regents Center of Research Excellence. LSU A&M and the LSU AgCenter wish to capitalize on a strong history of research in invasive species, and specifically their impact on the Lower Mississippi River Delta Region, including how those invasive species harm agriculture.

Approved the Center of Research Excellence for the Study of Invasive Species with conditional designation as a Center of Research Excellence.

2023 STATEWIDE STRATEGIC ACADEMIC PLANNING

Dr. Denley presented the Strategic Academic Plans for 2023. He noted that it is important that the plans are focused on the 2030 goal and that students receive the credentials they need. Previously, institutions provided 60 programs that are in various stages of initial implementation. This year, nine institutions recommend termination of 28 programs that do not meet the needs of students. He added that the academic plans do not take the place of the program approval process currently in place.

Additionally, institutions have been provided access to regional labor market information, via Lightcast, to use as part of their academic planning process to meet the economic needs of the state. He presented a list of the top high-demand occupations that will be used to assist in academic planning going forward.

Dr. Denley presented to the Committee 54 new degree programs for the coming year which campuses wish to develop for full consideration and advised that all have gone through an extensive review process by staff, as well as Louisiana Economic Development.

Supervisor Werner asked about the proposal from LSU A&M to terminate both the Master of Education in Gifted Education and the Master of Education in Special Education, as both are included in the list of economic needs. Dr. Susannah Craig noted that many institutions are transforming individual master's programs in Education disciplines to unified programs that include multiple concentrations,

though she stated that she was not aware if this is LSU's plan. It was later confirmed by Dr. Craig that LSU does intend to unify the program and offer multiple concentrations.

Approved the following actions on the 2023-2024 institutional academic plans:

- **Receive and accept the year one list of planned new degree programs.**
- **Receive and accept the progress report on recently approved programs.**
- **Approve the requested program terminations.**

RESEARCH AND SPONSORED INITIATIVES

APPOINTMENTS OF ENDOWED CHAIRHOLDERS WITHOUT NATIONAL SEARCH: **UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS**

Ms. Carrie Robison, Deputy Commissioner for Sponsored Programs, indicated that two institutions, Xavier University of Louisiana and Louisiana Tech University, had requested a waiver of the Endowed Chairs national search requirement to appoint current faculty to vacant Chairs:

- Xavier University/State of Louisiana Endowed Chair in Science Freeport McMoRan, Inc. Chair, matched FY 2007-08: Anderson Sunda-Meya, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences
- Daniel D. and Linda D. Reneau Eminent Scholar Chair in Biomedical Engineering, matched FY 2016-17: Dr. Collin Wick, Associate Dean of the College of Engineering and Science

She reviewed the current policy provisions for such a request and the assessments provided by out-of-state consultants of the proposed holders' qualifications, noting that both requests were recommended for approval.

Approved the request from Xavier University of Louisiana to appoint Dr. Anderson Sunda-Meya to the Xavier University/State of Louisiana Endowed Chair in Science and from Louisiana Tech to appoint Dr. Collin Wick to the Daniel D. and Linda D. Reneau Eminent Scholar Chair in Biomedical Engineering. As stipulated in Board policy, copies of the Letters of Appointment to these appointees must be submitted to the Board within 90 days of this approval.

LIMITED WAIVER OF ENDOWED CHAIRS AND ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIPS EXPENDABLE FUNDS CAP: LSU HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER – NEW ORLEANS

Ms. Robison stated that LSU Health Sciences Center – New Orleans requested a temporary waiver of the cap on spendable balance for a total of thirty-nine (39) BoRSF-matched faculty endowments (Endowed Chairs and Endowed Professorships). The waivers were requested to ensure impactful spending after a build-up of expendable dollars in these accounts due to travel and other

restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. She noted that the waiver of this policy provision is recommended to be effective only for FY 2023-24, with the understanding that all slots will be fully in compliance with the cap on expendable balances by June 30, 2024.

Approved the LSU Health Sciences Center – New Orleans’s request to waive the cap on expendable balances in faculty endowment funds for the thirty-nine (39) endowments specified in its letter of request. The waiver will expire on June 30, 2024, at which time all endowments shall be in compliance with the affected policy provision.

MORATORIUM ON CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS FOR APPOINTMENT OF ENDOWED CHAIRS WITHOUT A NATIONAL SEARCH

Regent Aubrey recommended the addition of a separate agenda item related to a moratorium on consideration of requests to appoint endowed chairholders without a national search rather than handling it with the previous agenda item on this topic. Chair Solomon noted that a voice vote is required to add an item, with unanimous agreement of all Committee members in attendance to consider the item.

Regent Aubrey moved to add an agenda item to address a moratorium on consideration of requests to appoint endowed chairholders without a national search. Ms. Robison called the voice vote, with voting as follows:

Yea: Regent Aubrey, Regent Seale, and Regent Solomon

Nay: None

Having gained the required unanimous vote of all members present, the item was added to the agenda as Item III.C and discussed.

Approved a moratorium on consideration of requests made under this policy provision, effective immediately, until staff recommendations for related policy revisions are considered by the Board in spring 2024.

DIVISION OF ENDOWED CHAIR INTO ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIPS: UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Ms. Robison indicated that UNO had requested to divide the Jack and Reba Matthey Endowed Chair in Engineering, a \$1 million endowed chair matched in 1993-94, into four Endowed Professorships, each with a corpus value of \$250,000.

Approved the division of the Jack and Reba Matthey Endowed Chair in Engineering into four (4) endowed professorships, each with a \$250,000 corpus, as follows: (1) Jack and Reba Matthey Endowed Chair in Engineering I; (2) Jack and Reba Matthey Endowed Chair in Engineering II; (3) Jack and Reba Matthey Endowed Professor of Practice I in Engineering; and (4) Jack and Reba Matthey Endowed Professor of Practice II in Engineering.

STATEWIDE PROGRAMS

Dr. Sujuan Boutté, Executive Director of LOSFA, presented the Consent Agenda items.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approved the items on the Consent Agenda as presented.

- A. Approval of Rulemaking – Reinstates COVID-19 as an objective circumstance for which a student may request an exception.**
- B. TOPS and M.J. Foster Exceptions – TOPS and M.J. Foster provisions that require students to remain continuously enrolled and to earn the annual credit hours required during the academic year.**
- C. TOPS Home Study Exceptions – TOPS provision that requires a student to begin a home study program no later than the conclusion of the tenth grade.**

A. Approval of Rulemaking

Dr. Boutté noted that this rulemaking reinstates 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 the 2023-2024 academic year. To inform this exception provision, staff proposes to include a new definition, which will be applicable to COVID-19 exceptions for the 2023-2024 academic year:

- The student has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
- A member of the student's family with whom they reside has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
- The student was exposed to COVID-19 and must adhere to quarantine protocols for COVID-19; or
- The student lives with a family member or provides care to a family member who is at high risk for complications due to COVID-19.

Dr. Boutté noted that Board authorization would allow the executive director to publish a notice of intent to make permanent rules to reinstate objective COVID-19 exceptions through the end of the 2023-2024 academic year.

B. TOPS and M. J. Foster Exceptions

Dr. Boutté noted that both TOPS and the M.J. Foster Promise Program require student recipients to maintain continuous enrollment. 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.

Similarly, Section 2207.A.5 of the M.J. Foster administrative rules provide that students must maintain continuous enrollment, unless granted an exception for cause in accordance with §2103 of the Scholarship and Grant administrative rules. The same exceptions that apply for TOPS students apply to all programs administered by LOSFA, including M.J. Foster.

Dr. Boutté noted that 27 TOPS and two M.J. Foster exceptions were reviewed and approved by the LOSFA Advisory Board at its meetings on August 2 and September 13, 2023. The students have presented facts and circumstances that the students believe justify the granting of an exception as an exceptional circumstance. The LOSFA Advisory Board has recommended approval of these requests.

C. TOPS Home Study Exceptions

Dr. Boutté indicated that the TOPS statute requires that a student begin a home study program no later than the conclusion of the tenth-grade year. Act 95 of the 2021 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature implemented a provision which allows the administering agency to grant exceptions to this

requirement when a student provides documentation that the transfer to a home study program later than the statutorily provided time frame was beyond the student's control.

Dr. Boutté noted that four requests for an exception to the deadline to begin a home study program were reviewed and approved by the LOSFA Advisory Board at its meetings on August 2, 2023, and September 13, 2023. The students have presented facts and documentation that the students believe justify the granting of an exception as an exceptional circumstance.

NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

Dr. Allison Smith, Assistant Commissioner for Student Health and Wellness, provided an overview of the state's college recovery programs and initiatives, noting that September is Collegiate Recovery Month nationwide. She summarized the history of the collegiate recovery movement, issues around student recovery, the necessity of solving related problems, and the benefit to both students and campuses in providing these services. Dr. Smith then profiled several new recovery programs available at campuses across the state and ongoing activities to support these programs and the students they serve. She also noted support provided for mental health services and the expanding programs that will result from the funding.

PLANNING, RESEARCH AND PERFORMANCE

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Susannah Craig, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Planning and Student Success, presented the Consent Agenda which included an item related to licensure of academic degree-granting institutions, which was a renewal application (South University).

Approved the items on the Consent Agenda as presented.

- A. R.S. 17:1808 (Licensure)**
 - 1. Renewal Applications**
 - a. South University**

REPORT ON ACT 109 OF THE 2021 REGULAR LEGISLATIVE SESSION – HEALTH CARE EMPLOYMENT REINVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY (H.E.R.O) FUND

Ms. Mellynn Baker, Assistant Commissioner for Strategic Planning and Student Success, provided an overview the H.E.R.O. Fund, which was created by ACT 109 of the 2021 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. She noted that the Louisiana Health Works Commission, which brought forth its annual report to the Board in April 2023, determines how the H.E.R.O. Fund will meet the current and growing healthcare employment demands. Building on the Health Works Commission annual report recommendations, the Commission approved the creation of the Regional Healthcare Innovation Partnership Program. This program has been designed for higher education institutions to partner with healthcare providers and regional not-for-profits to establish specific innovative programs that increase the number of healthcare graduates in their labor market. Ms. Baker gave an overview of the purpose of the program and highlighted the nine program participants, including:

Higher Education Institution	Regional Partner(s)
Elaine P. Nunez Community College	Louisiana Children's Medical Center, New Orleans East Hospital
Fletcher Technical Community College	Terrebonne General Health System, Cardiovascular Institute of the South, Terrebonne Parish Recreation District #7, Terrebonne Parish School District, and Ochsner Health System
Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University	Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System and HOPE Ministries
LSU Health Shreveport	Ochsner Lafayette General
Louisiana State University at Alexandria	Rapides Regional Medical Center, CHRISTUS St. Frances Cabrini Hospital, Avoyelles Hospital and CHRISTUS Central Louisiana Surgical Hospital
Louisiana Tech University	Northeast Louisiana Healthcare Alliance
Northwestern State University	Natchitoches Regional Medical Center
Southern University and A&M College	Ochsner Health and Southern University System Foundation
University of Louisiana at Lafayette	Ochsner Lafayette General and Oceans Healthcare

This item was for information only; no action was required.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Commissioner of Higher Education Kim Hunter Reed presented several items to the Board:

- She acknowledged Dr. Michael Khonsari, Associate Commissioner for Sponsored Programs Research and Development, on his election as a National Academy of Inventors Fellow.
- She expressed her excitement that a Louisiana team was selected to attend the American Association of College and University's (AAC&U) inaugural Institute on Digital Equity led by LOUIS's Rebecca Kelley. This is a seven-month program that will allow Louisiana to develop a statewide digital equity plan that will provide all postsecondary education institutions in Louisiana with the framework to initiate a project or to scale up additional existing digital inclusion efforts.
- She stated that she has been visiting the nine regional STEM centers, with her most recent stop at the fantastic Bayou STEM Chemistry Roadshow at Fletcher. She noted that she has two more STEM centers to visit (Lake Charles and Lafayette).
- She noted the celebration of National College Colors Day by Regents staff.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Temple asked if there was any other business to come before the Board. There was no other business. He noted that the offsite Board of Regents meeting will be held on October 17-18, 2023 in Lafayette, LA. Board development will be held on October 17th, with the Board meeting to follow on October 18th.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, on motion of Regent Gil, seconded by Regent Solomon, the meeting was adjourned at 1:49 p.m.

Appendix A
Board Meeting Guest List
Wednesday, September 20, 2023

NAME	AFFILIATION
Hampton Grunewald	LSU AgCenter
Mike Stout	LSU AgCenter
Kristin Bourque	P&N
Scott Hebert	UL
Anna Bartel	LSU
Amanda Tevis	OPB
Robert Rene	SU System
Luria Young	SUBR
Sean O'Neal	Ellucian
William Tulak	LCTCS
Blair LeBlanc	HLS

Collis B. Temple III
Chair

Gary N. Solomon, Jr.
Vice Chair

Robert W. Levy
Secretary

Kim Hunter Reed, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Higher Education



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Wilbert D. Pryor
T. Jay Seale III
Terrie P. Sterling
Felix R. Weill
Judy A. Williams-Brown
Samuel T. Gil, Student Member*

Board of Regents Meeting as a Committee of the Whole

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FINANCE

Wednesday, October 18, 2023

Loyd J. Rockhold Distance Learning Room
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Cecil J. Picard Center
200 East Devalcourt Street
Lafayette, LA 70506

VII. Reports and Recommendations

A. Finance

1. Approval of Higher Education Budget Request for FY 2024-2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wednesday, October 18, 2023

VII.A.1. Higher Education Budget Request FY 2024-2025

In 2019, the Board of Regents issued its Master Plan for Higher Education, which established an audacious goal for Louisiana: 60% of working adults holding a degree or credential of value by the year 2030. Following multiple years of major disruptions in our state, we have received record investments and achieved record educational attainment, positioning us to advance toward our ambitious aim. Having increased state attainment levels from 44% to 49.5%, now is the time to build on this momentum and accelerate our efforts.

Higher education is focused on meeting its 2030 attainment goal utilizing the Meauxmentum Framework. Navigating this pathway requires implementing and maintaining coordinated strategies including prioritizing talent development and student support, increasing affordability, and advancing workforce and research solutions to build a stronger state.

In support of the Master Plan and the role higher education plays in recovery and stability, the Governor and Legislature continued their historic reinvestment in higher education during the 2023 Regular Legislative Session with the largest state funding increase in Louisiana's history. This funding level built upon record investments of the previous two years, as the state continued to expand its support for higher education with annual funding increases exceeding 10%. Despite these investments, however, our institutions remain significantly underfunded though steadfast in their commitment to providing high-quality educational opportunities for more Louisiana students.

Having a shared vision that focuses on accelerating student learning and eliminating persistent equity gaps unifies the mission and purpose of higher education around building prosperity for all Louisianians. As Moody's Investors Service noted, "if the [Board of Regents'] strategic plan meets objectives, Louisiana will benefit from greater economic competitiveness, a credit positive for the state." To meet the demands of the future and position our people to thrive in the 21st-century world of work, we must scale up the growth accomplished during Fiscal Years 2022-2024, advancing Louisiana's reinvestment in higher education, and funding public institutions at levels that secure our competitive advantage within our region and nationally.

Today, despite record-setting reinvestment, we lag behind most Southern states in both funding per student and per capita. Louisiana ranks second-to-last among the sixteen states within the Southern Regional Education Board in state support per capita, at \$244.97, and also significantly trails the Southern average of \$319.74 by \$74.77 per citizen (23%) resulting in a competitive funding gap of \$347.8 million (State Higher Education Executive Officers Association). Therefore, this year, we request an investment that will allow us to accelerate talent development, fulfill Louisiana's workforce needs and expand research, positioning us to compete successfully within the Southern region.

Additionally, by ensuring that college remains affordable through expanding proven practices such as need-based aid, early college opportunities like dual enrollment, and investments in reduced- and no-cost textbooks, Louisiana can improve access to and success in the education to employment pipeline across our state. This approach helps us to maximize the impact of limited state dollars by ensuring our most resource-challenged students secure the advantages of a high-quality, high-value postsecondary education.

Staff will present a detailed list of FY 2024-2025 funding priorities, developed in consultation with the systems, for the Board's consideration. This information will support the Board of Regents higher education budget request letter to the Commissioner of Administration, which sets forth priorities for the upcoming fiscal year, in accordance with R.S. 39:32.1 (F).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends approval of the State General Fund operating budget requests for all higher education systems, boards, and agencies for FY 2024-2025.

Collis B. Temple, III
Chair

Gary N. Solomon, Jr.
Vice Chair

Robert W. Levy
Secretary

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Samuel T. Gil, Student*

Board of Regents Meeting as a Committee of the Whole

**REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FACILITIES AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, October 18, 2023

Loyd J. Rockhold Distance Learning Room
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Cecil J. Picard Center
200 East Devalcourt Street
Lafayette, LA 70506

VII. Reports and Recommendations

B. Facilities and Property

1. Consent Agenda

- a. Small Capital Projects Report
 - i. LSU AG: New Greenhouse (Budget Increase)
 - ii. LSU AG: Shop Building
 - iii. LSU A&M: SVM Main Building Library Renovations
 - iv. LSU-S: Business Education Building West Side Roof Replacement
 - v. NTCC-Sullivan: Youthbuild Facility Renovations
 - vi. ULL: New Iberia Research Center Land Acquisition

- b. Third Party Projects Report
 - i. La Tech: Joe Alliet Stadium Video Board Replacement

2. BOR FY 2024-25 Capital Outlay Budget Recommendation

Collis B. Temple III
Chair

Gary N. Solomon, Jr.
Vice Chair

Robert W. Levy
Secretary

Kim Hunter Reed, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Higher Education



BOARD of REGENTS
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Board of Regents Meeting as a Committee of the Whole
REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Wednesday, October 18, 2023

Loyd J. Rockhold Distance Learning Room
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Cecil J. Picard Center
200 East Devalcourt Street
Lafayette, LA 70506

VII. Reports and Recommendations

C. Academic and Student Affairs

1. Consent Agenda
 - a. Routine Staff Approvals
 - b. Academic Options
2. Reports
 - a. M.J. Foster Promise Program Annual Report
 - b. TOPS Annual Report

AGENDA ITEM VII.C.1.a.
Routine Academic Requests & Staff Approvals

Institution	Request
LSU A&M	Request to establish a Graduate Certificate (GC) in Preparing Future Faculty (CIP 13.1299) with a progress report due October 1, 2024. Approved
SUBR	Request to change the Master of Arts (MAT) in Teaching Elementary Education Grades 1-5 (CIP 13.1202) to the MAT Multiple Levels (CIP 13.1206) to accommodate additional new teacher certifications recently approved by the LA Department of Education and to allow flexibility in the curriculum as teacher certification offerings change over time. Approved .
UL Monroe	Request to consolidate the following Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) programs into a single MAT Multiple Levels (CIP 13.1206) to allow flexibility in the curriculum as teacher certification program offerings change over time. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MAT Elementary Education Grades 1-5 (CIP 13.1202)• MAT Elementary Education Special Education Mild/Moderate Grades 1-5 (CIP 13.1202)• MAT Secondary Education Grades 6-12 (CIP 13.1205)• MAT Secondary Education Special Education Mild/Moderate Grades 6-12 (CIP 13.1205) Approved.

AGENDA ITEM VII.C.1.b.

Proposed Academic Options University of New Orleans

Staff Summary

Board of Regents (BOR) Academic Affairs policy 2.11 Approved Academic Terms and Degree Designations defines an academic Option as an alternative track of courses within a Major that accounts for 50% to 80% of the Major requirements and require BOR approval. Concentrations within a Major, which are more common and do not require BOR approval, account for less than 50% of major requirements. The University of New Orleans (UNO) requests approval to convert several existing Concentrations to Options. The new option designations would bring the university into compliance with AA 2.11 and more accurately reflect the content of the programs. This request was granted administrative approval by the University of Louisiana System (ULS) before submission to BOR for consideration.

UNO requests adding the listed options to the following existing degree programs:

- *Bachelor of Arts in Romance Languages*: 1) French; and 2) Spanish.
- *Bachelor of Science in Human Performance & Health Promotion*: 1) Exercise Physiology; and 2) Health Promotion.
- *Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education & Teaching*: 1) Biology; 2) Chemistry; 3) Earth Science; 4) English; 5) Mathematics; and 6) Social Studies.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior staff recommends approval for the addition of the requested options to the Bachelor of Arts in Romance Languages (CIP 16.0101), Bachelor of Science in Human Performance and Health Promotion (CIP 31.0501) and Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education and Teaching (CIP 13.1205).

AGENDA ITEM VII.C.2.a.

ACT 457 of the 2021 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature

M.J. Foster Promise Program Annual Report

STAFF SUMMARY

This inaugural report on the Murphy J. Foster Promise Award Program (MJFP) is legislatively required by Act 457 of the 2021 Regular Session. The legislation stipulates that an overview of specific data points be analyzed on a yearly basis and presented to the legislature for outcomes assessment. The data for this year one report were compiled as the result of a collaborative effort by the Louisiana Board of Regents (BOR), Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA), Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), and Louisiana Department of Revenue (LDoR).

In its first year, almost 1,200 students received funds to support their education. Of those students, 80% were women and almost half were African American. Most of the students were 30 or older, and 60% earned less than \$30,000 per year. While many are still in the midst of their studies, 188 have already completed their credential. Well over 50% of award recipients came from the lower socio-economic brackets.

Initial data results are encouraging in that they indicate that the program is assisting students in need and funding access to high-demand programs. We look forward to this program serving an increasing number of students in future years. This Year One report sets a baseline to which future reports can be compared.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends approval of the "M.J. Foster Promise Program Annual Report" and authorizes the Commissioner of Higher Education to submit the report to the appropriate legislative committees on behalf of the Board of Regents.

The 2023 Year One Report
ACT 457 of the 2021 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature
Murphy J. Foster Promise Award Program



INTRODUCTION (BACKGROUND)

Act 457 of Louisiana's 2021 Regular Legislative Session, co-authored by Senate President Page Cortez and House Speaker Clay Schexnayder, was signed by Governor John Bel Edwards on June 23, 2021. Named after former Louisiana Governor Murphy J. "Mike" Foster, this legislation created a \$10.5 million annual state fund to provide workforce training opportunities for the state's working-age adults who have not yet earned a degree (legislation can be accessed here: [ACT 457 \(2021\)](#)).

The purpose of the program is to provide financial assistance to eligible students enrolled in two-year public postsecondary institutions and accredited proprietary schools approved by the Board of Regents to pursue an associate's degree or a short-term credential aligned with Louisiana's workforce priorities. The effective date of the M.J. Foster Promise Award Program (MJFP) was the 2022-2023 academic year.

Award recipients must pursue an associate's degree or shorter-term postsecondary credential tied to specific high-demand, high-wage occupations aligned to Louisiana's workforce priorities. The program funds enrollment in high-demand majors related to growing industry sectors, including construction, healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, and transportation and logistics (the complete list can be found at [MJFP Approved Programs](#)).

The M.J. Foster Promise Award Program is critical in helping reach the goal set forth in the Board of Regents Master Plan, *Louisiana Prospers*, of 60% credential attainment for the state's population by 2030. With the growth of participants and completers in the program, the MJFP Award provides financial support for students to complete their education and training to earn high-demand credentials, which ultimately contributes to a significant influx of working-age adults needed for high-value positions in Louisiana's economy.

Program eligibility requirements are as follows: applicants must be Louisiana residents (21 years or older) and meet a family income threshold of 300% of the Federal Poverty Level or be unemployed or underemployed for six months. The awards are available on a first-come, first-served basis and accessible to the student for three years. In this initial year, the program covers the cost of tuition and required fees after all other sources of aid have been applied (excluding student loans and federal work-study [MJFP Award Information](#)). Act 284 of the 2023 Legislative Session allows the scholarship to be used before all other sources of aid for an eligible student's first semester of support.

The award amount of \$3,200 per award year, or \$1,600 per semester, is for a student enrolled full-time. Part-time students receive a proportional amount. Students can receive a maximum of \$6,400 over three years. A student may receive the maximum award amount of \$6,400 in one year for certain high-cost programs ([MJFP Award Information](#)).

Compliance with reporting requirements is a condition of an institution's continued eligibility to receive payments from the state on behalf of award recipients and shall be determined annually by the administering agency.

As required by law, the Board of Regents has established an advisory council and identified qualified programs that provide the high-value credentials this program supports. The advisory council is comprised of the following members or their designees: chancellors of LSU Eunice and Southern University Shreveport, the president of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, the Commissioner of Higher Education, the State Superintendent of Education, the Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Economic Development, the Executive Director of the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the Chairman of the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council and the Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Revenue.

Furthermore, the law requires the Board of Regents to administer the program through LOSFA. Overall, for the 2022-2023 award year, 6,882 applicants were evaluated for eligibility to receive program funds. Of the total applicants, 3,660 were eligible, 1,970 were ineligible, 1,224 were cancelled, and 28 were withdrawn. Cancellations and withdrawals consisted of students who voluntarily withdrew for a variety of reasons, were not enrolled in an approved program, were not enrolled during the award year or did not adhere to enrollment deadlines. In total \$2,712,371.36 was dispersed to students in Year 1 (as of 9/25/23).

METHODOLOGY

To gather the requested data for the report, eligible institutions offering the program were identified: Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) institutions, LSU Eunice (LSUE), Southern University Shreveport (SUSLA), and accredited proprietary schools licensed by the Board of Regents. The dataset for year one of the program includes students enrolled in MJFP-approved majors and non-credit programs at LCTCS institutions, LSUE, and SUSLA. Approximately 150 proprietary institutions are licensed in the state, of which thirty-three offer credentials that are eligible for the award. BOR worked with these proprietary institutions to gather their enrollment and outcomes data.

Staff worked to identify both program awardees who enrolled in eligible credential programs and credential completers from all eligible institutions. Non-awardees in eligible programs were also identified, to provide comparison data whenever possible.

BOR, LOSFA, and LWC relied on previously established intra-agency Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) governing data-sharing to acquire the necessary data for this report.

RESULTS

Act 457 (2021) required that the Board of Regents submit a written report to the legislature to include all the information for the preceding academic year as listed below:

- The mean length of time required for award recipients to complete a qualified program as compared to other completers of the program who did not receive the award.
- Demographic information of award recipients, including age, race, gender, and household income.
- Pre- and post-award employment information, including employment status, annual wages, and employer's industry sector.
- Recidivism rates of award recipients.
- The administering agency shall, with the cooperation and assistance of the state's public two-year postsecondary education institutions and proprietary schools, annually query each first-time award recipient to determine the extent receiving the award influenced the recipient's decision to enroll in postsecondary education.

All data requested and analyzed are reported in the aggregate only and contain no personally identifiable information.

Program Completion Information

Program completion data compared the time to degree for MJFP award recipients in public and proprietary institutions with students in the same programs who did not receive MJFP funding.

The chart below (Chart 1) provides data for students who completed eligible credentials in public postsecondary institutions and proprietary schools in the first year of the program. For each credential level, time to degree is compared for students who received and did not receive MJFP funding. Altogether, 188 students earned 199 credentials.

First, students earned 115 credentials that could be completed in a year or less. Award recipients and non-recipients earned these Career Technical Certificates, short-term Diplomas, and Industry-Recognized Certifications in similar, if not identical, lengths of time.

Second, students completed 84 eligible diploma or associate's degree programs. These programs cannot be completed in a single year; consequently, these students must have begun their studies before the introduction of the MJFP award. The average time to degree for these programs was significantly longer for the award recipients than for the non-recipients (3.0 vs. 2.1 years for diploma earners and 8.9 vs. 4.7 years for associate's earners). This suggests that the funds provided by the MJFP award enabled people who otherwise would have had some college but no degree to complete their credentials.

Chart 1

Credential Completions by Award Level - 2022-2023				
	MJFP Awardee Completions		Non-MJFP Awardee Completions	
Degree Level	Headcount	Average Time-to-Degree (Years)***	Headcount	Average Time-to-Degree (Years)***
Career Tech 1-8 cr. hrs.	**	0.3	788	1.2
Career Tech 9-18 cr. hrs.	**	1.1	851	1.1
Certificate (One Year)	**	2.6	2,651	1.6
Diploma*	40	3.0	2,327	2.1
Associate*	34	8.9	2,283	4.7
Cert. or Diploma < than 3 Months			186	0.5
Cert. or Diploma 3 months to 6 months	**	0.7	235	0.8
Cert. or Diploma 6 months to 1 year	46	1.0	1,091	1.0
Cert. or Diploma 1 year to 2 years	**	1.1	408	1.2
Associate in Occ. Studies	**	1.9	254	1.6
Credential of Value	11	0.3	2,171	0.3
On-Ramp	13	0.4	768	0.3
Totals	168***		14,013	

*Students started their associate's programs prior to the start of the M. J. Foster Promise Program.

** n=< 10

*** Calculation of time-to-degree requires a start date and an end date. The data for 31 credentials did not have a start date or end date; therefore, they were not included in the time-to-degree calculations.

Chart 2 shows the race and gender demographics of those 188 students who completed credentials. These data demonstrate that program support is effective across races and genders in enabling people to complete their credentials.

Chart 2

Completers by Race and Gender - 2022-2023				
Completers	Female	Male	Total for Race	Percent by Race
Black, Non-Hispanic	107	21	128	68%
White, Non-Hispanic	29	19	48	26%
Hispanic	**	**	**	5%
Asian	**		**	1%
Two or More Races	**	**	**	1%
Total for Gender	143	45	188	100%
Percent by Gender	76%	24%	100%	

** n=< 10

Chart 3 provides the top seven programs with MJFP program completions. The healthcare profession had the largest number of completers, a clear need in our state. Further analysis finds that the top five healthcare program completions were Licensed Practical Nurse (46), Registered Nurse (20), Medical Assistant (19), and Nursing Aide (18).

Chart 3

MJFP Awardee Completions by Program Area - 2022-2023	
Program Description	Total
Health Professions and Related Programs	149
Construction Trades	17
Computer and Information Sciences and Support services	9
Engineering/Engineering-Related Technologies/Technicians	7
Transportation and Materials Moving	7
Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians	5
Precision Production	5

Program Participant Demographic Information

Act 457 (2021) requires demographic information of program participants, including age, race, gender, and household income.

Chart 4 considers MJFP participants by race and gender. Black students represent the largest number of participants at 46%, followed by white students at 16% and Asian students at 9%. When gender is added to the analysis, Black males represent the highest participation percentage rate at 50%, followed by Black females at 45% and white males at 27%.

Chart 4

Race by Gender for MJFP Funding Recipients - 2022-2023						
Race	Female		Male		Headcount	Percent
	Headcount	Percent	Headcount	Percent		
Black, Non-Hispanic	443	45%	108	50%	551	46%
White, Non-Hispanic	130	14%	56	27%	186	16%
Hispanic Of Any Race	27	3%	**	3%	34	3%
Asian	106	10%	11	5%	117	9%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	**	0%		0%	**	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	**	1%		0%	**	0%
Two or More Races	10	1%	10	5%	20	2%
Unknown	253	26%	20	9%	273	23%
Grand Total	976	100%	212	100%	1,188***	100%

** n=< 10

*** Gender data for 4 students was not available

Chart 5 looks at the age ranges of MJFP funding recipients. Eligible students must be 21 or older. Of the total MJFP recipients (1,192), more than half (51%) are 30 or older, and 77% are 25 or older.

Chart 5

Age Ranges for MJFP Funding Recipients - 2022-2023		
Age Range	Headcount	Percent
21-24	226	23%
25-29	317	25%
30-39	428	34%
40 +	221	17%
Grand Total	1,192	100%

The final required data point for demographic information is personal income for MJFP recipients. The program requires participants to meet a family income threshold of 300% of the [Federal Poverty Level](#) or be unemployed or underemployed for six months. Chart 6 illustrates the various household income levels of recipients. 81% of recipients fall into the two lowest income levels: 60% of recipients make less than \$30,000 per year, and 21% fall into the \$30,000-\$49,999 per year income group.

Consequently, almost 60% of recipients had household incomes below the Household Survival Budget for an adult (\$26,760), and 81% had household incomes below the [ALICE Household](#) Survival Budget for a family of 4 (\$66,280).

Chart 6

Income by Groups for MJFP Funding Recipients - 2022-2023		
Household Income	Headcount	Percent
Less than \$30,000	729	60%
\$30,000 to \$49,999	253	21%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	72	6%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	27	3%
\$100,000 +	20	2%
Unknown	91	8%
Grand Total	1,192	100%

Employment Information

An analysis of the wage income of recipients before beginning their program of study showed that those who were employed earned an average annual salary of \$24,084. All credential completers for whom wage data were available before beginning the program had annual salaries below the ALICE threshold for a family of four in Louisiana, and 65% were below the Federal Poverty Level.

Given that this is the first year of the program, insufficient time has elapsed for the analysis of post-completion wage data. Those data will be analyzed in the following annual report.

Recidivism Rates

Given that this is the first year of the program, insufficient time has elapsed for analysis of the recidivism of Year One recipients. Those data will be analyzed in the following annual report.

Yearly Student Survey

The legislation requires an annual survey of every first-time award recipient to determine how the MJFP award influenced their decision to enroll in college. LOSFA was asked to survey all students who met the eligibility criteria. The total survey population consisted of 2,295 eligible students. Of the total surveys sent, 346 students responded, yielding a 15.1% response rate. Of the total population (346 students), 208 students received funding. Of these 208 award recipients, 139, or 67%, said that the award influenced their decision to enroll in a postsecondary institution (Chart 7). In contrast, 33% reported that the award did not influence their decision to enroll.

Chart 7

M.J. Foster Promise Survey Results – 2022-2023			
Did Receiving the M.J. Foster Promise Award Influence Your Decision to Enroll in Postsecondary Education?			
Yes, It Did Influence	139	67%	
No, It Did Not Influence	69	33%	
Total Survey Respondents Awarded Funding		208	100%

CONCLUSION

Implications/Recommendations

The Murphy J. Foster Promise Award Program was developed to assist adult students by providing funding for workforce education and training opportunities in high-value programs. Funding is available to recipients for up to three years to attain an associate's degree, diploma, or short-term stackable credential.

The data in this report demonstrate that the program, as established, directly benefits its intended population. Almost 1,200 students received funds to support their education. Of those students, 81% were women, and nearly half were African American. There are high representation and participation rates among Black male recipients and students from lower socio-economic brackets. Most of the students were 30 years or older, and 60% had a household income below the ALICE Survival Budget threshold for an adult in Louisiana. While many are still in the midst of their studies, 188 students have already completed their credentials.

In future years, we will be able to analyze the economic impacts that the credentials earned have had on the prosperity of the recipients and their families, but the potential for success is significant.

AGENDA ITEM VII.C.2.b.

2023 TOPS Report (as Required by R.S. 17:5067)

Background Information

Act 1375 of the 1997 Regular Legislative Session	Created TOPS awards
First class to receive TOPS awards	Entering freshman class of 1998
Act 1202 of the 2001 Regular Legislative Session	Prescribed BOR to prepare a yearly report analyzing the program
Act 227 of the 2015 Regular Legislative Session	Modified and clarified specific data points without making substantive changes to the report
Act 665 of the 2022 Regular Legislative Session	Eliminated the inclusion of parental income data in the report
Act 447 of the 2022 Regular Legislative Session	Added Geometry as a core curriculum requirement for TOPS <i>Tech</i>
Act 502 of the 2022 Regular Legislative Session	Added specific computer science courses as an alternative to the foreign language requirement for TOPS <i>Opportunity, Performance, and Honors</i>

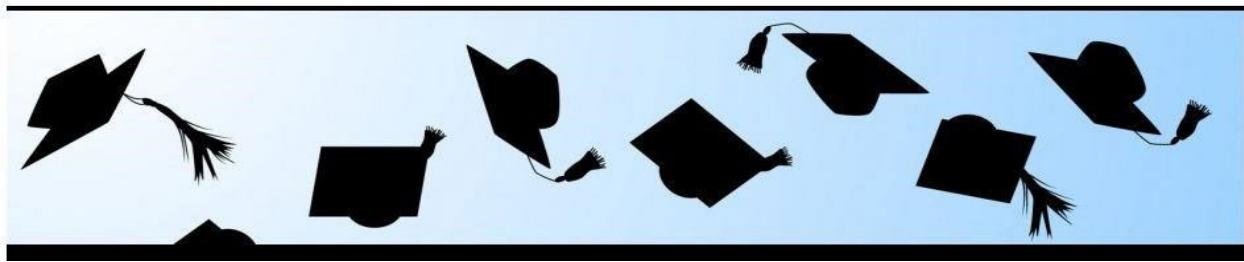
STAFF SUMMARY

- From 2012-2013 to 2021-2022, 85.4% of students deemed eligible for a TOPS award accepted the award by enrolling in a postsecondary education institution in Louisiana.
- The proportions of eligible students who accept their award differs by award level. The proportion of students who are eligible for *Opportunity, Performance, and Honors* awards and choose to accept their award is declining.
- While many students who are eligible for *Opportunity, Performance and Honors* choose to enroll in an out-of-state institution, most eligible students who do not accept their award enroll in a Louisiana college or university. They are unable to accept their award because they are enrolled as a part-time student.
- Only one in four students eligible for a TOPS *Tech* award choose to accept their award. The majority of these students choose to enroll in a Louisiana college or university either part-time or in a program that is ineligible for the award.
- The average ACT score of all TOPS recipients between 2013-2014 and 2022-2023 was 24, and their average core GPA was 3.50.
- The average ACT composite for TOPS recipients for 2022-2023 was 24, and their average core GPA was 3.71.
- From 2012-2013 to 2021-2022, the majority of TOPS recipients were disproportionately white (71.0%) and disproportionately female (57.2%).
- Despite the racial gaps among TOPS recipients, the number of minority students receiving TOPS has generally increased over time, but not at the rate needed to erase the equity gap. This year, all minorities saw modest increases in eligible students receiving TOPS. However, overall, the pool of eligible students has been declining, a trend reflected at the national level.

- Students who begin college with a TOPS award persist and graduate at higher rates than non-TOPS students.
- The average time-to-degree for TOPS recipients pursuing an associate's degree is 3.7 years, compared with 6.1 years for non-TOPS.
- The average time-to-degree for TOPS recipients pursuing a baccalaureate degree is 4.4 years, compared with 6.2 years for non-TOPS.
- From 1998-1999 through the 2022-2023 fiscal years, the state provided approximately \$5.10 billion in funding for the TOPS Program.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends approval of the "TOPS Report: Analysis of the TOPS Program from 2013-2022" and authorizes the Commissioner of Higher Education to submit the report to the appropriate legislative committees on behalf of the Board of Regents.



TOPS Report:
Analysis of the TOPS Program, 2013-2023

Louisiana Board of Regents

October 2023



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Executive Summary

The Tuition Opportunity Program for Students (subsequently renamed the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students, also known as TOPS) was created by Act 1375 of the 1997 Regular Legislative Session. The first college freshman class to receive TOPS awards entered postsecondary education in the fall of 1998.

Act 1202 of the 2001 Regular Legislative Session requires the Louisiana Board of Regents (BOR) to provide a report analyzing various aspects of the TOPS Program. Act 227 of the 2015 Regular Legislative Session modified prior law to clarify and specify data points without making any substantive changes to the program.

In accordance with Act 227, this report includes:

- An analysis of the relationship between high school courses taken and the student's American College Test (ACT) score;
- The number of high school graduates who are eligible for TOPS and subsequently enroll in college;
- Persistence (retention) rates of TOPS recipients;
- The number of and reasons for students losing award eligibility;
- Graduation data; and
- TOPS time-to-degree and degree attainment information.

Act 587 of the 2014 Regular Legislative Session added new reporting requirements to the TOPS report, including:

- Demographic information of program award recipients (race, gender, parents' income);
- High school GPA and ACT scores of program award recipients grouped by mean; and
- Average high school GPA and average ACT scores of students who lost the award.

Act 227 requires that this report be submitted annually, by December 1, to the Senate Committee on Education and the House Committee on Education. The report includes current and historical data on TOPS students (students receiving an *Opportunity, Performance, or Honors* award) and, where appropriate, non-TOPS students to allow for comparison.

Overall, the findings indicated that:

- From 2012-2013 to 2021-2022, 85.4% of students deemed eligible for a TOPS award accepted the award by enrolling in a postsecondary education institution in Louisiana.
- The proportions of eligible students who accept their award differs by award level. The proportion of students who are eligible for an *Honors* award and choose to accept their award is declining.
- While many students who are eligible for *Opportunity, Performance, and Honors* choose to enroll in an out-of-state institution, most eligible students who do not accept their award enroll in a Louisiana college or university. They are unable to accept their award because

they are enrolled as a part-time student.

- Only one in four students eligible for a TOPS *Tech* award choose to accept their award. The majority of these students choose to enroll in a Louisiana college or university either part-time or in a program that is ineligible for the award.
- The average ACT score of all TOPS recipients between 2013-2014 and 2022-2023 was 24, and their average core GPA was 3.50.
- The average ACT composite for TOPS recipients for 2022-2023 was 24, and their average core GPA was 3.71.
- From 2012-2013 to 2021-2022, the majority of TOPS recipients were disproportionately white (71.0%) and disproportionately female (57.2%).
- Despite the racial gaps among TOPS recipients, the number of minority students receiving TOPS has generally increased over time but not at the rate needed to erase the equity gap. This year, all minorities saw modest increases in eligible students receiving TOPS. However, overall, the pool of eligible students has been declining, a trend reflected at the national level.
- Students who begin college with a TOPS award persist and graduate at a higher rate than non-TOPS students.
- The average time-to-degree for TOPS recipients pursuing an associate degree is 3.7 years, compared with 6.1 years for non-TOPS.
- The average time-to-degree for TOPS recipients pursuing a baccalaureate degree is 4.4 years, compared with 6.2 years for non-TOPS.
- From 1998-1999 through 2022-2023 fiscal years, the state spent approximately \$5.10 billion on the TOPS Program.

Introduction and Background

TOPS Legislation

Act 1202 of the 2001 Regular Legislative Session charged the Board of Regents (BOR) with developing a uniform TOPS reporting system for policy analysis and program evaluation to provide accurate data and statistics relative to the program's impact on the state and students (Appendix A). BOR staff developed interfaces between the major systems needed to identify and track TOPS students through the postsecondary education enrollment cycle to satisfy the reporting requirements. In addition to mandating development of a TOPS reporting system, Act 1202 also required the BOR to prepare a report on various aspects of the TOPS Program. According to Act 1202, the "TOPS report" should include:

- An analysis of the relationship between high school courses taken and students' scores on the ACT;
- The number of high school graduates who are eligible for TOPS and subsequently enroll in college;
- Persistence (retention) rates of TOPS students by award level;
- The number of and reasons for students losing award eligibility;
- Graduation rates by award category (within 100% [4-year] and 150% [6-year] of time); and
- The number of students eligible for TOPS by award category, school, and parish.

Act 587 (Appendix B) of the 2014 Regular Legislative Session added reporting requirements to the annual TOPS report, including:

- Demographic information of program award recipients;
- High school GPA and ACT scores of program award recipients grouped by mean, median, and mode; and
- The average high school GPA and ACT scores of those who lost the award and those placed on probationary status.

Act 587 mandates that this report be submitted to the Senate Committee on Education and the House Committee on Education no later than December 1 each year. Therefore, data on 2022-2023 TOPS recipients are not included to comply with the Act's established deadline.

Act 227 of the 2015 Regular Legislative Session amended Act 1202 (Appendix C) for statutory clarity. The new law reorganizes, renumbers, and recodifies existing law without making substantive changes to the program beyond requiring additional data points to assess TOPS recipients' time to degree.

The **Acts of the 2016 Regular Session** of the Louisiana Legislature that impact TOPS are as follows:

- **Act 18** sets a floor for the TOPS award amount and provides that the qualifying ACT score shall be truncated to a whole number rather than rounded to the next whole number. These changes were effective beginning with the fall semester of 2016.

- **Act 388** increases the *core* grade point average (GPA) requirement to qualify for a TOPS *Performance* award from 3.0 to 3.25 and the GPA requirement for a TOPS *Honors* award from 3.0 to 3.50. These changes are effective for high school graduates of 2022 (per Acts 245 and 346 of the 2020 Regular Legislative Session).
- **Act 503** changes the methodology for eliminating students' TOPS awards in the event of a budget shortfall. When there is a budget shortfall, each student's TOPS award -- including *Performance* and *Honors* award stipends -- is subject to a reduction; National Guard stipends and TOPS *Tech Early Start* are not reduced. TOPS Awards will be distributed to all students according to a pro-rata distribution of the available funds. Under Act 503, students can "opt-out" of receiving their TOPS Award during a budget shortfall. This change was effective beginning with the AY 2016-2017 award year.

The **Act of the 2017 Regular Session** of the Louisiana Legislature that impacts TOPS is as follows:

- **Act 44** clarifies Act 18 of the 2016 Regular Session that the award level shall be the TOPS award amount charged to students during the AY 2016-2017.

The **Acts of the 2018 Regular Session** of the Louisiana Legislature that impact TOPS are as follows:

- **Act 671** changes certain TOPS initial eligibility requirements and provides relative to sharing specific student data.
- **Act 583** establishes the TOPS Income Fund as a special treasury fund. Monies in the fund can be combined with other funds; however, all monies in the TOPS Income Fund shall be used solely to fund the TOPS Program.

The **Act of the 2019 Regular Session** of the Louisiana Legislature that impacts TOPS is as follows:

- **S.R. 10** requires the BOR to study the feasibility of updating TOPS reporting requirements to include data on scholarship recipients' employment outcomes and other relevant information.

The **Acts of the 2020 Regular Session** of the Louisiana Legislature that impact TOPS are as follows:

- **Act 346** modified qualifications for the TOPS scholarships and continuing eligibility requirements for the 2019-2020 academic year.
- **Act 245** charges the administering agency to adopt rules to provide waivers and exceptions to initial eligibility requirements and continuing eligibility requirements for students impacted by the public health emergency declared by the governor in response to the novel coronavirus, COVID-19.

- Act 17 declared exceptions for Hurricane Laura-affected students and applied to students who had a home of record in an affected parish or enrolled in an eligible college or university in an affected parish.

The **Acts of the 2021 Regular Session** of the Louisiana Legislature that impact TOPS are as follows:

- Act 334 adds African American History as a core curriculum social studies requirement for TOPS.
- Act 407 adds race and ethnicity data that may be collected and shared with BOR and LOFSA for assessment, evaluation, and policy development.

The **Acts of the 2022 Regular Session** of the Louisiana Legislature that impact TOPS are as follows:

- Act 665 eliminates the requirement that parental income data be included in the report.
- Act 447 adds Geometry as a core curriculum requirement for TOPS *Tech* beginning with 2027 high school graduates.
- Act 502 adds specific computer science courses as an alternative to the foreign language requirement for TOPS *Opportunity, Performance, and Honors* core curriculum beginning with 2027 high school graduates.
- Act 681 provides exceptions to the initial and continuing eligibility requirements for students impacted by Hurricane Ida.

The **Acts of the 2023 Regular Session** of the Louisiana Legislature that impact TOPS are as follows:

- Act 267 adds Financial Literacy as a required, one-unit core curriculum course for both the TOPS OPH and TOPS *Tech* core curricula. For TOPS *OPH*, it adds one core curriculum course, bringing the total courses required to 20. For TOPS *Tech*, it reduces the math electives to one course instead of two and adds Financial Literacy as the third required math.
- Act 224 provides that any student who receives a tuition waiver due to being a 100% disabled veteran will not receive a TOPS Award. Note that the House Floor eliminated the stipend of \$600 per academic year and the enhanced book stipend for TOPS *Performance* and *Honors* recipients.
- Act 405 amends the definition of Louisiana Resident to allow graduates of 2023 and later to meet the residency requirement if their parent or court-ordered custodian was a Louisiana resident for at least the 24 months preceding the date they moved out of the country, provided that they remain a Louisiana resident as demonstrated by ownership of property, maintenance of a home, payment of Louisiana taxes, etc. during the entire time the parent or custodian was living out of the country.

Brief History of the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS)

The Tuition Opportunity Program for Students (subsequently renamed the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students, also known as TOPS), Louisiana's merit-based student aid program, was created via Act 1375 of the 1997 Regular Legislative Session. The first freshman class to receive TOPS awards entered postsecondary education in the fall of 1998. Although the founding legislation does not directly document the goals of the program, the four generally accepted purposes of TOPS are to:

- Promote academic success by requiring completion of a rigorous high school core curriculum;
- Provide financial incentives as a reward for good academic performance;
- Keep Louisiana's best and brightest in the state to pursue postsecondary education with the hope that they will remain in the state and become productive members of Louisiana's workforce and
- Promote access to and success in postsecondary education.

Eligibility Criteria, Levels of Award, Renewal Requirements, Distribution of Awards

Four TOPS awards are available to students enrolling at Louisiana's colleges and universities: *TOPS Tech, Opportunity, Performance, and Honors*. Trend data for the TOPS *Tech* Award can be found in Appendix D. Act 230 of the 2015 Regular Session changed the TOPS *Tech* program. Under Act 230, students graduating from high school during the 2016-2017 school year and thereafter can use the TOPS *Tech* Award to pursue an associate's degree or other shorter-term training and education credential, including skill, occupational, vocational, technical, certificate, and academic, that the Workforce Investment Council and the Board of Regents have determined is aligned to state workforce priorities.

The eligibility criteria for the *Opportunity, Performance, Honors* and *Tech* Awards include completion of a defined high school core curriculum, with a minimum grade point average (GPA) in core courses and a minimum ACT composite score. Table 1 lists the current eligibility criteria and award components of all TOPS awards. Currently, the TOPS Core Curriculum consists of 19 units. The specific course requirements of the TOPS Core Curriculum can be found in Appendix E.

Historically, the administration of TOPS was statutorily assigned to the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission (LASFAC). However, Act 314 of the 2016 Regular Session abolished LASFAC and transferred its duties to the Board of Regents. Therefore, the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) has been administering the TOPS Program under the BOR, as directed by the acts of the Louisiana Legislature since that date. Program eligibility is determined using the high school transcript from the Louisiana Department of Education's Student Transcript System (STS) and official composite ACT scores. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or TOPS Online Application are the mechanisms for applying for TOPS.

Table 1

TOPS Eligibility Criteria and Award Components				
Award	Core Units	Core GPA	ACT Composite	Duration
<i>Opportunity</i>	19	2.50	Prior-year state average, currently 20	4 years or 8 semesters
<i>Performance</i>	19	3.25	23	4 years or 8 semesters
<i>Honors</i>	19	3.50	27	4 years or 8 semesters
TOPS Tech	21 Jumpstart Career Path Core Units	2.5	17 or higher or a silver-level score on the assessments of the ACT WorkKeys system	2 years

Source: LOSFA website - TOPS Brochures & Flyers

Achievement of the required GPA must occur within one year for *TOPS Tech*.

To maintain eligibility, TOPS and *TOPS Tech* recipients must be continuously enrolled as full-time students, earn at least 24 semester hours each academic year (fall, spring, and summer), and maintain satisfactory academic progress as demonstrated by the cumulative grade point average. Continuing eligibility is determined by LOSFA based on data from the postsecondary institution in which the student is enrolled. Table 2 lists the minimum renewal requirements for each award.

Table 2

Minimum Renewal Requirements			
Award	Hrs. Earned /AY	Cumulative GPA for Continuation	Award Reinstated* (Upon recovery of req. GPA)
<i>Opportunity</i>	24	2.30 after 24 credit hours earned 2.50 after 48 credit hours earned Maintain steady academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 TOPS cumulative GPA)	Yes
<i>Performance</i>	24	3.00 after 24 credit hours earned Maintain satisfactory academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 TOPS cumulative GPA)	Yes, <i>Opportunity</i>
<i>Honors</i>	24	3.00 after 24 credit hours earned Maintain satisfactory academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 TOPS cumulative GPA)	Yes, <i>Opportunity</i>
<i>TOPS Tech</i>	24	2.5 after 24 credit hours earned Maintain satisfactory academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 TOPS cumulative GPA)	Yes

Source: LOFSA website - TOPS Brochures & Flyers

*Achievement of the required GPA must occur within two years for *Opportunity*, *Performance*, and *Honors* and one year for *Tech*.

Table 3 illustrates the distribution of TOPS awards across systems for AY 2022-2023. This year, one-half (50.0%) of TOPS awards went to students attending a UL System campus. Of students with the highest level of award, the *Honors* Award, 44.9% attended an LSU System campus, followed closely by UL System campuses at 44.5%. Data also indicate that most students (42.3%) with TOPS awards had an *Opportunity* Award.

Table 3

Award	Distribution of Award Types Across Systems, AY 2022-2023							% of all Awards
	LSU System	Southern System	UL System	LCTC System	Private Institutions	Proprietary Schools		
Opportunity	29.5%	2.5%	54.6%	7.1%	5.6%	0.8%		42.3%
Performance	33.9%	0.8%	55.7%	3.2%	6.1%	0.3%		28.1%
Honors	44.9%	0.2%	44.5%	0.7%	9.5%	0.1%		24.7%
TOPS Tech	9.2%	0.8%	4.8%	73.4%	0.0%	11.9%		4.8%
% of all awards	33.6%	1.4%	50.0%	7.6%	6.4%	1.0%		100.0%

Source: LOSFA - TOPS Payment Summary by Award Level for Academic Year 2022-2023 as of 08/14/2023

TOPS Report: Historical Analysis of the TOPS Program, from 2011-2012 to 2021-2022

This report includes current and historical data on TOPS students (receiving an *Opportunity*, *Performance*, *Honors* or *Tech* Award) and, where appropriate, non-TOPS students to allow for comparison. Some of the data provided in the "Preparation" section and all the data provided in the "Participation," "Persistence/Retention," and "Graduation" sections of this report do not include private postsecondary institutions since those institutions do not currently participate in Regents' reporting systems.

Methodology

This report contains data from public and private institutions, except for graduation rates, retention rates, and time-to-degree. Private institutions are currently not required to report this information to the Board of Regents.

In this year's report, we have been able to make several improvements to the granularity of the underlying data. These improved data have allowed us to refine the calculations of retention, graduation, and time-to-degree. These subtle changes in methodology should be taken into account when comparing this report to previous reports.

Preparation

With the 2001 Master Plan, the BOR adopted the TOPS Core as the Regents' Core, the most critical element of the minimum standards for admission to the state's public four-year colleges and universities. The TOPS/BOR Core currently consists of four units of coursework in English, Math, Natural Science, and Social Science, two units of foreign language, and one unit of study in fine arts. TOPS academic eligibility criteria require students to take this nineteen-hour core curriculum to prepare them for success after high school, particularly in postsecondary education. With this change, students had a double incentive to complete the college-preparatory curriculum.

Table 4

Average ACT Composite, AY 2019-2022					
High School Grad Year	Average ACT Composite for students completing BOR Core		Average ACT Composite for students not completing BOR Core		Total High School Graduates with an ACT Composite from LOSFA
	AVG ACT	Count	AVG ACT	Count	Count
2019	21.3	33,739	15.0	6,049	39,788
2020	21.2	32,310	14.7	4,802	37,112
2021	20.8	31,405	14.4	5,245	36,650
2022	20.7	30,816	14.4	5,618	36,434

Source: Louisiana Department of Education and LOSFA Files.

Participation

A generally accepted purpose of TOPS is to attract and retain Louisiana's high school graduates who are more likely to persist and attain a postsecondary credential. A common slogan associated with the TOPS Program has been to "retain the best and brightest" students to attend Louisiana's colleges, with the hope that they will enter the state's workforce after graduation. A recent Washington Post (September 2022) analysis reported that "Louisiana ranks 17th in keeping graduates in the state."

To that end, of the 253,734 students deemed eligible for a TOPS *Opportunity, Performance, Honors*, or TOPS *Tech* Award between 2013 and 2022, 177,295 (or 69.9%) accepted the award and enrolled in a postsecondary education institution in Louisiana (see Figure A).

While data supports the claims that participation in the TOPS Program keeps Louisiana students in the state to attain their postsecondary education, declining numbers of high school graduates and college-going high school graduates over the past several years are of concern. The percentage of students accepting TOPS and enrolling in college (Figure A) is the lowest it has been in ten years.

Several years of declining high school graduate numbers and declines in the number of TOPS-eligible students, combined with lower proportions of students receiving their awards, have resulted in a second decline in the number of overall TOPS recipients, and, for the second year, an increase in TOPS funding was not requested (Figure B).

Figure A: Number Eligible for TOPS vs. Number of Recipients who Enroll in Postsecondary Education Institutions

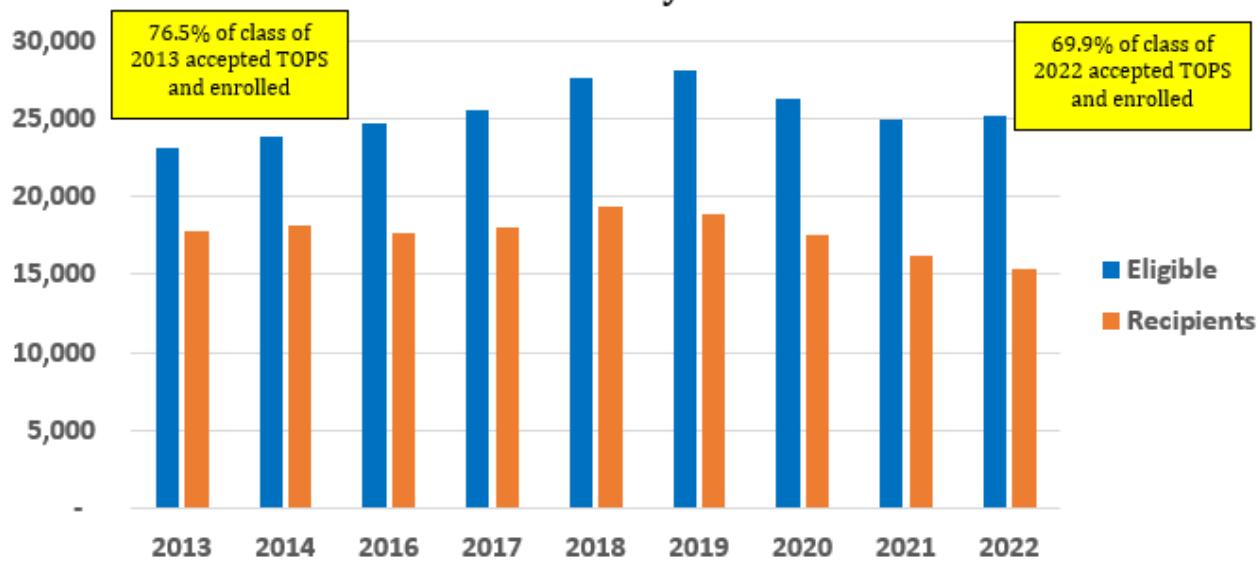
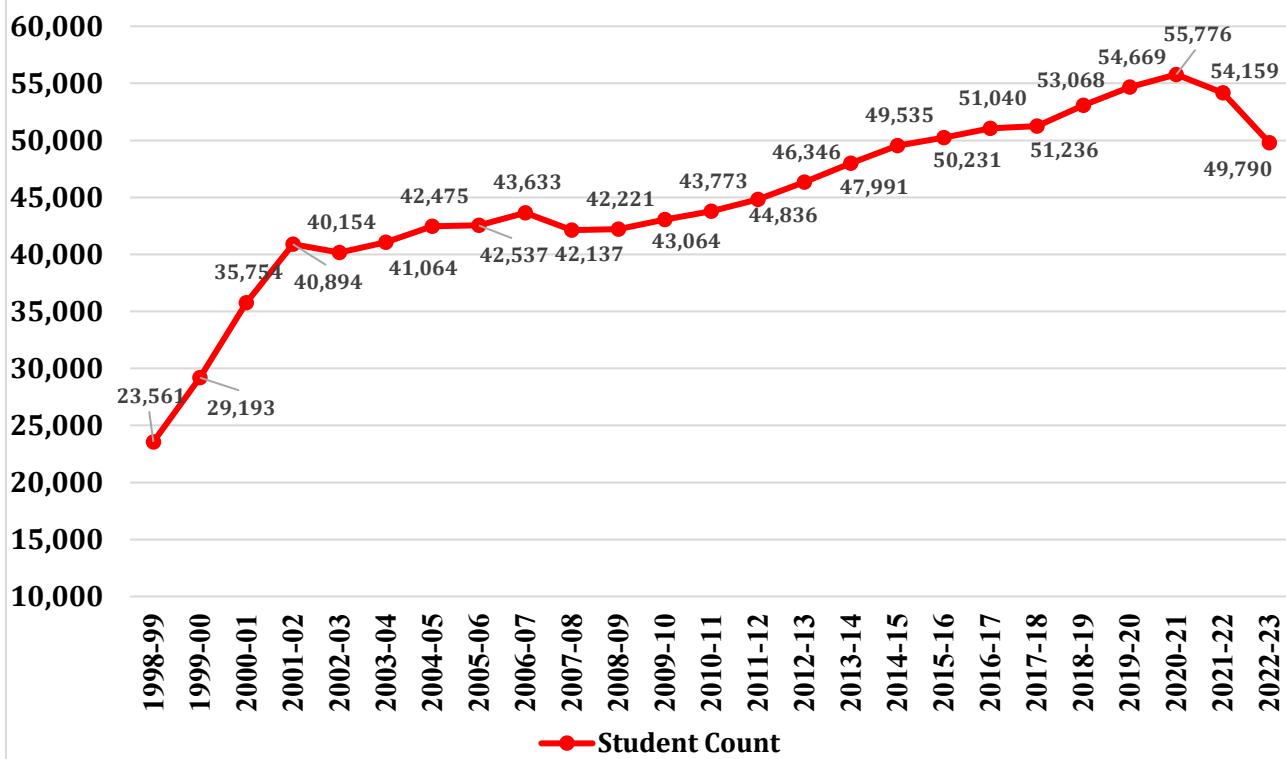


Figure B: TOPS Student Counts, 1998-1999 to 2022-2023



While Figure A presents the overall acceptance rate, this average masks significant differences in acceptance rates for the four different TOPS awards.

While the acceptance rates for *Opportunity* and *Performance* awards have remained in the mid-80s in recent years (Table 5), a steadily declining proportion of *Honors* awardees have been accepting their award. That proportion has dropped from 80% in 2018-19 to 75% in 2020-21.

Table 5

TOPS ACCEPTANCE RATES				
YEAR	<i>Opportunity</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Honors</i>	<i>Tech</i>
2014-2015	89%	92%	82%	23%
2015-2016	86%	91%	81%	18%
2016-2017	85%	89%	78%	23%
2017-2018	83%	88%	79%	25%
2018-2019	83%	88%	80%	25%
2019-2020	83%	88%	78%	23%
2020-2021	83%	86%	75%	24%

Also striking is that only about one in four of those who are eligible for a TOPS *Tech* award choose to accept their scholarship and enroll in an eligible program (refer to Appendix D).

To further understand these phenomena, LOFSA and Regents carried out an in-depth analysis of those students who were eligible for any TOPS award between 2015 and 2021 but chose not to accept their award. We utilized data from the National Clearinghouse, together with data collected from Louisiana public and proprietary institutions, to identify the higher education choices of eligible students who elected not to accept their TOPS award.

Table 6

PROPORTION OF TOPS NON-ACCEPTERS GOING OUT-OF-STATE				
YEAR	<i>Opportunity</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Honors</i>	<i>Tech</i>
2014-15	27%	43%	54%	7%
2015-16	18%	23%	39%	5%
2016-17	17%	23%	37%	7%
2017-18	19%	19%	33%	6%
2018-19	16%	21%	33%	7%
2019-20	18%	24%	36%	7%
2020-21	20%	27%	39%	7%

The National Clearinghouse data allowed us to see whether those students who chose not to receive their TOPS award enrolled in universities and colleges in other states (Table 6). Once again, the proportions vary by award level. While certainly there were many students who made the decision to go out-of-state, these are not the majority. Furthermore, the proportion of potential *Opportunity*, *Performance*, and *Honors* awardees who chose not to receive their award and elected to go out-of-state has declined from 2014-2015 level. That said, it is on a recent upward trend.

The Clearinghouse data also provide the most commonly chosen out-of-state options. These are shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7

OUT-OF-STATE COLLEGES CHOSEN BY LOUISIANA TOPS ELIGIBLE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES								
Out-of-State College	High School Graduation Year							
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	TOTAL
University of Southern Mississippi	65	35	62	73	80	86	56	457
University of Alabama	34	29	46	35	29	38	51	262
University of Mississippi	33	25	20	29	23	32	36	198
Mississippi State University	31	18	20	31	16	23	42	181
Millsaps College	22	17	14	22	15	25	33	148
Spring Hill College	26	28	22	12	23	18	19	148
Alcorn State University	22	15	25	12	19	19	6	118
Howard University	23	11	14	9	16	20	16	109
Jackson State University	16	16	10	21	16	18	10	107
Pearl River Community College	10	16	13	13	9	25	16	102

While many students who chose not to receive their TOPS award elected to attend an institution in another state, the majority in each TOPS award level attended a Louisiana institution. More than half of the *Opportunity*-, *Performance*- and *Honors*-eligible awardees who did not receive their awards enrolled in college in Louisiana. Overwhelmingly, these students were not able to receive their TOPS award because they enrolled part-time, and TOPS requires students to be enrolled full-time. (Table 8).

70% of eligible TOPS *Tech* recipients chose not to receive their awards but enrolled in a Louisiana college or university. These students represent more than half of all TOPS *Tech* eligible students. These students either enrolled part-time (41%), in a four-year institution, or in an ineligible program (29%).

Table 8

PROPORTION OF TOPS NON-ACCEPTERS WHO ENROLLED IN LA				
YEAR	<i>Opportunity</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Honors</i>	<i>Tech</i>
2014-2015	60%	50%	41%	85%
2015-2016	70%	69%	58%	87%
2016-2017	71%	71%	60%	83%
2017-2018	62%	71%	63%	76%
2018-2019	59%	70%	64%	70%
2019-2020	57%	66%	60%	72%
2020-2021	55%	59%	55%	70%

A final concerning trend is that a growing proportion of students at every TOPS level are choosing not to enroll in a higher education program at all (Table 9). In calculating these data we also confirmed that these students were not enrolled in any institution (in-state or out-of-state) nor in any short-term credentials or industry-recognized credential programs in the state.

Table 9

PERCENTAGE OF TOPS NON-ACCEPTERS NOT ENROLLED IN ANY COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY				
YEAR	<i>Opportunity</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Honors</i>	<i>Tech</i>
2014-2015	13%	6%	5%	8%
2015-2016	13%	8%	4%	8%
2016-2017	12%	6%	3%	10%
2017-2018	19%	10%	4%	18%
2018-2019	24%	9%	3%	23%
2019-2020	24%	10%	5%	21%
2020-2021	24%	14%	6%	23%

TOPS recipients' average ACT scores and TOPS Core GPAs have been consistently higher than the minimum requirements for a TOPS *Opportunity* Award. TOPS recipients' average high school Core GPA increased from 3.35 in 2013-2014 to 3.71 in 2022-2023 (Table 10).

Table 10

Mean ACT and Core GPA of TOPS Recipients*		
HS Cohort	TOPS Recipients' Average Composite ACT Score	TOPS Recipients' Average Core GPA
2013-2014	24	3.35
2014-2015	24	3.35
2015-2016	24	3.37
2016-2017	24	3.40
2017-2018	24	3.53
2018-2019	24	3.57
2019-2020	24	3.63
2020-2021	24	3.68
2021-2022	24	3.71
2022-2023**	24	3.71

* Since 2013, the average overall composite ACT score of TOPS recipients is 24, and the overall average GPA is 3.50

**Of those eligible

As illustrated below in Table 11, TOPS recipients' average ACT scores vary by race. Composite ACT scores for African American students throughout the past ten years have increased to an average of 22.7 for 2021-2022, compared to 24.4 for white and 23.9 for Hispanic students.

ACT reported that the number of Louisiana students taking the ACT more than once declined last year; this decrease in retesting is of concern as it has been found that students who retest do better in the subsequent test administrations. If a student took only one administration of the ACT, then there is a possibility that lower scores might not meet TOPS eligibility criteria, although a student could achieve that mark with an additional attempt.

Table 11**TOPS Recipients, by Race and ACT Composite Score***

HS Cohort	American		African		Hispanic	Other	Total
	Asian	Indian	American	White			
2012-2013	25.0	23.4	22.4	24.4	23.9	24.4	24.0
2013-2014	25.1	23.6	22.3	24.5	24.3	24.4	24.1
2014-2015	25.4	23.3	22.4	24.5	24.0	24.5	24.1
2015-2016	25.8	23.8	22.7	24.7	24.3	24.5	24.3
2016-2017	25.5	24.3	22.6	24.7	24.2	24.7	24.3
2017-2018	25.5	23.8	22.6	24.8	24.4	24.0	24.4
2018-2019	26.0	23.3	22.6	24.8	24.1	24.3	24.4
2019-2020	25.8	25.0	22.8	24.8	24.1	24.5	24.4
2020-2021	25.8	23.6	22.6	24.5	24.1	24.1	24.2
2021-2022	25.6	24.1	22.7	24.4	23.9	24.1	24.1

* It should be noted that 2,985 individuals did not report their race. Therefore they were not included in this analysis.

Source: LOSFA internal data files as of August 2023.

As Table 12 indicates, overall TOPS recipients are predominantly white. In 2021-2022 the first-time entering freshman student population was 50.5% white; this reflects all enrolled first-time freshmen (including in-state, out-of-state, TOPS recipients, and non-TOPS students).

Despite the racial gaps among TOPS recipients, the number of minority students accepting TOPS has generally increased over time; this year, the numbers of African American, American Indian, Asian and Hispanic TOPS recipients all saw a slight increase (Tables 12 and 13).

Table 12**TOPS Recipients, by Race***

HS Cohort	American		African		Hispanic	Other	Total
	Asian	Indian	American	White			
2012-2013	492	82	2,947	12,176	413	138	16,248
2013-2014	518	111	2,770	12,144	461	144	16,148
2014-2015	539	110	3,081	12,492	507	150	16,879
2015-2016	509	102	3,092	12,087	545	154	16,489
2016-2017	506	97	2,942	12,183	537	195	16,460
2017-2018	563	117	3,312	12,758	586	258	17,594
2018-2019	525	73	2,954	12,214	592	269	16,627
2019-2020	531	71	2,658	11,472	599	268	15,599
2020-2021	519	74	2,151	10,662	549	255	14,210
2021-2022	531	76	2,276	9,856	632	254	13,625

* It should be noted that 2,985 individuals did not report their race. Therefore they were not included in this analysis.

Source: LOSFA internal data files as of August 2023.

Table 13

TOPS Recipients, by Race									
HS Cohort	American		African		Not Reported				
	Asian	Indian	American	White	Hispanic	Other	Reported	Total	
2012-2013	3%	0%	18%	74%	3%	1%	1%	100%	
2013-2014	3%	1%	17%	73%	3%	1%	3%	100%	
2014-2015	3%	1%	18%	73%	3%	1%	2%	100%	
2015-2016	3%	1%	18%	72%	3%	1%	2%	100%	
2016-2017	3%	1%	18%	73%	3%	1%	2%	100%	
2017-2018	3%	1%	19%	72%	3%	1%	1%	100%	
2018-2019	3%	0%	17%	72%	4%	2%	2%	100%	
2019-2020	3%	0%	17%	72%	4%	2%	2%	100%	
2020-2021	4%	1%	15%	74%	4%	2%	2%	100%	
2021-2022	4%	1%	16%	71%	5%	2%	2%	100%	

Source: LOSFA internal data files as of August 2023.

TOPS recipients have been predominantly female for more than a decade. As Tables 14 and 15 noted, in 2021-2022, 57.2% of TOPS recipients were female. Male students receiving TOPS have had slightly higher average ACT scores; however, the number of male participants is 42.5%. In comparison, 56.2% of the total Academic Year 2021-2022 first-time freshman undergraduate population was female; this percentage reflects all enrolled first-time freshmen (including in-state, out-of-state, TOPS recipients, and non-TOPS students).

Table 14

TOPS Recipients ACT Composite Score* by Gender			
HS Cohort	Female	Male	Total
2012-2013	23.7	24.5	24.0
2013-2014	23.8	24.6	24.1
2014-2015	23.8	24.6	24.1
2015-2016	24.0	24.8	24.3
2016-2017	24.0	24.9	24.4
2017-2018	24.0	24.9	24.4
2018-2019	24.1	24.9	24.4
2019-2020	24.1	25.0	24.5
2020-2021	23.9	24.6	24.2
2021-2022	23.9	24.5	24.2

Source: BOR data files as of August 2023

* The average includes only those students whose data points were fully reported. It should be noted that over the ten-year period, 420 individuals did not report their gender and are not included in this analysis.

Table 15

TOPS Recipients, by Gender*			
HS Cohort	Female	Male	Total
2012-2013	9,597	6,852	16,449
2013-2014	9,784	6,925	16,709
2014-2015	10,130	7,026	17,156
2015-2016	9,925	6,849	16,774
2016-2017	9,775	6,913	16,688
2017-2018	10,334	7,441	17,775
2018-2019	9,729	7,095	16,824
2019-2020	9,236	6,566	15,802
2020-2021	8,216	6,212	14,428
2021-2022	7,943	5,896	13,839

Source: BOR data files as of August 2023

* The average includes only those students whose data points were fully reported. It should be noted that over the ten-year period, 420 individuals did not report their gender and are not included in this analysis.

Persistence (Retention)

Persistence in postsecondary education is measured by the rate at which first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students are retained in (or return for) their second year. As illustrated in Tables 16, 17, and 18, students who begin college with a TOPS award return to postsecondary education in subsequent years at higher rates than non-TOPS students.

Furthermore, students receiving the *Performance* and *Honors* Awards, generally better prepared for postsecondary education, are retained at higher rates than those receiving the *Opportunity* Award.

Table 16 examines the overall retention rate (retention at any Louisiana public postsecondary institution, not necessarily the institution where the student started) through the second, third, and fourth years of students with TOPS who began at a four-year institution compared to those who started without TOPS.

Table 16

Statewide Retention Rates of TOPS vs. Non-TOPS Students Who Began at a Four-Year Institution						
Fall Semester Entering Class	2 nd Yr. Retention		3 rd Yr. Retention		4 th Yr. Retention	
	TOPS	Non-TOPS	TOPS	Non-TOPS	TOPS	Non-TOPS
2012	87%	66%	81%	52%	75%	46%
2013	87%	63%	81%	53%	76%	44%
2014	87%	65%	81%	53%	75%	46%
2015	87%	61%	80%	51%	75%	43%
2016	88%	64%	81%	53%	76%	45%
2017	88%	65%	81%	52%	76%	44%
2018	88%	63%	81%	49%	75%	40%
2019	89%	65%	81%	50%	73%	42%
2020	87%	60%	79%	45%	0%	0%
2021	88%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Source: BoR internal data files as of September 2023

Table 17 examines the overall retention rate by award level of TOPS students who began at a four-year institution through the second, third, and fourth years.

Table 17

Statewide Retention Rates of TOPS Students Who Began at a Four-Year Institution by TOPS Award Level										
Fall Semester Entering Class	2 nd Yr. Retention			3 rd Yr. Retention			4 th Yr. Retention			Honors
	Opportunity	Performance	Honors	Opportunity	Performance	Honors	Opportunity	Performance	Honors	
2012	82%	91%	94%	73%	85%	90%	67%	80%	86%	
2013	81%	91%	95%	74%	85%	90%	68%	79%	86%	
2014	81%	91%	94%	72%	85%	90%	66%	80%	86%	
2015	81%	90%	94%	73%	84%	90%	66%	79%	86%	
2016	82%	90%	93%	74%	85%	89%	68%	79%	84%	
2017	82%	91%	94%	74%	84%	89%	68%	79%	84%	
2018	82%	90%	93%	74%	84%	89%	67%	78%	82%	
2019	83%	90%	95%	72%	84%	89%	64%	76%	82%	
2020	81%	89%	93%	71%	82%	88%	0%	0%	0%	
2021	83%	90%	93%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	

Source: BoR internal data files as of September 2023

Table 18 examines the overall retention rate in the second year of students who began with TOPS at a two-year institution compared to those who started without TOPS (Non-TOPS students include only Louisiana residents for comparative purposes).

Table 18

Fall Semester Entering Class	2 nd Year Retention	
	TOPS	Non-TOPs
2012	76%	51%
2013	74%	51%
2014	75%	52%
2015	76%	51%
2016	76%	48%
2017	76%	49%
2018	77%	51%
2019	75%	46%
2020	73%	51%
2021	76%	53%

Source: BOR internal data files as of September 2023

Retaining the TOPS award

As previously noted, students who receive a TOPS award must meet minimum academic criteria to retain their award (See Table 2). The award is cancelled when students fail to maintain full-time and continuous enrollment, earn 24 hours of credit per academic year, or maintain the minimum GPA. Students may request and be granted exceptions for failure to meet these criteria for circumstances beyond their control, including illness, death in the family, military service, natural disasters, etc. TOPS Awards are initially suspended for GPA and are permanently cancelled after two years. TOPS *Tech* awards are permanently cancelled after one year has passed during which the student has not attained the required GPA. As shown in Table 19, the number of awards cancelled has declined over time.

Furthermore, between the 2012-2013 cohort and the 2022-2023 cohort, 187,430 students received TOPS awards. Of these TOPS award recipients, 31,901 (17%) had their TOPS award cancelled during their postsecondary academic career. From 2012-2013 to 2022-2023, the cumulative total of cancelled awards was 31,901. Of these 31,901 cancelled awards, 28,148 were cancelled due to students' failure to earn 24 hours of college credit during an academic year, 2,555 due to the GPA requirement, and 1,198 due to non-continuous enrollment. The vast majority of awards are cancelled due to the 24-hour requirement. However, regardless, there has been a decreasing trend of award cancellations in recent years.

Table 19

Entering Cohort	Percentage of TOPS Award Cancelled** by Cohort							
	Total # of TOPS Awards	Total # of Awards Cancelled*		Cancelled: 24 Hr. Requirement		Cancelled: GPA Requirement		Cancelled: Non-Continuous Enrollment
2012-2013	16,171	4,314	27%	3,652	23%	557	3%	105 1%
2013-2014	16,994	4,578	27%	3,901	23%	556	3%	121 1%
2014-2015	17,306	4,488	26%	3,999	23%	382	2%	107 1%
2015-2016	17,883	4,553	25%	4,086	23%	355	2%	112 1%
2016-2017	16,974	4,045	24%	3,602	21%	311	2%	132 1%
2017-2018	17,262	2,968	17%	2,631	15%	202	1%	135 1%
2018-2019	18,511	2,705	15%	2,412	13%	138	1%	155 1%
2019-2020	18,198	1,394	8%	1,212	7%	43	0%	139 1%
2020-2021	16,958	1,364	8%	1,256	7%	10	0%	98 1%
2021-2022	15,704	1,174	7%	1,101	7%	1	0%	72 0%
2022-2023	15,469	318	2%	296	2%		0%	22 0%
Grand Total	187,430	31,901	17%	28,148	15%	2,555	1%	1,198 1%

Source: BOR data files as of August 2023

* Due to change in methodology by LOSFA in 2018 regarding a timeframe change from 90 days to 9 months for data collection. For awards cancelled for 2021-2022, these data are not available at this time and will be reported in the next year.

**Students whose awards are cancelled for everything but GPA, may request and be approved for an exception under existing law.

The average ACT score of all TOPS recipients who had their awards cancelled between 2010-2011 and 2021-2022 (due to failure to earn the required 24 hours of credit per academic year, achieve the required minimum GPA, or maintain full-time and continuous enrollment) was 23.1. This group's average high school GPA was 3.17 (Table 20).

Table 20

Average ACT Score and High School GPA of TOPS Recipients Who had Their Award Cancelled*, 2010-2011 to 2021-2022

Reason Cancelled	Average ACT Composite	Average High School GPA
24 Hour	23.1	3.17
GPA	22.8	3.10
Non-Continuous Enrollment	23.6	3.19

*Students whose awards are cancelled for everything but GPA may request and be approved for an exception under existing law.

Graduation

A graduation rate is typically measured by calculating the rate at which first-time, full-time degree-seeking students earn their academic degrees within 150% of the time anticipated (i.e., within six years for baccalaureate degrees and within three years for associate's degrees). However, because TOPS recipients are only eligible for the award for up to four years (or eight semesters), examining graduation rates at both 100% and 150% of time is essential.

As noted in Figures C and D, students who begin a baccalaureate degree program with TOPS graduate within 100% and 150% of time at much higher rates than students without a TOPS award. The 2016 class is used to compare cohorts as both 100% and 150% data are available. Findings indicate that 38% of the 2016 first-time, full-time entering cohort of TOPS recipients completed a baccalaureate degree within 100% of time, compared with 8% of non-TOPS students. Furthermore, 63% of the 2016 first-time, full-time entering cohort of TOPS recipients completed a baccalaureate degree within 150% of time, compared with 24% of non-TOPS students.

Figure C: Statewide Baccalaureate Four-Year Graduation Rate (100%) Among TOPS and Non-TOPS Students First-Time, Full-Time Entering Cohorts, Four-Year Institutions 2012-2018

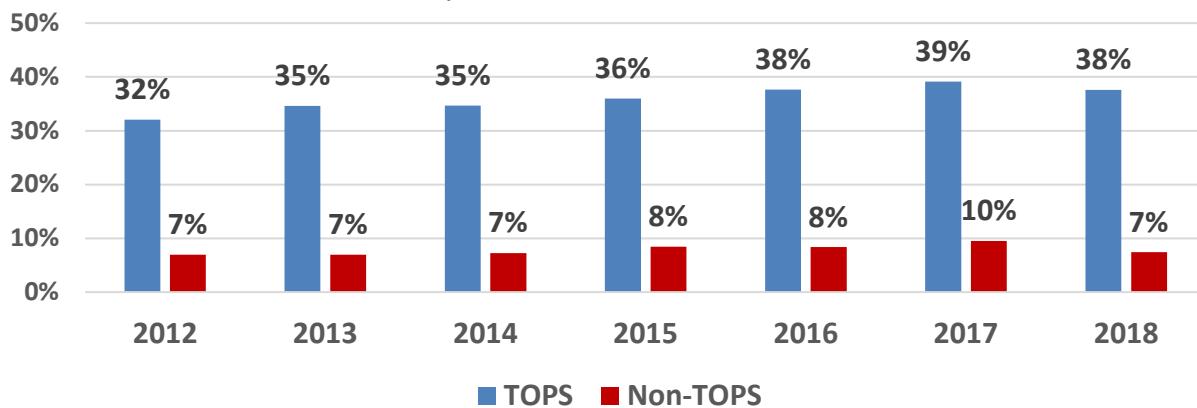
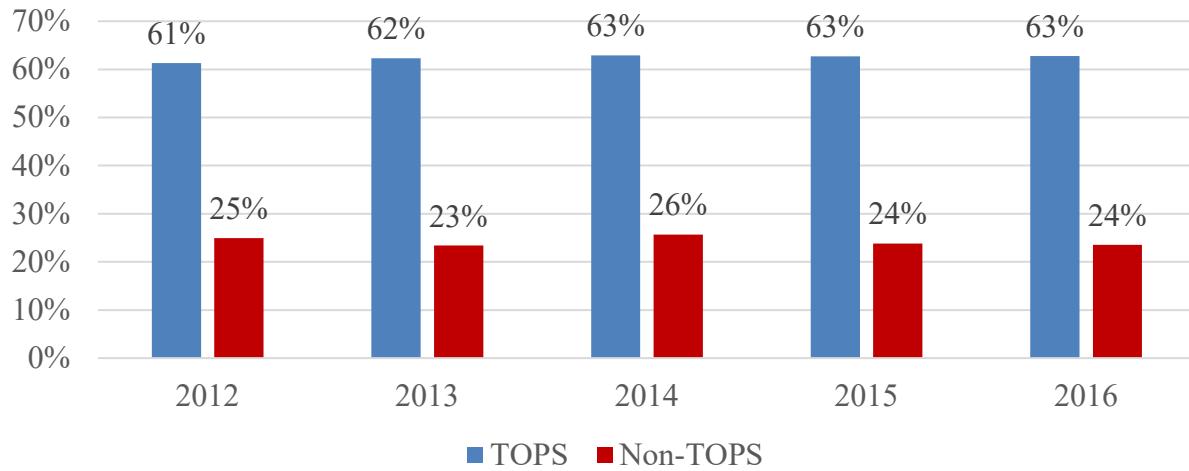


Figure D: Statewide Baccalaureate 6-Year Graduation Rate (150%) Among TOPS and Non-TOPS Students First-Time, Full-Time Entering Cohorts, Four-Year Institutions 2012-2016



Graduation rates also differ across the types of award received. TOPS *Honors* recipients graduate at much higher rates than TOPS *Performance* and *Opportunity* recipients. As noted in Figures E and F, 57% of TOPS *Honors* recipients in the 2016 entering cohort completed a baccalaureate degree within 100% of time and 79% within 150% of time, compared with 42% and 23% within 100% of time and 69% and 49% within 150% of time for TOPS *Performance* and *Opportunity* recipients, respectively. As mentioned previously, the 2016 class will be used to compare cohorts as both 100% and 150% data are available.

Figure E: Statewide Baccalaureate Four-Year Graduation Rate (100%) By Opportunity, Performance, Honors

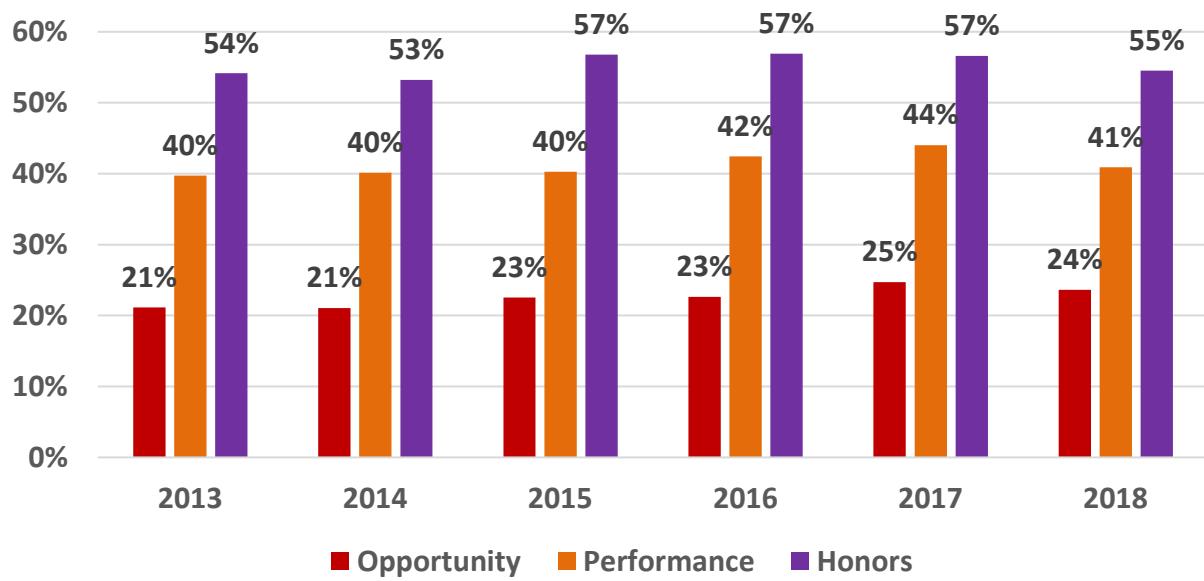
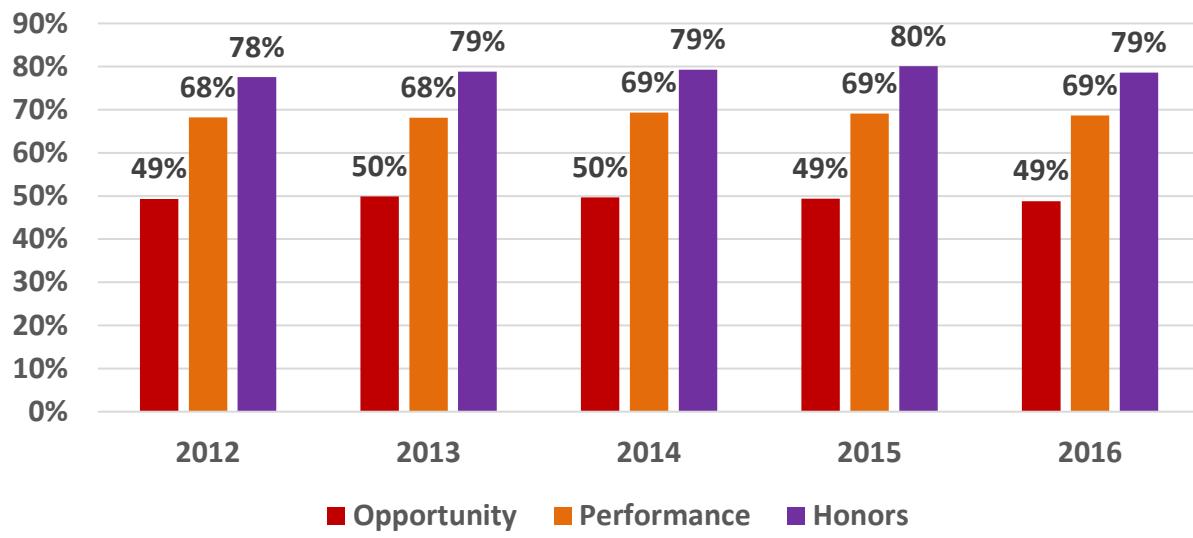


Figure F: Statewide Baccalaureate Six-Year Graduation Rate (150%) By Opportunity, Performance, Honors



Like TOPS baccalaureate degree seekers, TOPS recipients who begin an associate's degree program graduate at much higher rates than students without a TOPS award; as previously mentioned, the 2019 class is used to illustrate both 100% and 150% graduation rates as data are available. As shown in Figures G and H, 9% of the 2019 first-time, full-time entering cohort of all TOPS recipients completed an associate's degree within 100% of time, compared with 2% of non-TOPS students. Within 150% of time, 20% of the 2019 first-time, full-time entering cohort of TOPS recipients completed an associate's degree, compared with 7% of non-TOPS students. Performance measures for out-of-state and international students were negligible and did not affect the data.

Figure G: Statewide 2-Year Graduation Rate (100%) Among TOPS and Non-TOPS Students First-Time, Full-Time Entering Cohorts, Two-Year Institutions 2012-2020

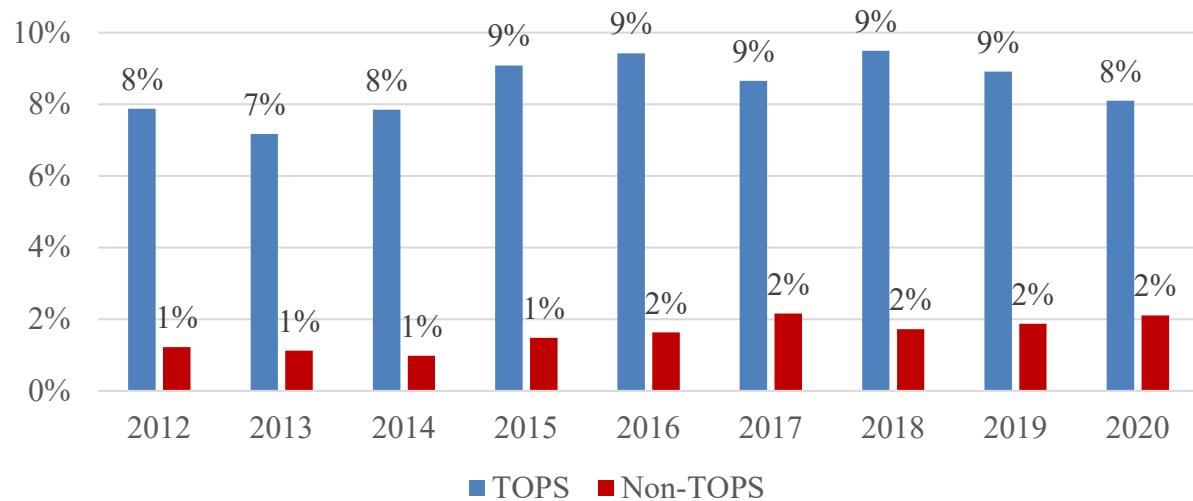
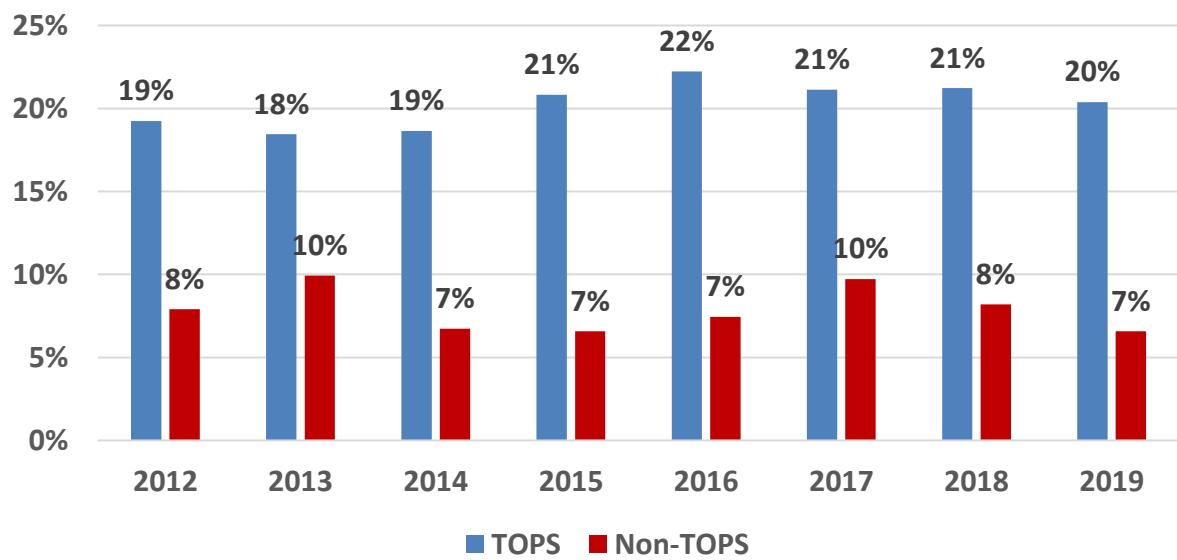


Figure H: Statewide 3-Year Associate's Graduation Rate (150%) Among TOPS and Non-TOPS Students First-Time, Full-Time Entering Cohorts, Two-Year Institutions 2012-2019



The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) [2016] defines time-to-degree as "the time between initial enrollment in a postsecondary institution and graduation with a college degree." Table 21 examines this metric for TOPS recipients compared with non-TOPS students for the 2021-2022 Academic Year. Consistent with trends discussed in this report, TOPS students took less time to complete the degree than their non-TOPS counterparts. Within the three tiers of TOPS

(*Opportunity, Performance, and Honors*), the higher the scholarship level, the fewer semesters taken to graduate.

Table 21

2022-2023 Average Time-to-Degree of TOPS & Non-TOPS Recipients*	
Average Time-To-Degree (Calendar Years)	
Associate's Degree Recipients	
TOPS	3.7
Non-TOPS	6.1
Total	5.2
Baccalaureate Degree Recipients	
TOPS <i>Opportunity</i>	4.9
TOPS <i>Performance</i>	4.2
TOPS <i>Honors</i>	4.0
TOPS Total	4.4
Non-TOPS	6.2
Baccalaureate Total	4.7

* Does not include out-of-state or international students

Conclusion

The TOPS eligibility criteria require students to take a more rigorous high school curriculum, which better prepares them for success in postsecondary education. Students who complete the TOPS Core also earn higher ACT composite scores than students who do not complete the TOPS Core.

Data indicate that the TOPS Program has succeeded in keeping more of Louisiana's high school graduates in the state to pursue postsecondary education. In a recently published positive trend for the state, a Washington Post (September 2022) analysis reported that "Louisiana ranks 17th in keeping graduates in the state". Analysis of data from the National Student Clearinghouse bears this out. Changes in traditional student behavior may account for some of the decreases due to the rising costs of education in the state.

From 2012-2013, of the 253,734 students deemed eligible for a TOPS *Opportunity, Performance, Honors, or Tech* Award, 177,295 (or 69.9%) have accepted a TOPS *Opportunity, Performance, Honors, or Tech* Award and enrolled in a postsecondary education institution in Louisiana.

The proportion of students who are eligible for *Opportunity, Performance, and Honors* Awards and receive their awards is steadily declining. While many of the students who are eligible for *Opportunity, Performance, or Honors* Awards but decline their award choose to enroll in an out-of-state institution, most eligible students who do not receive their award enroll in a Louisiana college or university. They do not receive their award because they are enrolled part-time.

Only one in four students eligible for a TOPS *Tech* award receive their award. More than half of TOPS-*Tech*-eligible students do not receive their award but enroll in a Louisiana college or university. Most of these students do not receive their award because they are enrolled part-time. One-third enroll in a program that is not eligible for TOPS *Tech* recipients.

Also of concern, a steadily increasing proportion of TOPS-eligible students are choosing not to continue to postsecondary education at all. This trend is not limited to Louisiana but is also reflected in national trends and may be connected to a change in the way in which people value higher education.

Taken together, these trends suggest that it may be time to realign TOPS requirements in ways that recognize new patterns in student enrollment behavior to better support progress toward the state's education attainment goal of 60% of working-age adults holding a postsecondary credential by 2030.

TOPS recipients consistently attain ACT scores and high school core GPAs above the minimum required for TOPS eligibility. Among TOPS recipients from 2013-2014 to 2022-2023, the average ACT score was 24 (four points above the minimum needed for eligibility for a TOPS *Opportunity* Award), and the average high school GPA (Core GPA) was 3.71 (significantly higher than the 2.5 minimum required for a TOPS *Opportunity* Award). Data also indicate that the majority of initial TOPS recipients are disproportionately white and disproportionately female.

Despite the racial gaps among TOPS recipients, the number of minority students receiving TOPS had generally increased over time, however, minority participation rates are too low to erase the existing opportunity gaps. In a positive trend for the state this year, all minority races saw an increase in number of TOPS recipients. BOR has been working with the Lumina Foundation to look more deeply into these findings and potential solutions.

In terms of persistence, students who begin college with a TOPS award return to postsecondary education in subsequent years at a higher rate than non-TOPS students. Approximately 16.8% of TOPS recipients had their awards cancelled between 2012-2013 and 2021-2022, with most cancellations due to students' failure to earn 24 hours of college credit during an academic year. Students may receive an exception to this requirement by filing an appeal due to extenuating circumstances.

Data indicate that students who began a baccalaureate or an associate's degree program with a TOPS award graduated within 100% and 150% of the time at much higher rates than students without a TOPS award. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the 2016 first-time, full-time entering cohort of TOPS recipients completed a baccalaureate degree within 100% of time, compared with 8% of non-TOPS students.

Data indicate that TOPS awards may correlate with time-to-degree, as TOPS recipients graduated in fewer semesters than non-TOPS students. Students who begin with a TOPS Award complete at a higher rate, regardless of whether they retain the award for the entirety of their eligibility.

From 1998-1999 through the 2022-2023 fiscal years, the state provided funding of approximately \$5.10 billion for the TOPS Program. However, several years of declines in the number of high school graduates and TOPS eligible students combined with lower proportions of students accepting their awards has resulted in a second decrease in the number of overall TOPS recipients, and a second year where an increase in TOPS funding was not requested.

Appendix A:
Act 1202 from 2001
Regular Legislative Session

<https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=817880>

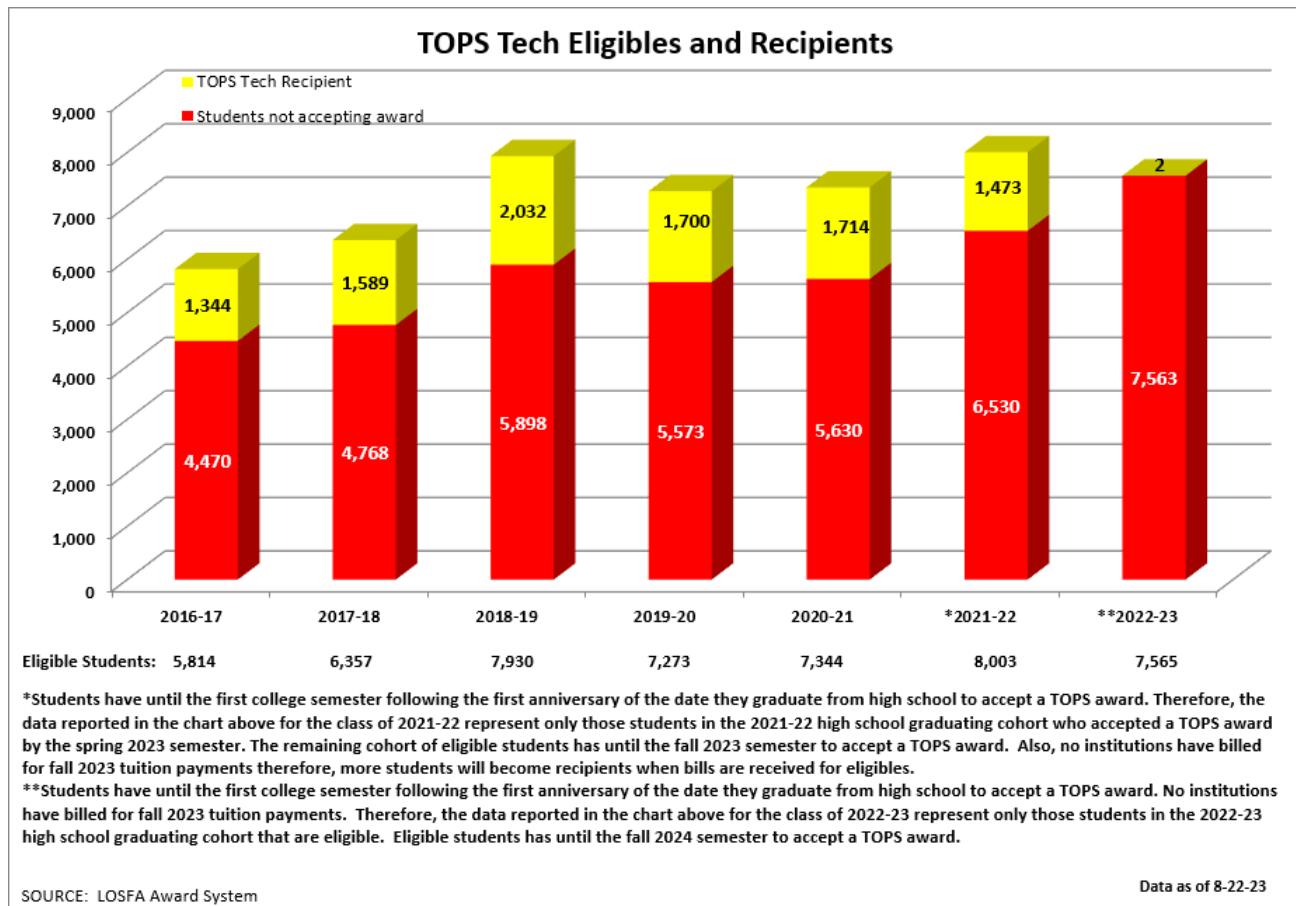
Appendix B:
Act 587 from 2014
Regular Legislative Session

<http://legis.la.gov/Legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=911152>

Appendix C:
Act 227 from 2015
Regular Legislative Session

<https://legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=954697>

Appendix D: TOPS Tech Analysis



Appendix E:
TOPS Core Curriculum

<https://mylosfa.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/TOPSCoreCurriculum.pdf>

Appendix F:
2023 High School Grads TOPS Eligible
by School and Parish

<https://mylosfa.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/TOPS-Eligibles-by-School-and-Parish-2022.pdf>

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Chair

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Board of Regents Meeting as a Committee of the Whole

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS PLANNING, RESEARCH AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 18, 2023

Loyd J. Rockhold Distance Learning Room
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Cecil J. Picard Center
200 East Devalcourt Street
Lafayette, LA 70506

VII. Reports and Recommendations

D. Planning, Research and Performance

1. Consent Agenda

- a. R.S. 17:1808 (Academic Licensure)
 - i. Renewal Applications
 - a. Baton Rouge General Medical Center (BRGM)
 - b. Fuller Theological Seminary (FTS)
 - c. Saybrook University (SU)
 - d. Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU)
 - e. University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USA)
 - b. Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission
 - i. Initial Applications
 - a. Clinical Lynks, Metairie, LA
 - b. Unimed Academy, New Orleans, LA
 - ii. Renewal Applications
 - a. 160 Driving Academy-Shreveport - License #2364
 - b. Acadiana Area Career College, Lafayette, LA - License #2357
 - c. Accelerated Academy-Denham Springs - License #2154
 - d. Accelerated Academy-Lafayette - License #2219
 - e. Accelerated Academy-Baton Rouge - License #2220
 - f. Accelerated Academy-Monroe - License #2223
 - g. Accelerated Academy-Slidell - License #2224
 - h. Accelerated Academy-Houma - License #2228
 - i. Accelerated Academy-Metairie - License #2230
 - j. Accelerated Academy-Hammond - License #2235

- k. Accelerated Academy-Lake Charles - License #2308
 - l. Advance Nursing Training, New Orleans, LA - License #2197
 - m. Ark-La-Tex Dental Assisting Academy, Shreveport, LA - License #2131
 - n. Baton Rouge Dental Assistant Academy-South - License #2305
 - o. Baton Rouge School of Phlebotomy - License #2335
 - p. Blue Cliff College-Alexandria - License #2358
 - q. Blue Cliff College-Lafayette - License #2359
 - r. Blue Cliff College-Metairie - License #2360
 - s. Blue Cliff College-Metairie, Satellite - License #2361
 - t. Camelot College, Baton Rouge, LA - License #680
 - u. Coastal College-Alexandria - License #991
 - v. Cross Road CDL Academy, Harvey LA - License #2321
 - w. Digital Media Institute, Shreveport, LA - License #2198
 - x. Fortis College, Baton Rouge, LA - License #2134
 - y. Healthcare Training Institute, Kenner, LA - License #2109
 - z. Life Care, Marrero, LA - License #2182
 - aa. MedCerts, Livonia, MI - License #2337
 - bb. Medical Training College, Baton Rouge, LA - License #969
 - cc. NOLA Institute of Gaming, New Orleans, LA - License #2322
 - dd. OceanPointe Dental Academy of Prairieville - License #2363
 - ee. Opelousas Academy of Nondestructive Testing - License #2275
 - ff. RelyOn Nutec USA, Houma, LA - License #2156
 - gg. Remington College - Baton Rouge - License #2277
 - hh. River Cities School of Dental Assisting, Shreveport, LA - License #2089
 - ii. Smith Institute, Shreveport, LA - License #2362
 - jj. Stick It Phlebotomy, Jonesboro, LA - License #2226
 - kk. Synergy Massage Institute-Slidell - License #2336
 - ll. Synergy Massage Institute-Metairie - License #2365
- c. Approval Of Initial Rulemaking – Allows Advisory councils and commissions to meet remotely in accordance with new legislation R.S. 42:17.2.

AGENDA ITEM VII.D.1.a.i.a.
Baton Rouge General Medical Center
School of Nursing and School of Radiologic Technology
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

BACKGROUND

Baton Rouge General Medical Center, School of Nursing and School of Radiologic Technology (BRGM) is a higher education institution with its main campus in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. This institution is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) and Joint Review Commission on Education in Radiologic Technology (JCERT).

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Baton Rouge General Medical Center (BRGM) offers diplomas and certificates in nursing and radiology technology. The institution currently has 131 students in its Louisiana Unduplicated Headcount Enrollment.

Degree Level	Louisiana Unduplicated Headcount Enrollment
Doctorate	0
Master's	0
Bachelor's	0
Associate	0
Diploma	107
Certificate	24
Total	131

FACULTY

Baton Rouge General Medical Center (BRGM) has 19 full-time and part-time faculty at various degree levels.

FACILITIES

Baton Rouge General Medical Center (BRGM) offers classroom lectures, laboratories, and clinicals to Louisiana residents. Instruction and laboratory instruction take place at 3616 North Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Given the programs' scope and the credentials of its faculty, the institution's campus, program accreditation, and the general oversight by the home campus, Senior Staff recommends the application for license *renewal* from Baton Rouge General Medical Center (BRGM).

AGENDA ITEM VII.D.1.a.i.b.
Fuller Theological Seminary
Pasadena, California

BACKGROUND

Fuller Theological Seminary (FTS) is a private institution with its main campus located in Pasadena, California. FTS offers twelve online academic programs to Louisiana residents. This university is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), Senior College and University Commission, and the Commission on Accreditation of the Association of Theological Schools.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

FTS offers academic programs and certificates that include ministry, leadership, theology, social services, and counseling. There are 17 academic programs offered to students including doctorate, master's, and certificate programs. The university currently has 7 students in its Louisiana Unduplicated Headcount Enrollment.

Degree Level	Louisiana Unduplicated Headcount Enrollment
Doctorate	1
Master's	6
Bachelor's	0
Associate	0
Certificate	0
Other	0
Total	7

FACULTY

Fuller Theological Seminary (FTS) has 53 full-time and 132 part-time faculty members with a master's degree or higher.

FACILITIES

FTS offers online instruction to Louisiana residents.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Given the programs' scope and the credentials of its faculty, the institution's campus, program accreditation, and the general oversight by the home campus, Senior Staff recommends approval of the application for license *renewal* from Fuller Theological Seminary (FTS).

AGENDA ITEM VII.D.1.a.i.c.
Saybrook University
Pasadena, California

BACKGROUND

Saybrook University (SU) is a private institution with its main campus located in Pasadena, California. SU provides various graduate degrees in subject areas tailored towards social sciences, integrative medicine, health sciences, and a host of certificates and workshops including psychology, management, and nutrition. This university is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), Senior College and University Commission.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

SU offers academic programs and certificates that include business, counseling, integrative medicine, psychology, social sciences, and nutrition. There are 32 academic programs offered to students, including doctorate and master's programs as well as certificates. The university currently has seven students in its Louisiana Unduplicated Headcount Enrollment.

Degree Level	Louisiana Unduplicated Headcount Enrollment
Doctorate	4
Master's	3
Bachelor's	0
Associate	0
Certificate	0
Other	0
Total	7

FACULTY

Saybrook University (SU) has 55 full-time and 207 part-time faculty members with either a master's or doctorate degree.

FACILITIES

SU offers online instruction to Louisiana residents.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Given the programs' scope and the credentials of its faculty, the institution's campus, program accreditation, and the general oversight by the home campus, Senior Staff recommends approval of the application for license *renewal* from Saybrook University (SU).

AGENDA ITEM VII.D.1.a.i.d.
Southern New Hampshire University
Manchester, New Hampshire

BACKGROUND

Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is a private institution with its main campus located in Manchester, New Hampshire. SNHU's focus is providing accessible higher education by offering 300+ online programs to students in Louisiana. This university is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE). SNHU is also a member of NC-SARA.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

SNHU offers academic programs that lead to doctorate, master's, bachelor's, and associate degrees along with certificate programs. They provide a range of online programs in 25 core areas of study. The university currently has 2,351 students in its Louisiana Unduplicated Headcount Enrollment.

Degree Level	Louisiana Unduplicated Headcount Enrollment
Doctorate	0
Master's	237
Bachelor's	1,756
Associate	319
Certificate	31
Other	8
Total	2,351

FACULTY

Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) has 79 part-time faculty at various degree levels.

FACILITIES

SNHU offers 100% online instruction to Louisiana residents.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Given the programs' scope and the credentials of its faculty, the institution's campus, program accreditation, and the general oversight by the home campus and NC-SARA, Senior Staff recommends approval of the application for license renewal from Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU).

AGENDA ITEM VII.D.1.a.i.e.
University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences
San Marcos, California

BACKGROUND

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USA) is a private institution with its main campus located in San Marcos, California. This university is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), Senior College and University Commission.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

USA offers academic programs in various areas of study including health administration, occupational and physical therapy, speech pathology, nursing, health sciences and education. There are 15 academic programs offered to students, including doctorate and master's programs as well as certificates. The university currently has 29 students in its Louisiana Unduplicated Headcount Enrollment.

Degree Level	Louisiana Unduplicated Headcount Enrollment
Doctorate	11
Master's	18
Bachelor's	0
Associate	0
Certificate	0
Other	0
Total	29

FACULTY

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USA) has 348 full-time and 78 part-time faculty members with either a master's or doctorate degree.

FACILITIES

USA offers online instruction as well as internship/fieldwork/practicums to Louisiana residents.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Given the programs' scope and the credentials of its faculty, the institution's campus, program accreditation, and the general oversight by the home campus, Senior Staff recommends approval of the application for license renewal from University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USA).

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Minutes
Board of Regents' Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission
September 12, 2023

The Louisiana Board of Regents' Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission met Tuesday, September 12, 2023, in Room 153 in the Claiborne Building. Prior to the start of the meeting, Chair James Fontenot took a moment to acknowledge long-time Commission member, Mr. James Dorris, who passed away suddenly in August. Commission members all expressed admiration and appreciation for Mr. Dorris. Chair Fontenot then called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. The roll was then called by Ms. Courtney Britton and a quorum was established. There were no public comments to be read.

Commission Members Present

Melanie Amrhein, Vice Chair
Chris Broadwater
Sherrie Despino
James Fontenot, Chair
Carmen Million
Randy Plaisance

Staff Members Present

Courtney Britton
Antonio Williams
Chandra Cheatham

Guests Present

(See Appendix)

Commission Members Absent

Jada Lewis
Susana Schowen

The first item of business was the approval of minutes from the Commission's meeting on July 11, 2023.

On motion of Chris Broadwater, seconded by Melanie Amrhein, the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission unanimously adopted the minutes of the July 11, 2023, Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission meeting.

The next item considered by the Commission were initial applications for licensure. The first initial license application was from Clinical Lynks, located in Metairie, LA. This application was deferred from the July meeting, with the request that the school owner provide additional information regarding her financials and business plan for the

Commission's consideration. The school was represented by owner, Ms. Kwanza Gaines. Ms. Britton reviewed the materials for the Commission members, informing them that the institution was proposing to offer one program: Phlebotomy Technician, 48 hour, 4-week program. Commission members commended Ms. Gaines on her persistence in pursuing her goal and expressed appreciation at the obvious work she had put in to provide the additional requested materials.

On motion of Chris Broadwater, seconded by Sherrie Despino, the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission unanimously voted that the Board of Regents approve the initial license application for Clinical Lynks, Metairie, Louisiana.

The second initial license application was from Unimed Academy, located in New Orleans, LA. The school was represented by owners, Dr. Princess Dennar and Dr. Darlonda Harris. Mr. Antonio Williams reviewed the materials for the Commission members, informing them that the institution was proposing to offer one program: Professional Advance Career Education Certification – Medical Assistant (Hybrid), 488 hour, 48-week program.

Discussion included the owners' backgrounds, the need for the school, the owners' goal to provide for additional training of Medical Assistants and the increased need in the area, average salary expectations, the curriculum and how it was modeled after national recognized certification material, the marketing plans, instructors and plans for students who might not be progressing.

On motion of Chris Broadwater, seconded by Carmen Million, the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission unanimously voted that the Board of Regents approve the initial license application for Unimed Academy, New Orleans, Louisiana.

The next agenda item considered by the Commission was operating license renewals. Over the previous two months, 38 schools submitted complete renewal applications. Two schools, Rockbridge Training Institute, Shreveport and NODC School for Dental Assisting, Harvey chose not to renew their license. After staff shared they were collecting records from the closed schools, discussion also included the challenges in collecting records from past schools where owners or operators are unresponsive to staff requests.

On motion of Chris Broadwater, seconded by Carmen Million, the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission unanimously voted that the Board of Regents renew the licenses of the following proprietary schools:

160 Driving Academy-Shreveport - License #2364
Acadiana Area Career College, Lafayette, LA - License #2357
Accelerated Academy-Denham Springs - License #2154
Accelerated Academy-Lafayette - License #2219

Accelerated Academy-Baton Rouge - License #2220
Accelerated Academy-Monroe - License #2223
Accelerated Academy-Slidell - License #2224
Accelerated Academy-Houma - License #2228
Accelerated Academy-Metairie - License #2230
Accelerated Academy-Hammond - License #2235
Accelerated Academy-Lake Charles - License #2308
Advance Nursing Training, New Orleans, LA - License #2197
Ark-La-Tex Dental Assisting Academy, Shreveport, LA - License #2131
Baton Rouge Dental Assistant Academy-South - License #2305
Baton Rouge School of Phlebotomy - License #2335
Blue Cliff College-Alexandria - License #2358
Blue Cliff College-Lafayette - License #2359
Blue Cliff College-Metairie - License #2360
Blue Cliff College-Metairie, Satellite - License #2361
Camelot College, Baton Rouge, LA - License #680
Coastal College-Alexandria - License #991
Cross Road CDL Academy, Harvey LA - License #2321
Digital Media Institute, Shreveport, LA - License #2198
Fortis College, Baton Rouge, LA - License #2134
Healthcare Training Institute, Kenner, LA - License #2109
Life Care, Marrero, LA - License #2182
MedCerts, Livonia, MI - License #2337
Medical Training College, Baton Rouge, LA - License #969
NOLA Institute of Gaming, New Orleans, LA - License #2322
OceanPointe Dental Academy of Prairieville - License #2363
Opelousas Academy of Nondestructive Testing - License #2275
RelyOn Nutec USA, Houma, LA - License #2156
Remington College - Baton Rouge - License #2277
River Cities School of Dental Assisting, Shreveport, LA - License #2089
Smith Institute, Shreveport, LA - License #2362
Stick It Phlebotomy, Jonesboro, LA - License #2226
Synergy Massage Institute-Slidell - License #2336
Synergy Massage Institute-Metairie - License #2365

The next agenda item was an update on program approvals. Chair Fontenot reminded the Commission that program approvals were being shared for informational purposes only. No questions were brought forward regarding the following program approvals.

1. Crossroad CDL Academy, LLC
Harvey, LA
Add
Diesel Mechanic Technician – 2000.0 clock hours

2. River Parishes Institute
Gonzales, LA
Add
Medical Assistant – 540.0 clock hours
Sterile Processing Technician – 540.0 clock hours

Additional business included the notice that proposed dates for 2024 meetings would be shared next meeting, along with the general and financial reports for Fiscal Year 2023.

The next meeting of the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission is scheduled for November 14, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 1-153 of the Claiborne Building. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

APPENDIX A
GUESTS

Dr. Princess Dennar	Unimed Academy
Kwanza Gaines	Clinical Lynks
Dr. Darlonda Harris	Unimed Academy
Amanda LaGroue	LA Department of Justice

Agenda Item VII.D.1.c.

Approval of Initial Rulemaking

Implements Act 393 of the 2023 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature

Consider authorizing the Commissioner of Higher Education to initiate the rule-making process to implement the electronic meeting provisions and other requirements of Act 393 of 2023.

Background: Act 393 of 2023 (Act 393) amends Louisiana's Open Meetings Laws, R.S. 42:11 *et seq.*, in two important respects: (1) It requires all public bodies to allow any member of the public with a disability recognized by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to participate in its meetings via teleconference or video conference, if it has the capability to do so; or to provide alternative methods to allow the same, if it lacks such ability; it further requires public bodies to allow any member of the public body to attend and participate electronically and for their participation to be counted for purposes of quorum and votes; and (2) it further allows any public body whose function is solely advisory with no decision-making authority to meet electronically, provided the public body has statewide scope and meets six or more times in a calendar year.

Act 393 requires all state agencies to promulgate rules pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act to implement these provisions.

To implement the first set of mandatory provisions of Act 393, the Board of Regents (BoR) must allow any member of the public with a disability recognized by the ADA or his/her caregiver to participate in open meetings via teleconference or video conference; or provide an alternative method for such participation. BoR must also allow any member serving on the board with an ADA-recognized disability to participate in board meetings electronically and their participation to count for purposes of quorum and vote.

To implement the second set of optional provisions of Act 393, BoR must adopt rules to allow any **purely advisory entity created by law or resolution and placed within BoR** to hold electronic meetings, if it is scheduled to meet six or more times in a calendar year. It should be noted that BoR itself is not allowed to hold electronic meetings under Act 393, only the various task forces, commissions, and other such advisory bodies within BoR. Act 393 requires that the BoR provide an anchor location from which the presiding officer must conduct the meeting. The presiding officer will be required to receive and acknowledge public comment during the meeting; must ensure the identification of each person participating in the meeting; must require a roll call vote for every motion; and must ensure that all parts of the meeting, excluding executive sessions, can be seen and heard. In the event the meeting becomes unable to be seen or heard, the meeting must be recessed until such time as full audio and visual capabilities are restored. If capabilities are not restored within 2 hours, the meeting must be adjourned, and no further business may occur.

Act 393 also provides various administrative requirements with which an advisory board must comply to conduct a meeting remotely, such as: post the agenda on the agency's website at least 24 hours in advance; notify any member of the public or the news media via email if they request

notice via email; post and/or distribute to media outlets and via other methods as needed; and provide detailed information on how to participate and submit comments regarding agenda items on the website.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends that the Board of Regents authorize the Commissioner of Higher Education to publish a notice of intent to make these rules permanent.

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Board of Regents Meeting as a Committee of the Whole

**REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
AUDIT COMMITTEE**
Wednesday, October 18, 2023

Loyd J. Rockhold Distance Learning Room
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Cecil J. Picard Center
200 East Devalcourt Street
Lafayette, LA 70506

VII. Reports and Recommendations

E. Audit

1. Proposed Amendment to the Internal Audit Plan for Fiscal Year 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Wednesday, October 18, 2023

VII.E.1. Proposed Amendments to the Internal Audit Plan for Fiscal Year 2024

The Internal Audit Plan for Fiscal Year 2024 was approved at the September 2023 Board of Regents meeting to provide for the allocation of internal audit resources to higher-risk activities within the Board of Regents' programs for the upcoming fiscal year. Audit Chair Seale will provide an update to the Board about a letter received from the Louisiana Legislative Auditor regarding a change by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants Standards to now require communication of significant risk of material misstatement to those charged with governance.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends amending the Internal Audit Plan for Fiscal Year 2024 to include additional audit testing of procedures.

Proposed 2024 Board of Regents Calendar of Meetings

	Time	Room	Reason
January 2024			
Tuesday, January 23	10:00 am	Purchase ¹	Oaths, Committee and Board Meetings
February 2024 – no meeting			
March 2024			
Wednesday, March 27	9:00 am	Iowa Purchase	Board Development Committee and Board Meetings
April 2024			
Wednesday, April 24	9:00 am	Iowa Purchase	Board Development Committee and Board Meetings
May 2024 – no meeting			
June 2024			
Wednesday, June 12	9:00 am 10:30 am	Purchase TJ A&B ²	Joint BoR/BESE, Committee and Board Meetings
July 2024 – no meeting			
August 2024			
Wednesday, August 28	9:00 am	Iowa Purchase	Board Development Committee and Board Meetings
September 2024			
Tuesday, September 24	9:00 am-4:30 pm	BCR ³	Budget Hearings
Wednesday, September 25	9:00 am	Purchase	Committee and Board Meetings
October 2024			
Tuesday, October 22	Noon	Off site	Board Development
Wednesday, October 23	9:00 am	Off site	Committee and Board Meetings
November 2024	No Board meeting Potential Board Retreat – Off site – Exact Dates TBD		
December 2024			
Tuesday, December 10	6:00 pm	TBD	Board Holiday Social
Wednesday, December 11	9:00 am 10:30 am	TJ A&B	Joint BoR/BESE, Committee and Board Meetings

¹ Louisiana Purchase (Purchase) Room (1-100), Claiborne Building, 1201 N. 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802

² Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Room A&B, (1-136), Claiborne Building, 1201 N. 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802

³ Board Conference Room (BCR), (6-242), Claiborne Building, 1201 N. 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802