

BOARD OF REGENTS

March 26, 2025

The Board of Regents met at 2:12 p.m. on Wednesday, March 26, 2025, in the Louisiana Purchase Room, Claiborne Building, 1201 N. Third Street, 1st Floor, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Chair Misti Cordell called the meeting to order.

Chair Cordell began the meeting by holding a moment of silence for Caleb Wilson, a student at Southern University A&M.

ROLL CALL

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

Present for the meeting were:

Kim Hunter Reed, Commissioner
Misti Cordell, Chair
Darren Mire, Secretary
David Aubrey
Christian Creed
Stephanie Finley
Ted H. Glaser III
Dallas L. Hixson
Kennedy Orr, Student Member
Wilbert Pryor
Christy Oliver Reeves
K. Samer Shamieh
Collis Temple III
Terrie Sterling
Judy Williams–Brown

Mgmt. Board Representative present were:

LCTCS System Representative, Stevie Smith
LSU System representative, Remy Voisin Starns
SU System Representative, Domoine Rutledge
UL System Representative, John Noble, Jr.

Absent from the meeting was:

Blake David
Phillip May, Jr.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 28, 2025 MEETING

On motion of Regent Aubrey, seconded by Regent Hixson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2025 meeting.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

On motion of Regent Hixson, seconded by Regent Temple, the Board voted unanimously to approve in globo the reports and recommendations of BOR Standing Committees.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Chair Misti Cordell made the following comments:

- She noted that Kennedy Orr, Regent's student member, traveled to Washington, D.C. earlier this month to attend the President's Joint Address to Congress as a guest of Congressman Cleo Fields.
- She asked Regent Orr to present her Student Board Member report. Regent Orr reported on her trip to Washington D.C. and her attendance at the President's Address. She noted that she, along with other student body presidents, will be participating in the student panel at the Meauxmentum Summit next week. She also commented on the critical work of hazing prevention in the wake of the death of Southern University A&M student Caleb Wilson.
- Chair Cordell added that the Board has received and reviewed the state's current hazing laws and will be keeping abreast of system discussions and the national Greek organization's conversations as well.
- She noted that Regent Glaser and Commissioner Reed attended the Southern Ag Center's 82nd annual state Livestock and Poultry Show.
- She congratulated Fletcher Technical Community College for winning the National Bellwether Award for Excellence in the Planning, Governance, and Finance Category.
- She mentioned that she and Commissioner Reed had begun a statewide Higher Ed Tour this month, visiting schools in North Louisiana and the New Orleans Metro Area, and will continue the tour in April in Lafayette.
- She noted that the Meauxmentum Summit will be held on April 2nd and 3rd in Lafayette, Louisiana.

FINANCE

Ms. Elizabeth Bentley-Smith, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration, began her presentation by stating that Chair Cordell received a letter from Louisiana's Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives requesting that Regents study the proposed transfer of the University of New Orleans (UNO) from the University of Louisiana System (ULS) back to the Louisiana State University System (LSUS).

Under Article VIII, Section 5 of the Louisiana Constitution, the Board of Regents (BOR) must study the proposed transfer of an institution from one system to another before the Legislature may enact any

legislation to accomplish such a transfer. For BOR to fulfill its constitutional mandate and prepare the required study on this matter, staff requested from the UL System information and data on a variety of fiscal, facilities, and academic topics relevant to UNO including, but not limited to, enrollment, completer trends, demographics, income statements, actual and budgeted expenses and revenues, and deferred maintenance and capital outlay projections.

Dr. Tristan Denley, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Innovation, discussed enrollment trends at UNO and personnel changes, to both faculty and staff, over time. Ms. Bentley-Smith then addressed the financial constraints facing the institution such as reduced state support, reduced tuition and fees due to enrollment declines, higher athletics costs, increased contractual obligations and deferred maintenance needs. She continued, highlighting the composition of the institution's revenue, stressing the significant impact of tuition and fees and state support on UNO's fiscal health. Ms. Bentley-Smith ended the presentation by providing summary observations, noting that governance change does not guarantee institutional success, but rather that both vision and sustained leadership commitment are critical while focus must be on excellence and resource optimization. Finally, the report provided the following recommendations: 1) Establishment of a Transition Team, 2) Collaborative Engagement between the Systems and Campus Leadership, 3) Rigorous Third-party Forensic Analysis of UNO's Finances, Academic Programs, and Facilities, 4) Compliance with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation standards, and 5) Continued Data-Informed Benchmark Reporting.

Following the presentation, a robust conversation ensued, with Louisiana State University System (LSU) representative Mr. Remy Starnes stating that the LSU administration is diligently reviewing the report and welcomes the opportunity to return UNO to LSU especially in light of their historical relationship. Regent Hixson appreciated the comments but expressed concern regarding the funding shortfall at UNO being transferred from one system to another and plans to eliminate the shortfall.

Regent Pryor concurred with Regent Hixson, noting that UNO's student population decreased from 15,000 students in 2010 to 600 in 2024. He expressed hope that due diligence is taken by LSU to address the

enrollment cliff. He also cited issues outlined in the 2010 UNO report and noted a concern about the failure to address those issues in the 15 years since. Regent Pryor also asked if Tulane University expressed interest in taking over UNO, to which Dr. Reed responded that received no inquiry from Tulane.

Regent Glaser wondered if another university in the New Orleans metro area could assume some of the educational programs currently provided by UNO. Dr. Denley commented that the recommended fiscal, academic, and facilities assessments will help to highlight the educational landscape of New Orleans and the unique programs in the region and at UNO specifically. Regent Mire noted that the report presented is the first step of the process and added that while there is still work needed to fully understand the scope of issues surrounding UNO, the current leadership at the university should be commended for all efforts to address the shortfall.

Regent Aubrey asked for clarification of the staff recommendation with respect to Regents' position on the transfer to LSU and inquired about discussions with the New Orleans business community. In response, LSU Supervisor Roderick "Rico" Alvendia observed that, as a member of the New Orleans business community, UNO has been extremely valuable to both his personal and professional life and that he would like to see the university succeed. He indicated that the LSU Board of Supervisors and system leadership are reviewing the report and noted that additional analysis needs to be completed. LSU Supervisor Starnes stated that UNO is of global significance and the university presence is vital to the New Orleans community. He continued that LSU is looking for ways to make this transfer work and that LSU is in full support of the recommendations to work collaboratively with Regents, the Legislature, ULS, and every other entity needed to make this transfer successful. Regent Aubrey expressed appreciation for those LSU comments in support and noted that he is looking forward to the quarterly transition reports. Regent Aubrey then inquired about the transfer timeline. Both Dr. Denley and ULS President Rick Gallot responded regarding the timeline and answered additional clarifying questions on the potential assessment of SACSCOC of the transfer process.

Regent Sterling then reflected on her campus visit to UNO and spoke about the students choosing the essence of New Orleans, its rich culture, and UNO. As the process moves forward, she encouraged

accountability to the community, students, alumni, and businesses that are served at UNO. She expressed her hope for a concrete plan and accountability for the plan's implementation. Regent Reeves stated she would appreciate the Legislature highlighting the effect of such a transfer on both public postsecondary systems, to which Regent Shamieh responded with a question about the opinion of the ULS leadership regarding the transfer. President Gallot spoke about the value of UNO to the system and the New Orleans community but indicated that he respected the decision to transfer UNO back to the LSU System and supported what is in the best interest of the university.

On motion of Regent Creed, seconded by Regent Hixson, the Finance Committee approved the study and its recommendations as it pertains to the transfer of the University of New Orleans from the University of Louisiana System to the Louisiana State University System.

FY 2025-2026 EXECUTIVE BUDGET OVERVIEW

Ms. Bentley-Smith stated that the FY 2025–2026 Executive Budget was presented to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget (JLCB) on February 20, 2025, as a standstill budget that included a total recommended State General Fund (SGF) decrease of \$42.3M for higher education. The decrease includes one-time (non-recurring) State General Fund allocations of **\$40.5M**, Mandated Costs reductions of **\$4.4M** due to retirement cost savings, and a decrease of **\$4.4M** to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) resulting from participation declines. The decreases are offset by increases of \$6.1M for the LSU First benefits program and \$2.3M for the Patriot Scholars program.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE FY 2025-2026 PRELIMINARY FUNDING RECOMMENDATION

Ms. Bentley-Smith stated that annually, no later than March 31, the Board of Regents is statutorily required to submit to the Senate Education Committee, the Senate Finance Committee, the House Committee on Education, and the House Committee on Appropriations any formula created and adopted by the Board for funding institutions of postsecondary education in the ensuing year. The formula submission is based on funds recommended for higher education in the Governor's Executive Budget.

The Division of Administration, on behalf of the Governor, presented a standstill budget for the FY26 Executive Budget with State General Fund decreases of \$42.3M to colleges, universities, specialized institutions, and boards, including the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) and the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON). Board of Regents funding is inclusive of LUMCON and LOSFA scholarships of almost \$250 million.

Ms. Bentley-Smith further explained that the preliminary submission is based on a standstill budget for all of higher education, distributing adjustments as noted to the respective agency/institution. In the event funding levels change as the appropriations bill moves through the process, a new allocation aligned with the latest version of the bill will be submitted to the Legislature.

On motion of Regent Hixson, seconded by Regent Creed, the Finance Committee approved the distribution in accordance with the methodology to be shared with the Legislature as required by statute. The Board will continue advocating for increased funding during the legislative process.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Bentley-Smith concluded the meeting by introducing Mr. Chris Henry, the new Associate Commissioner for Budget and Administration.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Regent Creed, seconded by Regent Hixson, the Finance Committee meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

AUDIT

INTERNAL AUDIT PRESENTATION

Mrs. Laura Soileau and Mrs. Kristin Bourque from EisnerAmper presented a status report on the Board of Regents' Fiscal Year 2025 Internal Audit. Mrs. Bourque explained that the LUMCON Vessel

Day Rates Audit was complete and the Regents Human Resources Process Audit was in progress. This presentation was for informational purposes only and required no action.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Bentley-Smith introduced Amanda Cain, the new Associate Commissioner for Finance and Compliance.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion of Regent Temple, seconded by Regent Hixson, the meeting was adjourned at 12:01 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE

LEGISLATIVE STUDY REPORTS UPDATE

Mrs. Brianna Golden-Phillips, Director of Government Affairs, provided an update on the legislative reports and noted that Board staff have submitted fifteen annual reports and five legislative studies.

A. SR 138 of the 2024 Regular Legislative Session: Louisiana Higher Education

Financial Aid Report

Dr. Tristan Denley, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Innovation, provided an overview of the Louisiana Higher Education Financial Aid Study, conducted pursuant to SR 138 (2024), sponsored by Senator Beth Mizell, which urged and requested Regents to conduct a study on the functioning of the state's higher education financial aid programs and to submit a report to the legislature.

Dr. Denley presented brief information on the state's student support programs, including TOPS, M.J. Foster Promise, GO Grant, Geaux Teach and the Louisiana National Guard Patriot Scholarship Program. He also reviewed study recommendations to provide for the efficiency and effectiveness of the programs identified:

- (1) Ensure alignment between the state's career and technical financial aid programs;

- (2) Establish a “first restricted dollar” usage for the Geaux Teach program;
- (3) Increase the competitiveness of TOPS awards;
- (4) Adjust TOPS eligibility criteria;
- (5) Increase awareness and usage of TOPS Tech Early Start; and
- (6) Require data submission for all financial aid programs.

Dr. Denley noted that, to date, the first four recommendations have resulted in current pieces of proposed legislation.

Regent Prior inquired about the trend of student TOPS utilization rates declining in contrast to an article related to the growing number of out-of-state students who are incoming freshmen at Louisiana State University A&M. Dr. Denley addressed the demographic cliff impacting the state and how surrounding out-of-state institutions are continuing to recruit Louisiana students, noting that anything the state can do to keep its best and brightest should continue to be a top priority. Regent Sterling stated that there is a particular problem the state faces in retaining students, citing a recent student panel discussion in which several students shared their plans to leave the state for various reasons including higher pay and contractual obligations. She also inquired about issues with students’ inability to pay for school, specifically whether this is related to the cost of education or families’ declining income. Dr. Denley responded that it was a combination of both.

On motion of Regents Aubrey, seconded by Regent Reeves, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Louisiana Higher Education Financial Aid Report.

2025 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Mrs. Golden-Phillips provided an overview of Regents’ Legislative priorities for the upcoming 2025 Regular Legislative Session.

2025 BoR Legislative Priorities

- **Career Office Reform:** Establishes a Career Alignment Task Force to develop a campus scorecard based on findings of best and promising practices like early-onset career advising (freshman year) and increased work-based learning opportunities to connect students to employment opportunities and address outmigration.

- **Physician Shortage/TOPS – HB 275 Rep. Berault:** Allows a TOPS-eligible student who previously opted out of TOPS to receive TOPS if returning to attend an in-state medical school. This priority is specifically designed to address Louisiana’s physician shortage.
- **Geaux Teach – HB 109 Rep. Thompson:** Makes this existing scholarship for future educators a first-restricted-dollar scholarship to cover tuition, books, and instructional materials.
- **Financial Aid Alignment – HB 161 Rep. Hughes:** Aligns TOPS Tech Early Start, TOPS Tech and M.J. Foster Promise eligibility based on the critical workforce needs identified by the Louisiana Workforce Commission.
- **TOPS Tech Early College Credit – HB 70 Rep. Brass:** Expands eligibility criteria for a TOPS Tech award to include the attainment of early college credit in high school through completion of dual enrollment courses or other approved skills and learning measures.
- **Retirement – HB 24 Rep. Bacala:** Requests that the optional retirement plan (ORP) managed by the Teachers' Retirement System of Louisiana (TRSL) include provisions for: expansion of participation in ORP; allowing employees to move from ORP to TRSL after seven years of service; allowing persons over 60 to opt out of TRSL; increasing the employer contribution rate to better align with other Southern states; and allowing for an ORP Advisory Committee as a component the TRSL Board.
- **Healthcare Task Force Consolidation – HB 544 Rep. Turner:** Creates a committee/subcommittee structure for the Health Works Commission, Nursing Supply and Demand Council and Simulation Medical Training and Education Council.
- **HBCU Advisory Council – HB 142 Rep. Mena:** Creates additional membership on Council, provides for student member travel payments, and allow for examination of campus safety on HBCU campuses.
- **Dual Enrollment Taskforce – HB 71 Rep. Brass:** Revises the membership of the Dual Enrollment Task Force by removal of two obsolete members and addition of two new members: the CEO of Leaders for a Better Louisiana and the state director of The Education Trust in Louisiana.

Ms. Golden-Phillips also shared potential bills of interest that the agency plans to monitor if they are filed.

On motion of Regents Aubrey, seconded by Regent Reeves, the Board voted unanimously to grant the Commissioner and Board Chair authority to finalize the 2025 Legislative agenda and act on legislation, as needed, with an update to the Board at the April 2025 meeting.

FACILITIES AND PROPERTIES

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Chris Herring, Associate Commissioner for Facilities Planning and Emergency Management, reported on the Consent Agenda's Small Capital Projects report, containing the projects approved by staff since the previous meeting:

Small Capital Projects

1. **LSU AgCenter: Sugar Mill Modification and Repairs, St. Gabriel, LA** – Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, 2024 Legislative Appropriation \$275,000
2. **LSU A&M: East Campus Apartments Waterproofing, Baton Rouge, LA** – Louisiana State University and A&M College, Auxiliary Revenues \$175,255
3. **LSU A&M: Innovation Park Building 3000 First Floor Renovations, Baton Rouge, LA** – Louisiana State University and A&M College, Lease/Service Revenues \$784,000
4. **LSU A&M: Student Union Air Handler Units 2.4 and 2.5 Replacements, Baton Rouge, LA** – Louisiana State University and A&M College, Auxiliary Revenues \$800,000
5. **LSU-S: Boat Garage, Shreveport, LA** – Louisiana State University – Shreveport, Foundation Funds/Tuition and Fee Revenues \$275,000
6. **PBRC: Installation of New Tunnel Washer, Dump Station, and Bedding Dispenser, Baton Rouge, LA** – Pennington Biomedical Research Center, Operational Funds \$400,000
7. **SOWELA: Lamar Salter Campus Commercial Driver's License Training Pad, Leesville, LA** – SOWELA Technical Community College, Rapid Response Grant \$230,000

On motion of Regent Reeves, seconded by Regent Aubrey, the Facilities and Property Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the item on the Consent Agenda, the Small Capital Projects report.

LEASE APPROVAL: LSUA MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING

The LSU Board of Supervisors, on behalf of LSUA, submitted a lease agreement for the purpose of constructing and operating multi-family housing on the site of the current LSUA golf course. This project will create a hybrid housing model, which will be considered private housing rather than LSUA housing, but located on the LSUA campus. While the units will be open to tenants with no connection to LSUA, priorities and incentives will be offered to LSUA students, faculty, and staff. The primary purpose

of the project is to spur development and increase the amenities available near LSUA, which will improve the institution's ability to recruit and retain high-quality students, faculty, and staff.

The ground lease agreement establishes an arrangement between LSUA and Durand Construction, LLC for a period of fifty years, with an option to renew for a second term of forty-nine years, related to 11.5 acres located on the north edge of LSUA's campus near Highway 3170. The agreement requires Durand Construction to commence substantial construction within twelve months of the agreement's effective date. Design and project plans must receive prior approval from LSUA to ensure compliance with university standards, local laws, and regulations. Durand Construction is obligated to maintain the premises and refresh or renovate the property significantly by the fortieth year of the lease. Due to the responsibility imposed upon Durand Construction for maintenance and upkeep of the housing over the lease term, LSUA has requested a waiver from the maintenance reserve fund typically required for traditional third-party housing projects. Ownership of all improvements made to the premises will revert to LSUA upon expiration or termination of the lease.

The new housing will consist of approximately 176 two-bedroom units. Through the lease agreement, Durand Construction is required to provide favorable treatment, which may include reduced rental rates or priority leasing, to LSUA students, faculty, and staff. While the project will benefit the LSUA community, the broader area will also be positively affected by the development and increased commercial opportunities created in the area.

Regent Hixson recognized Dr. Paul Coreil, LSUA Chancellor, who was in attendance, and the great work being done on the LSUA campus.

Regent Temple asked Dr. Coreil to provide comments related to the lease agreement. Dr. Coreil mentioned the substantial enrollment growth experienced by LSUA over the last few years and the need for additional student housing.

Regent Aubrey inquired about measures contained within the lease agreement to manage the risk associated with a private development on campus and to protect the state against negative occurrences over the term of the lease.

Patrick Martin, Assistant Vice President, Real Estate, Public Partnerships, and Compliance with LSU highlighted the measures in place related to campus safety, protections against foreclosure, remedies for default of the lease terms, and protections if the site conditions were to deteriorate to a point at which student needs were not being served. Mr. Martin further explained that the development will be under the jurisdiction of the LSUA Police Department and the developer will also be required to provide onsite security.

On motion of Regent Aubrey, seconded by Regent Glaser, the Facilities and Property Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the lease agreement submitted by the Louisiana State University Board of Supervisors, on behalf of Louisiana State University of Alexandria, for the purpose of construction and operation of multi-family housing on the current golf course location and a waiver of the maintenance reserve requirement.

LAND ACQUISITION: LSU HSCNO CEA

The LSU Board of Supervisors, on behalf of LSU HSCNO, submitted a CEA for approval authorizing LSUHSCNO to acquire seven property parcels (the “Property”) from the LSU Health Foundation (LSUHF). Several years ago, at the request of LSUHSCNO, LSUHF acquired the Property within the block in New Orleans bounded by Tulane Avenue, Claiborne Avenue, Poydras Street, and Galvez Avenue. The Property is located immediately adjacent to the LSU HSCNO campus and is suitable for the future expansion needs of the campus or property development that would further the university’s mission.

LSUHF acquired the Property with commercial real estate loans obtained from private financial institutions, on which loans LSUHF has made regular payments since acquisition. LSUHF also incurred closing costs, legal fees, and other expenses related to acquiring and maintaining the Property (“Property Acquisition Costs”). Subsequent to acquisition of the Property, LSUHSCNO and LSUHF

determined that LSUHF will direct its primary focus to fundraising for the benefit of LSUHSCNO. The continued debt service and operational expenses associated with the Property require LSUHF to divert resources that would be better used for development efforts. Since the Property was originally acquired for the benefit of LSUHSCNO, both entities desire for the institution to purchase the parcels from the Foundation.

LSUHF obtained an appraisal of the Property in January 2025, showing that the current fair market value of the Property is less than the Property Acquisition Costs. The LSU System and the Foundation agree that the benefits LSUHSCNO will receive from purchasing the Property for the Property Acquisition Costs, thus freeing up the resources of LSUHF to focus fully on development efforts for the benefit of LSUHSCNO, will be greater than the difference between the current fair market value of the Property and the Property Acquisition Costs.

The Property Acquisition Costs for the Property total \$5,147,007, and LSU HSCNO intends to use surplus funds within its current budget for the purchase. The appraisal expressed a fair market value of the Property of \$3.035M, a difference of \$2,112,007. LSU and LSUHF believe and expect that the development efforts, which can and will be undertaken once the Foundation is no longer burdened with the debt service and other costs associated with the Property, will be more than the difference between the appraised fair market value and the Property Acquisition Costs. For context, the excess payment is substantially less than the approximately \$8M–\$10M per year of expenditures made by LSUHF for the benefit of LSUHSCNO. In FY23, LSUHF provided \$8,435,149 in direct and in-kind support to the institution and \$10,880,900 in FY24.

The LSU System anticipates the benefits of purchasing the Property to be threefold. It will:

- Provide much-needed room for the potential growth of the LSUHSCNO campus.
- Allow the LSU System to control the Property for future development.
- Allow LSUHF to expand its fundraising capabilities, thus increasing private funding in

support of LSUHSCNO, with the use of LSUHF funds it receives for the purchase price and the freeing up of LSUHF funds used to service the debt incurred for the acquisition of the Property.

On motion of Regent Reeves, seconded by Regent Sterling, the Facilities and Property Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the cooperative endeavor agreement submitted by the Louisiana State University Board of Supervisors, on behalf of Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center New Orleans, for the purpose of acquiring seven property parcels immediately adjacent to the campus.

OTHER BUSINESS AND ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Facilities and Property Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:41 p.m.

ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Denley presented the Consent Agenda, consisting of routine items including Staff Approvals.

Regent Aubrey asked about the restructuring at the University of New Orleans and whether that was approved by Regents. Dr. Denley responded that, due to the nature of the restructuring, the action did not require approval of Regents. He indicated he would confirm that.

On motion of Regent Creed, seconded by Regent Aubrey, the Committee received and recommended Board of Regents approval of the items on the Consent Agenda.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Dr. Denley then presented for approval the Associate of Applied Science in Cybersecurity and Information Assurance from Nunez Community College, the Bachelor of Science in Disaster Management from the University of Louisiana at Monroe, the Bachelor of Science in Fire and Emergency Management Administration at Louisiana State University A&M, and the Master of Science in Cognitive Science at Louisiana Tech University.

Dr. Denley advised that the Associate of Applied Science at Nunez utilizes the LA Cyber Academy, which was created last year by Regents.

On motion of Regent Creed, seconded by Regent Aubrey, the Committee approved the four proposed new academic programs as presented.

LOW COMPLETER REVIEW UPDATES

Dr. Denley provided an update on the progress of the Low Completer program review process. He advised that 21 of the identified programs are in the process of being terminated by institutions. He advised that institutions are taking seriously the process of identifying low producing programs and are reviewing their offerings.

RESEARCH AND SPONSORED PROGRAMS

APPOINTMENT OF ENDOWED CHAIRHOLDER WITHOUT A NATIONAL SEARCH: LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS

Ms. Robison notified the Committee that Loyola University New Orleans has requested to appoint Dr. Robert “Bobby” Savoie, Dean of the College of Business, to the Gerald N. Gaston Eminent Chair in Entrepreneurship, a \$1 million Chair matched by the BoRSF in 2000–01. Dr. Savoie was appointed dean in 2024, following a 42–year career as an entrepreneur, CEO, and business founder. The Chair support will allow him to implement his vision for the College and build the entrepreneurship ecosystem across Loyola. Loyola’s request is aligned with all policy requirements for such appointments and the family of the original donor is very supportive of the appointment.

Regent Pryor asked why private institutions are required to seek Regents approval to make faculty appointments to endowed chairs. Commissioner Reed responded that the BoRSF policies apply equally to both public and private institutions.

On motion of Regent Hixson, seconded by Regent Glaser, the Research and Sponsored Programs Committee recommended that the Board of Regents approve Loyola University New Orleans’ request to waive the national search requirement to appoint Dr. Robert

“Bobby” Savoie to the Gerald N. Gaston Eminent Chair in Entrepreneurship. As stipulated in Board policy, a copy of the Letter of Appointment to Dr. Savoie must be submitted to the Board within 90 days of this approval.

Regent Aubrey asked whether, upon passage of the repeal of the Board of Regents Support Fund as part of the Constitutional amendments to be considered on the March 29, 2025, ballot, this source of support would no longer be available to institutions for grants or endowment matching. Ms. Robison confirmed that this was the case. Regent Aubrey indicated that these funds have been critical for campuses in growing their endowments.

STATEWIDE PROGRAMS

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Final Rulemaking – Allows for consideration of financial circumstances as a reason for which students may request an exception to the continuous enrollment, full time, and earned annual hours requirements.

Dr. Sujuan Boutté, Executive Director of the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA), explained that at its September 25, 2024, meeting, the Board of Regents authorized publication of a Notice of Intent that broadens a student’s ability to request an exception when financial circumstances prevent them from enrolling in school. Students will still be required to provide documentation that circumstances beyond their control caused them to fail to meet the TOPS continuation requirements; however, staff will be able to consider only the student’s income rather than requiring that the family’s financial circumstances be the issue. In addition, students will be required to provide a plan for preventing such circumstances from interfering with their ability to attend school in the future. The LOSFA Advisory Board recommended that the Regents authorize the Executive Director of LOSFA to make these rules permanent.

- B. TOPS Home Study Exceptions – TOPS statutory provision that requires a student to begin a home study program no later than the conclusion of the tenth grade.

Dr. Boutté informed the Regents that two requests for an exception to the deadline to begin a home study program were reviewed and approved by the LOSFA Advisory Board at its meeting of

January 29, 2025. The students presented facts and documentation that the students believe justify the granting of an exception as an exceptional circumstance, and the LOSFA Advisory Board recommended Regents approval.

- C. TOPS Exceptions – TOPS regulatory provisions that require students to remain continuously enrolled and to earn the annual credit hours required during the academic year.

Dr. Boutté informed the Regents that ten requests for exception to the TOPS requirements were reviewed and approved by the LOSFA Advisory Board at its meeting on January 29, 2025. The students presented facts and circumstances that the students believe justify the granting of an exception as an exceptional circumstance, and the LOSFA Advisory Board recommended Regents approval.

On motion of Regent Orr, seconded by Regent Sterling the Statewide Programs Committee voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda items.

PLANNING, RESEARCH, AND PERFORMANCE

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Susannah Craig presented the Consent Agenda, which included recommendations for approval of two initial applications and twelve renewal applications, as recommended by the Advisory Commission on Proprietary Schools.

On motion of Regent Williams–Brown, seconded by Regent Glaser, the Planning, Research and Performance Committee unanimously recommended that the Board of Regents approve the items listed under the Consent Agenda.

- A. Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission
 - 1. Initial Applications
 - a. Orphic Training Academy – Shreveport, LA
 - b. Phlebotomy Training Specialists – Elmwood, LA
 - 2. Renewal Applications
 - a. Brow Design by Dina – Denham Springs, LA - License #2345
 - b. Compass Career College – Hammond, LA - License #237
 - c. Gonzales Medical Assistant School – Gonzales, LA - License #2164
 - d. Infinity College – Lafayette - License #2140
 - e. National Driving Academy – Greensburg, LA - License #2376
 - f. New Orleans Culinary & Hospitality Institute (NOCHI) – New Orleans, LA - License #2237
 - g. Nursing Assistant Network Association (NANA) – New Orleans, LA - License #920

- h. SIHAF Career Institute – Shreveport, LA - License #2347
- i. Southern Security School – New Orleans, LA - License #2200
- j. The Laser and Medical Aesthetic Academy at ACWH – Gonzales, LA - License #2346
- k. Tulsa Welding School-Tulsa – Tulsa, OK - License #2096
- l. Williams Technical College – Houma, LA - License #2141

MEAUXMENTUM MOMENT

Dr. Tristan Denley presented the information on the progress of the recently introduced corequisite math and English courses across the state. He informed the Board that student completion rates for math corequisite courses have increased from 11% to 52% and English corequisite courses from 12% to 60% in 2023–2024.

He then introduced Dr. Nancee Sorenson, Chancellor of Louisiana State University–Eunice (LSU–E), to provide an update to the Board on the success that LSU–E has achieved in their corequisite English courses. She advised that there has been a 37.1% increase in overall success in math and a 7.3% increase in English corequisite courses and noted the significant increase in student success between Fall 2023 and Fall 2024. Regent Hixson commented on the increase in student success and congratulated Chancellor Sorenson and the faculty at LSU–E. Chancellor Sorenson commented that they learned from visiting other institutions that offer corequisite courses and noted that faculty are involved not only in teaching but also tutoring. Commissioner Reed also commended Dr. Sorenson and the faculty at LSU–E for their success.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Commissioner Reed presented several items to the Board:

- She mentioned that she recently spoke at the Shreveport–Bossier Business Alliance Higher Education Summit – providing an update on the Master Plan and sharing insights into the upcoming Regular Legislative Session.
- She mentioned her trip to the Westbank Workforce Training Center to visit the first cohort of dual enrollment students at Donaldsonville High School.
- She shared that Regents is working in collaboration with David Begnaud, a CBS News contributor, to highlight college students who embody kindness, resilience, and community impact.
- She noted that she visited two on–campus early childhood centers, LSU A&M’s Early Childhood Education Laboratory School and Southern A&M’s Child Development Laboratory, to celebrate Read Across America Day.

- She commented on the end of FAFSA as a high school graduation requirement. She added that there have been conversations with U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy’s staff and the hope is that if Workforce Pell is approved by the U.S. Senate, this policy will be revisited.

OTHER BUSINESS AND ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, on motion of Regent Hixson, seconded by Regent Sterling, the meeting was adjourned at 2:52 p.m.

Appendix A

Board Meeting Guest List

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

NAME	AFFILIATION
Roderick “Rico” Alvendia	LSU Board of Supervisors
Jackie Bach	LSU A&M
Chuck Berryman	LSU A&M
Kristen Bourque	EisnerAmpner
Paul Coreil	LSU-Alexandria
Martin Davis	Nunez Community College
Rick Gallot	UL System
Oriana Holmes	OPB
Bonnie Hymel	Pennington Biomedical
Jane Jacob	Louisiana Tech
Marcus Jones	UL System
Blair LeBlanc	HLS Fiscal
Jessica Lemoine	LCTCS
Patrick Martin	LSU A&M
Christian Michelet	OPB
Trang Nguyen	OBP
Claire Norris	UL System
Jeannine O’Rourke	UL System
Wendi Palermo	LCTCS
Reggie Poche	Nunez Community College
Robert Rene	Southern University System
Nancee Sorenson	LSU-Eunice
Deron Thaxton	LSU-Alexandria
Donna Thomas	Louisiana Tech
Jakob Ward	OPB