

MINUTES  
BOARD OF REGENTS

April 29, 2026

The Board of Regents met at 10:40 a.m. on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, in the Louisiana Purchase Room (1-100), Claiborne Building, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Chair Misti Cordell called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL

Ms. Emily Skaikay called the roll, and a quorum was established.

Present for the meeting were:

Kim Hunter Reed, Commissioner  
Misti Cordell, Chair  
Terrie Sterling, Vice Chair  
Dallas Hixson, Secretary  
David Aubrey  
Blake David  
Phillip May  
Darren Mire  
Wilbert Pryor  
Christy Reeves  
Devesh Sarda, Student Member  
K. Samer Shamieh  
Collis Temple III  
Judy Williams-Brown

Mgt. Board representatives present were:

LSU System  
UL System  
Southern System  
LCTCS

Absent from the meeting were:

Christian Creed  
Stephanie Finley  
Ted Glaser III

Appendix A  
Guest List

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

## APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 24, 2026 MEETING

**On motion of Regent Aubrey, seconded by Regent Temple, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the March 24, 2026 meeting.**

## REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Chair Cordell inquired whether any member of the Board wanted to take up any of the Committee reports separately before a motion was made to accept all reports. There were no requests.

**On motion of Regent Sterling, seconded by Regent Hixson, the Board voted unanimously to approve all Committee recommendations from the April 29, 2026 Committee meetings.**

## MASTER PLAN UPDATE – MEAUXMENTUM MOMENT

Dr. Tristan Denley, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Innovation, introduced Dr. Helen Wise, Associate Provost at LSU Shreveport (LSUS), to discuss how LSUS has operationalized the Meauxmentum Approach with incoming students. Dr. Wise acknowledged Angie Pellerin, the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Success at LSUS, for her work with the initiative. Dr. Wise shared demographics to define the makeup of the LSUS campus population and explain how these statistics shaped LSUS's response to the Meauxmentum Framework. LSUS has aligned its goals through the Meauxmentum Approach, the Complete College America Accelerator Project, work with the Gardner Institute, and SACSCOC QEP development. Dr. Wise emphasized that LSUS has one singular goal centered on student success. The campus focuses on what they call catapult courses, courses that increase students' likelihood of graduation when performance in these courses is at or above benchmarks set for success. An example of one such course is the freshman seminar course. Data had shown that students who did not earn an A in the freshman seminar course were less likely to graduate. The freshman seminar course was chosen as part of redesign based on the Meauxmentum Framework. Dr. Wise discussed evidence-based interventions implemented to make the freshman seminar more effective in getting students off to a successful start. LSUS is now offering to first year students a new metacognitive course which is an ethnographic exploration about how to learn about work.

Dr. Denley followed up with a report about the statewide email campaign started in early April to connect college-eligible Louisiana students to college pathways. The pilot program which began several years ago in two parishes grew to ten parishes last year and then all sixty-four parishes this year. All Louisiana graduating high school seniors who had created an account on LOSFA's website received emails. The emails sent to 45,000 students identified institutes in each student's locality that their scores

already qualify them to attend and the names of contacts at LOSFA to help with decisions about their education beyond high school.

### CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Chair Cordell made the following comments:

- She recognized Regent Devesh Sarda, student member who gave his report. She commended Regent Sarda for being a thoughtful and engaged contributor who was always prepared for each meeting and who is someone who represents Louisiana's students well.
  - Regent Sarda thanked the members of the Board for their support over the past year. He stated that he enjoyed his tenure as the student member on the Board and that he has learned much from the experience. Regent Sarda plans on staying in Louisiana at LSU Shreveport to pursue a master's degree.
  - He shared a report from the students at the Council of Student Body Presidents (COSBP) who asked Regent Sarda to thank the Board for another great year. He mentioned LSU and Southern Day at the Capitol and being kept updated about the progress of bills, such as the Caleb Wilson Hazing Prevention bill among others.
  - Chair Cordell presented Regent Sarda with a gift from the Board in recognition of his service.
- She noted that she and Commissioner Reed celebrated the investiture of ULM president Dr. Carrie Castille on April 23. Regent Williams-Brown joined them for the event.
- On May 5, National Teacher Appreciation Day, she plans on attending the annual Future Educator Honor Roll event at Louisiana's Old State Capitol. Forty-five outstanding future educators will be recognized, including five high school students. She invited members of the Board to join her.
- She announced that the Board of Regents has been selected to participate in the NASH, SHEEO Financial Sustainability Community of Practice. This is a national pilot program engaging ten systems and SHEEO leadership teams over the next year. She congratulated Elizabeth Bentley-Smith, Chris Henry, Amada Cain, and the Board finance team on having been chosen for this honor.

## LEGISLATIVE

### 2026 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Commissioner Kim Hunter Reed provided an overview of the 2026 Legislative Priorities and other legislative items.

#### **2026 BoR Legislative Priorities**

- **SB 305 – Career Alignment (Sen. Edmonds; Rep. Freiberg)**

Requires the Board of Regents to create a statewide dashboard linking degree programs to workforce outcomes and to partner with Louisiana Works to collect data on work-based learning experiences and evaluate how academic credit may be awarded for those experiences.

- **HB 636 – Hazing Prevention (Reps. LaFleur and Stagni; Sens. Boudreaux and Price)**  
Strengthens hazing prevention by requiring annual campus-wide education, improved reporting requirements, consistent adjudication procedures, and statewide oversight mechanisms.
- **HB 738 – Student Disciplinary Procedures (Rep. McMakin)**  
Updates student disciplinary processes by clarifying notice requirements, maintaining the clear-and-convincing evidence standard with a limited exception, expanding access to evidence, extending appeal deadlines, and requiring written decisions.
- **SB 347 – Digital Misuse / Power-Based Violence (Sen. Barrow)**  
Expands the statutory definition of power-based violence to include digital misconduct, sexual exploitation, and emerging technologies such as AI-generated and deepfake imagery.
- **HB 749 – College Savings Security (Rep. Carver / Sen. Foil)**  
Authorizes the Louisiana Tuition Trust Authority to contract with a program manager to administer START, START K–12, and ABLE college savings accounts.
- **HB 513 – Name, Image, and Likeness (Rep. Young / Sen. Connick)**  
Establishes a regulatory framework for NIL activities involving high school and postsecondary athletes, including protections for minors, prohibited industries, educational requirements, and institutional oversight.
- **HB 649 – Dual Enrollment Access (Rep. Brass)**  
Creates a single statewide application process for dual enrollment students to streamline participation across Louisiana public postsecondary institutions.
- **HB 325 – TOPS Tech Eligibility (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 and allows for part-time enrollment.
- **HB 407 – M.J. Foster Promise Award (Rep. Larvadain)**  
Freezes age eligibility requirements for M.J. Foster Promise Award at 21 for a two-year period.
- **HB 1059 – Math Alignment (Rep. Broussard)**  
Revises TOPS Core Curriculum requirements in math to align with recent BESE action.
- **HB 42 – Phased Retirement (Rep. Bacala)**  
Authorizes public postsecondary systems to implement voluntary phased retirement policies to support faculty and staff retention, succession planning, and knowledge transfer beginning July 1, 2027.
- **SB 142 – Regents Support Fund Protections (Sen. Reese)**  
Preserves the public character and matching requirements of Board of Regents Support Fund endowment dollars and ensures continued compliance with program purposes regardless of changes to the Louisiana Quality Education Trust Fund.

Commissioner Reed also shared the status of other bills of interest impacting higher education.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to come before the Legislative Committee.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business to come before the Legislative Committee.

**On motion of Regent Sarda, seconded by Regent Reeves, the meeting was adjourned.**

### **ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS**

#### CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Denley presented the current consent agenda, which included two main parts: routine administrative updates, such as changes to CIP codes and unit names, and the termination of a total of eight programs – seven degree programs and one certificate. He added that these terminations were not part of the earlier group presented in September. Dr. Denley noted that over the course of the year a significant number of programs will have been terminated. He emphasized that this demonstrates that campuses are effectively meeting expectations by phasing out programs that are no longer sustainable and redirecting resources more efficiently.

Regent Sterling asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

**On motion of Regent Aubrey, seconded by Regent Reeves, the motion was approved unanimously.**

Regent Aubrey stated his concern that some program terminations may disproportionately affect pathways into education careers, which are already less attractive and underfunded. He emphasized the need for legislative support to strengthen teacher preparation but still commended institutions for responsibly adjusting programs to fit current realities. In response, Dr. Denley noted that Louisiana has taken a deliberate, long-term approach to reducing programs, closing well over one hundred in recent years. However, as financial pressures continue, institutions are now facing tougher decisions, sometimes cutting programs they would prefer to keep, including those the state would like to preserve.

#### ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Dr. Denley introduced two new academic programs to be considered for approval. First, LSU Shreveport plans to launch a bachelor's in health administration, building on its strong master's program

and supporting regional healthcare needs, especially as the institution works to rebalance growth between online and on-campus enrollment. The program would be the only bachelor's-level opportunity of its kind in Louisiana. Second, Dr. Denley stated that LSU Eunice proposes an associate of applied science degree for physical therapy assistants, to address workforce demand in healthcare. He noted that this would be the third such program in the state, expanding training capacity geographically.

Regent Sterling asked for a motion to approve the proposed academic programs.

**On motion of Regent Sarda, seconded by Regent Aubrey, the motion was approved unanimously.**

#### OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Denley highlighted two major developments. First, he described Louisiana's significant role in the Artemis II mission, with 54 alumni from multiple state institutions contributing to NASA's work. The state has supported space exploration for over 60 years, and this achievement showcases the contributions of talent produced through our higher education institutions to major national efforts, along with broader technological innovations and economic development opportunities in aerospace. Commissioner Reed emphasized the importance of expanding aerospace manufacturing in Louisiana and highlighted the need to provide students with opportunities that support workforce development and produce strong economic growth.

Second, Dr. Denley announced that Louisiana is participating in a first-of-its-kind pilot program with the U.S. Census Bureau and national higher education partners. This initiative will allow the state to track outcomes for graduates even after they leave Louisiana, providing new insights into careers and earnings. The effort reflects the strength of the state's data systems and is expected to serve as a model for others nationwide.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Regent Sterling asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**On motion of Regent Reeves, seconded by Regent Sarda, the meeting was adjourned.**

## FACILITIES AND PROPERTY

### CONSENT AGENDA

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

#### A. Small Capital Projects

1. **LSUA: A.C. Buchanan Building Renovation, Alexandria, LA** – Louisiana State University of Alexandria, U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration Grant \$900,000
2. **LSUA: Oakland Hall Renovation, Alexandria, LA** – Louisiana State University of Alexandria, Operational Funds/Appropriation from Act 461 of 2025 Regular Legislative Session \$900,000
3. **LSU A&M: Hodges Hall Basement Corridor Renovations, Baton Rouge, LA** – Louisiana State University and A&M College, Auxiliary Revenues \$250,000
4. **LSU A&M: Life Sciences, J.C. Miller, and Sturgis Hall Lab Renovations, Baton Rouge, LA** – Louisiana State University and A&M College, Operational Funds \$695,000
5. **LSU A&M: Miller and Herget Hall Envelope Repairs, Baton Rouge, LA** – Louisiana State University and A&M College, Auxiliary Revenues \$418,000
6. **LSU A&M: Student Union Elevator Modernizations, Baton Rouge, LA** – Louisiana State University and A&M College, Auxiliary Revenues \$985,000
7. **UNO: Science Lab 1072 and 1074 Renovations, New Orleans, LA** – University of New Orleans, Private Donations \$594,000

#### B. Third-Party Project

8. **ULM: Williamson Child Development Center, Monroe, LA** – University of Louisiana at Monroe, Office of Risk Management Proceeds/Private Donations \$1,915,000

**On motion of Regent May, seconded by Regent Mire, the Facilities and Property Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the items on the Consent Agenda, the Small Capital, and Third-Party Projects report.**

ADDITIONS TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS FY 2026–27 CAPITAL OUTLAY BUDGET  
RECOMMENDATION

Mr. Herring presented four capital outlay projects submitted by the Louisiana State University System and four submitted by Grambling State University, for late addition to the Board of Regents (BOR) FY 2026–27 Capital Outlay Budget Recommendation.

**A. Louisiana State University and A&M (LSU) College Construction and Engineering Student Hall**

This project is a key component of LSU’s Strategic Capital Plan and Campus Master Plan. The initiative will advance the School of Construction’s mission by supporting continued growth in enrollment, research, and industry engagement. The project involves construction of a new 40,000 SF facility for the College of Engineering’s Construction and Engineering Student Hall, located at the core of the new South Quad. The total project cost is estimated to be \$30M and will be funded with a combination of self-generated revenues (\$15M) and state financing (\$15M). No state dollars are being requested in FY 2026–27, and the request for state funding will be submitted in a future capital outlay cycle. Any future BOR recommendation will consider the LSU Board of Supervisors’ priority ranking for this project alongside other LSU System capital priorities.

**B. Louisiana State University of Alexandria (LSUA) Downtown Parking Garage**

This project involves construction of a new three-level, open-deck parking structure on an existing surface parking lot adjacent to the site of LSUA’s new Downtown Health Education building. The parking garage will include approximately 270 parking spaces and provide safer student access to the new facility upon completion. The total project cost is estimated to be \$7.5M (\$750,000 in FY 2026–27) and will be funded with state financing. Any future BOR recommendation will consider the LSU Board of Supervisors’ priority ranking for this project alongside other LSU System capital priorities.

**C. Louisiana State University Eunice (LSUE) High-Voltage Electrical Grid Repair**

Due to the current uncertainty surrounding funding of the Act 751 program in FY 2026–27, LSUE is requesting state funding in the amount of \$4.8M to replace the campus electrical distribution system. The project scope involves the removal and replacement of the existing medium voltage switchgear, associated distribution infrastructure, and integration with a modernized power supply system. The project also includes coordination with the local utility provider to transition portions of the medium voltage distribution to the local provider where feasible. This project will result in a modern, reliable, and maintainable electrical distribution network capable of supporting campus operations, academic programs, and future growth.

**D. Louisiana State University Shreveport (LSUS) Electrical Grid Improvements**

The current electrical grid at LSUS operates at 4150V and has been in service for approximately sixty years. Modernizing this infrastructure will reduce downtime caused by system failures, better support increasing electrical demands, and transition the campus from an aging, capacity-constrained system to a modern, scalable, and resilient electrical distribution network. The project scope involves replacing the current electrical distribution grid with a new 35kV system. Due to

the current uncertainty surrounding funding of the Act 751 program in FY 2026–27, LSUS is requesting state funding in the amount of \$4.62M to support this project.

Mr. Herring then presented four projects on behalf of Grambling State University (GSU) being pursued through the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Capital Financing Program, a federal program that provides low-cost capital to HBCUs for the repair, renovation, and construction of campus improvements.

Mr. Herring noted that though the final details of the loan have not been established, each project requires inclusion in House Bill 2 (HB 2) to secure the necessary budget authority to advance the work upon the closing date, even though no state funds are being requested. This creates a timing issue with the Regular Legislative Session scheduled to end June 1. If the projects do not appear in HB 2 during the 2026 Regular Legislative Session, design and construction will not be authorized to begin until July of 2027. The BOR considered the projects to allow only for the amendment into HB 2. GSU anticipates the final details to be complete this summer and will return to the University of Louisiana System and BOR for final approval once in place.

#### **E. Grambling State University Campus Dining and Student Union**

The first project involves construction of a new \$25M campus dining and student union facility. The new facility will replace aging infrastructure and create a central hub for student life, improving food access, promoting engagement, and supporting campus-wide events. The project scope involves construction of a 40,000 SF multi-functional facility that combines a state-of-the-art dining hall with flexible seating, student lounges, meeting rooms, and offices for student organizations.

#### **F. Grambling State University Hotel and Conference Center**

The second project GSU intends to fund through HBCU financing involves construction of a new \$43.5M hotel and conference center. This project will enhance the university's capacity to host academic conferences, board meetings, alumni and university events, and community gatherings while generating auxiliary revenues. The conference center will serve as hub for learning, professional development, and community engagement, while the hotel will support visiting scholars, prospective students, and institutional partners. Additionally, the project will enhance academic hospitality and tourism-related programs by providing hands-on learning opportunities, internships, and experiential training for students. The project scope involves construction of a new 143,000 SF full-service hotel and conference center featuring approximately 120 guest rooms, flexible meeting spaces, ballroom and breakout rooms, on-site dining, and administrative offices. The project is designed to be self-sustaining, leveraging demand from university-related activities, athletics, external conferences, and community events to generate consistent revenue streams to meet financial obligations.

#### **G. Grambling State University Security Perimeter Fencing**

The third HBCU financing project addresses critical campus safety concerns for which GSU has been unsuccessful in securing funding through the traditional state capital outlay process. This

project will construct a perimeter security fence around the university and create access control points at various entrances to campus. The project supports the university's mission by enhancing the safety, security, and well-being of students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors, which is essential to maintaining a conducive learning environment. A more secure environment promotes uninterrupted academic activities, protects institutional assets, and supports emergency preparedness and campus policing initiatives. The total project cost is estimated to be \$5M.

#### **H. Grambling State University Deferred Maintenance and Infrastructure Improvements**

The final HBCU financing project involves strategic investment to address capital renewal, deferred maintenance, and infrastructure upgrades across the GSU campus. Approximately \$16.4M of the federal loan will be prioritized to make critical repairs and upgrades to HVAC systems, roofing replacements, electrical and plumbing infrastructure, and ADA and accessibility enhancements to both academic and residential buildings. This effort is critical to preserving campus assets, enhancing safety, and reducing operational costs and is necessary due to the uncertainty related to continued Act 751 program funding.

Regent Aubrey clarified the rationale for BOR consideration during the April meeting with the intention for GSU to return to the UL System and BOR when all project details are finalized.

Regent Mire expressed interest in working with GSU on the hotel and conference center component of the project based on his prior experience with another HBCU institution out of state.

Supervisor Romero confirmed the UL System's commitment to working with GSU to ensure the project represents a sound investment before the item comes back to the BOR.

**On motion of Regent Temple, seconded by Regent Pryor, the Facilities and Property Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the eight additions to the Board of Regents FY 2026–27 Capital Outlay Budget Recommendation submitted on behalf of four Louisiana State University System institutions and Grambling State University. Approval of the Grambling State University projects is limited to inclusion in House Bill 2; Grambling State University shall return to the University of Louisiana System and the Board of Regents for final approval once all project details are finalized.**

#### **THIRD-PARTY PROJECT: SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE STUDENT HOUSING**

The Southern University System, on behalf of SU A&M, submitted a third-party project for the purpose of constructing new student housing in an open field adjacent to the student recreation center where former residential halls were demolished in 2013. The project consists of two separate four-story housing structures to be built in two phases. The project will be administered through a standard lease/lease-back agreement where SU A&M will lease the site to the Southern University Foundation, which will be responsible for constructing the new facilities. The Foundation intends to seek public

financing over a forty-year term through the Louisiana Public Facilities Authority for both phases of the project.

The first phase of the effort encompasses approximately 500 new student beds dedicated to first- and second-year students, with an estimated project cost of approximately \$43M. The total cost of the Phase I issuance is approximately \$53M, including all necessary debt service and maintenance reserve funds. SU A&M has a waitlist for student housing, and this project will provide sufficient capacity for all students currently on the waiting list for on-campus housing. While SU A&M does not intend to implement a first-year residency requirement, a first-fill requirement will be included within the bond covenants to ensure students are assigned to the new facilities before existing housing options. A rental rate increase of 5% across all housing stock was approved by the SU Board of Supervisors during its April 17th meeting to maintain and upgrade the existing options. While the proforma provided by the bond counsel assisting SU A&M with the project indicates housing rental revenues generated from Phase I will be sufficient to cover the operating expenses and debt service, the institution intends to pledge general revenues of the university to secure financing in the event housing revenues are not sufficient to satisfy the debt service.

**On motion of Regent Mire, seconded by Regent Temple, the Facilities and Property Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the third-party project submitted by the Southern University Board of Supervisors, on behalf of Southern University and A&M College, for the purpose of constructing Phase I of new student housing.**

Regent Mire asked when Phase II was anticipated to begin and whether SU A&M has implemented a first-year residency requirement. Chancellor Pierre stated SU A&M hopes to begin planning for Phase II in late 2026, or early 2027, and currently SU A&M does not require first-year students to live on campus.

#### OTHER BUSINESS AND ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Facilities and Property Committee, the meeting was adjourned.

### **RESEARCH AND SPONSORED INITIATIVES**

#### DIVISION OF ENDOWED CHAIR INTO ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIPS: LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE

Ms. Carrie Robison, Deputy Commissioner for Research and Sponsored Initiatives, notified the Committee that LSU A&M has requested to divide the Marjory B. Ourso Endowed Chair in

Accounting Systems, a \$2 million endowed chair held by LSU and A&M College, matched by the BoRSF in FY 2020–21. LSU A&M requests approval to create four Endowed Professorships, each with a corpus of \$500,000 (\$300,000 non-state/\$200,000 BoRSF), from the corpus of the Chair as follows:

- Marjory B. Ourso Professorship in Accounting #1
- Marjory B. Ourso Professorship in Accounting #2
- Marjory B. Ourso Professorship in Accounting #3
- Marjory B. Ourso Professorship in Accounting #4

The original donor allowed LSU A&M to make decisions on behalf of the funds that have been endowed, so donor permission to make this change is not required.

**On motion of Regent Shamieh, seconded by Regent Pryor, the Research and Sponsored Programs Committee recommended that the Board of Regents approve LSU A&M’s request to divide the Marjory B. Ourso Distinguished Chair of Accounting Systems into four (4) endowed professorships, each with a corpus of \$500,000 (\$300,000 non-state/\$200,000 BoRSF), as follows: (1) Marjory B. Ourso Professorship in Accounting #1; (2) Marjory B. Ourso Professorship in Accounting #2; (3) Marjory B. Ourso Professorship in Accounting #3; and (4) Marjory B. Ourso Professorship in Accounting #4.**

There was no further business to come before the Research and Sponsored Initiatives Committee.

**On motion of Regent Shamieh, seconded by Regent Pryor, the meeting was adjourned.**

## STATEWIDE PROGRAMS

### CONSENT AGENDA

#### A. APPROVAL OF FINAL RULEMAKING – GEAUX TEACH PROGRAM

Dr. Susannah Craig, Interim Executive Director of LOSFA and Deputy Commissioner for Student Success, introduced rulemaking to implement Act 59 of the 2025 Regular Session of the Legislature, which provides that Geaux Teach will now be considered a restricted first-dollar program. It will be applied to awarded students’ tuition fees, textbooks, and instructional materials prior to the application of any other state or institutional aid. This amendment will ensure that students receive the maximum benefit of the Geaux Teach Program as well as any other scholarships, including TOPS, and need-based aid for which they are eligible.

Dr. Craig noted that at its August 20, 2025, meeting, the Board of Regents authorized publication of a Notice of Intent to affect these rule changes. The Notice of Intent was published in the Louisiana Register on September 20, 2025.

#### B. APPROVAL OF FINAL RULEMAKING – M.J. FOSTER PROMISE PROGRAM

Dr. Craig informed the Committee that the proposed rulemaking implements Act 152 of the 2025 Regular Legislative Session, which adds to the responsibilities of the M.J. Foster Promise Advisory Council by requiring that it identify eligible programs for TOPS Tech and TOPS Tech Early Start, as well as for the M.J. Foster Promise Program.

Dr. Craig noted that at its August 20, 2025 meeting, the Board of Regents authorized publication of a Notice of Intent to affect these rule changes. The Notice of Intent was published in the Louisiana Register on September 20, 2025.

#### C. APPROVAL OF FINAL RULEMAKING – TOPS, TOPS TECH, AND TOPS TECH EARLY START – AND TO ADD COURSE EQUIVALENTS IN THE TOPS CORE CURRICULUM

Dr. Craig introduced rulemaking related to TOPS, TOPS Tech, and TOPS Tech Early Start to:

- Implement Act 152 to add to the responsibilities of the M.J. Foster Promise Advisory Council by requiring that it identify eligible programs for TOPS Tech and TOPS Tech Early Start as well as for the M.J. Foster Promise Program;
- Implement Act 347 to create the TOPS Excellence Award, to provide award amounts for the Excellence Award and to provide for related matters;
- Implement Act 359, which eliminates the requirement that students attending home study programs earn a higher score on the ACT than students who attend public, private, parochial, or charter schools;
- Implement Act 268, which delays the requirement that students must earn one unit of Computer Science in order to qualify for any TOPS award to graduates of 2030–2031; and
- Implement TOPS Core Curriculum course equivalents that were approved by the Board of Regents in April 2025, including Creative Writing as an equivalent to Art; IB Psychology as an equivalent to Social Studies; and Tagalog I–IV, Turkish I–IV, Urdu I–IV, and West Germanic Languages (Dutch) I–IV as approved foreign languages.

Dr. Craig noted that at its August 20, 2025, meeting, the Board of Regents authorized publication of a Notice of Intent to affect these rule changes. The Notice of Intent was published in the Louisiana Register on September 20, 2025.

#### D. ACT EXCEPTION

Dr. Craig reminded the Committee that the TOPS statute requires that a student achieve a qualifying score on the ACT no later than the national ACT test date in April of the year of high school graduation. The law provides for an exception to this requirement if the administering agency determines that the student was prevented from taking the test prior to high school graduation due to circumstances beyond the student’s control and which were attributable to the administration of the test. Dr. Craig noted that a request for exception to this requirement was received for students attending a school that had scheduled its school test after the national ACT test date. This request was reviewed and approved by the LOSFA Advisory Board at its meeting on March 19, 2026. The school

has presented facts and documentation that the school believes justifies the granting of an exception as an exceptional circumstance.

Dr. Craig informed the Committee that since the request in this item was approved by the LOSFA Advisory Board, staff has become aware that a number of schools have scheduled school-administered ACT tests after this year's national ACT test date. Since the tests scheduled by secondary schools are beyond the control of the students, staff requests that it be authorized to approve exceptions for those students who are graduating in May 2026 and whose qualifying score was achieved on a test date scheduled by their school that is after the national ACT test date.

#### E. TOPS HOME STUDY EXCEPTIONS

Dr. Craig informed the Committee 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 that 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 timeframe was beyond the student's control. She noted that two requests for exception to the deadline to begin a home study program were reviewed and approved by the LOSFA Advisory Board at its meeting on March 19, 2026. The students have presented facts and documentation that the students believe justify the granting of an exception as an exceptional circumstance.

#### F. TOPS EXCEPTIONS

Dr. Craig notified the Committee that the TOPS statute requires Sections 705.A.6 and 7 of the TOPS administrative rules require TOPS recipients to continue to enroll full time for the fall and spring semesters of each academic year, to remain enrolled throughout the semester, and to earn a minimum number of credit hours by the end of the academic year. Section 2103.E authorizes the governing body to grant an exception to the full-time, continuous enrollment and annual earned-hour requirements when the "student/recipient has exceptional circumstances that are beyond his immediate control and that necessitate full or partial withdrawal from or non-enrollment in an eligible postsecondary institution." She noted that sixteen requests for exception to the TOPS requirements were reviewed and approved by the LOSFA Advisory Board at its meeting on March 19, 2026. The students have presented facts and circumstances that the students believe justify the granting of an exception as an exceptional circumstance.

**On motion of Regent May, seconded by Regent Sarda, the Statewide Programs Committee voted unanimously to recommend Board approval of the Consent Agenda items.**

STATEWIDE PROGRAMS SPOTLIGHT: LOUIS: THE LOUISIANA LIBRARY NETWORK

Dr. Craig introduced Emily Frank, Interim Executive Director of LOUIS: The Louisiana Library Network, to discuss the structure and purpose of LOUIS, as well as recent priorities and initiatives to meet its mission. Ms. Frank presented information about LOUIS and highlighted its efforts to support shared library technology, E-resources, affordability and student success, and institutional capacity at member institutions across the state.

**This presentation was for information only. No action was needed.**

There was no further business to come before the Statewide Programs Committee.

**On motion of Regent May, seconded by Regent Sarda, the meeting was adjourned.**

## PLANNING, RESEARCH, AND PERFORMANCE

### CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Craig presented the Consent Agenda. The sole item consisted of four license renewal applications from academic degree-granting institutions. All renewal applicants are institutions accredited by a U.S. Department of Education-recognized accreditor and have previously been approved as licensed institutions by the Board of Regents.

**On motion of Regent Reeves, seconded by Regent David, the Planning, Research, and Performance Committee unanimously recommended that the Board of Regents approve the items listed under the Consent Agenda.**

- A. R.S. 17:1808 (Academic Licensure)
  1. Renewal Applications
    - a. Alliant International University – San Diego, CA
    - b. CBD College – Los Angeles, CA
    - c. The Chicago School – New Orleans, LA
    - d. San Joaquin Valley College – Visalia, CA

There was no other business to come before the Committee.

**On motion of Regent Hixson, seconded by Regent Sarda, the meeting was adjourned.**

### REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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

- She joined the rollout for Artemis III at Michoud. Several Louisiana institutions of higher learning are represented in the next space flight project including Tulane, Nunez Community College, and Loyola.

- She congratulated Brianna Golden Phillips for receiving the social action award on Delta Sigma Theta's Red and White Day. She also congratulated Mellynn Baker on winning the 2026 Rising Leader Award from the LSU Department of Public Administration. Both Ms. Golden Phillips and Ms. Baker were graduate student workers under Commissioner Reed at the Board of Regents.
- She recognized the following eight Board administrative professionals as part of a celebration of Administrative Professionals Day: Michelle Brandon, Annie Evans, Cara Landry, Jenny Miller, Janette Patterson, Emily Skaikay, Carla Smith, Darcy Waguespack, and Ebony Allen. Chair Cordell and Vice Chair Sterling presented a plant to each honoree. Commissioner Reed also mentioned that Cara Landry, whom she complimented for her support of the Board and her work in organizing Board meetings, is being promoted to a new position in the proprietary schools division.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Cordell asked if there was any other business to come before the Board. She also reminded the Board that there will be no meeting in May. The next meeting will be Wednesday, June 10.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business to come before the Board.

**On motion of Regent Sterling, seconded by Regent David, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.**

Appendix A

Board Meeting Guest List

Wednesday, April 29, 2026

<b>NAME</b>	<b>AFFILIATION</b>
Luria Young	SUBR
Robert Rene	SU System
Helen Wise	LSUS
Angie Pellerin	LSUS
Carey Lawson	LSUE
Charles Stewart	LSUE
Jeannine O'Rourke	UL System
Margaret Finch	LSU A&M
Helena Janssen	OPB
Jakob Ward	OPB
Brian Roberts	LUMCON/BoR
Jackie Bach	LSU A&M
John K. Pierre	Southern A&M
Evelina Broussard	OTS
Desiree Honore Thomas	Southern A&M
William Tulak	LCTC
Marc Guichard	BoR