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## Postsecondary Inclusive Education Advisory Council

Tuesday, March 18, 2024

10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Claiborne Building, 6th Floor  
Board of Regents Conference Room, Room 6-242  
1201 North Third Street  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

### CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Tristan Denley called the meeting of the Postsecondary Inclusive Education Advisory Council to order at 10:00 a.m.

### ROLL CALL AND APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 1, 2024 MINUTES

Ms. Kim Langlois called the roll, and a quorum was established.

Members Present	Affiliation
Dr. Tristan Denley (Proxy)	Commissioner of Higher Education
Melissa Bayham	Louisiana Rehabilitation Services
Tracy Blanchard	LSU System
Dr. Mary Breaud	Office of the Governor
Ebony Haven	Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
Gerald "Mitch" Dillon	Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
LaKiesha London	Senate Committee on Education
Dr. Jeaninne O'Rourke	UL System
Dr. Willie Smith	LCTCS
Brittany Soden	House Committee on Education
Members Absent	Affiliation
David Martin	Special School District
Johnny Manela	Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
President Dennis Shields	Southern University System

Dr. Denley asked the Council to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2024 meeting. On the motion of Dr. Jeannine O'Rourke, seconded by Dr. Mary Breaud, the minutes were approved.

### CONSIDERATION OF POSTSECONDARY INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FUND APPLICATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Dr. Denley informed the Council that two applications had been received during the application process: a planning grant application from Fletcher Technical Community

College and an application to begin a new inclusive program from McNeese State University.

Dr. Breaud asked about the program proposed by Fletcher Technical Community College and whether it has a start date. Dr. Denley responded that a program start date has not yet been set, as this is a planning grant to provide support to the institution as they explore creating an inclusive program.

On the motion of Dr. Breaud, seconded by Dr. O'Rourke, the applications were approved.

#### POSTSECONDARY INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM UPDATES

Dr. Breaud presented an update on the Bridge to Independence program at Nicholls State University. She informed the Council that the program shifted from a two-year program to a four-year program in August 2024 and this was able to be accomplished due to the funding received from the Council. She added that Council funding also supported the hiring of a Teaching Assistant, Skills Specialist, and Program Director. She also provided an update on program enrollments and informed the Council that 29 students have graduated from the program. Finally, she provided updates on the program curriculum, including life skills courses.

Ms. Jade Viator presented an update on the UL Life Program at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. She informed the Council that currently 32 students are enrolled in the program and 36 graduates have completed. She indicated that Council funding has supported the addition of two graduate assistants, staff training, and software purchases for students to gain additional life skills.

Dr. Denley asked about the backgrounds of the graduate assistants. Ms. Viator responded that the students are from the Communications Disorders and Psychology departments. Ms. Ebony Haven asked if other programs like UL Life have out-of-state students, and Dr. Breaud responded that the program at Nicholls does.

Ms. Brittany Soden presented an update on the SPERO program at Louisiana State University of Alexandria. She informed the Council that in Fall 2025 the program will meet its maximum capacity of 16 students among four student cohorts. She informed the Council that the program has grown to three classrooms and has great support from the campus. She also updated the Council on the increased number of courses being offered for audit as well as the internships in which students can participate on campus.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Breaud asked if the Council could receive an update on the remaining funds and next allocation at the next meeting. Dr. Denley responded that an update can be provided after the upcoming fiscal session as well as discussing planning on the use of the remaining funds at the next meeting. Dr. Willie Smith added that he has spoken to legislators to continue funding the program.

Dr. Breaud asked about any vacant seats. Ms. Kim Langlois responded that the only vacant seat is the one previously held by Dr. Beckers, which is a Governor's appointment and Regents is still waiting for a reply from the Governor's office on a replacement. Dr. Breaud also asked about replacing Dr. Beckers' position of Chair as her seat is now vacant. Dr. Denley responded that they would need to confirm if a Chair can be appointed if there are vacant seats on the Council.

Dr. Breaud asked if the remaining programs can present at the next meeting. Dr. Denley responded that yes, that can be added to the next meeting agenda.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Liam Doyle informed the Council that the Louisiana Office of Disability Affairs' annual conference will be held July 22-23, 2025. He invited members of the Council to submit a proposal to present at the conference by emailing their proposals at [disability.affairs@la.gov](mailto:disability.affairs@la.gov).

#### NEXT STEPS & ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.