

MINUTES
BOARD OF REGENTS

March 24, 2026

The Board of Regents met at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 24, 2026, in the Louisiana Purchase Room (1-100), Claiborne Building, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Chair 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
David Aubrey
Christian Creed
Blake David
Ted Glaser III
Dallas Hixson
Wilbert Pryor
Christy Oliver Reeves
Devesh Sarda, Student Member
K. Samer Shamieh
Collis Temple III
Judy Williams-Brown

Mgt. Board representative present was:

LSU

Mgt. Board representatives not present were:

LCTCS
Southern
UL

Absent from the meeting were:

Stephanie Finley
Phillip May
Darren Mire

Appendix A
Guest List

OATHS OF OFFICE

Board Officers (Vice Chair and Secretary)

The newly appointed officers for 2026 were sworn in by Brianna Golden Phillips, Director of Government Affairs. She administered the oaths of office to Regent Terrie Sterling as Vice Chair and Regent Dallas Hixson as Secretary.

Members to Serve on the Executive Committee

The members of the 2026 Executive Committee were sworn in by Ms. Golden Phillips. The members of the Executive Committee who were sworn in include Regents Creed, David, Shamieh, and Temple.

Chair Cordell briefly updated the Board on the U.S. Department of Education's inquiry into BOR's previous performance objectives. Chair Cordell reported that the Board has approached the process with a strong commitment to transparency and full compliance with federal requests. She noted that prior to the January 2025 executive order, the Board was already in the process of updating the funding formula, which resulted in a formula that emphasizes outcomes. A formal response was submitted Friday, March 13, 2026. Commissioner Reed added the Board and staff understand the need to align with federal and state policy priorities and mandates.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 6, 2026 MEETING

On motion of Regent Hixson, seconded by Regent Temple, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2026 meeting.

MEAUXMENTUM MOMENT- MEAUXMENTUM SUMMIT 4 UPDATE

Chair Cordell reported that the fourth Meauxmentum Summit was held in February at the Cajundome in Lafayette. She noted the positive feedback highlighting the strong work being done through the Meauxmentum framework. Chair Cordell emphasized Dr. Denley's deep commitment to the initiative, which she states is clearly reflected in the quality and impact of these summits. Chair Cordell introduced Dr. Tristan Denley, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Innovation.

Dr. Denley stated that in its fourth year the Meauxmentum Summit hosted over 500 participants, including senior leaders, department chairs, faculty, student affairs staff, Meauxmentum champions, and students. The summit featured 18 national experts including prominent higher education leaders, who highlighted Louisiana's progress in higher education reform. The Meauxmentum speakers emphasized how other states are increasingly looking to replicate Louisiana's approach, which is focused on achieving the 60% attainment goal.

Dr. Denley stated that the event underscored strong national recognition of Louisiana's work, with attendees praising the state's leadership and innovation in higher education. He added that the summit was described as sold out and highly influential, reinforcing momentum efforts designed to improve student success.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Chair Cordell made the following comments:

- She recognized Regent Devesh Sarada, student member, who gave his report.
 - Regent Sarada reported a successful Washington, D.C. trip with Louisiana's congressional delegation, focusing on higher education issues. He emphasized improving communication channels to better elevate student concerns through leadership.
 - He reported on the McNeese COSBP meeting, addressing student mental health and burnout, and highlighted priorities including hazing prevention, TOPS and MJ Foster scholarships, and career alignment.
 - He referred to his Alzheimer's research previously presented nationally, noting the latest work includes more detailed Louisiana-specific data, strengthening its broader research impact despite data integration challenges.
- She presented highlights from student leaders who traveled to Washington, D.C. for the annual DC Mardi Gras visit with Louisiana's congressional delegation, where they engaged with policy makers and gained valuable firsthand experience. She noted that the trip was a fun and meaningful opportunity, especially for students meeting elected officials for the first time.
- She recounted the trip to Regent Glaser's sugar mill and farm in Pointe Coupee Parish that board members participated in where they learned about the complexity of sugar production. She described the experience as highly educational and invited Regent Glaser to provide further details on the visit.
 - Regent Glaser highlighted the large-scale organization of Louisiana's sugar industry, noting its major production output, coordinated harvest system, and heavy transportation demands. He emphasized its importance as a key economic driver, especially in Pointe Coupee Parish.
 - He noted that while agriculture faces policy and economic challenges, sugar remains a vital and relatively stable commodity in Louisiana.
 - He stated his concern that agriculture was omitted from a report on Louisiana's top industries despite its historic importance. He emphasized its strong economic impact and proposed inviting LSU AgCenter representatives to highlight its role, stressing the importance of valuing essential resources like food and water.

AUDIT

LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR MANAGEMENT LETTER–ANNUAL AGENCY AUDIT FOR FY 2024 – 25

Ms. Elizabeth Bentley-Smith, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration, explained that the Louisiana Legislative Auditor (LLA) completed a Financial Audit of the Louisiana Board of Regents for Fiscal Year 2024 – 25, for which no findings were noted.

LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR MANAGEMENT LETTER–ANNUAL START AUDIT FOR CY 2024

Ms. Bentley-Smith explained that the LLA completed a Financial Audit of the Student Tuition Assistance and Revenue Trust Programs (START) for Calendar Year 2024, for which one finding was noted: Noncompliance and Control Weakness over GEAR UP Scholarships. The corrective action plan for this finding, which includes returning unspent scholarship funds to the grantor, will be completed by June 30, 2026.

OTHER BUSINESS

Regent David Aubrey asked whether the Board of Regents completes performance audits to prove a return on investments related to employment outcomes after graduation. Ms. Bentley-Smith stated that she would work with other deputies to provide this information to the Board.

FINANCE

FY 2026–2027 EXECUTIVE BUDGET OVERVIEW

Ms. Elizabeth Bentley-Smith, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration, stated the FY 2026–2027 Executive Budget was presented to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget (JLCB) on January 23, 2026, as a standstill budget that included a total recommended State General Fund (SGF) decrease of \$40.1M for higher education. The decrease includes one-time (non-recurring) State General Fund allocations of \$49.4M and Mandated Costs reductions of \$4.2M due to retirement cost savings. The decreases are offset by increases of \$5.3M for the LSU First benefits program, a \$4.4M means of financing swap for TOPS, and \$4M for the purchase of a software platform for the START Saving

programs. Additionally, the M. J. Foster Promise scholarship program has been allocated another \$14.5M to bring the total statutorily dedicated funding to \$25M.

REVIEW & APPROVAL OF THE FY 2026–27 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.

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. Although there is a standstill budget, the new funding formula will be applied for FY27; this allocation has been reviewed and approved by all system presidents. 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.

LEGISLATIVE

LEGISLATIVE STUDY REPORTS UPDATE

a. Task Force on Career Alignment Interim Report: Response to SCR 38 of the 2025 Regular Legislative Session

Dr. Tristan Denley, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Innovation, provided an overview of the Task Force on Career Alignment Interim Report. He noted that Senate Concurrent Resolution 38 of the 2025 Regular Session established the task force to strengthen Louisiana’s education-to-career pipeline and improve in-state graduate retention.

Dr. Denley highlighted key findings, including that most institutions have career centers and work-based learning opportunities, though only half require career services engagement. He also noted challenges such as limited integration of career services across academic programs and fragmented internship and employer engagement efforts.

He concluded with an overview of the report’s focus areas, which include developing a faculty work-based learning playbook, creating a statewide opportunity index, expanding career coaching,

strengthening workforce reporting, implementing a work-study-to-work learning model, and increasing employer engagement through more centralized processes.

Regent Sarda thanked Dr. Denley and the task force for its work and invited Student Government Association Presidents Cruz Cassard (Nicholls State University) and Hannah Habisreitinger (University of Louisiana at Monroe) to share their perspectives, noting Mr. Cassard's role on the Task Force on Career Alignment.

Mr. Cassard shared that the task force was formed to help create meaningful opportunities for students to remain in Louisiana, address brain drain and strengthen connections to career services and paid internships. He expressed appreciation for the task force's leadership and the state's commitment to real solutions. Ms. Habisreitinger echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the importance of connecting students to career opportunities and the positive impact of aligning degrees with workforce pathways.

On motion of Regent Sarda, seconded by Regent Temple, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Task Force on Career Alignment Interim Report as requested by the Legislature.

a. Power Based Violence Report: Response to Act 472 of the 2021 Regular Legislative Session

Ms. Brianna Golden Phillips, Director of Government Affairs, provided a brief overview of the Power-Based Violence Report. She noted that since the establishment of the Power-Based Violence Review Panel, legislative actions have progressively strengthened accountability around power-based violence, improved coordination between law enforcement and institutions, enhanced training and reporting standards, and addressed emerging threats, including AI-related harms.

According to the 2025 Power-Based Violence Report, training compliance remained high, with 34,359 employees (94%) and all 200 confidential advisors (100%) completing required training. The report also reflects 119 formal complaints filed between October 2024 to September 2025, with outcomes including findings of responsibility, informal resolutions, and other case dispositions, demonstrating continued monitoring and resolution of incidents.

Additionally, the report included legislative and programmatic recommendations, which include expanding statutory coverage to address unlawful deepfakes and AI-generated sexual content. A related bill has been filed during the 2026 Regular Legislative Session to strengthen campus safety education and reporting and clarify statutory definitions. Additionally, the Board of Regents will continue to update and enhance training to ensure compliance, relevance, and effective prevention and response.

On motion of Regent Aubrey, seconded by Regent Sarda, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Task Force on the Power Based Violence Report as requested by the Legislature.

2026 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Ms. Golden Phillips 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 collaborate 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 (Rep. LaFleur; 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 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 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 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 for the TOPS Tech award to include students earning early college credit through dual enrollment or other approved workforce-aligned learning experiences.
- **TOPS Data (Rep. Bamburg)** – Evaluates the effectiveness of all TOPS programs, the administering agency requires standardized data from all public and nonpublic institutions on students who receive each type of TOPS aid and those who do not.
- **HB 407 – M.J. Foster Promise Award (Rep. Larvadain)** – Revises eligibility requirements by reversing the initial age restriction associated with the M.J. Foster Promise Award.
- **HB 104 – 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 requirements of endowments matched by the Board of Regents Support Fund endowment dollars

and ensures continued compliance with program protections regardless of changes to the Louisiana Education Quality Trust Fund.

- **Higher Education Funding Structure Study (Rep. Chaisson)** – Directs the Board of Regents to evaluate Louisiana’s higher education funding structure and report recommendations to legislative committees by February 26, 2027.
- **TOPS Return on Investment Study (Rep. Turner)** – Directs LED, Louisiana Works, the Board of Regents, and LAFIRST to jointly evaluate the state’s return on investment for the TOPS program.
- **Athletic Department NIL Study (Rep. Young)** – Requests a study examining the financial implications of NIL and revenue-sharing activities on collegiate athletics and long-term program sustainability.
- **High School NIL Trust Accounts Study (Rep. Chaisson)** – Requests examination of establishing trust accounts for high school athletes under age 18 to hold a percentage of NIL compensation earnings.

Bills of Interest

- **HB 99 – Guns on Campuses (Rep. McCormick)** – Authorizes individuals 18 years of age or older who are legally permitted to possess a firearm under state and federal law to carry a firearm on the campus of any public college or university in Louisiana.
- **HB 229 – Low-Earning Outcome Programs (Rep. Wyble)** – Prohibits public postsecondary education management boards from allocating state funds to academic programs identified by the federal government as low-earning outcome programs.
- **HB 385 (Rep. Bamberg) – TOPS Repayment** – Requires students who lose TOPS eligibility due to failure to meet program requirements to repay scholarship funds. The bill authorizes the Board of Regents to establish limited exceptions and implement collection procedures.
- **HB 626 – Suicide Prevention (Rep. Jordan)** – Requires colleges and universities to develop and implement campus suicide prevention plans.
- **SB 120 – NIL Financial Literacy Training (Sen. Talbot)** – Increases the annual financial literacy and life skills training requirement for postsecondary student-athletes participating in NIL activities.
- **HB 391 – Eliminates Board of Regents (Rep. McMackin)** – Proposes a constitutional amendment to eliminate the Louisiana Board of Regents effective January 1, 2028. The proposal would be submitted to voters for approval at the statewide election on November 3, 2026.

OTHER BUSINESS

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

ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Tristan Denley, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Innovation, presented the Consent Agenda, which included such routine items as program name changes and modality updates. He also highlighted five program terminations at UL Monroe, affecting 18 faculty members and saving about \$600–700K this year, with greater long-term impact.

On motion of Regent Creed, seconded by Regent Reeves, the Board voted unanimously to approve the items on the Consent Agenda.

Regent Aubrey asked for clarification on online courses and the funding formula. Dr. Denley stated that programs labeled 100% online will still have in-person options. For funding, in-state online students count the same as those on-campus, while out-of-state online students are not included in the funding formula.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Dr. Denley presented for the Board's consideration proposals for three new academic programs: an Associate in Health Studies at Baton Rouge Community College to support healthcare workforce needs as both a transfer pathway and entry-level training; a Bachelor's in Aviation at LSU Alexandria, developed from existing concentrations to prepare students for careers as commercial pilots or in aviation management; and a Bachelor's in Artificial Intelligence at LSU A&M, one of the first of its kind, designed to train AI engineers through rigorous technical coursework.

On motion of Regent Creed, seconded by Regent Reeves, the Board voted unanimously to approve the academic program as presented.

ACCELERATED BACHELOR'S DEGREE (ACCB)

Dr. Denley presented for the Board's consideration a proposal to introduce a new 90-hour accelerated bachelor's degree to help meet workforce needs more quickly and flexibly. Unlike the traditional 120-hour degree, the three-year program is more focused, allowing students to graduate faster while still meeting core learning objectives. Campuses gain flexibility by integrating some general education requirements into major coursework. Staff recommend approving this option for all four-year institutions.

On the motion of Regent Reeves, seconded by Regent Creed, the Board voted unanimously to approve the degree as presented.

Board members asked the current accreditation agency's position on these degrees. Dr. Denley responded that SACSCOC had approved a policy allowing "reduced" bachelor's degrees like the 90-hour program. Campuses must still complete a standard substantive change approval process with SACSCOC

to offer their first such degree, but the policy was developed in close coordination with the accreditor, positioning Louisiana as a leader in this area.

AccB PROGRAMS – LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERISTY OF ALEXANDRIA

Regent Sterling introduced LSU Alexandria’s proposal for two accelerated three-year bachelor’s programs and recognized President Paul Coreil on his retirement after over 43 years of service. Regents Glaser and Hixson praised President Coreil for impactful leadership, innovation, and contributions to LSU, central Louisiana, and the state.

Dr. Denley introduced for the Board’s consideration two proposed accelerated bachelor’s degrees: in Information Technology, to quickly prepare students for high-demand tech jobs, and in Bioinformatics, to train students in a specialized mix of biology, data science, and AI skills needed for advanced biomedical fields.

On motion of Regent Sarada, seconded by Regent Aubrey, the Board voted unanimously to approve the degree as presented.

FACULTY ANNUAL REVIEW

Dr. Denley provided information on the faculty annual review, noting that a vote would not be necessary as the presentation was for information purposes only. He stated that in Louisiana all faculty – tenured, tenure-track, and adjunct – undergo rigorous annual evaluations, which are consequential for career advancement. While each of the four public systems has slightly different processes and tools, the core approach is consistent.

OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Denley highlighted that Northwestern State University has proposed a new Ag Center, which is under review. The Academic and Student Affairs staff at the Board of Regents is examining how a new center would interact with existing agricultural centers at LSU A&M and Southern University, ensuring statewide support for agriculture. Notably, this comes after a related agribusiness program was recently sunsetted due to low enrollment.

FACILITIES AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

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

Mr. Chris Herring, Associate Commissioner for Facilities Planning and Emergency Management, presented two capital outlay projects submitted by the Louisiana State University (LSU) Board of Supervisors for late addition to the Board of Regents (BOR) FY 2026–27 Capital Outlay Budget Recommendation.

I. Louisiana State University and A&M College (LSU) Alex Box Stadium Improvements

The first project involves various upgrades to the Alex Box facility. Specifically, the project will build an addition to the batting cage facility at Alex Box Stadium and renovate existing spaces. The addition includes the construction of 11,500 square feet (SF) of space dedicated to new batting cages and a new 30,000 SF indoor practice facility. The practice facility will contain a full-size synthetic turf field. The existing batting cages will be renovated to create a new 8,000 SF pitching lab.

The final component of the project involves construction of a new alumni viewing deck in right center field of the stadium. The new viewing deck will provide additional seating opportunities and enhance the fan experience. The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$18M and will be funded with self-generated revenues. The project is scheduled to be complete for the 2028 college baseball season.

II. Louisiana State University of Alexandria (LSUA) Workforce Academic Center

The second project submitted by the LSU Board of Supervisors for consideration involves a request from LSUA to construct a new Workforce Academic Center. LSUA's enrollment growth has created a critical need for additional instructional space, faculty and staff offices, and modern academic resources. To address this challenge, the institution is proposing the construction of a state-of-the-art two-story facility comprising approximately 46,600 SF with workforce development as its central mission. The facility is envisioned as a modern, multidisciplinary facility that will house instructional and collaborative spaces for high-demand academic programs aligned with central Louisiana's economic priorities. With all existing campus buildings operating at 100% capacity, this building will support LSUA's continued enrollment growth and programmatic expansion.

To demonstrate LSUA's commitment to the project, the university will provide \$2M in institutional funds to fully support the planning and development phase during year one of the capital outlay timeline, and no state funding will be requested for the initial phase. Should the \$2M be insufficient to cover design costs, LSUA is prepared to add additional funding. Upon completion of the planning effort, the institution will seek approximately \$21.3M in state funds to cover the cost of construction. The request for state funding will be submitted in a future capital

outlay cycle. Any BOR recommendation related to this request will consider the LSU Board of Supervisors' priority ranking for this project alongside other LSU System capital priorities.

Regent Sarda inquired about the proposed location of the new facility and the impact the project would have on parking. Dr. Anzilla Gilmore, Associate Vice President, Facility and Property Oversight with LSU A&M, confirmed the new facility would be located on an existing parking lot on the LSUA main campus. She was not aware of any parking-related issues at LSUA.

On motion of Regent Temple, seconded by Regent Shamieh, the Facilities and Property Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the addition of two capital outlay projects to the Board of Regents FY 2026–27 Capital Outlay Budget Recommendation submitted by the Louisiana State University Board of Supervisors, on behalf of Louisiana State University and A&M College and Louisiana State University of Alexandria, for the purpose of improvements to the Alex Box Stadium facility and construction of a new Workforce Academic Center, respectively.

OTHER BUSINESS & ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Herring informed the Board of the posture of House Bill 2 (HB 2), the state's capital outlay bill, after the introduction of the bill by the Louisiana House of Representatives. He noted 38 projects, totaling approximately \$269M across all public postsecondary institutions and the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON), were included in the bill to receive new state funding for fiscal year 2027. Mr. Herring also noted four additional higher education projects not funded through schedule nineteen. Finally, he highlighted that the current bill does not include new funding for the Act 751 program.

Regent Aubrey mentioned the lack of Act 751 program funding and legislative concern related to the slow pace of program expenditures. Mr. Herring acknowledged the slower-than-anticipated expenditures, discussed various underlying reasons for the delay, and noted proposed solutions to expedite project execution going forward.

Regent Sarda asked how many projects within the BOR Capital Outlay Recommendation were deferred maintenance in nature. Mr. Herring explained that the majority of projects included within the recommendation have some impact on deferred maintenance. While some projects may be strictly deferred maintenance, renovations and replacement facilities also reduce the deferred maintenance backlog.

RESEARCH AND SPONSORED INITIATIVES

FY 2025–26 BOARD OF REGENTS SUPPORT FUND AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS

Ms. Carrie Robison, Deputy Commissioner for Sponsored Programs, highlighted the process for developing external evaluations for proposals submitted to the constitutionally prescribed program components of the Board of Regents Support Fund (BoRSF) and specific award recommendations for FY 2025–26. She noted that the current Revenue Estimating Conference projection exceeds the budget approved during the 2025 Regular Legislative Session and sufficient funds are available in the Support Fund to accommodate the recommendations. She then specified the following five (5) recommendations for FY 2025–26 across all BoRSF subprograms, to be funded with earnings distributed during the fiscal year. By these recommendations, the Board was asked to authorize awards, with contingencies, as follows:

I. Endowed Chairs for Eminent Scholars

Board action completed the endowments for the five (5) proposals ranked 1–4 in the Consultants’ Report.

II. Enhancement of the Quality of Academic, Research, and Agricultural Departments and Units

Board action approved disbursements in the Endowed Professorships and Endowed Two-Year Workforce Scholarships subprograms as follows:

A. Endowed Professorships: A total of \$2,640,000 from the Support Fund for the Endowed Professorships subprogram, including First-Generation Undergraduate Scholarships, to match new and prior-year requests at nine (9) institutions.

B. Endowed Two-Year Student Workforce Scholarships: \$1,760,000 from the Support Fund to match thirty-four (34) applications submitted in FY 2025–26 under the Endowed Two-Year Workforce Scholarships subprogram.

III. Targeted Research & Development

Board action approved disbursement of \$2,090,000 estimated to be available in FY 2025–26 to fund the nineteen (19) Research Competitiveness Subprogram proposals selected.

IV. Recruitment of Superior Graduate Students

Board action approved disbursement of \$1,000,000 from the Support Fund to match fourteen (14) applications, ranked 1–13, submitted in FY 2025–26 under the Endowed Superior Graduate Student Scholarships subprogram.

V. Contingency Plan for Budgetary Shortfall

Board action approved the following contingency plan for a budgetary shortfall: Should available Support Fund revenues not achieve the amount cited herein during FY 2025–26, any shortfall shall be accommodated through a proportionate reduction in the amounts allocated for proposals in the competitive program components.

On motion of Regent Reeves, seconded by Regent Shamieh, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the FY 2025–26 BoRSF funding recommendations, with contingencies, as presented.

STATEWIDE PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Susannah Craig, Interim Executive Director of LOSFA and Deputy Commissioner for Strategic Planning and Student Success, explained 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 timeframe was beyond the student’s control. Four requests for exception to the deadline to begin a home study program were reviewed and approved by the LOSFA Advisory Board at its meeting of February 10, 2026. The students have presented facts and documentation that they believe justify the granting of an exception as an exceptional circumstance.

On motion of Regent Sarada, seconded by Regent Sterling, the Statewide Programs Committee recommended that the Board of Regents approve the request for exception to the deadline to begin a home study program no later than the conclusion of the tenth-grade year.

TOPS EXCEPTIONS

Dr. Craig informed the Committee that 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 the 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.”

Dr. Craig advised that 14 requests for exception to the TOPS requirements were reviewed and approved by the LOSFA Advisory Board at its meeting on February 10, 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 Reeves, seconded by Regent May, the Statewide Programs Committee recommended that the Board of Regents approve the requests for exception to the TOPS regulatory provisions that require students to remain continuously enrolled and to earn the annual credit hours required during the academic year.

STATEWIDE PROGRAMS SPOTLIGHT: LOUISIANA UNIVERSITIES MARINE CONSORTIUM (LUMCON)

Ms. Robison introduced Dr. Brian Roberts, Executive Director and Chief Scientist, to provide an overview of the work of LUMCON. Dr. Roberts described the structure of LUMCON, as well as its goals and objectives. He noted that LUMCON undertakes a strategic planning process every five years and that the current strategic plan, now in its second year of implementation, established high-level goals aligned with the mission, vision, and structure of LUMCON as well as a detailed action plan. Strategies and implementation were developed in collaboration with LUMCON's consortium members and other stakeholders across the state. This process, already yielding significant progress, ensures that LUMCON pursues the broad priorities and concerns of the full consortium, as well as those of the core leadership. Following this broad view, Dr. Roberts discussed LUMCON in its two principal postures: as an institution and as a consortium. He presented programs offered by LUMCON to engage consortium members in support of its goals and mission. Finally, Dr. Roberts outlined legislative priorities during the 2026 Regular Session.

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

Reflecting on the previous discussion regarding TOPS, Regent Pryor asked about studies of the TOPS program and whether a committee already exists that could address questions about TOPS. Dr. Craig indicated that the LOSFA Advisory Board does provide regular guidance on the TOPS program, but the scope of the proposed legislative study is beyond the charge of this body. Regent Pryor then requested information on the structure of the study and the questions it proposes to address. Dr. Craig responded that the study will be designed over the coming months. Regent Pryor asked about the total budget for TOPS and potential for increases following the study. Dr. Craig, Ms. Elizabeth Bentley-Smith, and Dr. Reed provided information on the cost of the TOPS program over time and the issues facing the body selected to study the program.

PLANNING, RESEARCH, AND PERFORMANCE

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Susannah Craig presented the Consent Agenda. The first item consisted of seven 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.

The second item included recommendations from the Advisory Commission on Proprietary Schools approved during its January meeting. The recommendations consisted of the approval of one

initial license application and nine license renewal applications. Regent Aubrey asked about the services provided and fees charged for Brow Design By Dina. Dr. Craig and Director of Licensure, Courtney Britton confirmed the training provided, the sliding fee scale, and that as a non-accredited institution that does not lead to an in-demand occupation, the school was not eligible for any state funding.

On motion of Regent Hixson, seconded by Regent Williams-Brown, 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. Aspen University – Phoenix, AZ
 - b. Bard Early College in New Orleans – New Orleans, LA
 - c. California State University – Northridge – Northridge, CA
 - d. Lamar State College Orange – Orange, TX
 - e. Liberty University – Lynchburg, VA
 - f. Moreland University – Washington, DC
 - g. William Carey University – Hattiesburg, MS

- B. Advisory Commission on Proprietary Schools
 - 1. Initial License Applications
 - a. Southeastern Louisiana Technical College – Kentwood, LA
 - 2. Renewal Applications
 - a. Brow Design By Dina – Denham Springs – License #2345
 - b. Compass Career College – Hammond – License #2327
 - c. Gonzales Medical Assistant School – Gonzales – License #2164
 - d. Infinity College – Lafayette – License #2140
 - e. National Driving Academy – Greensburg – License #978
 - f. New Orleans Culinary & Hospitality Institute (NOCHI) – New Orleans – License #2237
 - g. Shreveport Bossier City Massage Academy – Shreveport – License #2396
 - h. Tulsa Welding School-Tulsa Campus – Tulsa, OK – License #2096
 - i. Williams Technical College – Houma – License #2141

The next item on the agenda was the Healthworks Commission Annual Report.

Ms. Mellynn Baker, Associate Commissioner for Student Success and Strategic Initiatives, introduced Dr. Ali Bustamante, Impact Econ Research, to present the data compiled for the Healthworks Commission Report. Dr. Bustamante stated that healthcare is Louisiana’s largest and fastest-growing private-sector industry, expected to add about 26,000 new jobs over the next decade. He noted that demand comes not only from growth but also from retirement and turnover, creating thousands of openings each year emphasizing that there are approximately 8,000 openings for home health aides and 4,000 openings for registered nurses. This means the state must continuously train and supply workers to avoid shortages. Dr. Bustamante stated that job needs span all levels, from doctors and nurses to aides and

therapists, and are driven by an aging population. Healthcare now makes up about 15% of jobs and could reach 1 in 5 jobs, making workforce training essential to meet demand and support economic growth.

Regent Sterling asked if the report will be shared with legislators related to the bill to limit funding for low-wage programs. It was said that report will be shared with legislators. Regent Shamieh asked if other medical roles that didn't interact with patients were included in the study. Ms. Baker responded noting that on page 10 of the report, Figure 4 indicates that Louisiana's healthcare sector by occupational group includes nearly 14% of these roles as office and administrative support roles. Regent Pryor expressed appreciation of the study and asked about the lack of nursing instructors and if the report addressed any bottlenecks like that one. Regent Sterling responded noting that there are several solutions underway but that grants which focus on instructors furthering their education to meet licensure requirements are one tool to support the nursing educator pipeline.

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

There being no other business, 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 thanked Regent Glaser for an informative presentation and highlighted several recent activities including upcoming presidential investitures and successful participation in HBCU Day and Read Across America events, which promoted student engagement, literacy, and early childhood education across Louisiana campuses.
- She honored Dr. Norman Francis, praising his legacy as Xavier University's long-serving president and his impact on higher education, civil rights, and student opportunity. She emphasized that his contributions to Louisiana and beyond were recognized as deeply influential and lasting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Cordell asked if there was any other business to come before the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, on the motion of Regent Temple, seconded by Regent Reeves, the meeting was adjourned.