

**RESPONSE TO SENATE RESOLUTION 132
OF THE 2015 REGULAR SESSION
OF THE LOUISIANA LEGISLATURE**

LOUISIANA BOARD OF REGENTS



January 2016

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REGENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Senate Resolution 132 (SR 132) of the 2015 Regular Session "urged and requested the Board of Regents (BoR) . . . to "re-examine the state's public postsecondary education delivery system and make recommendations to the legislature regarding the appropriate role, scope and mission for each public postsecondary institution as necessary to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated statewide public postsecondary delivery system that meets the needs of students and addresses the state's economic development and workforce needs on a local, regional and statewide level." (See Appendix A.)

The re-examination that SR 132 requests is embedded in various ongoing initiatives of BoR which are expected to be completed in the upcoming months. The most important of such initiatives is the revision of BoR's 2011 master plan, currently in progress, undertaken pursuant to its constitutional duty to formulate and timely revise a master plan for higher education in Louisiana. BoR's master plan includes the proper delineation of the role, scope and mission of higher education institutions in the state, as well as the efficient and adequate delivery of educational services to meet the needs of the students and the local, regional and statewide workforce needs and economic development. BoR's response to SR 132 is also embedded in the implementation of an outcomes-based funding formula, as required by Act 462 of 2014.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education in Louisiana is delivered through four systems which contain a blend of universities, community and technical colleges, and specialized units. Maintaining and fostering both excellence and diversity among institutions of higher education in Louisiana continues to be a primary goal of BoR. Each public postsecondary system and institution has a unique role,

scope and mission to serve its population. Although some might argue that the range of missions and diversity in populations represented make identifying and prioritizing need challenging, BoR sees the differences among and within the four systems as an opportunity to provide statewide access and to appropriately address the variations in need across the State.

Article VIII of Louisiana's Constitution authorizes BoR to develop a master plan for higher education in Louisiana and make timely revisions thereof. The master plan provides a broad vision for the State's higher education system and acknowledges its interdependence with the economy and its many contributions towards better lives for Louisiana's citizenry. The most recent master plan was adopted in 2011 and was guided by the reality that Louisiana must raise the educational attainment of its adult citizens if it were to compete successfully in the 21st century world economy. The plan also addressed the need to strategically invest in targeted research to sustain and expand the State's economic development. And, as expected, increased accountability was a common thread which undergirded every element of the 2011 master plan.

The 2011 plan included unique role, scope and mission statements for each public institution and unit of higher education. It provided a road map to reach the State's educational attainment goal for systems to follow as they exercised their authority to manage the day-to-day operations of their institutions. BoR has reported annually on the State's progress toward these goals.

THE TIME FOR ANOTHER LOOK

The importance of postsecondary education to the citizens and government leaders of Louisiana has increased dramatically over the past decades, even since the adoption of the 2011 plan. The escalating pressure to demonstrate the value added by a college degree, the swirling patterns of students' enrollment at varying points of their lives, and the revaluation of middle-

skill jobs all impact the diverse educational and workforce needs of Louisiana citizens. Evidence suggests that in order to successfully participate in the 21st century, a person must earn some form of postsecondary credential. The effects of higher education levels stretch beyond personal fulfillment. The economic stability of the State and the nation is tied to citizens who are employed in productive, meaningful work.

As Louisiana experiences industrial growth at historical rates, there is an increased need for trained individuals to support this expansion. According to Complete College America (2011), by 2020, approximately 53% of Louisiana jobs will require a career certificate or college degree. In order to build a sustainable workforce that can meet the needs of the 21st century economy, the State of Louisiana has two choices: (1) train its residents with the appropriate skill sets to build rewarding careers; or (2) import trained workers from outside Louisiana. The choice is clear. Louisiana postsecondary education must provide access to technical and professional education services to prepare its own citizens to participate more fully in the new economy.

To be responsive, Louisiana must have a comprehensive and flexible education and workforce network along a continuum in which all parts are well-aligned and coordinated into an integrated system. Transformations require thoughtful and innovative strategies to promote both stability and viability for the future of Louisiana. Recognizing this need, the Commissioner of Higher Education broadened the Regents' stakeholder engagement in 2015 by organizing a collaborative of state-level policy groups, business and industry partners, higher education leaders, and the workforce cabinet agencies. The primary objective of the BoR Stakeholder Collaborative (the Collaborative) is to work synergistically to identify and address relevant challenges that impede education and workforce attainment. Specifically, the Collaborative

recognizes that higher education is the vehicle to elevate Louisiana through education and innovation. Higher education understands its role and responsibility in improving lives, creating a strong workforce, and investing strategically in research that supports innovation and economic development for Louisiana.

As the economic, demographic and social landscape of the State continues to evolve, the Louisiana Board of Regents sees the master plan as a living document requiring continual vigilance and renewed commitment to ensure that higher education is accountable and adapts to meet the challenges and expectations it faces. To be responsive to the continual changes in education, the Board of Regents has embarked on the development of its seventh master plan. This plan will align with a new model in which performance and accountability (tied to institutional role, scope and mission) are measured, financially incentivized and evaluated based on institutional outcomes. The new master plan is tentatively scheduled to be presented to BoR for its consideration and approval in spring 2016. As the response to SR 132 is only one part of the master plan, a separate response to SR 132 is both premature and duplicative. The subject matter to be studied pursuant to SR 132 will be comprehensively addressed in the new master plan.

2015 Regular Session

ENROLLED

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 132

BY SENATOR APPEL

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Board of Regents, in consultation with the public postsecondary education management boards, to re-examine the state's public postsecondary education delivery system and make recommendations to the legislature regarding the appropriate role, scope, and mission for each public postsecondary institution as necessary to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated, statewide public postsecondary delivery system that meets the needs of students and addresses the state's economic development and workforce needs on a local, regional, and statewide level.

WHEREAS, the role public postsecondary education plays in the economic well being of our citizens and our state is both well established and undeniable; and

WHEREAS, it is equally clear that the number of current and projected job openings in the state and related educational requirements does not align with the number of citizens matriculating from our public postsecondary institutions with degrees and credentials that sufficiently prepare them to enter the workforce and fill the demand for skilled employees; and

WHEREAS, the changing needs of the state's workforce and the state's fiscal condition make it imperative that our public postsecondary educational system make optimal use of resources, increase institutional efficiency and productivity, and maximize student access to an institution of public postsecondary education that best meets their educational and career needs and serves the state's economic development and workforce goals; and

WHEREAS, the quality and worth of an institution is not determined by its size or the breadth of its program and degree offerings, but by how well it serves the needs of its students, community, region, and the state; and

WHEREAS, each public postsecondary institution is an integral part of the state's public postsecondary delivery system, but it is time to look beyond traditional parochial considerations and recognize that achieving the state's goals may require that the role, scope,

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mission, and degree and program offerings of individual public postsecondary institutions be redefined in a manner that differs from what is established in the current master plan, but yet preserves institutional identity; and

WHEREAS, Article VIII, Section 5(D)(2) of the Constitution of Louisiana provides, relative to public institutions of postsecondary education, that it is a power, duty, and responsibility of the Board of Regents to revise or eliminate an existing degree program, department of instruction, division, or similar division and to approve a proposed degree program, department of instruction, division, or similar subdivision; and

WHEREAS, Article VIII, Section 5(D)(3)(a) of the constitution further provides that it also is a power, duty, and responsibility of the board to study the need for and feasibility of creating a new institution of public postsecondary education, including establishing a branch of such an institution, or converting a nondegree granting institution to an institution which grants degrees, or converting a college or university limited to offering degrees of a lower rank than baccalaureate to a college or university that offers baccalaureate degrees, or merging one or more institutions of public postsecondary education, establishing a new management board, or transferring a college or university from one board to another; and

WHEREAS, Article VIII, Section 5(D)(3)(b) of the constitution specifies that if the creation of a new institution, the merger of institutions, the addition of a management board, or the transfer of an existing institution from one board to another is proposed, the Board of Regents shall report its written findings and recommendations to the legislature within one year and further specifies that only after the report has been filed, or after one year from the receipt of a request for a report from the legislature if no report is filed, may the legislature take affirmative action on such a proposal, and then only by law enacted by two-thirds of the elected members of each house; and

WHEREAS, Article VIII, Section 5(D)(4) of the constitution tasks the Board of Regents to formulate and make timely revision of a master plan for public postsecondary education; and

WHEREAS, the current Master Plan for Public Postsecondary Education adopted by the board in 2011, and revised in 2012, provides for the role, scope, and mission of each public postsecondary education institution in the state; and

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WHEREAS, it is incumbent upon the Board of Regents to exercise its constitutional responsibility and re-examine the state's public postsecondary education delivery system from a statewide perspective and determine the best manner in which to provide a coordinated statewide public postsecondary delivery system that provides for the proper role, scope, and mission of each public postsecondary institution and its placement within the public postsecondary education governance structure, focuses resources, and establishes an optimal balance of technical colleges, two-year and four-year institutions, and courses of study.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Board of Regents, in consultation with the public postsecondary education management boards, to re-examine the state's public postsecondary education delivery system and make recommendations to the legislature regarding the appropriate role, scope, and mission for each public postsecondary institution as necessary to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated, statewide public postsecondary delivery system that meets the needs of students and addresses the state's economic development and workforce needs on a local, regional, and statewide level.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Regents submit a written report of its findings and conclusions, including recommendations for the role, scope, and mission for each existing public postsecondary institution, to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Senate Committee on Education, and the House Committee on Education not later than sixty days prior to the beginning of the 2016 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the chairman of the Board of Regents, the commissioner of higher education, the president of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, the Louisiana State University System, the Southern University System, and the University of Louisiana System.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE