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Regents Partner with National Guard to Support Student Guardsmen

BATON ROUGE, La – Student soldiers and airmen who were activated and deployed by the National Guard during Hurricanes Gustav and Ike were aided in their transition back into Louisiana's colleges and universities this semester thanks to a clarification of policy made by the Louisiana Board of Regents. The clarification, which was agreed upon by higher education leaders earlier this month and was formally approved by Regents today, allows students called up for the storms the option of remaining enrolled in courses as long as they return to campus within 14 days of their mobilization.

"Every one of our System Presidents fully supported this measure for our student guardsmen," said Commissioner of Higher Education Sally Clausen. "This policy clarification states clearly that our institutions should provide the support necessary to get these students back into the classroom with as little disruption as possible. The National Guard has provided a tremendous service to all of us so I was happy to assist Major General Bennett Landreneau when he made this request on behalf of his troops."

"For the past four weeks our soldiers and airmen have been hard at work, serving fellow Louisianans during these difficult times," said Maj. Gen. Bennett Landreneau, the adjutant general of the La. National Guard. "We are very appreciative that the Board of Regents and the Commissioner have worked to support our student guardsmen in the same way. Serving our citizens as first responders, our student guardsmen's experiences will truly add to their academic experience."

Current law surrounding National Guard deployments and their impact on higher education enrollment was created in response to students being activated for long-term service during times of war. By clarifying its policy, Higher Education remained in compliance with Louisiana Revised Statute 29:420 (2)(a) which gives students who are mobilized/activated during a semester or term the following options:

- Complete withdrawal from the college or university with a 100% refund of tuition & fees
- Withdrawal from individual courses within the college or university
- Continuation of individual courses with the support of the instructor and dean

"I saw first hand the tremendous work being done by the Louisiana National Guard during and after Hurricanes Gustav and Ike," said Clausen. "I know our college and universities also value their service and will do what's right in serving these special students."

According to the National Guard, more than 1,000 guardsmen are students in Louisiana's public colleges and universities.

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Statement Regarding Louisiana National Guard Mobilization

Purpose: To clarify that existing policies are not intended to limit the ability of students returning within 14 days (or census date) of mobilization to continue their education

In response to Hurricane Gustav, over 1,000 postsecondary education students were activated and deployed by the National Guard. It is anticipated that their service will be shorter than in prior calls to service. In order to ensure compliance with Louisiana Revised Statute 29:420(2)(a) and provide these students with every reasonable opportunity to complete the Fall Semester of 2008, we issue the following statement. The following takes precedence over any current policies with respect to those activated and deployed by the National Guard in response to Hurricane Gustav.

Students who are mobilized/activated during a semester or term will be given the option of either: (1) complete withdrawal from the college or university for the semester with a refund of 100% of their tuition and fees including student insurance fees and other mandatory fees; or (2) withdrawal from individual courses within college or university or (3) continuation in individual courses with the concurrence of the instructor and dean (or equivalent) upon a determination that university guidelines are met or that it is educationally sound to allow such continuation. Consideration shall be taken of the minimum impact policies of La.R.S.29:420(2)(a).

Students who choose, pursuant to the above options, to remain enrolled in some or all courses should be provided reasonable support to ensure that the pursuit of education is disrupted to the minimum extent possible and that no undue penalties are assessed due to a military call to service.

Signed:



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