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Regents Identifies Underperforming Programs for Termination

BATON ROUGE, La. –The Board of Regents today announced more than 450 academic programs at risk of termination due to low-completion rates. This is the third academic program review performed by Regents since 2009 in an effort to streamline degree offerings statewide. This review however, is the most stringent in recent memory identifying approximately 1/3 of the total degree program offerings statewide.

Notably, this particular low-completer review relies upon a stricter set of standards than has been used in the past. The increased standards include a closer review based on average completion rates over a period of three years, down from five years in the past, the inclusion of ALL programs with no exclusions, as well as analysis of duplication and institutional mission. Additionally, campuses will be required to provide fiscal impact information for any program terminations or consolidations.

As established by the state constitution, the Board of Regents periodically reviews degree programs provided by the state's postsecondary institutions and recommends those that should be continued, consolidated or eliminated. Low-completer reviews use multiple years of student graduation data to measure productivity. The academic years used for this review are 2007-2010.

“It is critical that we improve the efficiency and productivity of our institutions’ delivery of academic programs. Today we will address a more stringent review that launches a very aggressive step in this process,” said Board of Regents Chairman Bob Levy. “Regents will begin by putting all low-completer and duplicative programs on the table so as to drive our state’s effort to become more productive and efficient concerning degree offerings. This is extremely important because it marks the first step in a series of actions which will culminate in a postsecondary education system that delivers services more efficiently, yet maintains quality and accessibility.”

“We have to answer the question, how relevant are our programs when it comes to the workforce?” said Board of Regents member Roland Toups. “We must look at this in a real solid hard-nosed basis. The goal is to sharpen the tools we use in evaluating our postsecondary institutions. We need our schools to report to us on the employment of their graduates religiously, annually.”

The established criteria for programs to meet in order to avoid being labeled as a “low-completer” are:

- **Undergraduate Programs**-an average of 8 completers per year or a minimum of 24 graduates within 3 years.
- **Masters/Specialist Programs**-an average of 5 completers per year or a minimum of 15 graduates within 3 years.
- **Doctoral Programs**-an average of 2 completers per year or a minimum of 6 graduates within 3 years.

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The list of programs identified as not meeting the established criteria has been shared with the four system offices as well as the individual campuses. Each campus has until the end of February to agree to terminate the program, recommend consolidation of the program or defend the continuation of each program identified as low-completer. Campuses that choose to defend a program for continuation or consolidation must not only provide fiscal impact data in their response, but will also be required to address how continuation of the program fits within their mission, especially if there is duplication of the program by another institution in the state. The Board of Regents will vote on the recommendations of staff concerning low-completer degree programs in April.

“We will require systems and campuses to vigorously defend any request to continue a low-completer program by the use of clear data and analysis to overcome the presumption against maintaining a low productivity degree,” said Levy. “In addition to this effort at improving productivity, the board will make additional recommendations that support the overall goal of increased educational attainment.”

The following list represents the number of programs by system and campus that have been identified as “low-completer”:

Low-Completer Review Total	459
Associate	88
Baccalaureate	246
Graduate	125
LSU System	122
LSU A&M	34
UNO	33
LSU-Alexandria	3
LSU-Shreveport	16
LSU-Eunice	3
LSUHSC-New Orleans	24
LSUHSC-Shreveport	9
Southern University System	53
Southern A&M	36
SUNO	10
Southern-Shreveport	7
University of Louisiana System	212
Southeastern Louisiana University	22
Nicholls State University	16
University of Louisiana at Lafayette	27
McNeese State University	22
University of Louisiana at Monroe	32
Louisiana Tech	46
Grambling State University	31
Northwestern State University	16

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Louisiana Community and Technical College System	72
Bossier Parish Community College	5
Baton Rouge Community College	3
Delgado Community College	14
Fletcher Community College	6
Delta Community College	2
Nunez Community College	5
River Parishes Community College	2
South Louisiana Community College	2
Southwest Louisiana Community College	5
(Technical Colleges)	
Acadiana	11
Capital Area	4
Central	3
Northeast	1
Northshore	4
Northwest	3
South Central	2

Chairman Levy stressed to the Regents and those in attendance that over the next several months, the board will making a set of recommendations focused on performance, preservation of quality and support for increased educational attainment.

“Next month, I anticipate you will see the completion of the work surrounding the Performance-Based Funding Formula,” said Levy. “This formula should be aligned with the GRAD Act and provide an equitable distribution model for those funds appropriated to higher education. In March, we will complete a study of the New Orleans region as requested by the Senate and Governor Jindal concerning this first comprehensive regional effort at improving postsecondary education. In the meantime, Regents will hold firm in implementing an increase to the statewide minimum admissions criteria in 2012 so as to support our efforts to achieve a more balanced enrollment mix among our two-year and four-year institutions. This is all part of our efforts to address the ‘new normal’ and provide the leadership necessary to transform our postsecondary education enterprise into one that responds to the needs of our students and our state, no matter what.”

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