

**RESPONSE TO HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 165  
OF THE 2010 REGULAR SESSION OF THE LOUISIANA  
LEGISLATURE**

**LOUISIANA BOARD OF REGENTS**

**JANUARY, 2011**

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## Introduction and Background

House Concurrent Resolution No. 165 of the 2010 Regular Session of the Louisiana

Legislature urges and requests the Board of Regents to:

**“...study and make recommendations relative to including students who graduate from an institution in calculations for determining and for reporting on student graduation and completion rates by public postsecondary institutions.”**

A copy of HCR 165 appears as Appendix A to this report.

### A Perspective on Graduation Rates and Completers

Over the past 30 years, the Board of Regents has developed a number of student level data systems in which all public postsecondary institutions participate. Using the data reported in Regents' Statewide Completer System and Statewide Student Profile System, Regents has developed and refined reports on completers and graduation rates. The following reports are annually published on Regents' website:

#### Completers

Each institution reports annually student level data for students who have been awarded a degree or certificate, within the most recent academic year (summer, fall and spring), in a program of study recognized by the Board of Regents. The numbers of awards are reflected in the published reports regardless of when the students began the program, the institution in which they initially enrolled, whether or not they were fulltime or part-time, whether or not they were entering freshmen or transfer students, or how long it took them to complete the program. The only criterion is that they received an award in the most recent academic year. If a student received more than one award in an academic year, both awards are reported. Several reports are published, all of which identify the number of awards by institution and statewide, and by other variables, such as degree level, program of study, gender, and race. In 2009-10, 34,901

degrees/certificates were awarded statewide by Louisiana's public postsecondary education institutions. A sample of a most recent completer report appears as Appendix B to this report.

### Graduation Rates

Upon receipt of final completer data, the Board of Regents annually produces a Graduation Rate Report. The Regents' systemic graduation rate report is designed to track a first-time, full-time cohort of students (reported in the Statewide Student Profile System) through the first six years of Louisiana public postsecondary education.

Institutions participating in federal financial aid programs are required to report these data to the U.S. Department of Education. In calculating the graduation rates, Regents uses the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) definition of the cohort to be tracked:

**"...the percentage of first-time, full-time degree/certificate seeking undergraduate students who enter the institution as part of the fall cohort of a specific year and complete their program within 150% of time to degree (6 years for bachelor degree and 3 years for associate degree)"**

This is also known as the *same institution* graduation rate. It is an accurate measure of what it is intended to measure and what is required of the institutions by the U.S. Department of Education. Regents chose to use the IPEDS definition because it is consistent and can be compared to other rates, whether by institution, within the state, regionally or nationally, and over a long period of time. For example, the rates published by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and used to compare to Louisiana institutions, are *same institution* graduation rates using the IPEDS definition.

For each cohort, the Board of Regents calculates three separate graduation rates: (a) associate or below in 150% of normal time for students awarded an associate degree, diploma, or

certificate within 3 years; (b) baccalaureate in 150% of normal time for students awarded a baccalaureate degree within 6 years; and (c) first award from (a) or (b) in 150% of time.

Since its inception, the IPEDs Graduation Rate Survey has come under heavy criticism from a variety of sources. The majority of the criticism has targeted the narrow focus of the survey and the many students who are excluded in the calculation: part-time, non-degree seeking, transfers, etc. Despite the U.S. Department of Education's reporting requirements regarding graduation rates, there are other graduation and related rates which can be reported in addition to the IPEDS rates. Granted, these additional calculations may not allow for regional and national comparisons. However, they do allow the opportunity to examine graduation rates in a different light and provide a more complete picture of Louisiana's graduates. A description of some of these methodologies follows.

Because of its robust student level data systems, Regents is able to calculate same institution and statewide graduation rates, including graduates from either the same or any other public postsecondary institution in Louisiana. If a cohort student enters and completes at the same institution, that student is counted in the IPEDs and Regents' *same institution rate*. If the cohort student enters and completes at the same or a different public postsecondary institution, that student is counted in Regent's *statewide graduation rate*. Although campus leaders have every interest in a student graduating from the 'home' institution, the state's interests are served by the student earning the award, regardless of which Louisiana public institution confers it.

For example – for the 2003 cohort that completed within 150% of time:

3,000 cohort students began at University A

1,000 students completed their degree at University A, for a *same institution graduation rate* of 33.33%

1,200 students completed their degree at University A or at another public postsecondary institution in Louisiana, for a *statewide graduation rate* of 40.00%

The *statewide* graduation rate for the state for the fall 2003 cohort is 36.81%. A total of 29,693 students were in the entering cohort in 2003 and the number of first awards received by the students within 150% of time (through the 2009-10 academic year) was 10,931. The *same* institution graduation rate for the 2003 cohort was 31.26% based on 9,282 graduates, not including the 1,649 students who graduated from an institution other than the one at which they originally enrolled. The most recent graduation rate report appears as Appendix C to this report.

While these two reports, Completers and Graduation Rate, provide accurate information on total completers (regardless of when or where the student was first enrolled) and traditional graduation rates (tracking a cohort of students defined by the U.S. Department of Education) for the purposes for which they were intended, there are other measures of annual undergraduate award production. These other measures include students in the traditional cohort as well as non-traditional students, part-time students, transfer students, and students who complete beyond 150% of time for the degree. These measures compare either the number of awards or the number of students receiving awards to the annual undergraduate fulltime equivalent (FTE) enrollment. FTE is calculated from Regents' Student Credit Hour Reporting System.

#### Award/Completion Ratio

The award ratio compares the number of awards received at an institution in an academic year to the annual undergraduate FTE at the same institution. All awards are counted, regardless if a student receives more than one award during the academic year. The completion ratio compares the number of students (completers) receiving an award(s) at an institution in an academic year to the annual undergraduate FTE at the same institution. Completers are counted once, even if they received more than one award.

These measures normalize the comparison of the ratios to other institutions and statewide, regardless of the size of the institution's undergraduate FTE.

For example, for the 2009-10 academic year:

University B's undergraduate FTE is 12,000  
2,000 undergraduate awards were conferred at University B  
Award ratio =  $2,000/12,000 = .166$   
1,900 students completed at least one degree at University B  
Graduation ratio =  $1,900/12,000 = .158$

College A's undergraduate FTE is 2,000  
400 undergraduate awards were conferred at College A  
Award ratio =  $400/2,000 = .200$   
450 students completed at least one degree at College A  
Graduation ratio =  $450/2,000 = .225$

Beginning in 2011, it is the intention of Regents to design and publish on its website an annual Award/Graduation Ratio Report. Although regional and national comparisons may be unavailable currently, many states are considering the adoption and publication of these metrics. These ratios allow campuses to account for all graduates in its reports without the restrictions inherent in the federal IPEDS reports. A sample of an Award/Graduation Ratio Report appears in Attachment D to this report.

### Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

#### Summary and Conclusions

House Concurrent Resolution No. 165 of the 2010 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature urges and requests the Board of Regents to:

**“...study and make recommendations relative to including students who graduate from an institution in calculations for determining and for reporting on student graduation and completion rates by public postsecondary institutions.”**

The Board of Regents currently publishes annual reports for the following:

- **Completers** – the numbers of awards completed in an academic year by institution, regardless of when the students began the program, the institution in which they initially enrolled, whether or not they were fulltime or part-time, whether or not they were entering freshmen or transfer students, or how long it took them to complete the program.
- **Graduation rates** -- to track a first-time, full-time cohort of students (defined by the U.S. Department of Education) through the first six years of Louisiana public postsecondary education. Regents publishes an annual report on same institution graduation rate and statewide graduation rate by institution.

#### **Recommendation**

The Board of Regents recommends that, in addition to continuing to publish the reports cited above, it commits to design and add to its published reports an Award/Completion Ratio report – to compare the number of awards received at an institution in an academic year and the number of completers receiving an award to the annual undergraduate FTE at the same institution.



## APPENDIX A.

Regular Session, 2010

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 165

BY REPRESENTATIVE AUSTIN BADON

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Board of Regents, in consultation with the public postsecondary education management boards, to study and make recommendations relative to including students who graduate from an institution in calculations for determining and for reporting on student graduation and completion rates by public postsecondary education institutions; to provide for a report to the legislative education committees of study findings and recommendations; and to provide for related matters.

WHEREAS, earning a college credential enhances an individual's opportunity for employment and advancement; and

WHEREAS, college graduates have increased earning power and have been shown to contribute greatly to the good of society; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Education (USDOE) recognizes the value of a college credential and collects such information on an annual basis; and

WHEREAS, in addition to collecting data on graduates, USDOE collects information on graduation rates; and

WHEREAS, the USDOE graduation rate calculation is based on tracking an entering cohort of first-time, full-time degree-seeking freshmen who graduate from that institution; and

WHEREAS, transfer students are not counted in the USDOE graduation rate for either the sending or receiving institution; and

WHEREAS, entering part-time students are not counted in the USDOE graduation rate; and

WHEREAS, all completers in postsecondary education are important contributors to Louisiana's economy and society, whether or not they meet specific criteria for inclusion in a federally defined rate; and

WHEREAS, public postsecondary education institutions should be recognized and given credit for graduating students, regardless of where the student begins postsecondary education; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Regents' data systems provide the agency with the capability to report graduation and completion rates in ways that present a more complete picture of the results achieved by public postsecondary education institutions.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Board of Regents, in consultation with the public postsecondary education management boards, to study and make recommendations relative to including students who graduate from an institution in calculations for determining and for reporting on student graduation and completion rates by public postsecondary education institutions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Regents shall report in writing on study findings and recommendations to the House Committee on Education and to the Senate Committee on Education by not later than March 1, 2011.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

## APPENDIX B.



LOUISIANA - BOARD OF REGENTS  
 INFORMATION SERVICES DIVISION  
 PROGRAM-ID. Cmplrcmp

S T A T E W I D E C O M P L E T E R S S Y S T E M  
 DEGREES/CERTIFICATES AWARDED BY RACE FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2009-2010  
 TOTAL STUDENTS

RUN-DATE 10/28/2010  
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INSTITUTION NAME	DIPLOMA	CERT.	ASSOC.	POST-ASSOC.	BACH.	BACH.	POST-BACH.	MAST.	POST-MAST.	DOCT.	DOCT.	POST-DOCT.	SPEC.	PROF.	POST-PROF.	TOTAL
L.T.C.-MATCHITOCHE	36	31	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	73
L.T.C.-NORTH CENTRAL	13	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	43
L.T.C.-NORTHEAST	37	14	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	60
L.T.C.-NORTHWEST	173	146	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	341
L.T.C.-OAKDALE	60	56	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	127
L.T.C.-RIVER PARISHES	48	60	93	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	201
L.T.C.-RUSTON	37	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40
L.T.C.-WEST JEFFERSON	7	5	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19
L.T.C.-WESTSIDE	17	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22
L.T.C.-YOUNG MEMORIAL	56	138	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	213
L.T.C.-SABINE VALLEY	19	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	58
L.T.C.-SHELBY JACKSON	37	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	62
L.T.C.-SHREVEPORT BOSSIER	179	58	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	247
SOWELA	127	234	267	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	628
L.T.C.-SULLIVAN	110	68	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	184
L.T.C.-T.H. HARRIS	146	85	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	239
L.T.C.-TALLULAH/M. SURLLES	22	43	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	68
L.T.C.-TECHE AREA	68	130	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	203
L.C.T.C.S. SYSTEM TOTALS	2,755	3,637	2,994	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9,399
PUBLIC TOTALS	2,757	3,736	4,429	19	17,939	25	4,515	1	605	0	52	800	23	34,901		

## APPENDIX C.

Institution	2003 FTF Cohort	Associate or Below 150% Time		Bachelors Degree 150% Time		1st Award (All Levels) 150% Time	
		Same	Other	Same	Other	Same	Other
GSU	1,027	4	1	295	7	299	8
La Tech	1,962	11	4	878	150	889	154
McNeese	1,521	12	3	516	51	523	54
Nicholls	1,395	13	7	394	39	401	45
ULM	1,287	5	5	340	75	343	80
NSU	1,849	11	5	531	108	540	113
SLU	2,556	8	7	773	102	781	108
ULL	2,595	0	7	1,075	125	1,075	131
LSU A	389	12	0	32	27	42	27
LSU A&M	5,363	0	1	3,122	401	3,122	402
LSU S	565	0	1	117	42	117	43
UNO	1,961	0	2	408	135	408	137
SU A&M	1,351	0	2	409	24	409	26
SUNO	388	0	1	31	4	31	5
Four-Year	24,209	76	46	8,921	1,290	8,980	1,333
LSU E	772	43	4	0	148	43	152
SUSLA	409	59	1	0	11	57	12
BRCC	1,051	22	3	0	79	22	82
BPCC	577	37	1	0	43	37	44
Delgado	1,791	28	0	0	36	24	36
Nunez	328	7	2	0	3	7	5
RPCC	129	9	1	0	15	9	16
SLCC	89	3	0	0	5	3	5
LDCC	60	1	0	0	7	1	7
Fletcher	152	65	0	0	0	65	0
Sowela	126	36	0	0	0	34	0
Two-Year	5,484	310	12	0	347	302	359
State Total	29,693	386	58	8,921	1,637	9,282	1,692

Notes/Definitions:

Beginning with the 2003-2004 Academic Year:

LSUA transitioned from a 2-year institution to a 4-year institution

Fletcher and SOWELA were recognized as Technical Community Colleges

FTF Cohort defined as First-Time Full-Time students, excluding those classified as Other Undergraduate (OU).

150% of normal time, Status (includes the summer following third/sixth academic year - trailing summer)

Certificate/Diploma = 1.5 years

Associate Degree = 3 years Status: Included

Bachelors Degree = 6 years Status: Included

1st Award (All Levels) represents unique count of cohort receiving any undergraduate award at any Louisiana Public

Postsecondary Institution within 150% of normal time for the level of the first award earned.



**APPENDIX D.**

# Undergraduate Completers and Awards Compared to Undergraduate Full-Time Equivalent Enrollment

System	Institution Name	2008-09				2009-10			
		Undergrad FTE	Completers per Award	Completer Ratio	Award Ratio	Undergrad FTE	Completers per Award	Completer Ratio	Award Ratio
LSU	L.S.U. and A&M College	23,968.8	4,648	0.19	4,734	23,741.2	4,312	0.18	4,388
	University of New Orleans	7,512.2	1,286	0.17	1,356	7,617.8	1,295	0.17	1,347
	L.S.U. in Shreveport	2,994.1	527	0.18	529	3,167.8	501	0.16	502
	L.S.U. at Alexandria	1,944.7	328	0.17	328	1,853.6	264	0.14	265
	L.S.U. at Eunice	2,085.7	256	0.12	258	2,231.3	273	0.12	277
<b>LSU Total</b>		<b>38,505.6</b>	<b>7,045</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>7,205</b>	<b>38,611.7</b>	<b>6,645</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>6,779</b>
ULS	Louisiana Tech University	7,678.5	1,400	0.18	1,416	7,578.8	1,340	0.18	1,354
	University of Louisiana at Lafayette	13,264.4	2,117	0.16	2,124	13,348.9	2,132	0.16	2,138
	Southeastern Louisiana University	12,042.8	1,939	0.16	1,947	12,414.1	2,013	0.16	2,030
	University of Louisiana at Monroe	6,623.9	911	0.14	923	6,741.5	1,094	0.16	1,104
	Grambling State University	4,751.5	574	0.12	586	4,440.6	729	0.16	748
ULS Total		<b>64,249.3</b>	<b>10,460</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>10,567</b>	<b>64,970.7</b>	<b>10,844</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>10,961</b>
	McNeese State University	6,781.1	1,155	0.17	1,171	7,077.1	1,114	0.16	1,127
	Nicholls State University	5,957.6	1,025	0.17	1,036	6,064.8	1,076	0.18	1,091
	Northwestern State University	7,149.6	1,339	0.19	1,364	7,304.8	1,346	0.18	1,369
	<b>SU Total</b>		<b>7,051.5</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>0.13</b>	<b>898</b>	<b>6,947.4</b>	<b>869</b>	<b>0.13</b>
SU	Southern University and A&M College	1,995.2	238	0.12	239	2,326.4	236	0.10	242
	Southern University in New Orleans	1,961.9	295	0.15	313	2,394.8	268	0.11	290
	Southern University in Shreveport	11,008.6	1,430	0.13	2,056	11,668.7	1,373	0.12	1,402
LCTCS	Baton Rouge Community College	5,253.5	297	0.06	314	5,708.4	468	0.08	495
	Bossier Parish Community College	3,522.5	573	0.16	577	4,128.3	756	0.18	760
	Delgado Community College	10,179.4	1,121	0.11	1,132	12,161.3	1,296	0.11	1,321
	Elaine P. Nunez Community College	1,048.7	208	0.20	212	1,147.5	251	0.22	252
	L.E. Fletcher Community Technical College	1,006.5	120	0.12	122	1,225.2	223	0.18	242
	Louisiana Delta Community College	1,105.7	92	0.08	93	1,244.1	99	0.08	99
	River Parishes Community College	786.0	73	0.09	74	1,038.8	221	0.21	224
	South Louisiana Community College	2,185.2	399	0.18	401	2,502.0	406	0.16	409
	Sowela Community Technical College	1,583.8	342	0.22	357	1,837.4	572	0.31	628
	LTC Delgado	819.2	39	0.05	41	987.6	80	0.08	83
	Acadiana Technical College	2,817.0	971	0.34	1,040	3,332.4	1,115	0.33	1,182
	Capital Area Technical College	2,283.8	746	0.33	827	2,482.0	614	0.25	659
Central LA Technical College	2,028.1	562	0.28	572	2,497.7	653	0.26	683	
Northeast Technical College	1,650.3	470	0.28	510	2,053.5	475	0.23	545	
Northshore Technical College	1,745.5	442	0.25	547	2,250.0	479	0.21	540	
Northwest LA Technical College	2,149.2	800	0.37	872	2,481.4	727	0.29	777	
South Central LA Technical College	1,370.3	357	0.26	386	1,630.1	454	0.28	500	
<b>LCTCS Total</b>		<b>41,534.8</b>	<b>7,612</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>8,077</b>	<b>48,707.6</b>	<b>8,889</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>9,399</b>
<b>Statewide Total</b>		<b>155,298.2</b>	<b>26,547</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>27,905</b>	<b>163,958.7</b>	<b>27,751</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>28,541</b>