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Higher Education



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REVISED AGENDA
PLANNING, RESEARCH and PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
September 22, 2016 • 10:05 a.m.
Louisiana Purchase Room, W.C.C. Claiborne Building, Baton Rouge, LA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Consent Agenda
 - A. R.S. 17:1808 (Licensure)
 1. Initial Licenses
 - a. Pensacola Christian College
 - b. Regis College
 - c. Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions
 2. License Renewals
 - a. Duquesne University
 - b. Remington College
 - c. Stevens-Henager College
 - B. Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission
 1. Initial Licenses
 - a. Baton Rouge Dental Assistant Institute
 - b. New Orleans Dental Assistant School
 - c. Shreveport Dental Assistant School
 - d. Hands-On Learning & Training College
 - e. Medical Careers College
 - f. Southern Oaks Care
 - g. Unitech Training Academy – Baton Rouge
 2. AOS Degree Applications
 - a. McCann School of Business & Technology (Monroe)
 - b. McCann School of Business & Technology (Shreveport)
 3. License Renewals

- C. State Authorization Reciprocal Agreement (SARA) Institution Renewal
 - 1. Louisiana Tech University
 - D. State Authorization Reciprocal Agreement (SARA) State Renewal (Louisiana)
- IV. Elevate Louisiana: The New Reality for Higher Education
- A. Draft Guiding Principles for Proposed Mergers, Consolidations or Unifications
-
- V. GRAD Act Intervention Policy
- A. Flood Relief
- VI. Other Business
- A. ITT Technical Institute
- VII. Adjournment

Committee Members: Claudia Adley, Chair; Joseph Farr, Vice Chair; Raymond Brandt, William Fenstermaker, Thomas Henning, Robert Levy, Gray Stream.

Agenda Item III.A.1.a.

Pensacola Christian College Pensacola, Florida

BACKGROUND

Pensacola Christian College (PCC) is not incorporated in the State of Louisiana. The institution traces its roots to Pensacola Christian Grade School founded in 1954. That institution was renamed Pensacola Christian Academy and eventually became Pensacola Christian College in 1974. PCC is a Christian independent Baptist liberal arts college. Today, PCC has eight academic divisions and offers programs from the associate through the doctorate. The institution is located in Pensacola, Florida and is accredited by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS).

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

PCC is seeking initial licensure to make available to Louisiana residents its online masters programs in Educational Leadership, Business, Ministry and Bible Exposition. Typically, the online nature of the delivery system would not require licensure. However, since some of the programs require externships, licensure is necessary.

FACULTY

PCC employs eighteen faculty in support of its online programs available to Louisiana residents. Of the eighteen faculty, fourteen are employed fulltime and fifteen are trained at the doctoral level.

FACILITIES

Since PCC operates its programs online with administrative and academic support in Pensacola, there are no physical facilities in Louisiana. Students will complete externship experiences at various locations within Louisiana.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Given the credentials of its faculty, the institution's accreditation, the limited programs offered to Louisiana residents, and the general oversight by the home campus, the senior staff recommends that the Board of Regents issue an initial operating license to Pensacola Christian College, located in Pensacola, Florida.

Agenda Item III.A.1.b.

Regis College Wellesley, Massachusetts

BACKGROUND

Regis College (Regis) is not incorporated in the State of Louisiana. The institution was founded as a women's college by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph and incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1927. Regis was originally a liberal arts undergraduate institution but expanded into graduate education in 1970s and began admitting men in 2008. Today, Regis has a rich mix of academic programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and enrolls approximately 2,000 students. The institution is located in Wellesley, Massachusetts and is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Regis is seeking initial licensure to make available to Louisiana residents its online masters programs in Health Administration and Nursing and post-masters certificates in Nurse Practitioner. The nursing programs are professionally accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing. Typically, the online nature of the delivery system would not require licensure. However, since both programs require clinical practice externships, licensure is necessary.

FACULTY

Regis employs 35 faculty in support of its online Health Administration and Nursing programs available to Louisiana residents. Of the 35 faculty, nineteen are employed fulltime and seventeen are trained at the doctoral level.

FACILITIES

Since Regis operates its programs online with administrative and academic support in Wellesley, there are no physical facilities in Louisiana. Students will complete practicum experiences at various healthcare locations within Louisiana.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Given the credentials of its faculty, the institution's and programs' accreditation, the limited programs offered to Louisiana residents, and the general oversight by the home campus, the senior staff recommends that the Board of Regents issue an initial operating license to Regis College, located in Wellesley, Massachusetts.

Agenda Item III.A.1.c.

Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions Provo, Utah

BACKGROUND

Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions (RMUoHP) is not incorporated in the State of Louisiana. The institution was established in 1998 as a post-professional graduate healthcare institution. Today, RMUoHP enrolls students from all 50 states. Its curricula have limited-residency requirements that allow its students to continue their professional lives without relocating. The institution is located in Provo, Utah and is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

RMUoHP is seeking initial licensure to make available to Louisiana residents its Doctor of Nursing and Doctor of Physical Therapy programs. Both programs are professionally accredited by their respective associations. Typically, the online nature of the delivery system would not require licensure. However, since both programs require clinical practice externships, licensure is necessary.

FACULTY

RMUoHP employs two faculty in direct support of its two online programs available to Louisiana residents, both fulltime and trained at the doctoral level.

FACILITIES

Since RMUoHP operates its program online with administrative and academic support in Provo, there are no physical facilities in Louisiana. Students will complete practicum experiences at various healthcare locations within Louisiana.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Given the credentials of its faculty, the institution's accreditation, the limited programs offered to Louisiana residents, and the general oversight by the home campus, the senior staff recommends that the Board of Regents issue an initial operating license to Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions, located in Provo, Utah.

Agenda Item III.A.2.a.

Duquesne University Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

BACKGROUND

Duquesne University (DU) is not incorporated in the State of Louisiana. The university was founded in 1878 as Pittsburgh Catholic College and received its current name in 1911. Today, DU is comprised of ten schools of study serving more than 10,000 students. The university is headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

DU offers online bachelors, master's and doctorate programs in nursing, masters programs in business-related areas, a master's program in leadership, and master's and doctoral programs in instructional technology to Louisiana residents. Typically, the online nature of the delivery system would not require licensure. However, since some of these programs require clinical experiences, licensure is necessary.

FACULTY

DU employs 91 faculty to support its online programs available to Louisiana residents, 44 on a full-time basis. Sixty-two of the faculty are trained at the doctoral level, while the remaining 29 are trained at the master's level.

FACILITIES

Since DU operates its programs online with administrative and academic support in Pittsburgh, there are no physical facilities in Louisiana. Students complete practicum experiences at various locations within Louisiana.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Given the credentials of its faculty, the college's and programs' accreditation, and the general oversight by the home campus, the senior staff recommends that the Board of Regents approve license renewal for Duquesne University, located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Agenda Item III.A.2.b.

Remington College - Lafayette Lafayette, Louisiana

BACKGROUND

Remington College was incorporated as a not-for-profit institution in the State of Oklahoma in 1991 and first registered with the Board of Regents in 1993 as Education America - Remington College. The institution is now headquartered in Little Rock, Arkansas, wholly owned by Education America and was initially licensed by the Board of Regents in 1994. The college offers diploma and associate of science degree programs. Remington College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC).

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Remington College - Lafayette provides classroom lecture and laboratory instruction. The college offers associate degree programs in Business Administration, Computer and Network Administration, Criminal Justice and Process Technology and diploma programs in Medical Assisting, Medical Billing and Coding, Electronic Technology, Pharmacy Technician, and Cosmetology.

FACULTY AND STUDENTS

Remington currently employs 22 faculty, seven of whom are employed full-time. Thirteen of the faculty are trained at the graduate level. In fall, 2013, the college enrolled 89 students in its associate degree programs, with 162 students enrolled in its diploma programs.

FACILITIES

Remington College - Lafayette leases two buildings in Lafayette with a total area of approximately 36,000 square feet. The facility contains classrooms, administrative offices, and a library. The facility also contains several well-equipped computer laboratories. Remington also offers classes in Baton Rouge and Shreveport.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Given the credentials of its faculty, the college's recognized campus accreditation, and the general oversight of the programs by campus faculty and administrators, the senior staff recommends that the Board of Regents approve Remington College's application for license renewal.

Agenda Item III.A.2.c.

Stevens-Henager College Salt Lake City, Utah

BACKGROUND

Stevens-Henager College (Stevens) is not incorporated in the State of Louisiana. The online operations of the private non-profit college are located in Salt Lake City, Utah. Stevens traces its roots to Intermountain Business College founded in 1891, later became Smithsonian Business College, Moench University of Business and Ogden-Westhaven Business College. In 1959, Stevens received its current name. Today, Stevens has multiple campuses in Idaho and Utah (including Independence University) and is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC).

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Stevens offers a variety of online diploma (4), associate (4), bachelor's (10) and master's (7) degree programs in business- and health-related areas. The required clinical activities in a few of the health-related curricula necessitate licensure. The institution reported a total of 203 Louisiana residents enrolled in fall 2015.

FACULTY

Stevens employs 297 faculty to support its online programs, 134 on a full-time basis. Of the 297 faculty, 261 are trained at the graduate level.

FACILITIES

Since Stevens operates programs online with administrative and academic support in Salt Lake City, there are no out-of-state physical facilities in Louisiana. Depending on the academic program, students will complete clinical experiences at various locations in Louisiana.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Given the credentials of its faculty, the college's accreditation, and the general oversight by the home campus, the senior staff recommends that the Board of Regents approve license renewal for Stevens-Henager College, located in Salt Lake City, Utah.

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Minutes

**Board of Regents' Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission
September 19, 2016**

The Louisiana Board of Regents' Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission met on Monday, September 19, 2016, at 10:10 a.m., in the Board Conference Room on the sixth floor of the Claiborne Building, Baton Rouge. Acting Chair Lalonde called the meeting to order and the roll was called.

Commission Members Present

Melanie Amrhein
Sherrie Despino
James Dorris
Theresa Hay
Raymond Lalonde

Staff Members Present

Chandra Cheatham
Kristi Kron
Carol Marabella

Commission Members Absent

Ralph Bender, Vice-Chair
Richard D' Aquin
James Fontenot
Keith Jones, Chair

Guests Present

(See Appendix A.)

The first item of business was approval of the minutes from its meeting of July 12, 2016.

On motion of Ms. Hay, seconded by Mr. Dorris, the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission unanimously adopted the minutes of the July 12, 2016 Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission meeting.

The next agenda item considered by the Commission was seven initial license

applications of which the first three applications were submitted from Baton Rouge Dental Assistant Institute, located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, New Orleans Dental Assistant School, located in Terrytown, Louisiana, and Shreveport Dental Assistant School, located in Haughton, Louisiana, and represented by the institutions' Director of Compliance, Mr. Peter Gilkey. Ms. Marabella reviewed the materials for the Commission noting that these three institutions are owned by Vandelay Education, LLC, which has two proprietary schools currently licensed by the Board of Regents that are located in Alexandria and Baton Rouge, Louisiana. These three proposed new institutions, like their sister schools, would be offering one program of study, Dental Assistant, which is a twelve-week, 142.0 clock hour program. The program will be taught on twelve consecutive Saturdays at a practicing dental office. Each of the applications from Vandelay Education, LLC, met all the legal and administrative requirements to be approved for an initial license.

Following further discussion regarding the location of the schools in practicing dental offices, method of recruitment, the success of the existing licensed schools, employment rate for graduates, and student tuition payment options,

On motion of Ms. Amrhein, seconded by Ms. Despino, the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission unanimously recommends that the Board of Regents approve an initial operating license for Baton Rouge Dental Assistant Institute, located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

On motion of Ms. Hay, seconded by Ms. Amrhein, the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission unanimously recommends that the Board of Regents approve an initial operating license for New Orleans Dental Assistant School, located in Terrytown, Louisiana.

On motion of Ms. Despino, seconded by Ms. Hay, the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission unanimously recommends that the Board of Regents approve an initial operating license for Shreveport Dental Assistant School, located in Haughton, Louisiana.

The fourth initial license application considered by the Commission was from Hands-On Learning & Training College, located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and represented by Ms. Vernay Sanders, Partner. Ms. Kron reviewed the materials for the Commission members, informing them that the proposed institution would be offering one program of study, Pipefitting, which is a six-month, 480.0 clock hour program. Hands-On Learning & Training College met all the legal and administrative requirements to be approved for an initial license.

Following further discussion regarding the owners' background in education, student/teacher ratio, NCCR certification awarded to graduates, location of school, length of program in comparison to similar programs, payment plans, and available job placement assistance,

On motion of Ms. Hay, seconded by Ms. Despino, the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission unanimously recommends that the Board of Regents approve an initial operating license for Hands-On Learning & Training College, located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

The fifth initial license application considered by the Commission was from Southern Oaks Care, located in New Orleans, Louisiana, and represented by the school's owners, Ms. Ariel Statum and Ms. Desiree Coleman. Ms. Marabella reviewed the materials for the

Commission, informing it that this institution would be offering one program of study, Certified Nursing Assistant, which is a two-week, 80.0 clock hour program (inclusive of both classroom and clinical experience). The program has received the required approval from the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Health Standards Section. Southern Oaks Care met all the legal and administrative requirements to be approved for an initial license.

Following further discussion regarding the length of the program, student/teacher ratio, the owners' teaching experience, location of the school, cost of the program, and starting salary of CNAs,

On motion of Ms. Amrhein, seconded by Mr. Dorris, the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission unanimously recommends that the Board of Regents approve an initial operating license for Southern Oaks Care, located in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The sixth initial license application considered by the Commission was from Unitech Training Academy--Baton Rouge, located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and represented by the school's Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Noah Brandon. Ms. Marabella reviewed the materials for the Commission, informing it that the institution would be offering six programs of study: Administrative Medical Assistant (11.0 months and 72.4 quarter credit hours), Day Care Management (9.0 months and 57.4 quarter credit hours), EKG/Phlebotomy Technician (11.0 months and 64.4 quarter credit hours), Massage Therapy (11.0 months and 66.73 quarter credit Hours), Medical Assistant (11.0 months and 69.07 quarter credit hours), and Pharmacy Technician (11.0 months and 63.07 quarter credit hours). These programs are currently being offered at the corporation's other six licensed schools that are located in

Alexandria, Houma, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Metairie, and West Monroe. Each licensed campus is accredited by the Council on Occupational Education, and an application for accreditation will be submitted to COE for the new campus as well. Unitech Training Academy--Baton Rouge met all the legal and administrative requirements to be approved for an initial license.

Following further discussion regarding the corporation's reason for expanding into the Baton Rouge market, enrollment projections, marketing strategies, competitive tuition pricing, and the scope of career services,

On motion of Ms. Despino, seconded by Mr. Dorris, the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission unanimously recommends that the Board of Regents approve an initial operating license for Unitech Training Academy--Baton Rouge, located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Since a representative was not in attendance to represent the initial license application for Medical Careers College, located in Shreveport, Louisiana,

On motion of Ms. Amrhein, seconded by Ms. Despino, the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission unanimously votes to defer the consideration of the initial license application for Medical Careers College, located in Shreveport, Louisiana, to the November 15, 2016, meeting of the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission.

The next agenda item considered by the Commission was four Associate in Occupational Studies (AOS) Degree applications from McCann School of Business and Technology, located in Monroe, Louisiana and Shreveport, Louisiana. Ms. Cheryl Lokey, Campus Director of the Monroe Campus, was in attendance to represent the schools.

Ms. Marabella reminded the Commission members that the Proprietary Schools Law requires that AOS degrees be offered only by schools that hold recognized accreditation and that

the Board of Regents must approve all AOS degree program offerings. (Both the Monroe and Shreveport campuses of McCann School of Business and Technology are accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges & Schools.)

The Monroe Campus is proposing to offer the AOS Degree in Cyber Security (70.0 weeks/96.0 quarter credit hours) and the AOS Degree in Healthcare Information Technology (80.0 weeks/96.0 quarter credit hours). The Shreveport Campus is proposing to offer the AOS Degree in Healthcare Information Technology (80.0 weeks/96.0 quarter credit hours) and the AOS Degree in Web Design (70.0 weeks/96.0 quarter credit hours). Each program would be delivered in the residential or online format with the option of flex track instructional delivery or hybrid instructional delivery. The proposed AOS degree programs submitted by McCann School of Business and Technology (Monroe and Shreveport Campuses) met all the legal and administrative requirements to be approved by the Board of Regents.

Following further discussion regarding the delivery methods of the programs, potential competition in market area, average class size, payment plans offered to students, and employment opportunities for graduates,

On motion of Ms. Hay, seconded by Ms. Despino, the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission unanimously recommends that the Board of Regents approve the Associate in Occupational Studies Degree programs in Cyber Security (Residential and Online) and in Healthcare Information Technology (Residential and Online) for McCann School of Business and Technology, located in Monroe, Louisiana.

On motion of Ms. Despino, seconded by Ms. Anrhein, the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission unanimously recommends that the Board of Regents approve the Associate in Occupational Studies Degree programs in Healthcare Information Technology (Residential and Online) and in Web Design (Residential

and Online) for McCann School of Business and Technology, located in Shreveport, Louisiana.

The next agenda item considered by the Commission was operating license renewals.

Ms. Marabella informed the Commission members that there were twenty-six (26) schools seeking renewal. These schools scheduled for renewal were in complete compliance, having met all the legal and administrative requirements to be re-licensed.

Following further discussion,

On motion of Mr. Dorris, seconded by Ms. Hay, the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission unanimously recommends that the Board of Regents renew the licenses of the following proprietary schools (initial license date in parentheses).

**Accelerated Dental Assisting Academy (08/24/11)
Accelerated Dental Assisting Academy (Lafayette) (08/26/15)
Accelerated Dental Assisting Academy (Lake Charles) (08/26/15)
Accelerated Dental Assisting Academy (Monroe) (08/26/15)
Accelerated Dental Assisting Academy (Slidell) (08/26/15)
Advance Nursing Training, LLC (08/27/14)
Ark-La-Tex Dental Assisting Academy (08/26/10)
Baton Rouge School of Computers (08/28/97)
Camelot College (08/28/86)
Coastal College--Alexandria (08/28/97)
Crescent City School of Gaming & Bartending (09/14/83)
Digital Media Institute at InterTech (08/27/14)
Falck Safety Services--Houma (08/24/11)
Falck Safety Services--Maurice (08/24/11)
Fortis College (08/26/10)
Healthcare Training Institute (08/27/08)
Houston Marine Training Services (08/24/11)
Julian Certified Nursing Assistant Training School (08/27/08)
Life Care, LLC (08/21/13)
Medical Training College (08/22/96)
New Horizons Computer Learning Center of New Orleans (08/21/13)
N.O.D.C. School for Dental Assisting (08/24/11)
River Cities School of Dental Assisting, Inc. (08/24/06)
Rock Bridge Training Institute, LLC (08/26/15)**

Stick It Phlebotomy (08/26/15)

Unitech Training Academy--Lake Charles (08/27/09)

Ms. Marabella informed the Commission that five institutions chose not to renew their licenses this renewal cycle. They were Accelerated Dental Assisting Academy (Mandeville) (08/26/15), Accelerated Dental Assisting Academy (Marrero) (08/26/15), Art Instruction School (09/21/74), Crescent City Career Institute (08/28/03), and Peach Tree School of Dental Assisting, Inc. (08/26/10). Staff will follow through to secure the student records from each school for safekeeping.

The next item on the agenda was an update on program approvals. Acting Chair Lalonde reminded the Commission that staff approved these updates administratively and course approvals were being shared for informational purposes only.

Under Report from Staff, Ms. Denise Kirkland of the Board of Regents' Finance Section presented a financial summary of the proprietary school activities, as well as a summary of the Student Record Administration Account of the Student Protection Fund for FY 2015-2016. Ms. Marabella shared with the Commission a numerical summary of proprietary school activities for the past fiscal year. She also distributed to the Commission a schedule of proposed meeting dates for calendar year 2017 to review for formal adoption at the November meeting of the Commission.

The next meeting of the Proprietary Schools Advisory Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, November 15, 2016, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 1-190 of the Claiborne Building. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

APPENDIX A
GUESTS

Noah Brandon	Unitech Training Academy
Desiree Coleman	Southern Oaks Care
Peter Gilkey	Vandelay Education
James Hardage	Unitech Training Academy
Deesi Kirkland	Board of Regents
Cheryl Lokey	McCann School of Business & Technology (Monroe)
Vernay Sanders	Hands-On Learning & Training College
Ashley Smith	Unitech Training Academy
Ariel Statum	Southern Oaks Care

Agenda Item III.C.1

Executive Summary

The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) is a national initiative which seeks to establish comparable national standards for the interstate offering of postsecondary distance-education courses and programs. It is intended to make it easier for students to take online courses offered by institutions based in another state by reducing the cost and administrative burden on institutions seeking authorization in various states. SARA is a voluntary agreement among regional compacts (SREB, NEBHE, MHEC, and WICHE) and member states. Each member state approves their in-state institutions on an annual basis for SARA participation. Once approved, SARA member institutions may offer distance education programs in other SARA member states without additional authorization. Institutions approved by their home state are required to renew their membership annually.

Act 13 of the 2014 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature authorized the Louisiana Board of Regents to seek SARA membership on behalf of the State of Louisiana. In October 2014, Louisiana's application for SARA membership was approved by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA), effective December 1, 2014. Since then, 17 Louisiana institutions have joined SARA.

Louisiana Tech University has submitted its SARA renewal application. Regents' staff have reviewed the renewal application and determined that it meets all requirements for continuing its membership in SARA.

Senior staff recommends that the Planning, Research & Performance Committee approve the Renewal Application for Institutional Participation in SARA for Louisiana Tech University, and authorize staff to submit the approved renewal application to NC-SARA for final approval of SARA membership.

Agenda Item III.D

SARA Application for State Membership Renewal Executive Summary

The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) is a national initiative which seeks to establish comparable national standards for the interstate offering of postsecondary distance-education courses and programs. It is intended to make it easier for students to take online courses offered by institutions based in another state by reducing the cost and administrative burden on institutions seeking authorization in various states. SARA is a voluntary agreement among regional compacts (SREB, NEBHE, MHEC, and WICHE) and member states. There is a uniform SARA application process through which a state will be required to demonstrate to its regional compact that it meets the standards established for participation in the interstate reciprocity agreement. Currently, 42 states are SARA members. State membership renewal is required each subsequent two-year renewal period.

Act 13 of the 2014 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature authorized the Louisiana Board of Regents to seek SARA membership on behalf of the State of Louisiana. In October 2014, Louisiana's application for SARA membership was approved by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA), effective December 2014.

Senior staff recommends that the Planning, Research & Performance Committee approve the renewal application for Louisiana's Participation in SARA, and authorize staff to submit the renewal application to Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) for final approval for continuing its membership in SARA.

Agenda Item IV.A.

At its June meeting, the Board received a staff draft of the Guiding Principles for Proposed Mergers or Consolidations (Guidelines). At that time, the Board was scheduled to consider the Guidelines at its meeting in August. Due to the flooding incident and the short time between distribution of materials and the Board's August meeting, Chair Adley determined to postpone action to allow Board members additional time to review and comment on the Guidelines.

In order to allow for any additional input from Board members, time was set aside on Thursday (09/15) and Friday (09/16) to discuss by phone the Guidelines with individual Board members prior to consideration by the full Board. At the conclusion of those conversations, staff made revisions to the Guidelines based on additional input from staff and Board members. A revised draft of the Guidelines (including the addition of Unifications as an alternative to Mergers or Consolidations) is attached and will be considered by the Planning, Research and Performance Committee at its meeting on Thursday, September 22nd.

Senior staff recommends that the Planning, Research and Performance Committee adopt the Guiding Principles for Proposed Mergers, Consolidations or Unifications.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PROPOSED MERGERS, CONSOLIDATIONS, AND UNIFICATIONS

Introduction and Background

The Board of Regents (Board) is constitutionally authorized to plan, coordinate and have budgetary responsibility for all public postsecondary education in the State. More specifically, under Article VIII, Section 5 of the Louisiana Constitution, the Board is authorized to study and report on the merger, transfer, or creation of institutions. The Board may undertake such a study on its own or at the request of another party such as the Legislature. However, the merger, transfer, or creation of a public postsecondary institution will only occur upon legislation enacted by two-thirds vote of each chamber of the Legislature, and only after the Board of Regents has studied and made recommendations, or in the absence of Board action, after one year has passed.

For purposes of these guiding principles, a **merger** is when **one or more** existing institutions are absorbed by another existing institution and the surviving institution retains its name. A consolidation occurs when **one or more existing** institutions are combined into a new institution¹. Given the disparate missions, histories, local/regional affiliations and thousands of dedicated alumni among Louisiana's higher education systems and institutions, mergers and consolidations are complicated and difficult undertakings. Therefore, potential actions must be carefully considered not only in terms of cost/benefit analyses of the action, but also for the potential impact that they may have on Louisiana's residents, its economy and the institutions' educational, research and public service missions.

Admittedly, there is no perfect blueprint for consolidations or mergers, requiring institutions to largely chart new territories. Generally, the more dissimilar the institutions being consolidated or merged, the more challenging the task. Higher education leaders recognize the academic, financial, and cultural challenges associated with mergers or consolidations. Unification, an emerging concept in higher education, has become an alternative approach to leverage state and federal resources while harmonizing comparable academic programs and service delivery systems. Unification is the result of a series of actions whereby two or more existing institutions combine resources, while maintaining their unique names and identity. These actions can range from the sharing of faculty to the centralization of administrative jobs and academic programs. This approach can still achieve economies of scale and efficiencies in operation through shared services, while preserving institutional identities and stakeholder loyalties. In addition, unlike mergers and consolidations, unifications do not require legislative approval.

The advisability of any merger, consolidation, or unification of institutions is case-specific and depends critically on the particular facts of the proposed action. Nevertheless, there are several guiding principles of general applicability that can help direct the assessment of any proposed action when applied with reasonable objectivity and sensitivity to the particulars of a situation. Below are broad guiding principles that, **at a minimum**, the Board will follow when analyzing the merits of any proposed merger, consolidation, or unification. Specifically, these guiding principles provide the higher education community and other interested parties with a better understanding of (1) the manner in which proposals for mergers, consolidations, or unifications are evaluated; and (2) the key issues that should be considered

¹ ~~These principles are limited to mergers and consolidations as defined herein, and do not extend to the closure of an institution. Consolidations as envisioned in this document are one example of the creation of a new institution; and therefore would fall under the legal framework of the creation of a new institution under Louisiana laws. The Louisiana Constitution and laws are silent on the legal and procedural requirements governing the closure of an institution. It is unclear if the Board study and legislative approval by 2/3 vote required for mergers, transfers and creation of institutions are also required for closures. Therefore, these principles only address mergers and consolidations, not closures.~~

prior to a merger, consolidation, or **unification**. The guiding principles also seek to ensure that merger, consolidation, or **unification** proposals are considered methodically, objectively, and with consistency.

Guiding Principles for the Analysis of Proposed Mergers, Consolidations, or Unifications

Mergers, consolidations, and unifications are seen as a way to solve **solution** to many of the challenges facing higher education while expanding access or overall program quality. Despite the opportunities resulting from a merger, consolidation, or **unification**, the unique mission of higher education – educating individuals as productive participating citizens in Louisiana’s economy and training individuals to become workforce ready – must be the priority when contemplating, proposing, or implementing **mergers, consolidations or unifications**. **These guidelines are not intended to be exhaustive; they simply offer a framework that can be used to evaluate a merger, consolidation, or unification. While the Board will include the following in assessing proposals for mergers, consolidations, or unifications, depending on the nature of the request, other considerations may be included in the evaluation. Also, the nature of a unification request may not necessitate that all that follows be included in the assessment.**

1. *Does the proposed merger/consolidation/unification make sense programmatically and academically?* The proposed merger, consolidation, or **unification** should enhance opportunities for citizens to raise their education attainment levels, and it must provide an appropriate benefit to the populations the institutions individually serve. Aligning two institutions with similar missions and shared visions could build on existing collaboration and create (a) greater availability of education and training by linking disciplines currently available on only one campus; (b) opportunities for services and activities aimed at increasing engagement; and (c) more seamless movement between programs offered between merged/consolidated/**unified** institutions.

Aligning of two or more institutions with diverse missions, programmatic offerings, and/or research opportunities can prove difficult. However such differences could result in opportunities to expand student services and academic offerings. Proposals should explore policies and processes that help to ensure that the new/combined/unified institution(s) can effectively and efficiently function for its staff, students, and community.

Such assessments should address the following:

- **Admissions policy and tuition/fee structure:** In light of the issues of equity and access, the development of an admissions policy and tuition/fee structure are matters that must be addressed when assessing the value of a merger, consolidation, or **unification**. The higher education community and its stakeholders will need reassurance that the transition to the new/combined/**unified** institution(s) will not disrupt current or prospective students’ studies or unnecessarily disadvantage them.
- **Academic Program Reviews:** A comprehensive evaluation of academic programs and structures should be conducted immediately to fully assess whether and how the new, combined or **unified institution(s)** adds value to students’ experiences.
- **Disciplinary codes and rules:** Following an evaluation of each partnering institution’s codes and rules, disciplinary codes and rules of the new, combined, or **unified institution(s)** should be established and clearly communicated. These may be developed on the basis of existing rules, either by adapting the rules or selecting the code and rules from one of the institutions or creating new rules.

- Accreditation Status: In some cases, the existing academic programs of the partnering institutions can be integrated with very little change. However, in other cases considerable modification may be necessary. It is critical that partnering institutions make arrangements with the appropriate state and accrediting agencies to ensure that the degree is awarded by a legally authorized and accredited institution.

2. *Will the proposed merger/consolidation/unification improve long-term financial stability, levels of capital investment and/or economies of scale?* The proposed action should offer opportunities for more efficient use of resources, especially in the area of space utilization and operations. Integrated capital and space planning can eliminate the need for constructing duplicate facilities while enhancing utilization of and access to specialized facilities and equipment. By combining resources, cooperating institutions can create an optimal balance between cost and quality. It is important to mention that although institutions with greater financial challenges may be more apt to consider mergers, consolidations, or unifications, the lack of financial support for debt clearance, the potential need to address faculty and staff salary disparities, and the cost associated with the coordination of campus information technology structures can make the decision less attractive. A successful merger, consolidation, or unification heavily depends not only on understanding this, but also on a careful assessment of each prospective partner's current resources and cost structures.

Below are some issues that should be addressed regarding financial management and administration. It is important to emphasize that the issues below are not all-encompassing, but provide a platform that the Board will use to examine the financial value of a merger, consolidation, or unification.

- Assessment of the current financial situation of merging, consolidating, or unifying institutions. Financial health analyses should be conducted (or reviewed if conducted recently) to assess each institution's financial obligations, assets, and risk profile(s). It is critical that the partnering institutions are accurately informed of one another's financial status prior to a merger, consolidation, or unification.
- Financial accounting systems and processes: One comprehensive financial, accounting and administrative process and system must be identified for the new combined or unified institution(s). This may be developed on the basis of existing processes and systems, either by choosing one existing system or replacing all existing systems/ processes.
- Cost of planning and ultimately implementing a merger, consolidation, or unification: Mergers, consolidations, and unifications typically require external assistance to perform tasks such as due diligence studies, academic program review, data and operational systems conversions, and financial audits. Those costs must be considered when assessing the value of a merger, consolidation, or unification, particularly in terms of external support.

3. *What legal issues should be considered when merging, consolidating or unifying?* Institutions of higher education in Louisiana are established under the provisions of state law, and any merger, consolidation, or unification must be reflected through

revisions to existing laws. The proposal should identify and address all legal ramifications to ensure that all legal obligations to students, special trust, endowments, donations, athletic programs, grants, contracts, scholarships, estate executors, other stakeholders, etc. are identified and addressed. Below are some of the legal issues that must be considered during the assessment phases of a merger, consolidation, or unification.

- Contractual obligations: Mergers, consolidations, and unifications can impact existing obligations of an institution, such as contractual obligations, court orders, consent decrees, and grant terms. It is essential to conduct an inventory of each institution's existing obligations to ascertain whether after a merger, consolidation, or unification they can be discharged without violating constitutional rights of private third parties.
- Relationship between institutions and its affiliates: Existing agreements between the institution(s) to be merged, consolidated, or unified and its alumni foundations, donors or other affiliated private entities with fundraising functions should be considered. Given that funding often comes from external sources and is normally tied to contracts, good public relations and communications with donors will be essential.
- Employee Rights: Faculty and staff contracts, pension liabilities, and employee restructuring are key issues that must be addressed. Employees should be (1) consulted on all matters that will impact them and their job security (for example: promotion and tenure, revised retirement policy; probation, sabbatical leave, etc.); (2) informed of all possible alternatives before determining termination (for example, severance packages, resubmission of job application for a new or current position).

4. *What cultural challenges arise from a merger, consolidation, or unification? Cultural issues are prominent in the merger, consolidation, and unification discussion.* Bringing together two (or more) institutions with different institutional cultures can be challenging. Some cultural differences may be apparent in the strategic and operational priorities of the institutions, in different focus areas for teaching and research, in different student populations, and in the historical experience. However, there are some less obvious aspects of institutional culture that cannot be ignored. It is of the utmost importance partnering institutions discuss how mergers, consolidations, or unifications can impact students' social and educational environment and the community at large.

- Cultural preservation: Proposals should strive to preserve the unique, positive elements of institutional culture and identify public service missions and local workforce and economic development needs. For example, smaller colleges might have a more student-centered culture that encompasses personalized support services for students while larger, more diverse universities might concentrate resources more on research opportunities and professional studies; variances in admission selectivity lead to differences in student populations which may be merged, as well. Proposals should draw on the positive elements of each institution's culture and include a comprehensive plan for incorporating the strengths of both.

- Buy-in: Because key players and stakeholders can serve as valuable communication channels during a merger, consolidation, or unification, buy-in from these individuals is critical. Open and informed communication can mitigate misconceptions such as a stronger institution imposing its institutional culture on the weaker institution.

5. *What are the issues associated with planning and implementation phase?* In higher education, where much of the research focuses on assessing the value of mergers and/or consolidations, challenges often arise from shortsightedness regarding the planning and implementation phase. The success of any merger, consolidation, or unification is in the details of its planning and implementation phase. While each merger, consolidation, or unification will face its unique issues and challenges, below are some issues that should be considered in the planning and implementation phases.

- Identify leadership team(s): Leadership is an integral component to mergers, consolidations, or unifications. Strong and creative leaders are necessary to drive the planning and implementation phases of the merger, consolidation, or unification. Therefore, the leadership teams should consist of individuals with diverse areas of expertise and interest. It is important to note that these leaders may or may not be from the involved institutions or from the new/combined/unified institution(s).
- Develop a plan for a smooth transition: Proposals should address the arrangement for ensuring a smooth transition from one set of governance and management structure to another. Issues such as combining or creating new faculty and student senate councils and expanding or collapsing academic management structures should be discussed in the planning and implementation phases.
- Identify Communication Outlets. Identify the outlets that will be used to communicate information about the merger, consolidation, or unification to the higher education community and its stakeholders. Identified modalities should be wide-ranging (e.g., town hall discussions to social media outlets) to reach the most individuals as possible.

Agenda Item V.A.

Executive Summary

Under the GRAD Act, an institution's failure to meet the GRAD Act requirements results in the loss of GRAD Act benefits, including losing the authority to increase tuition and 15% performance funding. The Board of Regents (BoR) GRAD Act Intervention Policy allows the 15% Performance Funding to be retained by the respective management board and held in a GRAD Act Remediation and Performance Improvement Fund Escrow Account to allow the institution to improve its performance through a remediation plan.

If the failing institution desires to earn access to some portion of the performance funding from the GRAD Act Remediation and Performance Improvement Fund, it must submit a remediation plan to the Commissioner of Higher Education. If the plan is approved, the Commissioner of Higher Education will act on a GRAD Act Performance Improvement Contract, allowing the institution over the period of the one-year contract to earn up to a maximum of 75% of the funds being held by the management board on its behalf in the GRAD Act Remediation and Performance Improvement Fund Escrow Account. The remaining 25% may be allocated to system institutions to strengthen GRAD Act related activities.

Both Southern University-Baton Rouge (SU A&M) and Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC) failed Year 6 GRAD Act. In compliance with the Intervention Policy, the failed institutions had been placed in the process of developing remediation plans in order to gain back some of the lost performance funding.

In August, Baton Rouge experienced the worst flooding in the Parish's history. As a result of the flood, both campuses have lost millions of dollars in tuition revenue since thousands of flooded/displaced students have not enrolled. This has placed both campuses in a delicate financial condition, exacerbated by the loss of state revenue due to GRAD Act performance dollars being withheld.

The loss of performance funding and the Intervention Policy are found in Board of Regents' policy which can be waived for good cause shown at the discretion of the Board. Such waiver is also consistent with the GRAD Act, which allows for some relief in the event of natural disasters.

Both President Belton and President Sullivan will appear before the Planning, Research and Performance Committee to further explain the flood's impact on the campuses and to seek financial relief from the Board of Regents using its discretion in administering the Board of Regents' GRAD Act Intervention Policy.