
DIGEST

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Tucker

HB No. 537

Abstract: Provides for merger of SUNO and UNO.

Proposed law provides for the creation of a comprehensive, integrated postsecondary education delivery system for the New Orleans region.

States legislative intent that such postsecondary education delivery system will:

- (1) Provide a world class educational environment that will meet the academic needs and interests of every student, while providing each student with the support, assistance, and guidance necessary to attain his or her educational goals and aspirations.
- (2) Ensure that academically unprepared students receive the educational resources they need to succeed academically.
- (3) Raise the educational attainment of the population, improve the quality of life, and contribute to the economic well being of the New Orleans region.
- (4) Make optimal use of facilities, faculties, and other academic and fiscal resources associated with the public postsecondary institutions in the region.

States legislative finding that these goals shall be best accomplished through:

- (1) The transfer of Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) and the University of New Orleans (UNO) from their current respective management boards to the University of Louisiana System.
- (2) The consolidation of SUNO and UNO into a newly formed university, the University of Louisiana at New Orleans (ULNO), which shall contain at least two colleges with differentiated admissions criteria, academic focus, and course and program offerings.
- (3) The establishment of a branch campus of Delgado Community College (Delgado), located on the ULNO campus to provide developmental education courses, general education courses, and college transfer degree programs.
- (4) The creation of a shared admissions and student academic and financial aid counseling center, housed on the Delgado branch campus on the ULNO campus, that will serve both

institutions and facilitate student access and transfer from the two-year to the four-year institution.

Provides relative to the transfer of SUNO and UNO to the UL System as follows:

- (1) Requires the chancellors of SUNO and UNO to submit a letter to the president of the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACS), not later than Aug. 1, 2011, stating their intent for a change in governance from their current management board to the Board of Supervisors of the UL System.
- (2) Requires the chancellor, faculty, and administration of both institutions to take every action necessary to efficiently and expeditiously comply with all SACS timelines, requirements, and procedures to ensure that the requested change of governance may be effected immediately upon receipt of commission approval.
- (3) Transfers SUNO and UNO to the UL System, pursuant to the authority granted to the legislature by the La. constitution to transfer an institution from one board to another by law enacted by two-thirds of the elected members of each house. Also transfers the assets, funds, obligations, liabilities, programs, and functions related to each school. Provides that such transfer will become effective immediately upon receipt of SACS approval for the change in governance.

Provides for the consolidation of SUNO and UNO as follows:

- (1) Requires the chancellors of SUNO and UNO to jointly submit a letter to the SACS president, not later than July 1, 2012, stating their intent to consolidate and become the University of Louisiana at New Orleans, under the management and supervision of the UL System board.
- (2) Requires the chancellor, faculty, and administration of each institution and the UL System board to take every action necessary to efficiently and expeditiously comply with all SACS requirements and procedures to ensure that the requested consolidation may be effected immediately upon receipt of approval from the commission and final approval from the UL System board.
- (3) Provides that SUNO and UNO will cease to exist as separately accredited institutions and will be consolidated, along with their assets, funds, obligations, liabilities, programs, and functions, into the newly created and properly accredited University of Louisiana at New Orleans immediately upon receipt of SACS approval and final approval from the UL System board.

Creates the University of Louisiana at New Orleans (ULNO) as follows:

- (1) Creates the University of Louisiana at New Orleans under the management and supervision of the UL System board, pursuant to the authority granted to the legislature

by the La. constitution to create a new public institution of postsecondary education by law enacted by 2/3 of the elected members of each house.

- (2) Provides that ULNO will consist of at least two colleges with differentiated admission criteria and programs of study designed to serve the needs of all students. Provides that there will be a research-centered college that will offer degree programs that are critical to the needs of the region, including graduate programs in the fields of science, engineering, and technology, and a college that will primarily offer undergraduate degree programs and courses of study.
- (3) Requires that the admissions criteria established for each college within the university shall not be less than the minimum admission criteria established in Board of Regents' policy for institutions of like role, scope, and mission.
- (4) Requires ULNO to enter into an agreement with Delgado for the provision of developmental education courses, general education courses, and associate transfer degrees through a branch campus located on the ULNO campus.
- (5) Requires ULNO and Delgado to create a shared admissions and student counseling and referral center that will serve both institutions and facilitate student access and the ability to transfer courses and enrollment from the two-year to the four-year institution.

Provides for the responsibilities for the UL System and requires the UL System board to:

- (1) Immediately initiate a search for an academic head, create an administrative structure, and employ key administrative staff for ULNO.
- (2) Assist the administrative staff of ULNO to develop and implement a comprehensive academic and operational plan to facilitate the consolidation of SUNO and UNO.
- (3) Assist SUNO and UNO to prepare and submit their joint prospectus for consolidation to SACS.

Provides for the responsibilities of the LSU and SU System boards. Requires the boards to:

- (1) Continue to exercise their authority to supervise and manage their respective institutions until such time as SACS grants approval for the requested change in governance and transfer of SUNO and UNO to the UL System.
- (2) Work cooperatively and collaboratively with the UL System board to ensure that the transfer may be effected immediately upon receipt of SACS approval.
- (3) Enter into agreements to transfer as many SUNO and UNO administrative and supervisory functions as possible to the UL System and ULNO, prior to receipt of SACS approval, without adversely impacting the current accreditation status of SUNO and

UNO.

- (4) Immediately transfer all assets, funds, facilities, property, obligations, liabilities, programs, and functions relative to SUNO and UNO to the UL System, upon receipt of SACS approval for the transfer.

Provides that the LSU and SU system boards shall not:

- (1) Interfere with or impede the processes to transfer SUNO and UNO to the UL System and for the ultimate consolidation of the two institutions into ULNO.
- (2) Sell, transfer, or otherwise remove any asset or thing of value, moveable or immovable, tangible or intangible, attributable to or owned by SUNO or UNO on the effective date of proposed law.
- (3) Incur, transfer, or assign any debt or other responsibility or obligation to SUNO or UNO that is not properly attributable to either institution on the effective date of proposed law.
- (4) Disproportionately reduce or reallocate the level of funding that would otherwise be allocated to SUNO or UNO.

Provides for the responsibilities of the La. Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) and requires the LCTCS board to:

- (1) Work cooperatively and collaboratively with the Board of Regents (BOR) and the UL System board to establish a branch campus of Delgado on the ULNO campus to provide developmental education courses, general education courses, and college transfer degree programs.
- (2) Secure all necessary approval from the BOR and SACS to establish and attain the proper accreditation status for such branch campus.
- (3) Enter into an agreement with ULNO to establish and operate a shared admissions and student academic and financial aid counseling and referral center that will serve students enrolled in both institutions.

Provides for the responsibilities of the Board of Regents and requires the board to:

- (1) Provide oversight, guidance, and support to all postsecondary management boards, systems, and institutions throughout the processes to transfer SUNO and UNO to the UL System and the ultimate consolidation of these two institutions into the University of Louisiana at New Orleans.
- (2) Provide oversight, guidance, and support in the establishment of a branch campus of Delgado on the ULNO campus.

Provides with respect to students enrolled in SUNO and UNO at the time of transfer to the UL System and at the time of consolidation of the two institutions into the University of Louisiana at New Orleans as follows:

- (1) Specifies that every student enrolled in, and in good standing with, SUNO or UNO at the time of the institutions' transfer to the UL System and at the time these institutions are consolidated into the University of Louisiana at New Orleans, be allowed to continue their enrollment and complete their prescribed course of study, provided they remain in good standing with the institution in which they are enrolled.
- (2) Specifies that students who complete their degree requirements and graduate prior to the consolidation of SUNO and UNO shall receive a diploma awarded by and in the name of the institution from which they graduate.
- (3) Specifies that students who complete their degree requirements and graduate subsequent to the consolidation of the two institutions shall receive a diploma awarded by and in the name of the University of Louisiana at New Orleans.

Provides for the creation of the New Orleans Postsecondary Education Advisory Committee as follows:

- (1) Requires the UL System board to appoint an advisory committee to provide advice and input relative to the creation of a comprehensive postsecondary education delivery system for the New Orleans region pursuant to proposed law.
- (2) Specifies that the committee shall meet only as directed by the UL System board and will have no power or authority other than to serve in an advisory capacity as established by the board.
- (3) Specifies that the committee be composed of representatives of SUNO, UNO, the LSU System, the SU System, the mayor of New Orleans or his designee, the parish presidents of the parishes of Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, and St. Tammany or their designees, the governor, or his designee, and representatives of the regional business community and other community stakeholders, as determined by the UL System board.
- (4) Members shall serve without compensation.
- (5) Terminates the committee on the date the consolidation of SUNO and UNO into the University of Louisiana at New Orleans is effected.

Requires the Board of Regents to submit written reports to the Senate and House committees on education regarding the implementation of proposed law on the following dates:

- (1) December 1, 2011.
- (2) July 1, 2012.
- (3) December 1, 2012.
- (4) July 1, 2013.
- (5) At such other times as specified by the committees.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 17:3217; Adds R.S. 17:3241-3251)