

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 132

BY SENATOR APPEL

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Board of Regents, in consultation with the public postsecondary education management boards, to re-examine the state's public postsecondary education delivery system and make recommendations to the legislature regarding the appropriate role, scope, and mission for each public postsecondary institution as necessary to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated, statewide public postsecondary delivery system that meets the needs of students and addresses the state's economic development and workforce needs on a local, regional, and statewide level.

WHEREAS, the role public postsecondary education plays in the economic well being of our citizens and our state is both well established and undeniable; and

WHEREAS, it is equally clear that the number of current and projected job openings in the state and related educational requirements does not align with the number of citizens matriculating from our public postsecondary institutions with degrees and credentials that sufficiently prepare them to enter the workforce and fill the demand for skilled employees; and

WHEREAS, the changing needs of the state's workforce and the state's fiscal condition make it imperative that our public postsecondary educational system make optimal use of resources, increase institutional efficiency and productivity, and maximize student access to an institution of public postsecondary education that best meets their educational and career needs and serves the state's economic development and workforce goals; and

WHEREAS, the quality and worth of an institution is not determined by its size or the breadth of its program and degree offerings, but by how well it serves the needs of its students, community, region, and the state; and

WHEREAS, each public postsecondary institution is an integral part of the state's public postsecondary delivery system, but it is time to look beyond traditional parochial considerations and recognize that achieving the state's goals may require that the role, scope,

mission, and degree and program offerings of individual public postsecondary institutions be redefined in a manner that differs from what is established in the current master plan, but yet preserves institutional identity; and

WHEREAS, Article VIII, Section 5(D)(2) of the Constitution of Louisiana provides, relative to public institutions of postsecondary education, that it is a power, duty, and responsibility of the Board of Regents to revise or eliminate an existing degree program, department of instruction, division, or similar division and to approve a proposed degree program, department of instruction, division, or similar subdivision; and

WHEREAS, Article VIII, Section 5(D)(3)(a) of the constitution further provides that it also is a power, duty, and responsibility of the board to study the need for and feasibility of creating a new institution of public postsecondary education, including establishing a branch of such an institution, or converting a nondegree granting institution to an institution which grants degrees, or converting a college or university limited to offering degrees of a lower rank than baccalaureate to a college or university that offers baccalaureate degrees, or merging one or more institutions of public postsecondary education, establishing a new management board, or transferring a college or university from one board to another; and

WHEREAS, Article VIII, Section 5(D)(3)(b) of the constitution specifies that if the creation of a new institution, the merger of institutions, the addition of a management board, or the transfer of an existing institution from one board to another is proposed, the Board of Regents shall report its written findings and recommendations to the legislature within one year and further specifies that only after the report has been filed, or after one year from the receipt of a request for a report from the legislature if no report is filed, may the legislature take affirmative action on such a proposal, and then only by law enacted by two-thirds of the elected members of each house; and

WHEREAS, Article VIII, Section 5(D)(4) of the constitution tasks the Board of Regents to formulate and make timely revision of a master plan for public postsecondary education; and

WHEREAS, the current Master Plan for Public Postsecondary Education adopted by the board in 2011, and revised in 2012, provides for the role, scope, and mission of each public postsecondary education institution in the state; and

WHEREAS, it is incumbent upon the Board of Regents to exercise its constitutional responsibility and re-examine the state's public postsecondary education delivery system from a statewide perspective and determine the best manner in which to provide a coordinated statewide public postsecondary delivery system that provides for the proper role, scope, and mission of each public postsecondary institution and its placement within the public postsecondary education governance structure, focuses resources, and establishes an optimal balance of technical colleges, two-year and four-year institutions, and courses of study.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Board of Regents, in consultation with the public postsecondary education management boards, to re-examine the state's public postsecondary education delivery system and make recommendations to the legislature regarding the appropriate role, scope, and mission for each public postsecondary institution as necessary to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated, statewide public postsecondary delivery system that meets the needs of students and addresses the state's economic development and workforce needs on a local, regional, and statewide level.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Regents submit a written report of its findings and conclusions, including recommendations for the role, scope, and mission for each existing public postsecondary institution, to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Senate Committee on Education, and the House Committee on Education not later than sixty days prior to the beginning of the 2016 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the chairman of the Board of Regents, the commissioner of higher education, the president of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, the Louisiana State University System, the Southern University System, and the University of Louisiana System.

---

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE