



Continuing Education

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Higher Education Quote of the Week:

"There is no reason that Louisiana taxpayers should foot the bill for students who scored below average on their ACT scores." - *Eli Haddow, reporter for Daily Reveille, in an opinion piece on TOPS.*



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Colleges and
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Dear Johnette,

At a recent meeting of the Louisiana Tuition Task Force, it was quite evident that most attendees believe the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) has largely been a success as it has persuaded many of Louisiana's most academically talented students to remain in the state for college. But, a majority also agreed the program needs some serious revisions to keep it viable for future students.

When the program began in 1999, it cost state taxpayers \$41 million. This last year, it cost \$166 million, and every dollar it requires comes from funds that would have gone to support the state's higher education institutions, which have seen a loss of close to \$1 billion in state funding since 2008.

Proposed changes to TOPS include raising the required ACT and GPA to receive the award as well as decoupling TOPS from tuition. Currently, the cost of TOPS increases with each increase in tuition. To date, Governor Jindal has shown no willingness to make any changes to the program although some legislators have expressed concern that something must be done soon.

Shreveport-Bossier Higher Education News

- A Louisiana Tech dormitory named after Shreveporter John D. Caruthers will soon be no more. The campus is demolishing the dorm built in 1966. *Shreveport Times, 11.19.13*

Louisiana Higher Education News

- Grambling State University must play their next three football games against JSU at Jackson State as a consequence of the Grambling's boycott of a game against Jackson earlier this season. Grambling has vowed to appeal saying the penalty for the forfeit is too

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harsh. ***The Monroe News-Star,***
11.13.13

- A tuition task force that met last week brought forth several recommendations for dealing with college funding, including raising the bar for receiving the TOPS award. Shreveport's Dr. Phillip Rozeman opened the session with a presentation during which he asked, "If it's available to 50% of high school students, is it really merit-based?" ***Shreveport Times,***
11.14.13
- Louisiana House Speaker Chuck Kleckley (R-Lake Charles) wrote in a piece for LaPolitics.com that he wants to push this next session to give university boards more control over tuition. ***Houma Courier,***
11.12.13
- Delegates at the Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual Meeting generally showed strong support for Louisiana College. According to Alexandria's Town Talk, President Joe "Aguillard preached on the mission of the Pineville College, receiving several audible 'Amens' from crowd." ***Alexandria Town Talk,***
11.13.13
- Higher Education Commissioner Jim Purcell was one of four finalists for the top higher education job in Florida, but he lost to an internal candidate currently serving as Vice Chairman of the Florida Board of Regents. ***The Advocate,***
11.14.13



National Higher Education News

- A new degree program at Southern New Hampshire University called College for America is the first competency-based degree program approved by U.S. Department of Education. Students earn an associate's degree when they demonstrate mastery of 120 specific competencies. ***Workforce Institute,***
11.12.13

For more information on higher education in Northwest Louisiana, please visit our website at www.sbba4he.org

Sincerely,

Johnette Magner, Ph.D., Executive Director
Shreveport-Bossier Business Alliance for Higher Education

You are welcome to forward this newsletter to others in your network who are interested in higher education.

For more information on becoming a member of the SBBA, or providing direct support for our work, please contact Dr. Johnette Magner at jmagner@sbba4he.org

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