**MEETING OF THE**

**LOUISIANA STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**DATE:** July 14, 2015

**TIME** Immediately following the Louisiana Tuition Trust Authority (LATTA) Meeting

**PLACE:** Louisiana Retirement Systems Building

Mr. F. Travis Lavigne, Jr., Commission Chair, called a meeting of the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission to order at 11:18 a.m.

The following members of the Commission were present:

Mr. F. Travis Lavigne, Jr.

Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer

Mr. James Garvey

Mr. Walter Guidry, Jr.

Mr. Benson Kinney

Ms. Wendy Simoneaux

Dr. Larry Tremblay

The following members were absent:

Mr. Scott Ballard

Mr. Ken Bradford

Mr. Raymond Brandt

Ms. Melanie Burke

Mr. Jeffery Ehlinger, Jr.

Mr. Myron Lawson

Mr. Jimmy Long, Sr.

Mr. Michael Murphy

Mr. Richard Maciasz

Mr. Winfred Sibille

Ms. Ann A. Smith

Mr. Stephen Toups

Seven members were present, which did not represent a quorum, therefore, in accordance with the Meeting Notice, the Chairman called the Executive Committee of the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission to order.

The following members of the Commission’s Executive Committee were present:

Mr. F. Travis Lavigne, Jr.

Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer

Dr. Larry Tremblay

Three members were present, which did not represent a quorum.

The following members were absent:

Mr. Jeffery Ehlinger, Jr.

Mr. Jimmy Long, Sr.

Mr. Winfred Sibille

Mr. Lavigne temporarily appointed Mr. Garvey, Mr. Guidry, Mr. Kinney, and Ms. Simoneaux.

The following staff members were present:

Dr. Sujuan Boutté

Ms. Rhonda Bridevaux

Ms. Alice Brown

Ms. Gayle Daigle

Mr. Kelvin Deloch

Ms. Shanna Estay

Ms. Carol Fulco

Mr. Jack Hart

Ms. Robyn Lively

Mr. Richard Omdal

Ms. Stacy Oubre

Ms. Deborah Paul

Mr. Gus Wales

The following guest was present:

Ms. Nancy Beben

The minutes of the May 4, 2015, meeting of the Executive Committee of the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission were presented for review and approval. Mr. Guidry made a motion to approve. Mr. Kinney seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Lavigne offered a public comment period. There were no comments.

Under Program Updates, Mr. Wales, Director of Public Information and Communication, presented the Field Services report for Statewide and Concentrated services for May and June 2015. Mr. Wales reported that in the month of June, PIC representatives conducted one TOPS Seminar with 150 students and parents, five general financial aid workshops with 932 attendees, and three target school workshops with 43 student attendees. Mr. Wales reported that for the 2014-2015 academic year, PIC representatives conducted 431 workshops and seminars with 70,788 attendees. Mr. Wales reported on the new Trailblazer Leadership Program, stating that LOSFA is hosting five, one-day events on different college campuses across the state. The first two leadership events were held on May 31 and June 1. The next two Trailblazer Leadership events will be at Southern University in Baton Rouge and Northwestern State University in Natchitoches at the end of July. Mr. Wales reported on the SignalVine text messaging campaign for the months of May and June 2015. Mr. Wales reported on the College Goal Sunday State report from Indiana University. Mr. Wales stated that the report shows that the College Goal Sunday event in Louisiana was successful in meeting the mission of assisting families in completing and submitting the FAFSA. Mr. Wales stated that 72% of Louisiana’s participants qualified as members of the target audience of low income, underrepresented minorities and first generation college students when the national average was 68%.

Dr. Boutté, Executive Director, reported on the Louisiana GEAR UP 2008-2014 cohort. During GEAR UP’s final year, 3,238 seniors were served, with 2,931 (or 91%) of the students graduating. Dr. Boutté reported that Louisiana was not one of the states selected for a continuation grant; however, the U.S. Department of Education has indicated that there is a possibility that they will fund down the list of states who did not receive a continuation grant. Dr. Boutté reported on the First in the World Grant Application, for which LOSFA is collaborating with the University of Louisiana System (ULS) Presidents. UL System Presidents and LOSFA will be employing text messages and integrated workshops to increase the opportunities to retain TOPS awards. Dr. Boutté announced that two LA GEAR UP state officers, Mr. Darius Spurlock and Mr. Oscar McLain, have been selected to attend the First Lady’s Beating the Odds Summit in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Hart, Assistant Executive Director of Fiscal and Administrative Affairs, presented the financial statements update. Mr. Hart presented the financials for the period ending May 31, 2015. Mr. Hart reported the financial statement for May 2015 showed the Operating Fund closed the month of May with net assets of $8.5M and the Federal Fund with net assets of $7.2M. The Federal Fund had a decrease for the month of $124K and an increase of $47K for the 8 months. The reserve ratio decreased to 0.636% on our portfolio of $1.140B. The Operating Fund had a decrease for the month of $421K and $2.3M for the 8 months. Rehabilitation loans were $3M for the month, which is $4M less than in 2014 and 11% below the current year projection. Mr. Hart reported on the operating budget for the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year. Mr. Hart reported on an analysis of the TOPS Award projections showing the projected difference between appropriated and projected awards based on actual GRAD Act increases.

Ms. Paul, Scholarship and Grant Program Director, presented a Go Grant update as of July 2, 2015. Ms. Paul reported that two schools have pending disbursements and that after these payments are made, there will be a remaining balance of $18 for the 2014-2015 academic year. Ms. Paul reported that allocations for the 2015-2016 academic year have been set and all the postsecondary schools were notified of the allocations. Dr. Boutté commented that Go Grant was distributed at the full amount by the Board of Regents at the full amount appropriated.

Ms. Paul presented a John R. Justice update as of July 2, 2015. Ms. Paul reported that all of the recipients have been reviewed and verified for the upcoming year. Ms. Paul reported that LOSFA is awaiting the release of the federal funds. Ms. Paul reported that the program is going through an OIG audit and that information LOSFA had ready to send off for the audit has changed. OIG has requested the number of prosecutors and public defenders statewide prior to the program beginning in 2009 versus the number of prosecutors and public defenders statewide currently. Ms. Paul reported that LOSFA is working with our contacts to procure this information to send to the federal program managers so that federal funds can be released to grant the awards for this year.

Ms. Paul presented the TOPS Update. Ms. Paul reported that LOSFA is paying prior year bills since funding has become available. Ms. Paul reported that LOSFA is working with Southern University - Shreveport to complete their billing for the 2014-2015 academic year. Ms. Paul reported that tuition amounts for the 2015-2016 academic year have been posted to the LOSFA Website. Ms. Paul stated that LOSFA is no longer mailing out TOPS Award letters, and that instead, LOSFA is using the student’s e-mail from the FAFSA to notify the student to register for an account on the Award System. Once a student has an account, they can look at their grades, ACT scores, and their TOPS eligibility.

Ms. Lively, Senior Attorney, presented a Legislative Update. Ms. Lively reported on three major bills that effected LOSFA’s role, scope, and mission during the 2015 Legislative session. Ms. Lively reported that Act 101 changes the TOPS citizenship requirement so students who are not citizens but who are children of non-citizens serving in the Armed Forces or students honorably discharged from the Armed Forces meet the citizenship requirements of the TOPS statute. Ms. Lively reported that Act 403 aligns the TOPS Tech Core Curriculum with the Career Option Diploma and that Act 230 makes significant changes to the TOPS Tech Award by requiring that the Workforce Investment Council and Board of Regents agree on what courses will be eligible to participant in TOPS Tech. Ms. Lively reported that Act 228 is the amendment to the privacy act from 2014 and goes into effect August 1, 2015 and that the amendment requires changes in the Consent Form to state that the form is in effect until a parent revokes the consent.

Dr. Boutté presented the Executive Director’s update. Dr. Boutté commented on a report about why students choose their majors and colleges. Dr. Boutté also reported the numbers on the FAFSA completion project.

The first item under Old Business was that the Commission consider publication of final rule to amend Section 703 of the Scholarship and Grant Program Rules to add Media Arts I – IV as equivalents of Art in the TOPS Core Curriculum for students graduating from high school in 2018 and later. Dr. Tremblay made a motion for approval. Ms. Simoneaux seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The second item under Old Business was that the Commission adopt the Monetary Amount That Will Constitute the Weighted Average Award Amount for TOPS Recipients Who Attend Institutions that are Members of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU) during the 2015-16 Academic Year. Dr. Barnes-Teamer made a motion for approval. Mr. Guidry seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The third item under New Business was that the Commission consider and act upon Requests for Exception to the TOPS Provisions that Require Students to Enroll Full-Time, to Remain Continuously Enrolled, and to Earn at Least 24 Credit Hours During the Academic Year. Mr. Kinney made a motion of approval of requests from Aaron (553262), Rebecca (564369), Stephen (424044), Sydney (534906), Madison (605228), Katelin (536647), Anneke (469198), Cory (611423), Michael (421368), Sean (611996), Sunny (641089), Laurie (479213), and Caroline (549201). Mr. Garvey seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The fourth item under New Business was that the Commission Review the Internal Audit Plan for FY 2015-2016. Dr. Tremblay made a motion for approval. Ms. Simoneaux seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The fifth item under New Business was that the Commission consider a Budget Adjustment for Fiscal Year 2015-2016, increasing the appropriation for the Scholarships/Grant Program in the amount of $3.3M. Mr. Garvey made a motion for approval. Mr. Kinney seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The sixth item under New Business was that the Commission consider amending Section 703 of the Scholarship and Grant Program Rules to add Photography I, Photography II, and Digital Photography as equivalents of Art in the TOPS Core Curriculum for students graduating from high school in 2018 and later. Dr. Barnes-Teamer made a motion for approval. Mr. Garvey seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The seventh item under New Business was that the Commission consider amending Sections 301, 703, 801, 803, 805, 1005, and 1903 of the Scholarship and Grant Program Rules to implement Acts 101, 403, and 230 of the 2015 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. Ms. Simoneaux made a motion for approval. Dr. Tremblay seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The eighth item under New Business was that the Commission consider the new agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2016-2017 through 2020-2021. Dr. Tremblay made a motion for approval. Mr. Kinney seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

There being no further business, Mr. Kinney made a motion to adjourn at 12:08 p.m. and Dr. Barnes-Teamer seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

APPROVED:

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Chairman