**MEETING OF THE**

**LOUISIANA STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**DATE:** May 4, 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 11:22 a.m.

The following members of the Commission were present:

Mr. F. Travis Lavigne, Jr.

Mr. Ken Bradford

Mr. Jeffery Ehlinger, Jr

Mr. James Garvey

Mr. Walter Guidry, Jr.

Mr. Winfred Sibille

Ms. Ann A. Smith

Dr. Larry Tremblay

The following members were absent:

Mr. Scott Ballard

Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer

Mr. Raymond Brandt

Mr. Nichquin Dumas

Mr. Willie Hendricks

Mr. Jimmy Long, Sr.

Mr. Richard Maciasz

Mr. Michael Murphy

Ms. Wendy Simoneaux

Mr. Stephen Toups

Eight 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.

Mr. Jeffery Ehlinger, Jr

Mr. Winfred Sibille

Dr. Larry Tremblay

Four members were present, which did represent a quorum.

The following members were absent:

Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer

Mr. Jimmy Long, Sr.

Mr. Lavigne temporarily appointed Mr. Bradford, Mr. Garvey, Mr. Guidry and Ms. Smith.

The following staff members were present:

Dr. Sujuan Boutté

Ms. Rhonda Bridevaux

Ms. Alice Brown

Dr. Tireka Cobb

Mr. George Eldredge

Ms. Shanna Estay

Ms. Carol Fulco

Mr. Jack Hart

Ms. Robyn Lively

Mr. Richard Omdal

Mr. Jerry Oubre

Ms. Stacy Oubre

Ms. Deborah Paul

Mr. Gus Wales

The minutes of the March 24, 2015 meeting of the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission were presented for review and approval. Mr. Guidry made a motion to approve. Ms. Smith seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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

Under Program Updates, Dr. Cobb, LA GEAR UP Assistant Director, presented the Extensive Services update. Dr. Cobb reported that Glen Oaks High School participated in Baton Rouge Community College’s (BRCC) Spring College Day, and two students from Glen Oaks received ambassador scholarships to BRCC. Dr. Cobb also reported on College Acceptance Day Programs, stating that Bastrop High School had 63 students who were accepted to college. GEAR UP representatives attended the event at Bastrop High School. Dr. Cobb reported that several LA GEAR UP students were invited to speak before the House Appropriations Committee concerning the impact the program made on them, on their school and on the state. Dr. Cobb also reported that LA GEAR UP school leaders and school coordinators from East St. John High School were able to meet with Congressman and Senators in Washington, D.C. while there visiting several college campuses. Dr. Cobb reported that May 11 will be Louisiana GEAR UP day at the capitol. Dr. Cobb mentioned that in the packets are program snapshots of a few of the GEAR UP schools that show the LA GEAR UP program impact at those sites. Dr. Cobb reported on the Signal Vine text messaging platform for high school seniors.

Mr. Wales, Director of Public Information and Communication, presented the Field Services report for Statewide and Concentrated services for March 2015. Mr. Wales reported that in the month of March, PIC representatives conducted 24 TOPS Seminars across the state with 395 students/parents in attendance. PIC representatives also conducted 4 General Financial Aid Workshops with 245 attendees, 6 Financial Literacy Programs with 1,153 attendees (includes FLY Tour of 853 attendees), and 9 FAFSA Programs with 414 attendees. PIC and LA GEAR UP representatives also participated in 32 FAFSA Completion Events at 26 locations around the state attended by 1,383 parents and students. Mr. Wales reported on the Louisiana College Goal Sunday Attendance Summary by location. Mr. Wales reported on the Signal Vine Text Messaging Campaign for college freshman. Mr. Wales reported that to date, 16,301 participants are in the system and that a total of 176,959 messages have been sent and 3,011 messages have been received.

Mr. Hart, Assistant Executive Director of Fiscal and Administrative Affairs, presented the financial statements update. Mr. Hart presented the financials for the period ending March 31, 2015. Mr. Hart reported that the Operating Fund closed the month of March with net assets of $9.1M and the Federal Fund closed with net assets of $7.2M. The Federal Fund had an increase for the month of $122K and an increase of $38K for the 6 months. The reserve ratio was 0.625% on a portfolio of $1.158B. The Operating Fund had a decrease for the month of $127K and $1.7M for the 6 months. Also, rehabilitations were $5.1M for the month; which was 15% above 2014 and in line with the current projections.

Ms. Paul, Scholarship and Grant Program Director, presented a Go Grant update as of May 4, 2015. Ms. Paul reported that Southern University Baton Rouge and University of Louisiana at Monroe are planning to bill this week and that the billing will exhaust their remaining funds. Ms. Paul reported that there will probably not be any reallocations this year for Go Grant because schools did a great job of awarding their full allocations to their eligible students.

Ms. Paul presented a John R. Justice update. Ms. Paul reported that as of April 30, 2015, 15 public defenders and 32 prosecutors applied. Ms. Paul reported that 2 prosecutors from the third district withdrew after their applications were submitted. She stated that the application deadline was April 30. Ms. Paul reported that the next step is ranking the applicants and that awards are usually made in July.

Ms. Paul presented the TOPS Update. Ms. Paul reported that all four-year schools except Southern University have received funding for the spring semester. Ms. Paul reported that LOSFA is working with Southern University on their billing for TOPS students.

Dr. Boutté presented a Legislative Update. Dr. Boutté gave a summary of the bills currently in the Louisiana Legislature. Dr. Boutté stated that LOSFA is working with representatives from ARC on the ABLE legislation. Dr. Boutté stated that Mr. Eldredge has also worked with Rep. Broadwater on technical corrections to TOPS legislation to make it clearer to parents and students. Dr. Boutté stated that LOSFA anticipates Rep. Cox’s bill that aligns the TOPS Tech core with the JumpStart core will move through the legislature. Dr. Boutté also stated that Rep. Price’s bill makes changes to TOPS Tech to align eligible programs with workforce needs.

Dr. Boutté presented the Executive Director’s update. Dr. Boutté reported on the presentations given to the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Finance Committee. Dr. Boutté provided updates on state trends for keeping college bound students in-state; Cost Gap worksheets documenting remaining need at sample institutions after Federal Aid and GO Grant have been awarded; as well as the latest statistics regarding district participation in the FAFSA Completion Project.

The first item under New Business was that the Commission consider a Budget Adjustment for Fiscal Year 2014-2015, transferring five (5) vacant positions from the Admin./Support Services program of its Table of Organization to the Board of Regents. Dr. Tremblay made a motion for approval. Mr. Bradford seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The second item under New Business was that the Commission consider the adoption of meeting dates for the period July through December 2015. Ms. Smith made a motion for approval. Mr. Sibille 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. Ehlinger made a motion of approval of requests from Alexandria (419385), Seth (167615), Alexandre (563492), Kade (615204), Kristen (651713), Joseph (563873), Shanika (649662), Danielle (463544), Avadhi (397895), Myeisha (586793), Tanner (561651) and Brett (602072). Mr. Garvey seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The fourth item under New 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. Mr. Ehlinger made a motion for approval. Mr. Guidry seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

There being no further business, Mr. Bradford made a motion to adjourn at 12:06 p.m., and Ms. Smith seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

APPROVED:

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Chairman