**MEETING OF THE**

**LOUISIANA STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**DATE:** July 17, 2014

**TIME** 10:30 a.m.

**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 10:35 a.m.

The following members of the Commission were present:

Mr. F. Travis Lavigne, Jr.

Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer

Mr. Ken Bradford

Mr. Nichquin Dumas

Mr. Jeffery Ehlinger, Jr

Mr. Walter Guidry, Jr.

Mr. Myron Lawson

Mr. Wilfred Sibille

Dr. Larry Tremblay

The following members were absent:

Mr. Scott Ballard

Mr. Raymond Brandt

Mr. Willie Hendricks

Mr. Jimmy Long, Sr

Mr. Richard Maciasz

Mr. Michael Murphy

Ms. Wendy Simoneaux

Mr. Stephen Toups

Nine 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

Mr. Jeffery Ehlinger, Jr

Mr. Winfred Sibille

Dr. Larry Tremblay

The following member was not present:

Mr. Jimmy Long, Sr

Five members were present which did represent a quorum. Mr. Lavigne temporarily appointed Mr. Bradford, Mr. Dumas, Mr. Guidry, and Mr. Lawson. The following staff members were present:

Dr. Sujuan Boutté

Mr. Neal Boyd

Ms. Rhonda Bridevaux

Ms. Alice Brown

Dr. Tireka Cobb

Mr. Kelvin Deloch

Mr. George Eldredge

Ms. Shanna Estay

Ms. Carol Fulco

Mr. Jack Hart

Ms. Tisha Lewis

Ms. Robyn Lively

Mr. Jason McCann

Mr. Richard Omdal

Ms. Nyetta Meaux

Ms. Deborah Paul

Mr. Gus Wales

Under Introductions and Announcements, Mr. Jack Hart introduced Ms. Tisha Lewis as the new Accountant Administrator 3 for the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance. Mr. Lavigne introduced Mr. Ken Bradford, the new member representing the Proxy for State Superintendent of Education. Dr. Sujuan Boutté introduced Dr. Keena Arbuthnot from Wiz-dom Educational Consultants as a guest speaker.

The minutes of the June 3, 2014 meeting of the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission were presented for review and approval. Dr. Tremblay made a motion to approve. Mr. Guidry seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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

Under Program Updates, the Executive Director update was first. Dr. Sujuan Boutté deferred to Dr. Arbuthnot, who gave a presentation on the key findings to the TOPS Data Analysis and Reporting Project. Dr. Arbuthnot took questions from members.

Mr. Wales, Public Information and Communications Division Director, presented the Outreach Report for the period ending June 2014. Mr. Wales reported one outreach event around the state with an attendance of 38. Mr. Wales reported that currently we are at 352 outreach events for the year which reached 69,163 parents and students statewide. Mr. Wales reported on events in 57 parishes in the state. In addition to the outreach activities, Mr. Wales indicated that staff responded to 42,266 telephone calls and to 2,668 e-mails. Mr. Wales also talked about Trailblazer Camps.

Mr. Hart presented the Federal and Agency Operating Fund financial statements for the period ending June 30, 2014 and May 30, 2014. Mr. Hart reported the financial statement from June shows Operating Fund net assets of9.7 million dollars and Federal Fund net assets of7.6 million dollars. Mr. Hart also reported on the State Fiscal Budget for 2014-2015.

Ms. Paul, Scholarship and Grant (S/G) Program Director, presented a GO Grant update as of July 7, 2014. Ms. Paul stated that we have one pending request for $302 dollars allocated to Southern University. A bulletin was sent out to the schools for GO Grant allocations for the 2014-2015 academic year.

Ms. Paul presented a John R. Justice update as of July 7, 2014. She stated that there are 18 awards available this upcoming year. Ms. Paul indicated that All service agreements for the public defenders have been received and one service agreement for a prosecutor is pending receipt. She reported that once all agreements are received, the agency would be able to request money from the federal government to make the awards.

Ms. Paul presented a TOPS update as of May 16, 2014. She indicated that TOPS processing for 2014 graduates commenced yesterday. Ms. Paul stated that 17,874 students processed and 6,199 were determined ineligible. She stated that staff continues to review the data from Department of Education and work out any issues identified. She explained the notification process and the fact that the master roster for TOPS is updated on Friday for institutions.

Ms. Paul presented a TOPS Tech Early Start update as of July 2, 2014. Ms. Paul reported that we ended the 2013-2014 academic year with 5,612 students being processed with 1.2 million dollars which is a significant increase from previous years.

Dr. Cobb, Assistant Director of GEAR UP, presented a LA GEAR UP update. Dr. Cobb reported that we were granted a No-Cost-Extension (NCE) for the second GEAR UP grant. She stated we are currently in the sixth year of the grant and NCE from the United States DOE will allow us to use the $1.5 million we have left to serve 3,000 seniors. Dr. Cobb reported that Summer Bridge Programs are running concurrently at Grambling and Louisiana Tech Universities. She stated that Grambling students will be receiving six hours of college credit. Dr. Cobb reported that the proposal for the third Louisiana GEAR UP grant was completed and submitted in advance of the deadline. She indicated partners for the new grant include Department of Education, Board of Regents, the University of Louisiana System, Xavier University, Louisiana Workforce Education Initiative, and the Southwest Louisiana Healthcare Education Center. She also indicated support from Southern University and other institutions who have committed to working with the agency on the new grant. Dr. Cobb indicated that, if funded, the new grant would serve 55 schools over a seven year period for a total of $20.45 million dollars. She reported that notifications regarding funding should occur in September of this year. Mr. Bradford extended his gratitude and commended the staff for pulling all the entities together for this grant.

Ms. Meaux presented a CACG update. Ms. Meaux reported that we received permission to utilize remaining CACG money for the Louisiana College Application Month (LCAM) initiative. She specified that the permission allowed the agency to pay money toward orientation fees, housing fees and registration fees for students. Ms. Meaux discussed how she and Ms. Paul went to Grambling to work with 25 GEAR UP students to assist them with scheduling attendance for orientation and registration for housing. Ms. Meaux indicated that most students had not done so prior to the LOSFA visit. Ms. Meaux reported that Ms. Paul also worked with students to help them understand their financial aid award letters. She stated that the agency is partnering with several state organizations to help assist students with completing PINs to complete the FAFSA for the College Goal Sunday event in March.

Mr. Eldredge gave a Legislative Update on bills affecting LOSFA’s Role, Scope and Mission. He indicated that four bills are already in effect and three will be in effect on August 1st.

Under Committee Reports, the first item was to receive the Approved Minutes of the December 2013 Advisory Committee Meeting that were adopted at its meeting on June 13, 2014. Mr. Dumas made a motion for approval. Dr. Barnes-Teamer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The second item was to receive the Approved Minutes of the March 2014 Advisory Committee Meeting that were adopted at its meeting on June 13, 2014. Mr. Ehlinger made a motion for approval. Mr. Guidry seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Under New Business, the first item was a proposal that the commission consider a Budget Adjustment for Fiscal Year 2013-2014 transferring federal budget authority of $2.6M from Admin/Support Services to Loan Operations. Mr. Ehlinger made a motion for approval. Dr. Tremblay seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The second item under new business was a proposal that the Commission consider a Budget Adjustment for Fiscal Year 2013-2014, increasing the appropriation for TOPS in the amount of $7,094,327. Mr. Sibille made a motion for approval. Mr. Guidry seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The third item under new business was a proposal that the Commission consider rulemaking to implement Act 837 of the 2014 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature by providing policies and procedures regarding personally identifiable information and to implement Acts 566, 733, and 737 of the 2014 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. Mr. Dumas made a motion for approval. Dr. Barnes-Teamer seconded the motion. Dr. Sujuan Boutté addressed questions from commission members. Motion passed unanimously.

The fourth item under new business was a proposal that the Commission consider rulemaking to implement Act 737 of the 2014 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature to amend the TOPS Tech Early Start Award rules. Mr. Sibille made a motion for approval. Mr. Dumas seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The fifth item under new business was a proposal that the Commission consider the Review of the Internal Audit Plan for FY 2014-2015. Mr. Kelvin Deloch reported on the Internal Audit Plan. Mr. Lawson made a motion for approval. Mr. Guidry seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The sixth item under new business was a proposal that the Commission consider and act upon the Attached Requests for Exception to the TOPS Regulatory 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. Sibille made a motion for approval. Mr. Dumas seconded the motion. Dr. Tremblay commented. George Eldredge reported data on exceptions for the year. The motion passed unanimously

There being no further business, Dr. Barnes Teamer made a motion to adjourn at 12:01 p.m. and Mr. Ken Bradford seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

APPROVED:

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Chairman