

## Louisiana's Community & Technical Colleges

Louisiana has sixteen community and technical colleges with locations in fifty-five of the state's sixty-four parishes. These colleges are classified by the state into three categories: community colleges, technical colleges, and technical community colleges.

There is little in the way of mission or operational differences between community colleges and technical community colleges. Both types of colleges are comprehensive institutions that offer a full array of transfer programs, career and technical education programs, workforce training programs, developmental education programs, adult education programs, and community service programs. These institutions are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools – Commission on Colleges.

The three technical colleges offer only technical education programs, workforce training programs, and developmental studies programs. They are accredited by the Council on Occupational Education (COE)

Of the State's sixteen technical and community colleges, one community college is governed by the Louisiana State University Board of Supervisors. Another community college is governed by the Southern University Board of Supervisors. Fourteen community and technical colleges are governed by the Louisiana Community and Technical College Board of Supervisors. This system is called the Louisiana Community and Technical College System and is the primary focus of this report.

In addition to community and technical colleges, twelve of the state's fourteen universities offer one or more certificate or degree programs that are between one and two years in length.<sup>1</sup>

The State's two-year colleges, by governing board, are as follows:

Louisiana Community and Technical Colleges Board of Supervisors

- Baton Rouge Community College
- Bossier Parish Community College
- Capital Area Technical College
- Central Louisiana Technical Community College
- Delgado Community College
- Fletcher Technical Community College
- Louisiana Delta Community College
- Northshore Technical Community College

- Northwest Technical College
- Nunez Community College
- River Parishes Community College
- South Central Louisiana Technical College
- South Louisiana Community College
- SOWELA Technical Community College

#### **Southern University Board of Supervisors**

- Southern University – Shreveport

#### **Louisiana State University Board of Supervisors**

- Louisiana State University – Eunice

In fiscal year 2012, enrollment in Louisiana community and Technical College System (LCTCS) reached a total headcount of 100,807 students.<sup>2</sup> Full time equivalent enrollment for the same time period was 52,219.46.<sup>3</sup>

According to data from the Louisiana Board of Regents, in fiscal year 2011, Louisiana State University – Eunice, 12-month unduplicated headcount undergraduate enrollment was 4,330 and full-time equivalent enrollment for the same period was 1891. For Southern University at Shreveport, for the same time period, 12-month unduplicated headcount undergraduate enrollment was 3993 and 12-month full-time equivalent enrollment was 2,242.

#### ***The development of community colleges in Louisiana***

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Louisiana struggled to come up with an education, workforce, and economic development strategy that embraced community colleges. There was a history of starting and operating two-year colleges and then later expanding their mission to include baccalaureate degrees, master's degrees, and even doctoral programs. The following universities were started as two-year colleges and later became universities:

- Louisiana State University at Alexandria
- McNeese State University
- Nicholls State University
- Northwestern State University
- Southeastern Louisiana University

- University of Louisiana at Monroe

In addition to the two-year colleges that became universities, there were six community colleges that had a long history of serving local communities in the state. These include Bossier Parish Community College, Delgado Community College, Louisiana State University at Eunice, Louisiana State University at Alexandria, Nunez Community College, and Southern University at Shreveport. The state also operated forty-two postsecondary vocational education institutions under the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

In October of 1998, Louisiana passed a constitutional amendment that created the Louisiana Community and Technical College Board of Supervisors to manage a new system of two year post secondary institutions. Senate Bill 2, Act 151 of the 1998 first extraordinary session authorized the Board of Supervisors to manage Delgado Community College, Nunez Community College, South Louisiana Community College, River Parishes Community College, Louisiana Delta Community College, Bossier Parish Community College, Baton Rouge Community College and all public postsecondary technical colleges that provide vocational-technical education. In 2002, SOWELA Technical Community College and Fletcher Technical Community College were authorized by the Board of Regents to expand missions from providing technical education only, to include the community college mission. Also in 2002, the newly created Louisiana Delta Community College became operational.

The combination of forty-two technical schools into one college was accomplished in the appropriations bill, House Bill 1 of the 1999 Legislative Session. In 2006, the Louisiana Technical College was reorganized into eight regional colleges. These colleges were later named as follows:

- Acadiana Technical College, Lafayette
- Capital Area Technical College, Baton Rouge
- Central Louisiana Technical College, Alexandria
- New Orleans Technical College, New Orleans
- Northeast Louisiana Technical College, West Monroe
- Northshore Technical College, Bogalusa
- Northwest Louisiana Technical College, Minden
- South Central Louisiana Technical College, Morgan City

In 2011, the regional technical college in New Orleans was merged with Delgado Community College. That same year, the mission of Northshore Technical College was expanded to become Northshore Technical Community College.

In 2012, Northeast Louisiana Technical College merged with Louisiana Delta Community College, Acadiana Technical College merged with South Louisiana Community College, and the mission of Central Louisiana Technical College was expanded to become Central Louisiana Technical Community College.

With these organizational, operational, and mission changes, as of the fall of 2012, the Louisiana Technical and Community College System consisted of fourteen two year colleges that included four technical community colleges, seven community colleges, and three technical colleges. In addition, Louisiana State University at Eunice and Southern University at Shreveport continue to be governed by four-year university boards.

There are two additional responsibilities of the LCTCS Board of Supervisors. The LCTCS is responsible for the leadership and management of two federal programs in Louisiana: The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act and the Adult Education Program. The LCTCS administers the Carl Perkins Program for the state's higher education agencies and receives and distributes funds totaling \$21 million, including \$9 million awarded to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for distribution to state-supported public school districts. The LCTCS also administers the \$14 million Adult Education Program (renamed Work Ready U), which provides services in over 200 colleges, local education agencies, public schools, and community-based organizations across the state.

### ***Governance of community and technical colleges in Louisiana***

The Louisiana Constitution provides for five boards to oversee the state's system of higher education. These include the Board of Regents, Louisiana State University Board of Supervisors, Southern University Board of Supervisors, the University of Louisiana Board Of Supervisors, and the LCTCS Board of Supervisors.

The Board of Regents is a state agency that coordinates all public higher education in Louisiana. The fifteen members of the Board of Regents are appointed by the Governor and represent all areas of the state.

The Louisiana State University Board of Supervisors provides for the management and operation of Louisiana State University at Eunice. The Southern University Board of Supervisors provides for the management and operation of Southern University at Shreveport.

The remaining fourteen state-supported, two year colleges are governed by the Louisiana Community and Technical College Board of Supervisors which was created by a 1999 constitutional amendment. Members may serve a maximum of two six-year terms. This board is comprised of seventeen members, of whom fifteen are appointed by the Governor. The remaining two members are students that are elected annually by their peers.

The President of the LCTCS reports directly to the Board of Supervisors. As Louisiana does not have local boards for its colleges, all fourteen of the campus chief executive officers, called chancellors, report to the System President.

### ***LCTCS revenue and expenditures, budget, trends, and alternative sources of funds***

The LCTCS relies on two major sources of funding for its operating budget. These revenue sources are state appropriations and self-generated funds. Self-generated funds are comprised primarily of student tuition and fees. In fiscal year 2009, state appropriations represented seventy-three percent of the operating budget for the LCTCS and self-generated student tuition and fees represented twenty-seven percent. By fiscal year 2012, self-generated revenues comprised fifty-three percent of college budgets while state appropriations represented forty-seven percent.

Three factors contributed to the increasing budget share of self-generated revenues accompanied by a decrease in the budget share of state appropriations. First, beginning in 2009, state general funds available to the legislature for appropriation began to decline.

Second, in 2011, the LCTCS President requested legislation to allow the LCTCS Board of Supervisors to increase tuition and mandatory fees to permit LCTCS colleges to standardize uniform rates across the system based upon student credit hours. Passage of this legislation provided for a standard per credit hour rate for community colleges and a standard rate, phased in over three years, for technical colleges. This standardization resulted in tuition increases for all but one of the LCTCS colleges.

Third was the rapid growth of enrollment between 2009 and 2012. This twenty-one percent enrollment growth accelerated the impact of declining state funds and increased tuition rates.

While these three events shifted more costs to students, they also prevented larger reductions in the overall operating budget and allowed colleges to continue to provide programs and services as state appropriations continued to decline.

In an effort to improve college graduation rates, improve efficiencies, and enhance transparency, Louisiana has engaged in an ambitious performance funding initiative that accounts for a significant portion of college funding. Act 741 of the 2010 Regular Session is known as the Louisiana Granting Resources and Autonomy for Diplomas Act or LA GRAD Act. The purpose of the Act is to support the State's public postsecondary education institutions in remaining competitive and increasing their overall effectiveness and efficiency. The GRAD Act specifies that the institutions achieve specific, measurable performance objectives aimed at improving college completion and meeting the State's current and future workforce and economic development needs. The four performance objectives are as follows:

1. Increase student success
2. Increase articulation and transfer
3. Enhance responsiveness to regional and statewide workforce and economic development needs
4. Increase institutional efficiency and accountability

Fifteen percent of the annual allocation of state budget dollars is determined by how colleges perform on the GRAD Act measures. In addition, colleges that meet or exceed their benchmarks are granted the authority to increase their tuition by up to ten percent in any given year.

Approximately seventy-five percent of the LCTCS annual budget is personnel related. Operating services (rent, utilities, and other operating costs), statutorily dedicated earmarked expenditures, and mandated costs (legislative auditor's fees, risk management insurance premiums, employee retirement, and employee and retiree health benefits) constitute the majority of the remaining twenty-five percent of the budget. Despite the twenty-one percent increase in enrollment since 2009, the number of faculty and staff and the proportion of personnel expenditures has remained relatively the same as in 2009. However, the ratio of faculty to staff has increased by thirty percent, largely due to efficiency measures that have diverted funds from administration and operations to instruction.

With the downward trend in state appropriations, the LCTCS began an effort in 2009 to streamline operational services in order to redirect resources into workforce training, instructional programs, and student service delivery. These efforts paid off and by 2011, \$25 million in efficiency savings were directed back into the classroom. The LCTCS introduced a shared services model, delivered through the system office on behalf of all colleges. The services provided that were shared system-wide included online programs, student information services, financial services, payroll for all employees, internal audit, facility project management, risk management, consolidated financial reporting, debt service payment management, legal services and other functions on behalf of colleges.

An important revenue stream for LCTCS involves \$30.8 million in state appropriations for LCTCS campus capital programs through an alternative debt financing method. This alternative process involves authorization by the Legislature to establish a structure to enable third party financing of major capital outlay projects. The process requires establishing a non-profit 501(c) (3) Corporation, authorization of many agreements and leases between the LCTCS, the Corporation and the State, and ultimate approval by the State Bond Commission. The corporation, in cooperation with the LCTCS, issues bonds, leases the land from the LCTCS, constructs the facilities in a relatively short amount of time and leases the facilities to the LCTCS/State. The lease payments cover the debt service and maintenance of the facilities for the term of the bonds. When the debt on the bonds is retired, the corporation releases the facilities to the state.

Through this process, LCTCS has constructed the Baton Rouge Community College at \$70 million, the Bossier Parish Community College campus at \$55 million, the South Louisiana Community College at \$17.8 million, the Louisiana Delta Community College Campus at \$45 million and is completing a single \$200 million program with twenty-four projects across the state, including many new and renovated instructional facilities on existing campuses, two new major community college campuses and several technical college campuses. This alternative capital funding method has far surpassed the funding and construction management capability of the state's capital outlay program.

Other sources of revenue include statutory fees and student self-assessed fees for student related services and facilities. At one of the LCTCS colleges, students assess themselves an athletic fee to fund

the entire athletic budget for the college, including men's and women's basketball, men's baseball, women's softball, intramural sports and a wellness center. Several college student bodies have elected self-assessed activity and facility fees to construct student activity centers and other facilities.

College foundations are becoming an increasingly significant alternative source of funds for LCTCS institutions. These emerging organizations are growing along with the colleges themselves. When the system was founded, only the older colleges had affiliated foundations. The new colleges had to work to develop them. Lacking funds and expertise, most of these fledging 501(c) (3) organizations struggled to operate. In 2007, a grant from the Board of Regents for \$300,000 provided funding for the system office to establish the office of system advancement to provide capacity building for college foundations and leadership to develop a system foundation which was established in 2006.

In addition to developing the system foundation, the office of system advancement provides training, technical assistance, and support to colleges to strengthen their development offices and foundation boards. These capacity building efforts have resulted in over \$16M in five major gifts donated to four colleges in 2011-2012 alone, an amount unheard of in prior years, and a trend expected to continue. In addition, annual campaigns were developed by college foundations on a regular basis that exceeded \$100,000, where none had occurred before.

Another important service the system foundation and the office of system advancement provides is to serve as the foundation for those colleges still without foundations, managing endowments, facility donations, and supporting fundraising campaigns. In addition to supporting college fundraising capacity, the key areas of focus for the system foundation include advocacy and public engagement, international partnerships and programs, and support for the LCTCS Annual Conference.

### ***Programs, certificates, and degrees***

Louisiana's community and technical colleges provide a wide array of programmatic offerings to students. These offerings include credit bearing coursework, non-credit and continuing education coursework as well as career and technical education. While the system has institutions that are specifically geared toward career and technical education, the vast majority of the colleges within the system offer some career and technical education programs. Some of the most popular programs include general business, teacher education, and nursing and allied health fields of study. In addition to these credit offerings, colleges have also begun to offer the Louisiana Transfer Degree, which provides students with the opportunity to enroll in a General Studies Degree at one of the colleges within the System and then transfer to one of the State's four-year institutions to continue their studies. This degree program not only guarantees admission, but also acceptance of sixty hours' worth of transfer coursework. Degrees offered by the colleges for credit include:

- AA/Associate of Arts Degree: An academic degree program (sixty to seventy-two credit hours) with a significant general education core (twenty-seven credit hours) designed primarily to serve as preparatory for transfer to a related baccalaureate program.

- AS/Associate of Science Degree: An academic degree program (sixty to seventy-two credit hours) with a significant general education core (twenty-seven credit hours) designed primarily to serve as preparatory for transfer to a related baccalaureate program.
- AAS/Associate of Applied Science Degree: An applied/academic degree program (sixty to seventy-two credit hours) primarily designed to prepare students for immediate employment or career entry.
- AGS/Associate of General Studies Degree: An academic program (sixty credit hours) that allows students to select a concentration to prepare them for career entry but which may also transfer to a baccalaureate program.

In addition to credit programs that are offered, colleges within the System offer a wide variety of credentials for students interested in entering the workforce. In 2012, LCTCS colleges awarded 24,320 degrees and certificates. These included associate degrees, post associate degrees, technical competency area certificates, specialized certificates, and diplomas. Credentials students may earn within the System include:

- Technical Competency Area (TCA) Certificate: An applied course, or series of courses (one to sixteen credit hours) which provides a student with a specific technical competency.
- Certificate of Technical Studies (CTS): an applied technical program (sixteen to thirty-three credit hours) usually formed by combining multiple TCAs.
- Certificate of General Studies (CGS): An academic program (thirty credit hours) of general education courses designed to prepare students for entry into an associate or baccalaureate program.
- Technical Diploma (TD): An applied technical degree program (forty-five to sixty credit hours) formed by combining multiple CTSs and/or TCAs.

In addition to credit and technical education, most colleges within the LCTCS offer a wide variety of continuing education programs. These programs are varied and include offerings that are for leisure/pleasure to short-term workforce development programs.

***Adult Basic Education (ABE), dual enrollment, and workforce development***

The transfer of governance and management in Louisiana of adult basic education to the LCTCS from the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) occurred in 2010. This transfer fostered the recasting of adult basic education in Louisiana to extend its scope beyond literacy and basic skill remediation to include transitional services, technical education, wrap around student services, career pathways, and student opportunity to secure family sustainable employment. Symbolic of this new vision, adult basic education in Louisiana was renamed WorkReady U.



The adult basic education provider network consists of LCTCS colleges, local education agencies and community based organizations servicing communities throughout Louisiana. Currently there are thirty-seven adult basic education providers offering highly accountable services at over 200 instructional sites in Louisiana. Recognition of the *WorkReady U* vision and implementation progress to date has garnered invitations to participate in national initiatives designed to explore the limits of adult basic education delivery.

LCTCS colleges are very involved in offering dual enrollment programs at sites all over the State. Each college participates with local school systems to offer high school students a jump start at college. The dual enrollment programs fall into three broad categories. The Expanding High School Choice Grant provides state funding to colleges for enrolling students in dual enrollment coursework that prepares the students for entering credit bearing programs of study. The TOPS Tech-Early Start program offers high school students an opportunity to work toward a technical credential while still in high school and provides funding to the colleges for student participation. The third broad category is specific agreements with local schools or school systems. Under these partnerships, college coursework is offered to students academically prepared for the rigors of college work.

In addition, the State is transitioning to a new framework for dual enrollment entitled "*Course Choice*". This framework will allow state funding to follow high school students and will allow students and parents more opportunities to select coursework providers for college coursework and workforce training opportunities.

Louisiana's community and technical colleges produce graduates with credentials who have the skills, abilities, and credentials to go to work on day-one to fill high-demand, high wage jobs. In fact, colleges offer the Day One Guarantee, which promises business and industry that if a graduate of any one of our programs does not have the knowledge, skills, or abilities to go to work on day one, they will re-train them for free.

In addition to curricular programs, community and technical colleges provide customized training to address the following needs:

- Retrain workers.
- Offer training to individuals who are employed but require additional knowledge, skills, and abilities demanded by rapidly changing employer needs.

Louisiana's community and technical colleges have implemented curricular innovations such as career pathways and stackable credentials. These innovations allow students multiple exit points wherein their skill attainment and job earning potential is enhanced by completion of certificates and degrees.

Colleges work closely with business and industry in their local communities to ensure that workforce programs are aligned with local needs and are up-to-date in content and equipment. For example, major partners in high demand areas include the oil and gas industry with process technology programs, the automobile industry with automotive technician programs, and the construction industry with the

construction technology and welding programs. These partners, in turn, invest resources in LCTCS colleges by serving on program advisory boards, donating equipment, and contributing funds to build facilities.

LCTCS colleges also provide contracted coursework to local business and industry. The partnerships between local employers and the community and technical colleges have long been recognized as a critical component to the economic health of the State. To this end, the colleges continue to find ways to partner with business and industry. For example, the LCTCS works closely with the Louisiana FastStart program to provide training programs and services to a variety of businesses and industries. Their approach is considered a national model in attracting and keeping businesses in Louisiana.

The System also works closely with both the state workforce system of workforce boards and One-Stop centers with local service delivery. These services are closely coordinated with community colleges that comprise the majority of eligible training providers serving trade-affected workers in each state. State agency partners include:

- Louisiana Workforce Commission
- FastStart
- Office of Corrections
- Workforce Investment Board
- Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance
- Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Louisiana Board of Regents

### ***Challenges and Opportunities***

Increasingly, the most direct route to a middle-class job is through community and technical colleges. Yet until recently, a person could get a good paying job without any education beyond high school. Thus, despite the fact that Louisiana lagged on most education measures, the nature of the state's job opportunities provided economic security for most citizens. Today, Louisiana faces a very different reality.

In today's economy, individuals without skills beyond high school are struggling to find good-paying jobs at the same time that employers are reporting difficulty in finding qualified employees. This is both the greatest challenge and the greatest opportunity for community and technical colleges.

While demand for higher education is going up, state resources are declining. There are two options to address how to manage diminishing funding. Colleges can either do less or they can find ways to increase productivity, reduce cost, and serve more students. Louisiana has chosen the latter option.

In recent years there has been a dramatic shift in the business model for the LCTCS. As recently as 2007, seventy-nine percent of operating revenue came from state general funds. By 2012, only forty-eight percent of the budget came from the State. Yet, during this same period of time, enrollment increased by fifty-four percent.<sup>4</sup>

To achieve these results, Louisiana has used the following strategies:

- a. **Align Programs with Needs.** Louisiana's community and technical colleges engaged in a strategic process to ensure that programs offered at the colleges led to good paying jobs in the local community. As a result of this emphasis, over a four-year period of time, 541 programs have been closed and over 200 have been initiated.
- b. **Sharing Services across Colleges.** The real strength of community and technical colleges is in their ability to provide high quality direct service to students. While this applies to course and program offerings, it also matters in other college operations such as advising and financial aid. Therefore, Louisiana's community and technical colleges have consolidated operations in areas such as student registration and financial systems, payroll, auditing, and online offerings. This approach has freed up over \$25 million annually that can be used to improve both the quality and quantity of program offerings.
- c. **Colleges do not have needs.** Our guiding philosophy is that colleges have no needs. However, students, employers, and communities all have problems and needs for which community and technical colleges are the only solution. Louisiana's community and technical colleges exist to solve the problems.
- d. **Merging Colleges.** Until the creation of the LCTCS, Louisiana operated almost fifty two-year colleges. For a state whose population is comprised of only four million people, this was too many colleges. Therefore, through mergers and reorganization, the state now operates only fourteen colleges.

As a result, despite increased expectations and shrinking fiscal resources, Louisiana's community and technical colleges have grown over fifty-four percent since 2007<sup>5</sup> while seeing per student funding reduced by 21 percent. Student tuition and fees have gone from a small percentage of the budget to the largest component of funding. This has necessitated new business models and practices that reduce overhead, increase scale and place an emphasis on increased service. There is no doubt that these trends will continue into the foreseeable future. As they do, the LCTCS will rise to the challenge by continuing the strategies that have been so successful in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and seek new and innovative solutions that will make our citizens prosperous, our business and industry productive, and Louisiana competitive far into the future.

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References:

<sup>1</sup> Louisiana Board of Regents, *Inventory of Degree and Certificate Programs*, as400.regents.state.la.us/pdfs/crin/crinprga.pdf (accessed November 7, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Louisiana Community and Technical College System, *Statewide Student Profile System - Academic Year 2012*.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Louisiana Community and Technical College System, *Statewide Student Profile System, Academic Years 2008-2012*.

<sup>5</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, *Integrated Postsecondary Education System, 12 Month Enrollment Survey 2008-2012*.