

LOUISIANA COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM

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Creating Futures

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TO: Dr. Monty Sullivan
LCTCS President
FROM: Joseph F. Marin
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Dr. Emily Campbell
Interim Chief Enrollment Management Officer

SUBJECT: Strategic Sustainability and Growth Initiative 1A - Initiative to Lessen
Financial Burden for Students

DATE: 06/13/2017

FOR BOARD ACTION

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Board approve a package of items that
together incentivizes enrollment and lessens the financial burden on students. The
package includes 1) receiving of the LCTCS Leadership Team recommendation to
maintain tuition at the current rate, 2) authorization of an LCTCS Institutional Aid Pilot
that authorizes colleges to provide financial incentives to attract target student
populations, and 3) endorsement of the Leadership Team's recommendation to reduce
the non-tuition related costs of attendance, the most prominent is the reduction of
textbook costs to students.

Background: The LCTCS Leadership Team is focused on improving access to the
people of Louisiana, increasing enrollment in our institutions, and most importantly
reducing the cost of attendance for students. Tuition increases over the last few years
have had an impact on our student population. In an effort to ensure access to the two-
year college mission, the Leadership Team is committed to holding the tuition of our
colleges to the 2016-17 level through the 2017-18 academic year.

However, simply maintaining the current tuition level is not enough. Our colleges must
begin to seek ways to incentivize enrollment through a strategic institutional financial aid
effort. Based upon research conducted by LCTCS staff, it is clear that a significant
number of prospective students could be incentivized with a relatively small financial
award. Recognizing that the amount of financial aid a student is offered is a strong
predictor of whether or not that student will enroll in college and that the LCTCS does
not currently have a comprehensive financial aid policy, LCTCS colleges will conduct a
highly structured institutional aid pilot. System Office staff will set guidelines and

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parameters for the pilot, which will include specific populations of students to target, including adult students, students who have applied in the past but did not enroll, returning students, and students enrolled in high-demand majors. Colleges will submit, no later than July 1, 2017, their plans for how institutional aid will be awarded throughout the 2017-2018 academic year. System Office staff will analyze the results of the pilot and submit a report to the Board no later than the April 2018 meeting. The findings will drive the development of a comprehensive financial aid policy. Therefore, the LCTCS Leadership Team recommends an institutional aid pilot to develop policies and practices that reduce costs to students and drive enrollment.

Maintaining tuition and providing a strategic financial aid package are strong steps forward in ensuring access to the two-year college mission. However, there are other ways the LCTCS can help our students. Recognizing that the cost of attendance is much broader than the cost of tuition and fees, the cost to a student of textbooks, materials, housing, food, transportation, etc. can be prohibitive. Therefore, the LCTCS Leadership Team is focusing on efforts to assist students with these kinds of items. The first step in that effort is a focus on sharply reducing the costs of textbooks and materials for LCTCS students. The LCTCS Leadership Team has set a goal of reducing the overall textbook and materials cost to students effectively putting money back in the pockets of students going forward. Similar initiatives in other states have shown decreases of about 10% of total textbook and materials costs. If that same level of savings were accomplished in the LCTCS, we believe we could save students \$5-7 million annually. Chancellors and Directors will work with the System President to develop specific plans for achieving this goal. The two most prominent elements of that work will be a focus on Open Educational Resources (OER's) and negotiation of improved pricing arrangements with publishers and/or bookstores.

OER's have shown a dramatic effect in driving savings while maintaining the level of instructional quality across the higher education landscape. To support the colleges further in the development of OER materials, the LCTCS made available \$75,000 in competitive funding to incorporate OER in academic programs (see attached call for proposals). In total, eight applications for funding were submitted from multiple colleges. The awards to Baton Rouge Community College, Bossier Parish Community College, Delgado Community College, Fletcher Technical Community College, Louisiana Delta Community College, Northshore Technical Community College, River Parishes Community College, and South Louisiana Community College will assist in ensuring that 24 courses across the System have OER materials available. It is estimated that this could impact as many as 20,000 students by reducing their cost of attendance by an estimated \$5,000,000 annually.

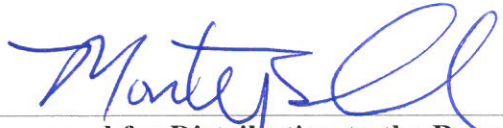
The Louisiana Library Network (LOUIS) and LCTCS libraries have collaborated in purchasing low-cost eBooks to provide licensed course textbooks on the first day of class at no charge to students. This work has demonstrated over \$700,000 in savings across all LOUIS members through a combination of eBooks and (OER) strategies for 7,600 students. As members of the LOUIS consortium, LCTCS colleges deliver cost-effective solutions to ensure that students have the materials they need to be successful.

Last, the LCTCS is exploring options for a system-wide bookstore provider that would include a pricing guarantee ensuring that the price charged to LCTCS students will be less than the lowest price on the market. Dr. Natalie Harder is leading this effort, and will likely be bringing forth a system RFP process in the weeks ahead.

History of Prior Actions: The Board approved strategic sustainability and growth plan recommendations at the March 2017 meeting.

Fiscal Impact: The cost of the financial aid pilot is not a precise number but is estimated at about \$2.5 million. However, the new revenue from new enrollments will far exceed the cost of the pilot. Further, reducing the total annual textbook costs will save LCTCS students an estimated \$5-7 million annually.

Benefits to the System: Decreasing the overall costs of attending will result in savings for students and likely increase enrollment.



Approved for Distribution to the Board
Dr. Monty Sullivan, President

6-14-17

Date